



Diploma Seal Guidance: **Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy**

Revised December 2024



Diploma Seal: Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy

Introduction

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is committed to ensuring all students have access to course offerings with high-quality curriculum and instruction as essential components of a rigorous education that prepares every student for success in college and their career. On November 15, 2022, the R.I. Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approved [Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements](#) for all R.I. students beginning with the graduating Class of 2028. RIDE’s adoption of Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements presents an opportunity to revitalize existing high school Council Designations (i.e., Diploma Seals and Diploma Endorsements) to ensure that these credentials are recognized and valued by Rhode Island employers and postsecondary institutions.

Specifically, this has presented the opportunity to update Rhode Island’s Seal of Biliteracy criteria and guidance to ensure all students graduate high school ready to create their own futures and to pursue their postsecondary goals. The adoption of Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements establish that students must earn diploma endorsements that are recognized and valued by employers and postsecondary institutions. RIGL [§16-22.2-3](#) establishes that “each public university and public community college in this state shall accept the state Silver Seal of Biliteracy and the Gold Seal of Biliteracy as world language coursework if taken during high school and if a student’s high school transcript indicates that he or she will be receiving or has received the state Seal of Biliteracy” meaning that the Seal of Biliteracy is now a recognized and valued credential of value that may be earned by Rhode Island students based upon the criteria outlined in this guidance.

The Rhode Island 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 Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy certifies that a student has demonstrated skills in the English language and one or more other world languages. The Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy should be awarded to recognize high school graduates who have attained proficiency or higher in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more world languages, and English. **The Seal of Biliteracy not only celebrates our students’ multilingualism but also acknowledges its importance by awarding students with academic credit at both the secondary and postsecondary levels.**

- The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) awards 3 credits for the Silver Seal and 6 credits for the Gold Seal.
- Rhode Island College (RIC) awards 4 credits for the Silver Seal and 8 credits for the Gold Seal.

- The University of Rhode Island (URI) awards 3 credits once a more advanced course in the sequence has been completed.

Criteria for Awarding the Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy

The Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy recognizes students who have achieved proficiency in both English and another world language. To earn the Seal, students must meet specific scores on approved assessments that measure their proficiency according to English Language Arts or English Language Development standards for English and Rhode Island World Language standards for the other language.

Components of awarding the Seal of Biliteracy:

1. **Score Requirements:** Students must achieve the scores designated on the RIDE-approved list of assessments that are officially recognized to show their proficiency in both languages.
2. **High School Credit:** Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may allow students to earn high school credit by completing these approved assessments, aligning with the Rhode Island Readiness-Based Secondary Regulations. This can enable students to take advanced courses or choose additional elective credits earlier in their high school experience.
3. **Post-Secondary Credit:** Rhode Island General Law § 16-22.2-3 allows students to receive course credit for their Seal of Biliteracy at any public university or community college in Rhode Island. Students must request this credit within three academic years of graduating from high school.
4. **Transcript Notation:** LEAs are responsible for ensuring that the Seal of Biliteracy is recorded on the student's high school transcript.

The Rhode Island 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 and/or High" 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.

The awarding of the Seal of Biliteracy highlights language proficiency and the multilingual skills of Rhode Island High School students. The Seal not only recognizes the importance of multilingualism but also ensures that our students' language abilities are clearly communicated to, and recognized by, colleges and universities through the awarding of postsecondary academic credit.

