

ALABAMA SEAL OF BILITERACY

Overview and Guidelines for Public Schools





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PART I: ABOUT THE ALABAMA SEAL OF BILITERACY

Overview

On April 1, 2022, the State of Alabama signed into law [Alabama Act #2022-200](#), which recognizes graduates who have demonstrated English proficiency and intermediate-mid proficiency or better in one other world language, including American Sign Language. This designation, reported on a student's high school transcript, helps employers and universities identify candidates who are bilingual, possess 21st century skills, and value learning other languages and cultures. The Alabama Seal of Biliteracy highlights the significance of bilingualism for better communication and economic growth, as well as, cultural understanding to strengthen intergroup relationships.

Students enrolled in a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) or world language course may apply for the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy in school districts with an approved board plan. This opportunity is available to native heritage speakers, students engaged in self-study of their own language, and those participating in a community-based language program.

Purpose

The Alabama Seal of Biliteracy is based on solid research highlighting the advantages of mastering two or more languages. The Alabama Seal acknowledges and communicates the value of the nation's diversity in language assets and recognizes the linguistic resources students develop in homes, communities, and through a range of educational experiences. It encourages language learners to maintain and improve their first or heritage language while also acquiring proficiency in additional languages.

In summary, the purpose and benefits of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy include:

- To encourage students to study multiple languages
- To certify attainment of biliteracy at the minimum of intermediate-mid level proficiency
- To provide employers with a method of identifying individuals proficient in language and biliteracy skills
- To provide institutions of higher education with a method to recognize and give academic credit to applicants seeking admission
- To prepare students with 21st century skills
- To recognize and promote world language instruction in Alabama schools
- To strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures of a community

Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Criteria

To earn the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy a student must fulfill the following:

1. Complete the Alabama high school graduation requirements.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in one of the approved English language assessment options.
3. Demonstrate proficiency in one of the approved world languages assessments, or through a Portfolio Assessment when applicable.



Language Proficiency Requirements

The following information outlines approved assessments for English proficiency, world languages, and pathways to approve languages with unique characteristics. To meet the minimum requirements, one option must be met for English proficiency and one option must be met for a world language, Latin, or American Sign Language.

A school district may request approval from ALSDE to substitute an equivalent assessment in place of those listed in the World Languages Assessment Options Table. Email ALSB@alsde.edu for assistance.

English Proficiency Assessment Options Table

Name of Assessment	Common Acronym	Minimum Score	Notes
ACT [®] English	ACT	18	
ACT [®] Reading	ACT	20	
Advanced Placement [®]	AP	3	
International Baccalaureate [®]	IB	5	
WIDA ACCESS for ELLs	WIDA ACCESS	4.8	Maintain exit criteria in English proficiency
ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages	AAPPL	Intermediate Mid 3	For non-native English speakers



World Languages Assessment Options Table (also view Appendix A)

Name of Assessment	Common Acronym	Minimum Score	Notes
Advanced Placement®	AP	3	
International Baccalaureate®	IB	4	
ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages	AAPPL	Intermediate Mid 3	All four components
Common European Framework of Reference	CEFR	Level B1	
Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency 4S	STAMP 4S	Intermediate Mid	
ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages Oral Interview and Writing Proficiency Test	OPI/WPT	Intermediate Mid 3 Intermediate Mid 3	Must pass both
School district may request an equivalent language assessment.	NA	Contact the ALSDE at ALSB@alsde.edu	
Portfolio Assessment	Portfolio	Must have ALSDE pre-approval. Refer to Portfolio Assessment on page 6.	

Latin and American Sign Language Assessment Options Table

Name of Assessment	Common Acronym	Minimum Score	Notes
ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment	ALIRA	Intermediate Mid 3	
Sign Language Proficiency Interview	SLPI: ASL	Intermediate Plus	
American Sign Language Interview	ASPLI	Level 3	



Languages With Unique Characteristics

Due to the unique characteristics of certain languages, special allowances may be necessary. In cases where language assessments across all three modes of communication are not available, a school district may substitute a different assessment or use a portfolio assessment that equally aligns with the goals of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy. As discussed on the sealofbiliteracy.org website, “Students seeking a seal through languages not characterized by the use of listening, speaking, reading, or for which there is not a writing system, will then demonstrate the expected level of proficiency on an assessment of the modalities that characterize communication in that language.”

Examples include:

- American Sign Language (ASL) – recommend assessment of interpersonal signed exchange, presentational signing, and demonstrating understanding of ASL and use of the ASPLI assessment.
- Native American Languages – recommend assessment of interpersonal face-to-face communication as well as interpretive listening, presentational speaking, and writing and reading where a written code exists. This may be documented through a portfolio assessment process if a standardized assessment does not exist.
- Classical Greek – recommend assessment of interpretive reading and presentational writing, not of listening or interpersonal face-to-face communication. This may be documented through a portfolio assessment if a standardized assessment does not exist.

