

Michigan Seal of Biliteracy



Celebrating Michigan's Cultural and Linguistic Capital

Updated May 2024

For questions or further information about the Seal of Biliteracy, visit www.michigan.gov/mde or contact:

Kelly Alvarez at AlvarezK@michigan.gov or (517) 241-5392

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	4
Alignment to Michigan’s Top 10 Strategic Education Plan	4
PURPOSE AND RATIONALE.....	4
Value of Learning and Maintaining World Languages and Cultures.....	4
Michigan’s Global Competitiveness	5
Articulation Between PreK-12 and Higher Education.....	5
Career Readiness.....	5
PATHWAYS TO BILITERACY	5
Points of Entry.....	5
Academic Coursework	6
Heritage and Home Language Acquisition	6
Heritage Language Maintenance.....	6
Summary	6
CRITERIA FOR GRANTING THE SEAL OF BILITERACY	6
Determining Eligibility	6
Approved Assessments for Demonstrating Proficiency	7
Commercial Assessments that Assess Only Two or Three Domains (e.g. STAMP WS, STAMP 3S).....	7
Foreign Transcripts and Other Formal Documentation	7
Languages that Use Fewer than Four Domains/Skills.....	7
Timeline for Testing Language Proficiency	8
Assessment completed in 8th grade	8
Assessment completed in 9th Grade	8
Assessment completed in 10 th Grade	5
ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF ASSESSMENT	9
Overview	9
Recommended Guidelines	9
Summary	9
APPLICATION PROCESS	9
Student Application	9
Michigan Seal of Biliteracy Application.....	9
MDE’s Role.....	10
OUTREACH STRATEGIES.....	10
Michigan Department of Education	10
District and Schools	10

ISDs as Michigan Seal of Biliteracy Liaisons	11
Professional Organizations and Associations.....	12
Language Communities	12
AWARD DESIGN	13
AWARD PRESENTATION PROCESS.....	13
Venues.....	13
Honors Convocations.....	13
Awards.....	14
Communications	14
REFERENCES	14
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES.....	14
APPENDIX A.....	16
Professional Organizations and Associations.....	16
APPENDIX B.....	17
NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements	17
APPENDIX C.....	19
Alternative Process for Assessment - MI Seal of Biliteracy.....	19
Verification of the Alternative Process for Assessment	24
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	25

Document Updates

August 2019: "Criteria for Granting the Seal" was updated to remove the portfolio and replace it with the MDE Alternative Process for Assessment for Languages without an Approved Commercial Assessment. For languages where a commercial assessment is available, the commercial assessment must be used unless the administration fee exceeds \$200. Assessments that assess only expressive domains (speaking and writing), must be supplemented with the MDE Alternative Process for Assessment. Additionally, a section was added to clarify ways of working with languages that use less than four language domains/skills. "Alternative Method of Assessment" was updated to include the newly created MDE Alternative Process for Assessment for languages without an approved commercial assessment.

December 2022: Included assessments that test the two expressive domains when a four-domain assessment is not available.

May 2024: Included a 12-month flexibility timeline to allow students to apply for the Seal beyond graduation.

INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Seal of Biliteracy is an award presented to students who have demonstrated proficiency in English and at least one other world language by high school graduation. Our Michigan schools and learning institutions promote world languages, English language development, and heritage language maintenance.

As other states have recognized, the language skills of students who complete extended sequences of world language study as well as those whose native language is other than English, increase their marketability in the workplace and are a valuable economic resource to the state. More than 95% of the world's consumers and 80% of the world's purchasing power are outside the United States. Currently, 1.2 million Michigan jobs are tied to international trade (Business Roundtable, 2015). It is imperative for students to develop language proficiency in English and other languages so that our state remains competitive in the global marketplace. In addition to career advantages, students who learn more than one language gain numerous cognitive benefits, including improvements in executive functioning, working memory, attention span, flexibility, and creative thinking (Bialystok, 2007).

Additionally, the Seal of Biliteracy recognizes the rich cultural and linguistic diversity that exists in our state. Michigan is home to residents who come from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Our Great Lakes State's history proudly includes a vast number of Native American cultures and immigrants from all over the world. Our state is home to many ethnic communities dedicated to maintaining their cultural identities and celebrating their contributions. We are host to many newcomers who contribute to our society in many ways.

Alignment to Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan

Michigan is one of 50 states and Washington D.C, that awards a state Seal of Biliteracy (as of March 2024). In Michigan's journey to improving educational outcomes for all students, awarding the Seal of Biliteracy aligns to the goals and strategies of this endeavor.

This policy has been developed with each of the eight goals in mind. The goals are referenced below to demonstrate the alignment of the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy with the state's Top 10 Strategic Education plan.

Aligns with Top 10 Strategic Education Plan goals:

4. *Expand secondary learning opportunities for all students*
5. *Increase the percentage of all students who graduate from high school*
6. *Increase the percentage of adults with a post-secondary credential*

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

Value of Learning and Maintaining World Languages and Cultures

Developing language proficiency and cultural competence strengthens intergroup relationships, affirms the value of diversity, and honors the multiple cultures and languages of a community. Michigan's adoption of a Seal of Biliteracy sets a standard and expectation for our students who clearly value learning world languages as well as maintaining native and heritage languages and cultures in our schools, homes, and communities.