RIDE-Approved Assessment List for the Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy

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

RIDE-Approved English Assessments and Minimum Required Scores or Levels

English Assessment	Contingent Upon	Minimum Score (For Both Silver and Gold)
American College Test (ACT)	N/A	18
PSAT Reading and Writing	N/A	430 or above in grade 10 460 or above in grade 11
SAT	N/A	480
Advanced Placement (AP): English Language and Composition	N/A	Level 3 and above
Advanced Placement (AP): English Literature and Composition	N/A	Level 3 and above
International Baccalaureate (IB): Literature	*Must be part of an IB school or diploma program.	4 on High Level, 5 on Standard Level
International Baccalaureate (IB): Language and Literature	*Must be part of an IB school or diploma program.	4 on High Level, 5 on Standard Level

ACCESS	*Approved only for MLL students taking ACCESS in an LEA.	State defined <u>exit criteria for MLLs</u>
AAPPL Test of English Proficiency	*Approved for MLL students who missed the window for other assessments and grade 12 students post-SAT.	Advanced Low
STAMP English Language Proficiency	*Approved for MLL students who missed the window for other assessments grade 12 students post-SAT.	Advanced Low

*Additional instruction and support in grade 12, through senior year coursework or other method, in the language must be completed prior to attempting new assessments or retaking assessments.

RIDE-Approved World Language Assessments and Minimum Required Scores or Levels

If the assessment is available in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, it must be used. For low incidence languages, an assessment may be given in fewer domains only if domains are not available. If you have any questions about the choice of assessment, please contact diplomaseals@ride.ri.gov.

World Language Assessment	Contingent Upon	Silver Minimum Score	Gold Minimum Score
ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment (ALIRA)	N/A	Intermediate Mid or High	Advanced Low
Advanced Placement (AP)	N/A	Level 3	Level 4 or above
AAPPL (ACTFL) (Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages)	N/A	Intermediate Mid or High	Advanced Low or above
**ALTA	**Only allowable for low incidence languages with fewer than four domains available or not available via other RIDE-approved	6 (on each section)	7 (on each section)

	assessments.		
Avant STAMP 4S	N/A	Intermediate Mid or High	Advanced Low or above
Avant STAMP Monolingual	N/A	Intermediate Mid or High	Advanced Low or above
*Avant STAMP 3S	*Only allowable for low incidence languages with fewer than four domains available or not available via other RIDE-approved assessments.	Intermediate Mid or High	Advanced Low or above
*Avant STAMP WS	*Only allowable for low incidence languages with fewer than four domains available or not available via other RIDE-approved assessments.	Intermediate Mid or High	Advanced Low or higher
Avant STAMP for ASL	N/A	Intermediate Mid or High	Advanced Low or higher
Avant STAMP for Latin	N/A	Intermediate Mid or High	Advanced Low or higher
International Baccalaureate (IB): Overall Language A or B Assessment (other than English)	N/A	4 on High Level, 5 on Standard Level	5 on High Level, 6 on Standard Level
***TOCFL: Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language	***Students must test in all 4 domains; because the scores are given in each domain and do not align, students must score at the designated level for ALL domains. For example, if they scored a 1 in reading, they would not meet the minimum score requirements. *Although the TOCFL can be administered at home, it must be administered with a trained proctor	Level 3 **in each of the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.	Level 4 **in each of the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

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By listing these assessments, the Rhode Island Department of Education does not endorse one listed vendor above another.

Additional instruction and support in grade 12, through senior year coursework or other method, in the language must be completed prior to attempting new assessments or retaking assessments.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is RIDE Updating the Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy Criteria/Guidance?

Rhode Island’s statewide adoption of Readiness-Based Graduation Requirements establishes that diploma endorsements must be designed to be recognized and valued by employers and postsecondary institutions. Additionally, RIGL [§16-22.2-3](#) establishes that “each public university and public community college in this state shall accept the state Silver Seal of Biliteracy and the Gold Seal of Biliteracy as world language coursework if taken during high school and if a student’s high school transcript indicates that he or she will be receiving or has received the state Seal of Biliteracy” meaning that the Seal of Biliteracy is now a recognized and valued credential of value that may be earned by Rhode Island students based upon the criteria outlined in this guidance.

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

According R.I.G.L. § 16-22.2.-2, the state Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency by a graduating high school pupil in one or more languages, in addition to English.

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 \(2012\)](#).

The Rhode Island Silver Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who have demonstrated their ability to create with the language, ask and answer simple questions, and handle a simple transaction in a world language. The Silver level is aligned with the [ACTFL “Intermediate Mid” Proficiency Guidelines \(2012\)](#).