Portfolio Assessment (example in Appendix E)

A student may demonstrate an intermediate-mid level of language proficiency in a world language by using the portfolio process as an alternative method to collect and document evidence for language proficiency.

A portfolio assessment may be considered when:

- ✓ There is not a standardized examination to assess the language.
- ✓ The school district Alabama Seal of Biliteracy committee determines the portfolio is necessary due to a student’s disability. Documentation of the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) shall be provided to the Alabama State Department of Education.

The portfolio assessment must include the following items:

1. The school district Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Committee will convene, with input from the student, parents or guardians, and other district personnel to identify a language expert who is proficient in the applicable domains of the language to be assessed. This expert should be able to review and assess student’s proficiency in all available language domains.
2. The school district Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Committee will ensure that the portfolio assessment includes expressive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and speaking) aspects of the language.
3. A portfolio rubric will be established to assess all available language domains. The school district Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Committee may use the rubric provided in Appendix E, or a similar rubric may be adopted by the LEA.
4. The language expert will review the evidence submitted by the student and meets with the student to assess the domains and certify that the student’s evidence meets the minimum intermediate-mid proficiency level.



5. The language expert will record and sign the evaluation to indicate the student demonstrated language proficiency that meets the minimum intermediate-mid proficiency criteria.
6. The language expert will provide a summary to the school district Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Committee about the student's performance and evidence of language proficiency.
7. Each school district Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Committee and supervising administrator will determine the method to maintain the records and documentation for the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy with the original signatures.



PART II: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Implementation Requirements

As a first step, the school district or school entity must develop an Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Implementation Plan. The following items are provided to assist with planning:

1. Establish a school district Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Committee. This committee should include a variety of educators including counselors, administrators, EL and world language teachers, parents, and community members.
2. Draft a local Alabama Seal of Biliteracy plan that adheres to the guidance set forth in this document. The plan should include a purpose, rationale, funding sources, timeline for implementation, and how it will be communicated and promoted to engage student participation.
3. Submit the proposal plan for school board approval. Email approved plan to ALSB@alsde.edu
4. Establish procedures for implementation. Items to include but not limited to:
 - a. Define roles and responsibilities of the school district Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Committee.
 - b. Meet ALSDE communication and documentation requirements for approval of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy designation in PowerSchool and release of the seal image.
 - c. Establish and communicate the student application process.
 - d. Implement a communication plan to disseminate information about the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy to students and stakeholders.
 - e. Establish procedures for purchasing necessary assessments.
 - f. Prepare test schedule and identify students that may require testing accommodations. Consider students with an IEP, 504 plan, and I-ELP.
 - g. Decide how the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy will be presented and celebrated.
 - h. When needed, establish a portfolio assessment and scoring guidelines.
 - i. Conduct an annual review of the program to improve pathways, ensure equity, and create preparatory programs in the lower grades when possible.

Additional Considerations

[Alabama Act #2022-200](#) does not require schools to offer the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy nor does it provide financial support or incentives for offering the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy program. “It is the intent of the Legislature that no fee be charged to a student to participate in the State Seal of Biliteracy.” Participating school districts must equitably offer this program to all students and should consider providing the program at no cost to students who apply. Potential costs may include testing fees, contractual time of school-based committee members, awards, communicating the qualification and award process to students, parents, and the community, and other costs. LEAs are encouraged to seek out grants, local support, and other funding opportunities to implement and maintain the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy activities, testing fees, and materials.

Have a clear communication plan. How will students and families know about the opportunity to apply for the State Seal? Do you have a student application process?

Local communication and recruitment plans may vary; however, it is recommended that students in grades 7 and 8 are informed of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy and the requirements for earning the State Seal by high school graduation. See Appendix B for a notification form example.



The Alabama Seal of Biliteracy image is to be used by permission only. Use of the image for labels, awards, seal emblem, transcripts, and other forms of communication are limited to the approval of the ALSDE.

Annual Procedures and Communication Requirements

Once an approved school district plan is submitted to ALSDE, the school district Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Committee must follow annual procedures to award The Alabama Seal of Biliteracy, post the State Seal to the student’s transcript, and to use the Alabama State Seal of Biliteracy image for the recognition or award ceremony.

To initiate and communicate intention to award the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy, complete the digital form and assurances to <https://forms.office.com/r/hwhgmXi9eN>





Implementation Time Frame

To assist with meeting procedural and communication requirements, please refer to the time frame provided. Please note that procedures and time frame are subject to changes as we improve the implementation process. This document will be reviewed annually.



