

# Council Designations: Seal of Biliteracy Criteria

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## Overview and Intent of Seal of Biliteracy

The Seal of Biliteracy celebrates students who have multilingual competence—a critical skill in today’s global society and an asset that will prepare RI graduates for success in the local and global economy. The Seal of Biliteracy certifies that a student has demonstrated skills in the English language and one or more other world languages. Students earn a Seal of Biliteracy by demonstrating competence in English Language Arts standards as defined by the Commissioner Seal or English Proficiency standards, and nationally-recognized world language standards.

The Seal of Biliteracy can be achieved at two levels:

- **Gold Seal of Biliteracy:** The Rhode Island Gold Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who have demonstrated their ability to narrate and describe in past, present, and future in a world language. Their language functions allow them to deal effectively with unanticipated complications. The Gold level is aligned with the ACTFL “Advanced Low” Proficiency Guidelines (2012).

Students will earn a Gold Seal of Biliteracy if they meet the performance standard on an English assessment and the Gold-level performance standard on a World Language assessment from the RIDE-approved assessment list.

- **Silver Seal of Biliteracy:** The Rhode Island Silver Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who have demonstrated ability to create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to close a simple conversation by asking and responding to simple questions in a world language. The Silver level is aligned with the ACTFL “Intermediate Mid” Proficiency Guidelines (2012).

Students will earn a Silver Seal of Biliteracy if they meet the performance standard on an English assessment and the Silver-level performance standard on a World Language assessment from the RIDE-approved assessment list.

## Seal of Biliteracy: Assessment List and Gold and Silver Level Performance Standards

The Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy should be awarded to recognize high school graduates who have attained an Intermediate-Mid level of proficiency or higher in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more world languages, and have mastered English for academic purposes.

Students must successfully meet the established benchmark on both an approved English assessment and an approved world language assessment in order to earn the Seal of Biliteracy at either the Silver or Gold level, as demonstrated by meeting the following criteria:

## Seal of Biliteracy Assessments and Proficiency

Assessment	Assessment Content Area		
ACT English	English Language Arts	18	
PSAT Reading and Writing	English Language Arts	430	
SAT Reading and Writing	English Language Arts	480	
Advanced Placement: English Language and Composition	English Language Arts	Level 3 and above	
Advanced Placement: English Literature and Composition	English Language Arts	Level 3 and above	
ACCESS	English Language Proficiency	State defined exiting criteria for ELs	
LAS Links - DRC (Form C/D)	English Language Proficiency	Overall level 5	
		Silver Proficiency	Gold Proficiency
Advanced Placement: World Language	World Language	Level 3	Level 4 or above
AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages)	World Language	Level Intermediate-Mid or High	Advanced Low or above
STAMP 4S: World Language	World Language	Level 5 or above	Level 7 or above
ASLPI: American Sign Language Proficiency Interview	American Sign Language	Level 3.0 or above	Level 4.0 or above

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. When will the state Seal of Biliteracy criteria go into effect?

While many districts and schools are awarding a local Seal of Biliteracy based on local criteria, the criteria listed above for the state Seal of Biliteracy will go into effect for the graduating class of 2021.

## 2. How are the Seal of Biliteracy Gold and Silver levels defined?

The Rhode Island Gold Seal of Biliteracy will be given to a learner who demonstrates the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future in paragraph-length discourse with some control of aspect. Writers are able to combine and link sentences into texts of paragraph length and structure. The Gold writer demonstrates the ability to incorporate a limited number of cohesive devices, and may resort to some redundancy and awkward repetition. Listeners demonstrate the ability to comprehend language on a range of topics of general interest. They have sufficient knowledge of language structure to understand basic time-frame references. Readers are able to understand conventional narrative and descriptive texts with a clear underlying structure though their comprehension may be uneven. These texts predominantly contain high-frequency vocabulary and structures. The Gold level is aligned with the [ACTFL “Advanced Low” Proficiency Guidelines](#) (2012).

The Rhode Island Silver Seal of Biliteracy will be given to a learner who can successfully handle a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture. They can write short, simple communications, compositions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts about personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other personal topics primarily in the present time tense. The learner’s comprehension is most often accurate with highly familiar and predictable topics although a few misunderstandings may occur. They are able to understand short, non-complex texts that convey basic information and deal with basic personal and social topics. The Silver level is aligned with the [ACTFL “Intermediate Mid” Proficiency Guidelines](#) (2012).

## 3. My district currently gives out a Seal of Biliteracy based on local criteria. How can we make the transition?

Districts may adopt and award a local Seal of Biliteracy at any time. RIDE recommends that LEAs align the local criteria with the criteria of the state Seal of Biliteracy Council Designation (listed above). LEAs may award a Seal of Biliteracy and note that it is aligned with the state criteria. Starting with the graduating class of 2021, LEAs may offer the state Seal of Biliteracy to any student meeting the criteria for either a Gold or Silver level Seal of Biliteracy, as outlined in this document.

## 4. When can a student earn a Seal of Biliteracy?

A student may earn a Seal of Biliteracy any time after they have demonstrated the performance standard on both the English and a world language assessment. Qualifying assessments taken at any point during high school are eligible to meet the criteria for earning a Seal of Biliteracy. Earning this Seal should be noted on the student’s transcript immediately after meeting the criteria. If a student earns a Silver level Seal of Biliteracy and then later earns a Gold level Seal of Biliteracy in the same world language, the Gold Seal of Biliteracy should replace the Silver on the students’ transcripts. A student’s Seal of Biliteracy will be officially conferred upon high school graduation and should be noted on the student’s diploma and final transcript.

