Guidelines For Implementing The Seal of Biliteracy

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After several years of implementing the Seal of Biliteracy at the state and local levels, many lessons have been learned, many questions have arisen, and many ideas have been piloted and evaluated. To share what has been learned from these experiences, seven organizations present these updated guidelines for implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy. The organizations that have partnered to present these updated guidelines are:

1. ACTFL
2. MLA (Modern Language Association)
3. NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education)
4. NAELPA (National Association of English Learner Program Administrators)
5. NCSSFL (National Council of State Supervisors for Languages)
6. SealofBiliteracy.org and Californians Together
7. TESOL International Association

The goals for presenting these guidelines are to:

1. Strengthen existing strategies for implementing the Seal of Biliteracy
2. Encourage expansion of practices at the local and state levels
3. Connect all language learning programs across institutional lines (including primary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions) to support all learners to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy, regardless of learners' native or heritage languages

The guidelines are organized around the following themes:

1. Advocacy - Purpose
2. Pathways to Biliteracy
3. Equity and Access to Opportunity to Earn the Seal of Biliteracy
4. Implementation Guidelines for State Education Agencies (SEAs)
5. Implementation Guidelines for Public School Districts
6. Implementation Guidelines for Non-Public Entities

We begin with **Advocacy** because, although the Seal of Biliteracy has spread quickly across the country since it was first introduced in California in 2011, there are still many students who do not yet have access to a State Seal of Biliteracy. We move next to **Pathways to Biliteracy** to make it clear that states, districts, and schools need to nurture and develop English and other languages and varieties starting wherever the learners are and helping learners develop both languages to higher levels of proficiency. We put a focus on **Equity and Access to Opportunity** because even though the Seal has grown in popularity, too many languages and students are still left behind. Earning the Seal of Biliteracy requires multiple years of acquisition, study, or use of a language in order to reach the target proficiency levels. Many learners do not have opportunities to nurture the languages and enroll in bilingual programs to develop biliteracy in the language they use at home and in their community. Finally, we share **Implementation Guidelines** for State Education Agencies, Public School Districts, and Non-Public Entities because they are the critical institutions typically responsible for implementing the Seal of Biliteracy.[1]

Advocacy – Purpose

WHY:

The Seal of Biliteracy is given by an educational or governmental unit to honor and recognize a language learner who has demonstrated proficiency in English and one or more other world languages. Its purpose is to encourage lifelong language learning, motivating students to develop and showcase their biliteracy in English plus at least one additional language[2]. The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes the linguistic resources that students develop in homes and communities as well as through a range of educational experiences. The Seal acknowledges and communicates the value of the nation's diversity in language assets. It encourages language learners to maintain and improve their first or heritage language while also acquiring proficiency in additional languages.

The Seal of Biliteracy builds upon strong research about the benefits of mastery of two or more languages for individual students, and the increasing awareness of the need in our communities, state, nation, and world for people with biliteracy and cross-cultural skills. It will benefit learners in the labor market and the global society while strengthening intergroup relationships and honoring the multiple cultures and languages in a community.

WHAT:

The Seal of Biliteracy is awarded based on demonstrating proficiency in at least two languages. All languages should be eligible, including sign languages such as American Sign Language. Proficiency describes what a learner can do in a specific language and is not dependent on acquiring the language through a formal course of study. The term "language learners" includes native speakers of English learning additional languages and native or heritage speakers of languages other than English adding English to their native or heritage language.

Key elements of the Seal of Biliteracy are:
- All human languages qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy
- Proficiency at a level specified by each state (or school) is to be demonstrated in two or more languages, one of which is English[3]
- Qualifying for the Seal is possible regardless of when, where, or how people learned the languages in which they are seeking to obtain the Seal of Biliteracy
- Collectively and collaboratively, educational institutions need to ensure that all learners, including English language learners, have access to high-quality programs that support the development of proficiency in English and other languages
- Community-based language programs can be integral to help their students develop learners' home, heritage, or native languages other than English to the level of proficiency needed to qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy
- Individual student initiative is encouraged to help students qualify in languages they are passionate about regardless of whether or not they have a heritage connection to that language.