The numerous cognitive and social benefits for students learning more than one language are well documented and include improvements in executive functioning, working memory,

attention span, flexibility, creative thinking, greater intercultural awareness, and open-mindedness (Davin & Heineke, 2017).

Michigan’s Global Competitiveness

Globalization is a relatively new term although the concept is thousands of years in the making (Stone, 2005). According to Stone, in today’s society “the pace of the exchange of ideas, peoples, and goods is greatly increased; modern technology makes the communication of ideas almost instantaneous; and there are few places on the globe to which the average person cannot travel with 24 hours.” Despite modern technologies, having the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately continues to be paramount.

Customers in 207 countries buy Michigan-made goods and services, and foreign-owned companies employ over 200,000 workers in Michigan (Business Roundtable, 2015). Although English is widely used in international trade, the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with colleagues and trade partners who speak other languages is crucial for Michigan’s competitiveness and economic growth.

Articulation Between PreK-12 and Higher Education

College readiness refers not only to successful completion of coursework, but also to the recognition and acceptance of skills and knowledge gained beyond the classroom. The Michigan Seal of Biliteracy honors language proficiency regardless of where or how it is acquired.

The Michigan Seal of Biliteracy establishes criteria to inform and facilitate placement decisions in language courses at postsecondary institutions. In addition, the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy has the potential to play the same role as the granting of credit for dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate courses.

Career Readiness

In a recent survey of U.S. employers, 66% reported valuing foreign language skills in the hiring process, and 41% reported giving preference to multilingual job candidates (Damari et al., 2017). In Michigan, international trade-related jobs grew 17% from 2004 to 2014 while total employment declined 1% (Business Roundtable, 2015). There is also a growing need for bilingual employees across a wide range of occupations, regardless of educational requirements or salary (New American Economy, 2017). The Michigan Seal of Biliteracy serves as an endorsement to employers that a high school graduate enters the workforce with highly desirable skills in more than one language.

PATHWAYS TO BILITERACY

Points of Entry

Bilingual or multilingual students are an asset to the nation, and their ability to use multiple languages is a skill that should be encouraged and recognized. The unique language abilities and cultural competencies of these students enhance the quality of our workforce as a society, providing a contribution to commerce and enrichment of the job market.

Throughout a child’s educational journey, there are multiple opportunities to pursue dual or multiple language proficiency. The Seal is not designed to dictate a specific course of study or point of entry, but rather to honor diverse pathways to achieve biliteracy, promote active

engagement in pursuing it, and ultimately recognize that achievement. The following provides a brief description of various pathways to biliteracy.

Academic Coursework

The most familiar method of learning a world language or acquiring English as an additional language is through PreK-12 academic coursework. Bilingual and immersion programs, Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate language and literature courses, dual enrollment in community college/university courses, traditional world language classes, study abroad and exchange programs, and academic coursework through homeschooling are all viable means for attaining proficiency in a world language.

Heritage and Home Language Acquisition

Many students in the United States are raised in a bilingual or multilingual environment and/or in homes in which a language other than English is spoken. Known as heritage language speakers, these students acquire language through the experience of interacting with family members, friends, and neighbors. Heritage language speakers possess skills necessary for our national security and prosperity. These students are an essential component of our multilingual or multicultural society.

Heritage Language Maintenance

Deliberate efforts to maintain the heritage or native language are prevalent within many culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities.

Encouragement to participate in activities where the heritage language is used, such as multimedia, community organizations, ethnic or cultural marketplaces, can be very beneficial to society. Recognizing the value of maintaining the heritage language sustains important direct cultural ties to students' respective families and communities. These efforts to preserve the heritage language must be in place as students become more immersed in English as the dominant language.

Summary

The Michigan Seal of Biliteracy provides multiple pathways for students to achieve the Seal by honoring, encouraging, and recognizing that students may already have achieved high levels of proficiency in English and one or more languages and may earn the Seal of Biliteracy through a demonstration of proficiency. The efforts to maintain languages and to enhance the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing will enable students to achieve the necessary proficiency to obtain the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy in support of future educational and career opportunities.

CRITERIA FOR GRANTING THE SEAL OF BILITERACY

Determining Eligibility

The Michigan Seal of Biliteracy has been designed to be awarded to high school graduates or the equivalent. The Seal may be awarded to any student receiving a high school diploma, a high school certificate of completion or a high school equivalency certificate who meets the requirements stated below for English and a Language Other than English.

Approved Assessments for Demonstrating Proficiency

Demonstrating Proficiency in English: All recipients of the Seal must demonstrate proficiency in English through the successful completion of the Michigan high school curriculum requirements.

Demonstrating Proficiency in a Language Other than English: Approved assessments used to provide evidence of world language proficiency in any language must meet the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) criteria of Intermediate High or equivalent. A list of approved commercial assessments can be found [on the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy website](#).

Commercial Assessments that Assess Fewer Than Four Domains

Some commercial assessments do not assess all four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, writing). Some assess the productive domains (speaking and writing) of language but do not assess both receptive domains (reading and listening). In the absence of an approved four-domain assessment, a one-domain, a two-domain, or three-domain assessment may be used if it is on the approved commercial assessment list. However, if a four-domain assessment aligned to ACTFL proficiency levels is developed and approved for the language, the four-domain assessment must be used.

