



## THE MARYLAND SEAL OF BILITERACY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### 1. What is the Seal of Biliteracy?

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award from the Maryland State Board of Education that recognizes a student's high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing in English and one or more languages.

### 2. What is proficiency?

Proficiency is the ability to function in a language at a high degree of competence.

### 3. What is the purpose of the Seal of Biliteracy?

High school graduates who can function in two or more languages are equipped with the knowledge and skills to participate successfully in college, careers, and a diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century society. The purpose is to:

- Recognize the value of language learning in public schools
- Encourage students to attain high proficiency levels in one or more languages in addition to English
- Affirm native or heritage languages
- Provide employers with a method of identifying individuals with language and biliteracy skills
- Prepare students with the critical skills necessary to function in a global society
- Strengthen cross-cultural communication, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages in our communities.

### 4. What are the requirements for a Seal of Biliteracy?

To receive a Maryland Seal of Biliteracy, a student must:

- Pass the Maryland High School Assessment in English 10; AND
- Demonstrate Intermediate High proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a language other than English, as measured by assessments that are aligned to ACTFL (The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines. These assessments include:
  - OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview)/ OPIc (Oral Proficiency Interview-Computer) AND the WPT (Writing Proficiency Test).
  - AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) with a minimum score of I-5.
  - STAMP (Standards Based Measurement of Proficiency) with a minimum score of 6.
  - ALIRA (ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment) with a minimum score of I-4.
  - AP (Advanced Placement) with a minimum score of 4.
  - IB (International Baccalaureate) with a minimum score of 5 (Higher Level) or 6 (Standard Level).
  - American Sign Language assessments:
    - ASLPI (American Sign Language Proficiency Interview) with a minimum score of 3+; OR
    - SLPI (Sign Language Proficiency Interview) with a minimum score of Advanced Plus.
  - DELE (Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera) with a minimum score of B1.
  - DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue Française) with a minimum score of B1.

For more information about the approved assessments, please visit the [Maryland Seal of Biliteracy website](#).

**5. Who determines the eligibility of a student to receive a Seal of Biliteracy?**

Local school systems will be responsible for verifying the documentation submitted by students.

**6. Can a student earn high school credits with a Seal of Biliteracy?**

No. The Seal of Biliteracy is not tied to high school credits and is not awarded based on course completion requirements.

**7. How do I apply for a Seal of Biliteracy?**

- a. Review the guidelines and requirements for the Seal of Biliteracy.
- b. Consult with the Seal of Biliteracy contact at your high school to obtain information about the approved language assessment that would be most appropriate for you.
- c. If your score qualifies for a Seal of Biliteracy, complete the Seal of Biliteracy application.
- d. Submit the application with a copy of the assessment score report to the Seal of Biliteracy contact at your school or school district.

**8. Do all school systems award the Seal of Biliteracy?**

No, this program is voluntary. However, if a school system participates in the program; all schools in that system must participate.

**9. What is the cost of the Seal of Biliteracy?**

No fee is charged to students to apply for a Seal of Biliteracy. However, students are responsible for any assessment costs not covered by their school or school system.

**10. Does the Seal of Biliteracy apply to American Sign Language (ASL)?**

Yes. American Sign Language is recognized as a world language.

**11. Can a student qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy in multiple languages in addition to English?**

Yes. The requirements must be met for each language.

**12. Students who use AP (Advanced Placement) or IB (International Baccalaureate) exam scores during their senior year to qualify for a Seal of Biliteracy will not receive their results until after graduation. Will they be eligible to receive a seal after graduation?**

Yes, the seal may be awarded after graduation. A school system may choose to recognize these students as “candidates for the Maryland Seal of Biliteracy” during graduation ceremonies, and/or hold a special ceremony at a later time to honor the Seal of Biliteracy recipients.

**13. Are students in nonpublic schools in Maryland eligible for a Seal of Biliteracy?**

No. At this time, the Seal of Biliteracy Bill designates public high school students only. However, any public school student who also attends a language school outside of their regular school day is eligible to apply for a Seal of Biliteracy in that language. **What if a student wishes to apply for a Seal of Biliteracy in a language that is not available in any of the approved assessments?**

The student’s Seal of Biliteracy contact at the school should contact the Maryland State Department of Education as soon as possible. MSDE will work with testing agencies and

professional language organizations to obtain a comparable assessment that meets the Intermediate High proficiency requirements. The student will then be responsible for making arrangements for taking the assessment and providing acceptable evidence to his/her school system.

**14. Where can I find more information?**

- a. Contact your world language teacher or school counselor to find out if your school system is participating in the program.
- b. Visit the [Maryland State Department of Education Seal of Biliteracy website](#).