HOW:

Eligible educational institutions or school districts – which may include public, private, independent, charter, community-based, or weekend schools[4] – are generally the vehicle for confirming the qualifications of learners to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy. To ensure equity of access, schools need to be proactive in promoting the Seal of Biliteracy to ALL learners and offering a variety of options for achieving and confirming the level of proficiency required in English and one or more additional languages. Schools should make a strong effort to recruit all students for the Seal of Biliteracy, regardless of their home language(s). English native speakers should be encouraged to develop proficiency in another language besides English. English learners should be encouraged to maintain and improve proficiency in their home or heritage language(s) and be provided access to high-quality English language and literacy development programs. Schools should support heritage language development with additional instruction or after-school activities, and, whenever possible, enlist the support of community members, businesses, and non-profit groups. Further, schools in partnership with state and local educational agencies should ensure that families and heritage communities are informed about the Seal of Biliteracy. Communications could be translated into the heritage languages relevant to the local community. Schools and districts should make a special effort to publicize and celebrate the achievement of language learners in their community. Such celebrations will change the culture of deficit thinking to recognize language learners – regardless of their first or second languages – are an asset to schools, communities, and the workforce.

2. Pathways to Biliteracy

WHY:

The process of measuring and documenting biliteracy needs to begin at any point when learners enter the educational system. Learners arrive with a variety of backgrounds in languages and literacies in their heritage languages as well as in English. Institutions are encouraged to set up multiple pathways to biliteracy that allow for different entry points as well as continuous development. Pathways may begin in pre-kindergarten, primary years, the secondary level, or whenever students enter the educational system, in order to produce achievement of the Seal of Biliteracy in high school. Students should then be able to continue developing high levels of biliteracy through pathways available in two- and four-year postsecondary options and in careers. The benefits of biliteracy have been demonstrated through research[5], but many of our institutions do not yet have the programs that mirror the value of biliteracy. Now the work is to build programs and learning opportunities to enable all students to attain, maintain, and continue to improve multilingual proficiency.

Preparing students for careers and participation in the 21st-century global world requires multiple pathways and varied language learning opportunities that build toward the global competency and linguistic and intercultural skills students need. Such pathways can support learners' cultural and linguistic identities, address a shortfall in needed skills in our communities and economy, and offer concrete recognition of the vibrancy and value of cultural diversity. In addition, pathways towards biliteracy help to address the opportunity gaps experienced by English learners.

WHAT:

Pathways to the Seal of Biliteracy are intended to develop learners' proficiency in two or more languages throughout the learners' educational experiences, beginning with where learners enter, charting their progress toward reaching the level required to attain the Seal of Biliteracy and continuing with further lifelong language acquisition. Pathways to biliteracy require knitting together a set of language learning options taking students from their arrival at any time in the school year, at any grade level, with varied backgrounds in two or more languages. These learning options may include: formal schooling opportunities (such as dual language programs, world language classes), after-school programs/clubs, and community-based heritage language classes.

For any school or district, building pathways to biliteracy begins with clarity about the school or district's goals and includes the development of a plan for quality implementation. A well-articulated PreK-12 Multiliteracy Pathways/Languages plan or roadmap for a district describes the various language programs that comprise a coherent set of language development opportunities PreK-12 (including community-based opportunities), as well as the supports needed for students to achieve the goal of mastery in two or more languages. It moves a district from an ad hoc approach to a coherent system of language-learning opportunities.

HOW:

Creating pathways to the Seal of Biliteracy involves the intentional planning of diverse routes to identify learners' language proficiency levels as they enter the educational institution, to develop and strengthen learners' language proficiency and literacy skills, and to chart progress toward benchmarks that lead to the level required for the Seal of Biliteracy.

Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy

Proficient biliteracy is a high standard. Research has demonstrated that it can take five to seven years of language development and the use of both languages in academic settings to achieve this level of proficiency. Along the pathway to attainment of high-level biliterate competency, there are developmental stages. These may be different for learners at different school levels and with different home language and literacy backgrounds. Particularly for English language learners, social and academic language use develop in tandem and learners may enter school at different grade levels. For young children learning a language other than English, exposure to the sounds and phrases of a new language, awareness that multiple languages exist, and experiencing how people speak and use different languages for communication are foundational understandings that build motivation to later acquire multiple languages. Language learning and development options need to take these differences into consideration and build in an articulated sequence towards linguistic and cultural proficiency that may continue beyond high school in postsecondary study and in careers.