NOTE: For languages that do not utilize all four domains (e.g. the speaking domain for Latin), it is not necessary to assess the nonexistent domains.

The current list of approved assessments can be found on the [MDE Seal of Biliteracy webpage](#).

Foreign Transcripts and Other Formal Documentation

Students transferring from other countries may demonstrate the required proficiency level (Intermediate High) by providing official transcripts/documentation from a school abroad, showing at least one year in which the language used for instruction was a language other than English. The transcripts/documentation must demonstrate the equivalent of Grade 6 or beyond. When an official transcript is not available, districts should use discretion in accepting other official documentation such as report cards, certificates of completion, or documents of attendance. Should the district have concerns regarding the required proficiency level of the student, the MDE recommends that districts consider implementing either an approved commercial assessment or, in lieu of an exam, the Alternative Process for Assessment found in Appendix C of the Seal of Biliteracy Policy.

Note: Transcripts from schools abroad where English is the primary language of instruction do not qualify for the Seal transcript option. Students from these schools may be eligible for the Seal through the approved assessment process.

Languages that Use Fewer than Four Domains/Skills

When proficiency must be determined for languages that use fewer than four language domains/skills, only the language domains/skills that are used with regard to that language will be assessed. The Seal is eligible to be awarded in these languages if the proficiency of Intermediate High has been achieved based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for the language domains/skills tested. Some examples of these languages include American Sign Language, Hmong, Sylheti, Anishinaabemowin, and Latin.

Timeline for Testing Language Proficiency

Traditional Timeline

The expectation is that language proficiency assessments accurately reflect ACTFL Intermediate High proficiency at the time of graduation. For the purpose of awarding the Seal, the Michigan Department of Education recommends that a student’s proficiency be tested beginning in his/her second semester of the junior year through the end of the first semester of the senior year. Note that students tested in their senior year may not receive test results until the summer of their graduating year. As a result, the Seal will be awarded retroactively following graduation.

12-Month Flexibility Timeline

If a student has earned a high school diploma, a high school certificate of completion, or a high school equivalency certificate, but has not earned the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy in the year of their graduation, they may still apply within 12 months after graduating, providing that the student has demonstrated Intermediate High proficiency on an approved commercial assessment.

Other Alternative Timelines

The expectation is that language proficiency assessments accurately reflect ACTFL Intermediate High proficiency at the time of graduation. Students who have documented proficiency at the Intermediate High level before their junior year, such as students in dual immersion programs, transitional bilingual programs, community-based language programs, and students beginning language study in grades K-8, may utilize one of the following timelines. Any formal assessment completed before 8th grade cannot be used to qualify for the Seal.

Assessment completed in 8th grade

Number of additional years of language study after assessment	3 years of continued enrollment	2 years enrollment	1-year enrollment or Less
Required documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcript or equivalent official documentation (certificate of completion, letter from language school director, etc...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcript • Alternative Process for Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassess

Assessment completed in 9th Grade

Number of additional years of language study after assessment	2 years enrollment	1-year enrollment or Less
Required documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcript 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassess

Assessment completed in 10th Grade

Number of additional years of language study after assessment	1-year enrollment	Less than 1-year enrollment
Required documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcript 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassess

ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Overview

For languages without available assessments or in circumstances where test administration is cost prohibitive, students must still demonstrate Intermediate High proficiency in all skills that are applicable. The determination of applicable skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) must be clearly documented through the MDE approved Alternative Process for Assessment. Assessments should be aligned with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Intermediate High or equivalent.

Recommended Guidelines

The Michigan Department of Education recommends adherence to the guidelines under the Alternative Process for Assessment found online, and in Appendix D of this document.

Summary

The purpose of the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy is to serve as an equitable and authentic means to certify attainment of biliteracy for students, employers, and universities. It is crucial for districts to honor this goal by adhering to high standards and rigorous criteria to establish and maintain a credible pathway to obtain this prestigious award.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Student Application

Students who intend to apply for the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy must begin the process at their own school or district. Districts are highly encouraged to develop a simple application process that may include the following components:

- orientation meeting for students and parents
- on-track for graduation check
- language check or language inventory
 - language or languages to be tested
 - tentative testing dates or method to demonstrate proficiency

Once the district has determined the application process, a communication plan should be designed and implemented to ensure equity for all students and parents.

Michigan Seal of Biliteracy Application

The application process will use the Michigan Department of Education portal found on the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy [website](#). Public schools, private schools, community-based language programs, and individuals will be able to log in or create a login to submit student applications. The application process requires basic information about the requesting entity, student name, language, type of assessment used, and the acknowledgement of all assurances. These assurances are required and serve as verification that the student has met the minimum requirements of Intermediate High. The assurances are also in lieu of collecting student data (scores, names of assessments) as verification. The application may be submitted by anyone at the entity. Once identified, the individual may begin the application process immediately. An option to upload multiple students at once is also available.