Implementation Time Frame

TIME	SUBMISSION ITEM	
As soon as possible.	<p>Submit a copy of your board approved plan to the official Alabama Seal of Biliteracy email. This is required one time. Resubmit when changes are made to the approved plan. Contact ALSB@alsde.edu if you have any questions or need assistance.</p> <p>Alabama Seal of Biliteracy email: ALSB@alsde.edu</p>	
<p>Fall Semester</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>ALSDE District Participation Form at https://forms.office.com/r/hwhgmXi9eN</p> <p>ALSDE monitors State Seal data collection and communication throughout the year.</p> <p>There is no penalty or consequence if you do not award the Seal to any students by the end of the school year.</p>	
<p>Winter and Spring Semesters</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>1) ALSDE Summary Report. These are candidate names scheduled to receive the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy for the current school year.</p> <p>Submit the following information via survey link at https://forms.office.com/r/31dyKzcnLG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of school district • Name and email of school district contact • List of student names, world languages, and their high school • If known, provide the date, time, and location of the award presentation. <p>2) Complete the following steps to meet documentation expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm English and world language requirements are met and recorded to the appropriate dashboard in PowerSchool. • Add the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy designation in PowerSchool. • Provide the contact information for the printing company that will produce the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy memorabilia (medals, certificates, other). • Send an announcement letter to the student recipient. See Appendix D for an example. • Invite Alabama State Department of Education staff to the award ceremony. 	

****ALSDE has the right to deny the award of the Alabama State Seal of Biliteracy if all requirements are not met or reported in accordance with the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines.*



APPENDIX A: WORLD LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS AND MINIMUM SCORES

Assessment	Minimum Score
AP – Advanced Placement Examination	3
AAPPL – The ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages	3
IB – International Baccalaureate	4
OPI – American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Oral Proficiency Interview	Intermediate-mid
WPT – American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Writing Proficiency Test	Intermediate-mid
STAMP 4S – Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency	Intermediate-mid
ALIRA – American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment	Intermediate-mid Level 3
ASLPI - American Sign Language Proficiency Interview	Level 3
SLPI: ASL – Sign Language Proficiency Interview	Intermediate Plus
CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference	B1
A school district may request approval from ALSDE to substitute an equivalent assessment that meets the intended criteria described in Alabama Act #2022-200. Email ALSB@alsde.edu	Intermediate-mid Level 3
Indigenous Languages – Native American tribal leaders may certify that a student is proficient in the respective language using their own methods and processes for determining proficiency in their language. Students may also utilize the alternative portfolio for verification of biliteracy.	Intermediate



APPENDIX B / GRADES SEVEN AND EIGHT NOTIFICATION EXAMPLE

This form may be used to assist seventh and eighth grade students in notifying the school that they wish to pursue the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy.

Grades Seven and Eight
Student Notification of Interest in the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy

Student Name: _____

School Name: _____

Expected Year of Graduation: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Email/Phone: _____

Please Initial each statement and sign at the bottom of the form and return to: _____

___ We have been notified of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy and the requirement for earning this designation.

___ My child would like to pursue coursework and other requirements to work towards attaining the seal upon high school graduation.

Languages of interest are:

Student Signature / Date

Parent Signature / Date



APPENDIX C / STUDENT APPLICATION EXAMPLE

Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Student Application			
<p>Directions to Applicants: Please complete all sections of the application. Submit application and documentation of qualifying scores to your school counselor at your high school no later than _____</p>			
<p>Name _____ Date _____</p> <p>Current Grade Level _____ Expected Year of Graduation _____</p> <p>School Counselor Name _____</p> <p>Recommending Teacher Name _____</p>			
Assessment Information			
Language	Name of Assessment	Date Completed	Score
English			
Other Language:			
Other Language:			
<p>Attach a copy of the score report. Please note that some exams do not give results until after June. Students and advisors need to plan accordingly.</p>			
For School Counselor Use Only			
<p>Qualifications checklist for an Alabama Seal of Biliteracy:</p>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete all high school graduation requirements; and		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meet any one of the defined English Proficiency Criteria Options; and		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meet any one of the defined World Language Proficiency Criteria Options.		
<p>Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Awarded</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>		<p>If No, reason:</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>School Counselor Signature / Date</p>		<p>_____</p> <p>Recommending Teacher Signature / Date</p>	



APPENDIX D / SCHOOL LETTER EXAMPLE

Date

Dear Recipient:

Congratulations! You have been awarded the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy.

You have received this designation based on your demonstration of high levels of proficiency in both English and at least one other world language.