There are key issues a school or district should consider in developing their biliteracy plans. Indicators of quality pathways programs include:

- Establishing various entry points into the continuing development of learners' language skills or the study of additional languages, including English
- Identifying additional routes to develop and acquire language proficiency, such as through community-based organizations, home and other outside support, or weekly after-school meeting times, to identify what learners can do to develop language skills to higher levels
- Building upon learners' home language skills to develop English simultaneously with the home language and continue with both languages to support and maintain biliteracy
- Tracking learners' first and second language skills to document progress along the continuum of proficiency and to identify the continuous development of language skills to the level required for the Seal of Biliteracy.
- The Seal of Biliteracy generally requires demonstration of proficiency in three modes of communication: Interpretive (understanding what is heard, read, or signed), Interpersonal (exchanging ideas, information, and opinions in conversations or discussions), and Presentational (creating a message that is spoken, written, or signed).
- Celebrating the learners' use of language or achievement of specific milestones toward the Seal of Biliteracy's level of proficiency in English and the other language(s). Local institutions may establish targets to help learners chart progress in both languages toward the proficiency level they need to demonstrate for the Seal of Biliteracy, perhaps using WIDA ACCESS levels or ACTFL Proficiency levels or skill-based language performance tasks.
- Providing long-term language study integrated with academic instruction and articulated across grade levels in order to develop students' capacity to engage in high-level academic work in two or more languages, starting as early as possible to take advantage of the optimal time for learning in two or more languages
- Considering equitable access to language learning regardless of when learners begin the process of learning additional languages
- Engaging stakeholders in the development of the language-learning plan, considering what investments are needed to support students to build to high levels of proficiency in English and the other language(s).
- Encouraging school counselors to enroll English learners in high-level English classes to be able to acquire the proficiency required for the Seal

Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy

Regardless of the specific program model, several key characteristics should be reflected across the language learning options.[6] These include:

- Integration of culture and language
- Active engagement in language production
- Development of metalinguistic awareness (understanding how language works)
- An affirming climate about language and cultural diversity
- Development of a proficiency-aligned curriculum articulated across levels
- Providing high-quality instructional resources
- Exposure to authentic, high-level and expressive language models and texts
- Using valid and appropriate assessments for placement and to monitor progress
- Age- and grade-appropriate instruction
- Instruction that is differentiated and scaffolded by proficiency level
- Integrated uses of technology
- Providing a system of professional learning and support for teachers

3. Equity and Access to Opportunity to Earn the Seal of Biliteracy

WHY:

Each state, municipality, district, or school should first specify the level of oral and written (or signed) proficiency in each language that a learner must demonstrate to achieve the seal. Once the level of proficiency required has been identified, the means to demonstrate that level of proficiency need to be established. The critical issues in identifying appropriate assessments are equity of access and parity of the types of assessments used to demonstrate competencies in either language. Requiring only formal or external assessments of proficiency may disadvantage some populations or language communities when no such assessment is available or affordable. For that reason, providing more than one option to demonstrate the required level of language proficiency contributes to equity of access to the seal. In developing assessment alternatives for the Seal of Biliteracy, access, time, rigor, and ease of implementing the proficiency evaluation process need to be carefully balanced.

Biliteracy refers to having a functional level of proficiency in each language. However, typically, the level of proficiency is not necessarily identical for both languages and is likely to be unequally distributed across domains of use. Furthermore, currently, for many states, qualifying for high school graduation qualifies you for the "English" part of the Seal of Biliteracy, but criteria for the language(s) other than English may not be equal. The criteria for the Seal should be comparable in both languages, that is, the documentation for each language in the Seal of Biliteracy needs to be equitable regardless of being a native speaker of English or a native speaker of another language.

WHAT – Evaluation of Language Proficiency:

The focus of assessing language proficiency should be on the language tasks[7] learners need to be able to perform; the tasks can be demonstrated in formal and informal language and via standard or non-standard varieties. Regardless of the pathway to get to the Seal of Biliteracy language level, the local educational entity (school or district) should identify key milestones for learners to achieve and chart learners' progress toward the required Seal of Biliteracy proficiency level, through a mix of formal or informal evidence.