MDE's Role

Once student applications have been submitted, the state administrator will access each application and either accept or reject the application. Rejection of an application typically occurs when there are duplicate submissions, or the application is missing required information. Once accepted, the system will automatically generate a link to the following:

- The official MDE Letter of Certification
- The official MDE Pre-Populated Certificate

MDE will mail a gold foil seal with the official embossed Michigan Seal of Biliteracy. The seal could be placed on the certificate, the diploma (if space allows) or on the provided letter.

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Key to promoting the importance our state's cultural and linguistic capital is the coordination with institutions of higher education and workforce partners. Equally important to promoting this opportunity is providing parents and students with appropriate and timely information about the Seal. This section is designed to provide guidance for developing effective outreach strategies that will reach all stakeholders.

Michigan Department of Education

The Michigan Department of Education provides resources such as a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document, a promotional video, a PowerPoint presentation, information posters and brochures in multiple languages, a quarterly newsletter, as well as additional strategies.

Michigan Department of Education Outreach

MDE continues to host multiple public forums with Michigan stakeholders including professional organizations, special interest groups, ISD and LEA representatives, and families to introduce the Seal and provide details on how students may earn it.

MDE created a webpage to host information on the Seal and provide access to necessary resources for districts to apply for the Seal on behalf of their students. Students, parents, and districts have access to up-to-date information on acceptable assessments and criteria for measuring biliteracy.

District and Schools

The most direct way to share information about Michigan's Seal of Biliteracy is through district and/or school venues. Because parents and students are directly connected to their schools and districts, information about the Seal can be easily obtained. Outreach strategies could begin with a campaign of distributing information through school counselors, teachers, and other school affiliates such as PTAs and PTOs. Use school event venues such as career day, language day, curriculum night, parents' orientation, and any other gathering that parents and students usually attend.

Districts and schools might develop a plan for sharing information on the Seal on the district and individual school websites. Dedicated web pages can serve to explain the purpose and process for attaining the Seal of Biliteracy, along with any highlights and former recipients. Finally, tap into the social media platforms by creating a page on Facebook or other popular social media apps.

Districts and schools can be proactive by developing a communication plan to announce the Seal. Media outreach to local or regional newspapers, local TV stations, and local radio stations can serve as a way to inform not only parents but the community at large. If available, district cable channels could publicize the Seal of Biliteracy. Press releases, in-person interviews, and panel discussions are all options when working with your local media sources.

Many districts and/or individual schools require regular communication to the home. Consider creating a pamphlet or using promotional materials located on the MI-SoBL website along with publicizing other special events such as high school orientation.

Review the following list of ways to conduct effective outreach in your district, school, and community:

- Teachers, schools, and districts can work with community agencies to promote the Seal.
- Host an annual Seal of Biliteracy orientation workshop or meeting to educate the parents and students on the process to receive the Seal.
- Host a student competition to develop the most unique and catchy slogan or logo. Use the winning slogan or logo on district websites, school letterhead, in email signature lines. For example, in its marketing efforts, the State of Illinois adopted the hashtag “#2bilit2quit.”
- Invite Seal of Biliteracy alumni back to their schools as ambassadors. These alumni could speak in assemblies, language classrooms, and school, district, and/or public venues and events.
- Utilize school courses such as media classes or project-based learning to develop short vignettes or documentaries about students who are on their journey to receive the Seal or who have already been awarded it. Use these short informational videos to highlight the benefits of the Seal.
- Locate the nearest universities to determine if they celebrate a University World Language Day. Seek out a partnership that will assist in your outreach efforts. Additionally, many districts currently celebrate world language week. Explore how your district might institute this practice and develop strategies for sharing information on the Seal.

Districts that include language immersion and/or bilingual schools or programs most often begin the language learning process in the early grades. These schools have a unique advantage in exposing students and parents to the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy. It is highly recommended that parents be informed about the Seal when enrolling their child in the immersion or bilingual school or program. Refer to the [K-8 Trifold Brochure](#) found on the MI-SoBL website

ISDs as Michigan Seal of Biliteracy Liaisons

To begin the outreach process, ISDs should consider identifying a representative/liaison to support LEAs to implement and troubleshoot the process. ISDs could create a common timeline to support local districts to reach out to, identify, assess, and award students that are eligible for the Seal. Finally, the ISD representative/liaison should consider attending the online webinar meetings to share and receive accurate and timely information about the Seal.

Other outreach ideas may include:

- hosting a Seal of Biliteracy day or week. Oakland Schools has hosted a Seal of Biliteracy Studio Day for teachers and administrators and a Seal of Biliteracy Bootcamp for students.
- using existing resources and tools. ISDs can feature recorded webinars on their website on both the ESL/Title III and World Languages pages.
- creating a recurring meeting for local districts to refine their systems around outreach, identification, assessment, and awards for students.

Professional Organizations and Associations

Professional organizations are encouraged to share information on the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy with their members through their existing means of communication, conferences, and other events. This may include providing pertinent information, links, and resources via email, on organization websites, social media and in publications; hosting sessions, workshops, and exhibits on the Seal at conferences or meetings; hosting webinars, chats, and tutorials; publicizing the Seal through press releases and other outreach to media; recognizing students connected to the organization who receive the Seal; recognizing efforts to promote the Seal by members and/or affiliates.