Who should take the Seal of Biliteracy assessments?

Any student who speaks another language in addition to English should be encouraged to take the assessments that may qualify them for the Seal. At graduation time, the Seal of Biliteracy certifies that a student has demonstrated skills in the English language and one or more other

world languages. These students do not have to be enrolled in a world language course to qualify for the Seal. Students may be currently or previously enrolled in a world language course, enrolled in a bilingual or dual language program, studying a language outside of school, a heritage speaker, or a student visiting from another country.

Are students not enrolled in world language classes in the language they wish to be assessed eligible for the Seal of Biliteracy?

Any student who speaks another language in addition to English, regardless of how they learned it, should be encouraged to take the assessments that may qualify them for the Seal. Moreover, we encourage you to seek out multilingual learners and heritage speakers in your district interested in demonstrating their proficiency in their native/home/learned language. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to show their skills to future employers and universities. Students may earn the Seal in multiple languages, proving they have reached Intermediate Mid or higher in a world language. Students tend to score higher if they can take a course in each language (also true for heritage speakers new to taking proficiency tests in their own language) but that coursework is not required.

When can a student earn a Seal of Biliteracy?

Any high school student who speaks another language in addition to English should be encouraged to take the assessments that may qualify them for the Seal. 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 high school transcript immediately after meeting the criteria.

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.

Can students show proficiency in English on an assessment other than the state assessment?

Yes, students can show proficiency on an assessment other than the state assessment. However, additional instruction and support in grade 12, through senior year coursework or other method, in the language must be completed prior to attempting new assessments or retaking assessments.

How might an LEA test a low-incidence language?

Districts should reference the RIDE Seal of Biliteracy guidelines above and refer to eligibility information. Students should be assessed with tests in all available domains.

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 of Biliteracy in Spanish, and a Gold Seal of Biliteracy in Portuguese). *Each should be included on a student's high school transcript.*

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.

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 *Seal of Biliteracy assessments may be integrated* into their course experience (e.g. end of course assessments).

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

No, as a Diploma Seal, the R.I. Seal of Biliteracy is an externally validated recognition that must be earned through a demonstration of proficiency at a designated performance standard on a set of qualifying assessments. The Council of Elementary and Secondary Education shall promulgate regulations of the Commissioner as may be necessary to establish the criteria that students must achieve to earn a state Seal of Biliteracy, which may include, but shall not be limited to, attainment of units of credit in English language arts and languages other than English; passage of state assessments in English language arts and languages other than English; and passage of additional assessments of foreign language proficiency as may be approved by the Commissioner for this purpose. However, local recognitions may be an option for students who do not meet the designated performance standard on qualifying assessments.

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 state

assessment program administering 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. While the State of Rhode Island pays for the state assessments, the LEA is only responsible for the first world language assessment or any other English assessment administration not part of the RI state assessment program. For example, the LEA would be responsible to pay for a student to take the AAPPL for English assessment if administering in place of the assessments paid for by the State of Rhode Island.

Are retakes of eligible assessments allowed?

A student can 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. Therefore, it is important for schools to discuss with students the optimal time for taking the assessments, as well as additional instruction and preparation, through coursework or other method, that should be completed prior to attempting new assessments or retaking assessments for them to be most successful.

For which languages can a student earn a Seal of Biliteracy?

Students may earn a Seal of Biliteracy in any language 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](#)).

How will students know that they can earn a Seal of Biliteracy?

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 Diploma Seals and Diploma Endorsements) 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. LEAs are encouraged to include this requirement in their program of study and/or student handbook.

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, deafness or hearing impairment cognitive disabilities, or learning disabilities, should be made available to allow for students to meet criteria to earn the Seal of Biliteracy.

How and when should the Seal of Biliteracy be noted on a student’s transcript?