## 5. Must a student show proficiency on an English and a world language assessment to earn a Seal of Biliteracy?

Yes, a student must show proficiency on at least one of the approved English assessments and at least one of the approved world language assessments. Students who demonstrate proficiency at the performance

standard on multiple qualifying English assessments or multiple qualifying world language assessments of the same language will only earn one Seal of Biliteracy.

**6. Can a student earn more than one Seal of Biliteracy for multiple languages?**

Yes, if a student meets the performance standard for the Seal of Biliteracy in multiple world languages and meets the performance standard on one of the qualifying English assessments, a student may earn multiple Seals of Biliteracy (e.g. a student could earn a Silver Seal on Biliteracy in Spanish, and a Gold Seal of Biliteracy in Portuguese).

**7. How will employers, colleges and universities know what a Gold or Silver Seal of Biliteracy means?**

RIDE has been and will continue to communicate with top employers and institutions of higher education about the Gold and Silver Seal of Biliteracy, using the performance descriptors listed in this document. RIDE will also post this information on the RIDE website. Students should also be prepared to share this information with their potential employers or institutions of higher education.

**8. When is the best time for a student to take the assessments to earn a Seal of Biliteracy?**

A student can meet the criteria for a Seal of Biliteracy at any point in high school, yet it is advisable that schools guide students to take the assessment when the student has reached an advanced level of proficiency, taking into consideration the developmental stages of language acquisition. For many students, the qualifying assessments will be integrated into their course experience (e.g. end of course assessments).

**9. Can a student earn a Seal of Biliteracy through other means than taking assessments?**

No. As a Council Designation, the Seal is an externally validated recognition that must be earned through demonstration of proficiency at a designated performance standard on a set of qualifying assessments. However, local recognitions may be an option for students who do not meet the designated performance standard on qualifying assessments.

**10. Who pays the assessment fees for students to take the assessments?**

Currently, the State of Rhode Island is responsible for the expenses associated with the PSAT, SAT, and ACCESS assessments. Other assessments used by an LEA should be made available to students at no cost. RI General Law § 16-22.2-2, State Seal of Biliteracy, states that no fee shall be charged to a pupil for the purposes of a Seal of Biliteracy.

**11. Are re-takes of eligible assessments allowed?**

A student is allowed to take a qualifying assessment as many times as they wish. The score that meets the performance standard will be counted toward the Seal of Biliteracy. However, schools and LEAs are not required to administer or pay for multiple administrations of a particular assessment.

## **12. For which languages can a student earn a Seal of Biliteracy?**

Students may earn a Seal of Biliteracy in any language that is assessed in one of the qualifying world language assessments. Should a student want to earn a Seal in a language that is not currently covered by the list of approved world language assessments, the superintendent of the student's LEA may nominate an appropriate assessment to RIDE via the nomination process (see Seal of Biliteracy Assessment Nomination Process guidance).

## **13. How will students know that they can earn a Seal of Biliteracy?**

In accordance with the Secondary School Regulations adopted in 2016, starting with the class of 2021, each graduating class must be notified of the requirements of the Seal of Biliteracy at both Silver and Gold levels (and all available Council Designations) no later than October 1 of the cohort's ninth grade year, or when that student is enrolled in the high school after the ninth grade year.

All students should receive information on the Seal of Biliteracy so that they are able to organize their schedules and meet the requirements to pursue a Seal. All students, regardless of language background or any identified condition, including those that may exclude demonstration of language proficiency in one of the modes of communication, should receive information on the Seal of Biliteracy so that they are able to organize their schedules and meet the requirements to pursue a Seal. Accommodations, such as those already in place for state required assessments of language for such conditions as blindness, deaf or hearing impaired, cognitive disabilities, or learning disabilities, should be made available to allow for students to meet criteria to earn the Seal of Biliteracy.

## **14. What is the difference between a Seal of Biliteracy and a Pathway Endorsement in Humanities and World Languages?**

The Seal of Biliteracy is an assessment-based recognition of student proficiency in English and another world language. The Pathway Endorsement recognizes students who have undergone a series of connected experiences that leads to deep learning in a language and culture. Students may choose to pursue both of these, though the requirements for earning them are separate. For example, a student who takes AP Spanish 4 as part of their pathway programming may count the course toward their Pathway Endorsement and, if they take the AP exam at the end of the course and earn a 3 or higher, could use that score towards also earning the Seal of Biliteracy at either the Gold or Silver level.

## **15. How and when should the Seal of Biliteracy be noted on a student's transcript?**

Immediately upon meeting the criteria for a Seal of Biliteracy Council Designation, it should be noted on the student's transcripts that they earned the Silver or Gold level Seal of Biliteracy. It should be clearly noted at which level they earned the Seal of Biliteracy (Gold or Silver), and in what language(s) a student earned the Seal of Biliteracy (e.g. "Gold Seal of Biliteracy in English and Mandarin earned October 2020").

Additional Questions? Contact Michael Hobin: [Michael.Hobin@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Michael.Hobin@ride.ri.gov)

## Appendix A

Assessment	Languages
Advanced Placement: World Language	Chinese French German Italian Japanese Spanish
AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages)	Arabic Chinese French German Hindi Italian Japanese Korean Portuguese Russian Spanish Thai
STAMP 4S: World Language	Arabic French Japanese Mandarin (Simplified and Traditional) Spanish
ASLPI: American Sign Language Proficiency Interview	American Sign Language