Organizations and associations are also encouraged to collaborate in order to leverage their outreach efforts. The Massachusetts Language Opportunity Coalition (see Electronic Resources) provides a model for inter-organizational collaboration in order to promote language learning opportunities such as the Seal of Biliteracy.

Language Communities

Michigan is the home of numerous language communities which serve as rich and diverse resources. Community leaders are encouraged to promote the Seal of Biliteracy. These languages are valuable to our communities, businesses, and educational institutions.

Language communities have ties to groups such as elders, churches, religious organizations, recreational centers, and cultural celebrations which can help promote the Seal. It is possible to seek out the language teachers in the community and introduce them to the Seal of Biliteracy.

Native American Communities

Michigan is home to 12 Federally Recognized Tribes, as well as other American Indian/Alaska Native and First Nations citizens. A primary channel for disseminating and promoting the Seal of Biliteracy can begin with, but not be limited to, the Inter-tribal Council of Michigan.

Collaboration and communication with education coordinators and directors of the respective tribes will be a valuable asset to reaching any and all of our students. Some communities, schools and/or districts may have Native American Advisors who are able to reach students not affiliated with recognized tribes of Michigan and are encouraged to promote and share the Seal of Biliteracy pathway. Community colleges and universities that teach Native American languages may also be important resource contacts. See Appendix A for contact information.

AWARD DESIGN

Each Michigan Seal of Biliteracy is awarded in the form of an official letter, official prepopulated certificate, and one gold foil seal. Once the application has been submitted and approved, the district representative should return to the same link where the application was submitted in order to print the certificate and letter of acknowledgment. Generally, the gold foil seal will be mailed out within one to two weeks of approval **to the address associated with the account**. The Michigan Seal of Biliteracy may be placed on the diploma or transcript. The approved language for the transcript is "Michigan Seal of Biliteracy Awardee – (name of language other than English)" A sample of the official Michigan Seal of Biliteracy certificate is pictured below:



AWARD PRESENTATION PROCESS

Demonstrating proficiency in English and one or more world languages is a worthy accomplishment. Students who earn the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy should be recognized and celebrated by their peers, teachers, families, communities, and the state. This section provides recommendations on how districts and individual schools might present and publicize the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy.

Venues

Presentation of the Seal may be conducted in a school or district ceremony. There are a number of existing forums for schools and districts to consider.

Honors Convocations

Consider using a general honors convocation already occurring in departments and programs as a starting point. A special honors convocation only for the Seal of Biliteracy could be designed and/or interwoven within existing structures. Additionally, consider developing specific or concurrent honors convocations and induction ceremonies for world languages. Invite local and state government officials, civic leaders, corporate representatives, local business owners, school board members, and press/media representatives to highlight the awarding of the Seal.

Board Meetings

Local school board meetings can provide an excellent venue to celebrate students' biliteracy accomplishments. Consider presenting the Seal to students at a board meeting.

Recognizing students at local school board meetings is particularly beneficial for students who have experienced delayed test results that arrived after graduation.

Awards

Districts and schools should consider providing students who earn the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy with a physical award in addition to the foil seal (see Award Design section) to celebrate their accomplishment. Awards may be presented or highlighted at the ceremonies described above. The additional awards could include items such as digital or printed certificates, cords, patches, sashes, medals, ribbons, or mortarboard tassels to be worn at graduation or awards ceremonies.

Communications

It is recommended that information about students who receive the Seal of Biliteracy be announced by local district/schools and tribal partners. Districts, schools, and tribal partners may recognize the Seal of Biliteracy achievement by promoting awardees on local school websites and through social media, local cable networks, tribal and local press releases, the Chambers of Commerce, foundations working with diverse communities, at award and honorary receptions and meetings of local boards of education.

REFERENCES

Business Roundtable (2015). [*How Michigan's economy benefits from international trade and investment.*](#)

Damari, R.R., Rivers, W.P., Brecht, R.D., Gardner, P., Pulupa, C., & Robinson, J. (2017). The demand for multilingual human capital in the U.S. labor market. *Foreign Language Annals*, 50(1), 13-37.

Davin, K.J., & Heineke, A.J. (2017). The seal of biliteracy: variations in policy and outcomes. *Foreign Language Annals*.

New American Economy (2017). [*Not lost in translation: the growing importance of foreign language skills in the U.S. job market.*](#)

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

[National Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy](#)

[Seal of Biliteracy](#) – Californians Together and Velázquez Press

[American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages](#) (ACTFL)

[ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012](#)

[ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners](#)

[Massachusetts Language Opportunity Coalition](#)

[Webinar, Massachusetts](#)

[Language Testing International](#)

Professional Organizations and Associations

Inter-tribal Council of Michigan

2956 Ashmun Street, Suite A

Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan 49783 Phone: 906.632.6896