On April 1, 2022, the Alabama legislature signed into law [Alabama Act 2022-200](#) establishing an Alabama Seal of Biliteracy for all students meeting rigorous standards and demonstrating bilingualism and biliteracy in both English and high proficiency in an additional world language, including American Sign Language.

Your transcript has been updated in our files and this achievement has been communicated to the Alabama State Department of Education.

Please be advised that this is a very rare accomplishment and one that you should consider highlighting on future applications including those for college, graduate school, and on job applications. Remember, **by earning the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy you have earned a designation that can be highlighted on your resume for a lifetime!**

You may wish to include a variation of the recommended wording below on your resume and on job applications:

“Recipient of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy verifying intermediate level biliteracy and bilingualism in both English and _____.”

Congratulations again on your achievement.

Sincerely,

High School Principal



APPENDIX E / PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

To assess the student using a portfolio, the language expert may use the following rubric or create a similar one adopted by the school district.

Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Portfolio Assessment					
Required score for earning an Alabama Seal of Biliteracy:	3.0				
Rubric Scoring Guidelines: – Student is unable to complete task. – Student completes task with many errors that make understanding difficult. – Student completes task with some errors that do not interfere with understanding. – Student completes task with few or no errors; understanding is clear at all times.					
Domain: Reading (Interpretive Reading) Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).					
A. The student can easily understand the main idea of texts related to everyday life, personal interests and studies.	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
B. The student can follow stories and descriptions about events and experiences during various time frames in history.	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
Overall Reading Score Average the scores from letters A-B	Overall Average Reading Score:				
Examples of evidence that could be included in the student's portfolio for the reading domain: The student can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand written accounts of personal events or experiences. Understand a letter describing a family experience/vacation. Understand a written description of an individual's daily life. Follow simple written directions. Understand the main idea of and a few supporting facts about famous people and historic events in a biography. Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language. 					



Domain: Writing (Presentational Writing)
Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

A. The student can write on topics related to school, work, and community in a general organized way.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
B. The student can write some simple paragraphs about events and experiences in various time frames.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes

Overall Writing Score Average the scores from letters A-B	Overall Average Writing Score:	
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The language authority should consider the student's use of grammar and vocabulary when scoring the student's writing. Examples of evidence that could be included in the student's portfolio for the writing domain:

The student can:

1. Write about school and academic topics such as writing a simple summary about something the student has learned in school.
2. Write a series of steps needed to complete a task.
3. Prepare notes for someone who was absent from class or school.
4. Write the content for a multi-media presentation, a handout, a synopsis, etc.
5. Write about work and career topics.
6. Write about community topics and events.
7. Write about an entertainment or social event.
8. Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language.

Domain: Listening/Receptive (Interpretive Listening)
Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

A. The student can easily understand the main idea in conversations and oral/signed presentations on a variety of topics related to everyday life and personal interests and studies.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
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B. The student can usually understand what they hear in conversations even when something unexpected is expressed.	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
C. The student can follow what they hear about events and experiences.	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
Overall Listening Score Average the scores from letters A-C	Overall Average Listening Score:				
<p>Examples of evidence that could be included in the student's portfolio for the listening domain: The student can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand foreign visitors about activities they have done and are planning to do while in town. 2. Understand a tour guide's description of a city's history and attractions. 3. Understand details about a nutritional recommendation in a public service health announcement. 4. Understand the services offered in a radio advertisement for an auto repair shop. 5. Understand details from public service announcements, such as severe weather warnings or safety alerts. 6. Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language. 					
Domain: Speaking (Interpersonal Speaking) Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).					
A. The student can participate with ease in conversations on familiar topics.	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
B. The student can usually talk about events and experiences at various points in their lives.	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
C. The student can usually describe people, places, and things.	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes
D. The student can handle social interactions in everyday situations, sometimes even when there is an unexpected complication.	1	2	3	4	Evaluator's Notes



Overall Speaking Score Average the scores from letters A-D	Overall Average Speaking Score:
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Examples of evidence that could be included in the student’s portfolio for the speaking domain:
The student can:

1. Ask for and provide information about a personal interest, current local/world events.
2. Ask for and provide information about a hobby or activity.
3. Ask for and provide descriptions of places that the student knows or places that the student would like to visit.
4. Talk about family history.
5. Talk about jobs and career plans.
6. Use the language needed to complete a task that requires multiple steps such as providing the basic rules of a game or sport and answer questions about them or they can ask for, follow, and give instructions for preparing food, etc.
7. Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language.

Recommended Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Award

<p style="text-align: center;">Average Overall Score</p> <p>Average the overall scores from the Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking domains.</p>	<p>Final Average Score: _____</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (0 – 2.9) Do Not Confer</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (3.0-4.0) Confer Alabama Seal of Biliteracy</p>
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