Immediately upon meeting the criteria for earning the silver or gold Seal of Biliteracy, it should be noted on the student’s transcripts ([R.I.G.L. 16-22.2.2](#)) 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”).

How should a district begin preparations?

Choosing a test is the first step. Most tests have online demonstrations. It is important to have teachers in the world language, MLL department, and/or school counselors participate in a demonstration of the test to understand the timing, the types of questions, and all the associated technology required. Then it is extremely helpful for the students to complete the demonstration to reduce test anxiety and help them to pace themselves with the timing. To ensure student attainment of at least Intermediate Mid proficiency, it is suggested that your district move to a proficiency-oriented world language curriculum with a performance-based approach to assessing all four skills. See the [Rhode Island World Languages Curriculum Framework](#) for more information on world language standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

What are the recommended testing conditions?

Each test provides recommended conditions in the proctor guidelines.

What happens if a student earns the Seal of Biliteracy because of a standardized test result reported in the summer after graduation?

Should passing scores for seniors return to the school after the student graduates, the student should still qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy. The Office of College and Career Readiness should be notified via email at diplomaseals@ride.ri.gov and a foil seal will be mailed to the recipient. The LEA should ensure that the designation be included on the student transcript so that the student can earn Rhode Island public college and university world language credit within three (3) years of graduation.

Can other state tests be used for the Rhode Island Seal of Biliteracy if a student transfers to a school in RI (i.e. MCAS for MA)?

Juniors or Seniors that have transferred and missed the SAT administered at their new LEA may qualify to meet the English test requirement if they have met the designated benchmark for proficiency on the state administered test.

We honor other states’ exit criteria for Multilingual Learners; therefore, MLLs who have transferred from another state where they exited MLL status via that state’s ELP assessment may also qualify for the Seal.

Can any PSAT/SAT administration count toward the Seal of Biliteracy score?

Yes. PSAT/SAT scores administered and paid for outside of the state assessment window do qualify toward the Seal of Biliteracy.

What is the difference between the Rhode Island State Seal of Biliteracy and the Global Seal of Biliteracy?

U.S. State Seals of Biliteracy are generally awarded to high school seniors but in many states are only available to students who attend public schools. Criteria for state Seals are determined by a state, district or school as determined by each state. The Rhode Island State Seal criteria was determined by teachers, administrators and members of the Rhode Island Department of Education. The Global Seal of Biliteracy is a language credential issued in collaboration with a school or organization and the Global Seal of Biliteracy, an independent international certifying body. It can be awarded to anyone, student or adult, from any state or country, that has met the criteria for one of its two award levels on one of its qualifying tests. The Global Seal of Biliteracy is serial-numbered and can be listed as a certificate, not just an award, on a CV or social media digital profile.

What is the guidance on including and omitting domains?

For most students, it is assumed world language assessments include all four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. LEAs may omit domains for which a demonstration of proficiency is inappropriate or inapplicable. LEAs are not required to collect evidence of proficiency in omitted domains. The student must demonstrate Intermediate Mid or High for Silver and at least Advanced Low for Gold to be claimed for the RI Seal of Biliteracy.

A domain may be omitted for any of the following reasons:

Disability

- For some students, the impact of a disability prevents accurate or appropriate measurement of the student's proficiency. For example, a deaf student might be required to demonstrate Listening proficiency in ASL, but not in (spoken) Spanish. A disability significant enough to impact a student's performance in a language will usually, but not always, be recorded in an IEP plan.

Does Not Apply (domain not available in the language)

- Some languages may not have a written form (or, more rarely, a spoken form). It is appropriate to select an assessment that omits domains not represented for a given language. Choose an assessment from the approved list above or contact RIDE if you have additional questions.

Rare or Difficult to Support Language

- Some languages may be so rare that no assessment exists that measures one or more domains of the language, and there is no reasonable chance of finding a qualified user

to evaluate student proficiency in that language. Please contact RIDE for more options.

Additional Questions? Contact diplomaseals@ride.ri.gov.