Fax: 906.632.1810

<http://www.itcmi.org/>

Michigan Association of Bilingual Education

<http://www.mabemi.net/>

Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

<http://www.mitesol.org/>

Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals

1001 Centennial Way, Suite 100

Lansing, Michigan 48917

Phone: (517) 327-5315

Fax: (517) 327-5360

<http://mymassp.com/>

Michigan Association of School Boards

1001 Centennial Way, Suite 400

Lansing, Michigan 48917-8249

Phone: (517) 327-5900

<http://www.masb.org/>

Michigan Coalition for Refugee and Immigrant Rights

<http://www.mcirr.org/>

Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association

1980 N College Rd.

Mason, MI 48854

Phone: (517) 694-8955

Fax: (517) 694-8945

<https://memspa.org/>

Michigan School Counselor Association

15260 Club Course Dr

Bath, MI 48808

Phone: (517) 719-7801

<http://www.michiganschoolcounselor.org/>

Michigan World Language Association

<http://miwla.org/>

General Education Leadership Network

1001 Centennial Way, Suite 300

Lansing, MI 48917

Phone: (517) 327-5910

<http://www.gomaisa.org/organizations/general-education-leadership-network-geln/>

APPENDIX B

NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements

The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements identified in this section should be used to design an appropriate assessment that will meet the **Intermediate High Proficiency**. The Can-Do statements incorporate the national language standards as well as the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Designing an assessment is only recommended in the absence of an appropriate commercial assessment.

INTERPRETIVE COMMUNICATION INTERMEDIATE HIGH

Proficiency Benchmark

I can understand the main idea and some pieces of information on familiar topics from sentences and series of connected sentences within texts that are spoken, written, or signed.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

*What can I understand, interpret or analyze in authentic **informational texts**?*

I can usually follow the main message in various time frames in straightforward, and sometimes descriptive, paragraph-length informational texts.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

*What can I understand, interpret or analyze in authentic **fictional texts**?*

I can usually follow the main story and actions expressed in various time frames in paragraph-length fictional texts.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

*What can I understand, interpret or analyze in **conversations and discussions**?*

I can usually understand the main idea and flow of events expressed in various time frames in conversations and discussions.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION INTERMEDIATE HIGH

Proficiency Benchmark

I can participate in spontaneous spoken, written, or signed conversations on familiar topics, creating sentences and series of sentences to ask and answer a variety of questions.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

*How can I **exchange information and ideas** in conversations?*

I can exchange information in conversations and some discussions on a variety of familiar and some concrete topics that I have researched, using connected sentences that may combine to form paragraphs and asking a variety of questions, often across various time frames.

How do I **meet my needs or address situations** in conversations?

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

I can interact with others to meet my needs in a variety of situations, sometimes involving a complication, using connected sentences that may combine to form paragraphs and asking a variety of questions, often across various time frames.

How can I **express, react to, and support preferences and opinions** in conversations?

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

I can explain preferences, opinions, and emotions and provide advice on a variety of familiar and some concrete topics that I have researched, using connected sentences that may combine to form paragraphs and asking a variety of questions, often across various time frames.

**PRESENTATIONAL COMMUNICATION
INTERMEDIATE HIGH**

Proficiency Benchmark

I can communicate information, make presentations, and express my thoughts about familiar topics, using sentences and series of connected sentences through spoken, written, or signed language.

How can I present information to **narrate about my life, experience, and events**?

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

I can tell stories about school and community events and personal experiences, using a few short paragraphs, often across various time frames.

How can I present information to **give a preference, opinion or persuasive argument**?

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

I can state my viewpoint on familiar or research topics and provide reasons to support it, using a few short paragraphs, often across various time frames.

How can I present information to **inform, describe, or explain**?

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

I can give detailed presentations on a variety of familiar topics and some concrete topics I have researched, using a few short paragraphs, often across various times

APPENDIX C

Alternative Process for Assessment - MI Seal of Biliteracy

Currently, there are NO commercial language proficiency exams available to assess the level of language proficiency in many languages such as Sylheti or Maltese. As a result, this Alternative Process for Assessment has been developed for students who are speakers of less-commonly taught languages.

Reminder: If an [approved commercial assessment](#) is currently available, this Alternative Process for Assessment cannot be used. Districts should explore additional funding sources such as Title IV and community partners.

Exception: When the cost of an approved commercial assessment is prohibitive, such as an exam that may cost more than \$200 per assessment, consult the MDE (MDE-EL@Michigan.gov) to request an exception for approval to use the Alternative Process for Assessment.

Process to Verify Language Proficiency in Languages OTHER than English

Districts/schools must receive approval in order to implement the Alternative Process for Assessment. The verification form (found at the end of this document) must be completed and submitted to the MDE at MDE-EL@Michigan.gov at least one month before the date of the assessment. This form is used to identify the committee members and the materials that will be used. The student outcome section can be filled in after students have been assessed; it is not necessary to complete that section upon requesting approval.

It is recommended that a districtwide/school Seal of Biliteracy Committee be developed within each school district or school. This Committee is responsible for the verification of language proficiency for the applicants to the MI Seal of Biliteracy and for ensuring that the individual student applicants for the Seal have at least an Intermediate High proficiency level based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Languages that utilize fewer than four domains, such as Latin, ASL, and Sylheti, will only be assessed in the domains that they use. If a commercial assessment is available for less than four domains, supplement it with an appropriate approved commercial assessment or use the Alternative Process for Assessment for the missing domains.

