



**Language isn't a "credit to check off for graduation,"
but a skill that "checks you in" to future opportunities.**

Linda Egnatz - ACTFL - 2017

What is the Montana Seal of Bilingualism?

The Seal of Bilingualism is awarded to high school seniors who have demonstrated language proficiency in English and at least one other language. The seal was created to encourage students with a first language other than English to maintain and/or develop their home language while learning English and challenge students whose first language is English to attain proficiency in an additional world language. The seal is affixed to the high school diploma or on a separate certificate and the accomplishment is noted on the transcript of the graduating senior.

Why should districts and schools support students to apply for the seal?

Districts can adopt the Montana Seal of Bilingualism so that it is recognized on the high school diploma and the transcript as evidence of proficiency in two or more languages. It provides colleges with an additional method to recognize applicants entering their language programs and highlights linguistic skills that are attractive to future employers.

In what other ways does the Montana Seal of Bilingualism benefit students?

The seal is both incentive and recognition for an enviable life skill. Acknowledgement of language skills is a way for students to represent their identity, language, culture, and heritage.

What steps do districts, schools, and teachers need to take in order to award the Seal of Bilingualism?

The Montana Seal of Bilingualism is in the implementation stages with the goal of awarding the first seals to the graduating class of 2023. The following steps, therefore, are in their basic form and will likely be edited somewhat for the school year 2023-24. In the meantime, please contact either Lisa Werner at lisawerner65@gmail.com or McCall Flynn at MFlynn@mt.gov to share your intent to adopt the seal in the 2022-23 school year so that we can keep you updated with more information or to answer any questions that you might have.

Timeline

September/October

- Identify and contact students in your district who might be able to qualify for the seal.

January

- Schedule testing to be completed in March

March

- Complete testing

May 1

- Submit application and documentation of qualifying scores

Step 1:

Identify students in your district who might be able to qualify for the State Seal of Biliteracy.

- Working from your home language surveys, contact families with a home language other than English to see if their students would like to earn the Seal of Biliteracy.
- Contact students who are currently receiving or previously received English Learner (EL) services and might be interested in being recognized for their language proficiency in a language other than English, as well as English.
- Reach out to students enrolled in advanced levels of World Language classes offered in your district.
 - Students enrolled in language classes up through level III or IV may qualify for the seal based on the language proficiency they've developed and can take one of the approved assessments for the seal.
 - Students in AP and or IB classes who take the associated exams can potentially qualify students for the seal. However, it will be awarded after high school graduation due to the unavailability of scores before July.
- Contact families to see if their children have had out-of-school language learning experiences, such as attending community-language programs or traveling and living abroad.

Step 2:

Determine what testing options you'll need to offer in order to test the languages of your students.

- Options vary by language, cost, and availability. See criteria chart for guidance.
- Once you decide on the tests you'll need to offer, set up some testing days in your district. Plan to complete testing by the end of March. Please equity at the forefront in determining what languages to test and when, and how to make the testing fees affordable for students.

Step 3:

Publicize information regarding the Montana Seal of Biliteracy together with testing dates to students and families.

- Encourage counselors and teachers, especially EL teachers and World Language teachers if available in the district, to reach out to their students.
- Provide information and offer opportunities for families to ask questions.

Step 4:

Record the results.

- Review the test results as they come in and determine whether the student qualifies for the Gold Seal (Intermediate Mid) or the Platinum Seal (Advanced Low).
- Maintain accurate and complete data records. Collect the data on all the students who qualify as proficient for the seal into a file and update it in your district data system, and ensure that you have records for all graduating seniors who have earned the seal.

Step 5:

Celebrate success!

- In May, identify the graduating seniors who will earn the Seal of Biliteracy upon graduation and arrange for them to receive recognition.

Here are some ideas.

- Request the embossment of the seal for their diplomas.
- Provide letters or certificates recognizing students.
- Provide cords for students to wear during graduation ceremonies.
- Recognize seal recipients during honors ceremonies at school; invite parents, families, and community members to attend.

Step 6:

Plan for future recipients of the Montana Seal of Biliteracy!

- The intent of the Montana Seal of Biliteracy is to encourage all students to become proficient in two or more languages and seek recognition for their language abilities they already have. The Montana Seal of Biliteracy Advisory Committee is actively creating “pathway awards” for 5th and 8th graders to celebrate the gift of language on their way to high school graduation. Please don’t limit your outreach to this year’s seniors — let elementary and middle school students and teachers know about the seal so that they can plan their future language milestones!

Again, please contact either Lisa Werner at lisawerner65@gmail.com or McCall Flynn at MFlynn@mt.gov to share your intent to adopt the seal in the 2022-23 school year so that we share additional information with you and keep you updated — or simply answer any questions that you might have!

<https://bpe.mt.gov/Seal-of-Biliteracy/Seal-of-Biliteracy>



Montana Seal of Biliteracy Criteria for Awards

Assessment Options	Languages	Score / Proficiency Level
Native Languages of Montana		Montana tribes will mirror the Class 7 Licensure process and set their own proficiency measures and criteria for the awarding of the Montana Seal of Biliteracy.
* STAMP 4S	Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin (Simplified), Mandarin (Traditional), Polish, Portuguese (Brazilian), Russian, Spanish, Spanish Monolingual	IM: 5 in all 4 domains AL: 7 in all 4 domains
STAMP WS (Writing and Speaking)	<u>Less-Commonly Taught/Tested Languages</u>	IM: 5 in all domains AL: 7 in all domains
STAMP FOR ASL	Receptive and Expressive Skills	IM: 5 in all domains AL: 7 in all domains
* AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages)	Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese (European), Spanish	IM: I-3 in all 4 domains AL: A-1 in all 4 domains
ACTFL OPI (interview) & WPT (writing tasks)	<u>Less-Commonly Taught/Tested Languages</u>	IM: I-4 AL: A-1
ACTFL ALIRA	Latin	IM: I-3 AL: A-1
Advanced Placement Exam (AP / College Board)	Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Spanish, English	IM: 3 AL: 5
* International Baccalaureate (IB)	French, Spanish, English	IM: 4 AL: 6
SLPI National Technical Institute for the Deaf (SLPI),	American Sign Language	IM: Intermediate Plus AL: Advanced Plus
ASLPI Gallaudet University (ASLPI)	American Sign Language	IM: Level 3 AL: Level 4
* WIDA ACCESS for ELLs	English	IM: Completion of 4 units of English language arts, as required by the Montana Board of Public Education AL: 4.7
* ACT (ELA Composite Score)	English	AL: 20
Montana BPE ELA Graduation Requirements	English	IM: Completion of 4 units of English language arts

**Additional testing options for attaining the Platinum Award (Advanced Low) in English*