In the case where the Alternative Process for Assessment is required, the committee must include a formally trained language speaker and writer of the language who has an understanding of and/or experience using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and/or Performance Descriptors for assessment purposes. In order to find a formally trained speaker/writer of the less commonly taught language it is recommended that the district/school reach out to colleges and universities, tribal language departments, embassies or consulates, or professional language schools. In the event that a formally trained language speaker who is also familiar with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and/or Performance Descriptors is unable to be identified, an interpreter or translator may be used to assist the Committee in completing the Alternative Process for Assessment and/or interpreting the language used on the assessment. The interpreter's role is simply to interpret for the Committee, which must include at least one person that has experience using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and/or Performance Descriptors for assessment purposes.

The Committee is responsible for the following:

1. Implementation of the Alternative Process for Assessment for listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing when applicable.
 - a. Listening/Reading
 - i. Select authentic, age appropriate resources to verify the language proficiency required to earn the Seal in listening and reading. Such authentic materials are generally available on the Internet, through YouTube, and on social media.
 - ii. Create test items to assess these materials.
 - iii. The formally trained speaker or an interpreter/translator may assist with the selection of materials and the creation of test items.
 - b. Speaking
 - i. Create speaking tasks that verify Intermediate High proficiency which is required to earn the Seal in speaking.
 - ii. The formally trained speaker or an interpreter/translator may assist in the interpretation of the oral responses.
 - c. Writing
 - i. Create writing tasks that verify Intermediate High proficiency which is required to earn the Seal in writing.
 - ii. The formally trained speaker or an interpreter/translator may assist in the interpretation of the written response.
2. Archive the assessment tasks as well as the applicant responses to ensure confidentiality and validity of the assessment.

The following prompts are appropriate examples for speaking OR writing tasks at the Intermediate High Level. To create your own assessment tasks, consult the NCSSFL/ACTFL Can-Do Statements.

- Describe a famous person that you admire and/or consider to be a positive role model. Provide supporting details as to why you admire this person.
- Explain what your goals are after you complete high school and what you want to achieve in life (college, work, professional and/or personal life.) Indicate how you plan to overcome the challenges that you may face.
- Describe a recent purchase including what you bought, where you bought it, why you bought it, and how much you paid. Provide as much detail as possible.

Recognition: This document has been adapted from the Detroit Public Schools Community District's Alternative Assessment Process.

2024 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines Intermediate Level

SPEAKING

INTERMEDIATE

Speakers at the Intermediate level are distinguished by their ability to use language creatively, that is, to recombine rehearsed or formulaic material in order to manage transactional and straightforward social situations. They can participate in conversations on familiar topics, ask and answer simple questions, and can handle straightforward survival situations. They produce sentence-level language, ranging from discrete sentences to short strings of sentences, typically in present time, and they are able to formulate simple questions. Speakers at the Intermediate level have a growing but limited vocabulary of high frequency items. Intermediate-level speech

may be influenced by the pronunciation, stress, intonation, and tone (in tonal languages) patterns of other languages that individuals know, but they can apply strategies for recognizing and repairing any resulting miscommunication.

Intermediate High

Speakers at the Intermediate High sublevel are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with routine tasks and social situations that require an exchange of basic information related to their work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence. The breadth of their vocabulary and language control reduces the need for pauses and reformulations when they speak on such topics. The influence of other languages that they know may be evident in their articulation, stress, and intonation patterns, but rarely interferes with successful communication. At the Intermediate High sublevel, speakers can handle a substantial number of tasks associated with the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance of all of these tasks all of the time. They often can narrate and describe in all major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length. When they do so, their speech exhibits one or more features of breakdown, such as inability to fully carry out narration or description in the appropriate major time frame, difficulty maintaining paragraph-length discourse, or a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary.

WRITING

INTERMEDIATE

Writers at the Intermediate level have the ability to meet practical writing needs, such as simple messages and letters, requests for information, and notes. In addition, they can ask and respond to simple questions in writing. These writers can create with the language and communicate simple facts and ideas in a series of loosely connected sentences on topics of personal interest and social needs. They write primarily in present time. At this level, writers use basic vocabulary and structures to express meaning. Intermediate Low Writers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to meet some limited practical writing needs. They can create statements and formulate questions based on familiar material. Most writing consists of short, simple sentences that recombine learned vocabulary and structures using basic word order, present tense, and conversational style. Topics are tied to highly predictable content areas and personal information. Vocabulary is adequate to express elementary needs. There may be basic errors in grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling, and the formation and use of non-alphabetic symbols.

Intermediate High

Writers at the Intermediate High sublevel are able to meet all practical writing needs of the Intermediate level, including routine transactional tasks and social situations that require an exchange of basic information related to work, school, recreation, individual interests, and areas of competence. The breadth of their vocabulary and language control is sufficient to ensure successful communication. Additionally, these writers can demonstrate an Advanced-level ability to write paragraph-length compositions and simple summaries related to work and/or school experiences but cannot do this all of the time. They can narrate and describe in different time

frames when writing about everyday events and situations, but their writing exhibits some challenges in structure or vocabulary use when they do so.

LISTENING

INTERMEDIATE

At the Intermediate level, individuals can understand speech that conveys basic information on highly familiar or everyday topics such as meals, time, directions, simple transactions, and personal information. This speech is simple, minimally connected, and contains high-frequency vocabulary. Individuals at this level are generally able to comprehend one utterance at a time while engaged in face-to-face conversations or in routine listening tasks such as understanding highly contextualized messages, straightforward announcements, and simple instructions and directions. They may be able to distinguish some sounds and tones (in tonal languages) that differ from those characteristic of languages they already know, and to recognize levels of formality in simple phrases and expressions. Individuals at the Intermediate level are most accurate in their comprehension when obtaining meaning from simple, straightforward speech. They require a controlled listening environment where they hear what they may expect to hear. They rely on redundancy, restatement, paraphrasing, and contextual clues, and use factors other than the oral message itself, such as gestures, visual supports, and familiarity with the situation or context, to facilitate listening comprehension.

Intermediate High

At the Intermediate High sublevel, individuals are able to understand, with ease and confidence, simple sentence-length speech in basic personal and social contexts. They can derive substantial meaning from some connected passages typically understood by listeners at the Advanced level. However, there often will be gaps in understanding due to limited knowledge of the vocabulary and structures of the spoken language.

READING

INTERMEDIATE

At the Intermediate level, individuals can understand information conveyed in simple, predictable texts. Readers rely heavily on contextual clues. They can most easily understand information if the format of the text is familiar, such as in a weather report or a social announcement. Readers at the Intermediate level are able to understand texts that convey basic information such as that found in announcements, notices, and online collaborative tools and forums. These texts are not complex and have a predictable pattern of presentation. The discourse is minimally connected and primarily organized in individual sentences and strings of sentences containing mostly high-frequency vocabulary. At this level, readers are most accurate when obtaining meaning from simple, straightforward texts. They are able to understand messages found in highly familiar, everyday contexts. At this level, readers may not fully understand texts that are detailed or texts in which knowledge of language structures is essential in order to understand sequencing, time frame, and chronology.

Intermediate High

At the Intermediate High sublevel, readers are able to understand, fully and with ease, short, non-complex texts that convey basic information and deal with personal and social topics to which the reader brings personal interest or knowledge. These readers are also able to understand some connected texts featuring description and narration as readers at the Advanced level do, although there will be occasional gaps in understanding due to a limited knowledge of the vocabulary, structures, and writing conventions of the language.

Verification of the Alternative Process for Assessment

School District/Private School: _____

Biliteracy Seal Committee Lead Name: _____

Language OTHER than English: _____

Date: _____

MI Seal of Biliteracy Committee Members:

	Name	Position
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Name of Interpreter:

	Name of Seal of Biliteracy Applicant	ID #	Meets Requirements for the Seal (WRITING) YES - NO	Meets Requirements for the Seal (READING) YES - NO	Meets Requirements for the Seal (LISTENING & SPEAKING) YES - NO	The APPLICANT can APPLY FOR THE SEAL YES - NO
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Michigan Department of Education would like to thank and acknowledge individuals who assisted in the initial collaborative development of this policy at the MDE.

Under the Supervision of

Linda Forward, Director, Office of Education Improvement and Innovation

Project Lead

Dr. LaWanna Shelton, Education Consultant, Michigan Department of Education

Project Support

Beatrice Barajas-Mills, Analyst, Office of Education Improvement and Innovation

Graphic Design

Christi Lopez, Graphic Arts Designer, Office of Education Improvement and Innovation

MDE Workgroup Members

Kelly Alvarez, English Learner Consultant, Office of Field Services

Dr. Gregg Dionne, Supervisor, Office of Education Improvement and Innovation

Dr. Sean Kottke, Education Consultant, Office of Professional Preparation Services

External Workgroup Members

Lini Athavale, Marathi Shala, Ann Arbor Marathi Mandal (A2MM)

Viviana Bonafede, World Languages Supervisor and Teacher,
Detroit Public Schools Community District

Melissa Dalton, Teacher, Lake Orion Community Schools, Michigan World Language Teacher of the Year, Central States Teacher of the Year, ACTFL Teacher of the Year Finalist

Dr. Christina P. DeNicolo, Associate Professor of Bilingual and Bicultural Education,
Wayne State University

Dr. Julie Foss, Associate Professor, Dept. of Modern Foreign Languages, Saginaw Valley State University/Michigan World Language Association

Dr. Chris Gordon, Cultural Coordinator/Instructor, JKL Bahweting Anishinaabe PSA

Dr. Nabila Hammami, Teacher/World Language Chair, Dearborn Public Schools

Dr. Wafa Hassan, Director, Arabic Language and Culture, Global Ed. Excellence

Sergio Keck, Director, Special Populations, Lansing Public Schools

Margarita Chavez-Franco, Teacher, Edsel Ford High School, Dearborn Public Schools

Dr. Anne Nerez, Director, K-12 World Language Teacher Certification, Eastern Michigan University

Marzanna Owinski, The Polish Mission, Polish Language Instructor, Polish Community

Dr. Emily Spinelli, Executive Director, American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese

Patrick Stecco, Spanish and Mandarin Immersion Education, Forest Hills Public Schools

Suzanne Toohey, EL/Bilingual Consultant, District and School Services, Oakland Schools ISD

Irma R. Torres, World Languages Consultant, District and School Services, Oakland Schools ISD

Dr. Michael Vrooman, Associate Professor, Dept. of Modern Languages & Literatures, GVSU

Office of the Superintendent

Brian Whiston, Superintendent of Public Education

Sheila Alles, Chief Deputy Superintendent