The level of proficiency currently required by most states ranges from Intermediate Low to Advanced Low according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, with Intermediate Mid and Intermediate High as the most common level. Some states have established multiple levels for the seal. The actual standard is determined independently by each state (in some states, by the local municipality or school district).

It is important to share criteria and examples with learners so they can reach for the proficiency level required to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy. Assessment should provide rich information and should not be limited only to a pass/fail rating. Any assessment can help identify a learner's profile (via a formal assessment or through the evaluation of more informal language samples that are compared to proficiency descriptors). Evaluations should identify areas where learners already perform at or beyond the Seal of Biliteracy level and those that need continued development. With knowledge of the profile of how they perform in each mode of communication, learners can focus on improving areas that are below the state's minimum threshold level for the seal and then re-test to validate improvement toward the eventual achievement of the seal. Schools can help learners understand the characteristics of language at each major milestone of the journey and aim for the level required for the seal. With this knowledge, learners are better prepared to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy.

HOW:

Learners should be encouraged to document their language journey to achieving the Seal of Biliteracy and beyond. Language learners can demonstrate their level of language proficiency in a variety of ways. Providing multiple options to demonstrate language proficiency opens the Seal of Biliteracy to all learners. Options that states have in place for documenting achievement of the required level of language proficiency include:

Assessments

When an external examination of language proficiency is identified as one option, a comprehensive list of available assessments is very helpful to those issuing the Seal of Biliteracy. External assessments present advantages in terms of validity, reliability, efficiency, and resources of time and personnel. In consideration of equity and access, however, external measures may advantage some learners and disadvantage others, particularly immigrant populations whose children do not have extensive experience and preparation in the use of formal examinations. Another limitation is that external assessments may be based on a standard language variety, thus marginalizing speakers of alternative language varieties.

Alternative Measures

To ensure that all learners have access to the Seal of Biliteracy, alternative means to evaluate language proficiency may be considered. Alternative measures involve using the same descriptive criteria for the required level of proficiency and evaluating the evidence presented. Such measures need to allow for alternative varieties of language, including the characteristics associated with registers of oral language usage. Some states have set up processes to have evidence evaluated by knowledgeable individuals using clear rubrics. Some states have collaborated with outside organizations or businesses to develop assessments of languages of immigrant populations for use within their schools. Some states and districts have found that as a practical matter, using a multiple measures approach was difficult in terms of resources, and they were more comfortable with an available examination.

Access options may also include the need for alternatives to computer-based assessments when the writing system presents challenges, and writing by hand needs to be a possibility. The use of technologies in assessment should be an option rather than a requirement so as not to disadvantage less affluent districts and families.

State or districts should ensure access to the same accommodations that a learner would have in any other subject area as identified on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), such as extended time. The state or district, therefore, may need to exempt such students from a particular modality (listening, speaking, reading, or writing) putting more emphasis on the others.

Portfolios

The use of portfolios to credential language proficiency allows for a range of ways that learners may demonstrate language proficiency. The evaluation of the portfolio relies on evaluators verifying the attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy by applying the criteria for the required level of proficiency. Therefore, issues of inter-rater reliability and validity must be considered and addressed. Ideally, two or more examples might be required, including combinations of an external assessment and/or other demonstrations of proficiency. In addition, a portfolio could include evidence in all four modalities as applicable to the language (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and all three communication modes (Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational).[8]

4. Implementation Guidelines for State Education Agencies (SEAs)

WHY:
In most states, the State Education Agency (SEA) sets the criteria for the Seal of Biliteracy and the required or allowed implementation options based on directives from the state legislature or the state board of education. SEAs thus are essential to ensure the equity of access and the advocacy for inclusion of all learners in pathways to the Seal of Biliteracy. SEAs generally oversee issues related to learning and learners, including important student privacy concerns. SEAs provide a natural point of connection between learners, educational opportunities from prekindergarten through high school graduation, postsecondary institutions, policymakers, and all stakeholders (including business, communities, and parents). A designated SEA point of contact for the Seal of Biliteracy is critical for collaborating with and listening to other experts, including K-12 teachers, faculty members in two- and four-year institutions, experts on the Seal of Biliteracy in national organizations, and others. Consistency in implementation of state education policy is already the role of SEAs. Collaboration among SEAs currently exists in various arenas, so SEAs are encouraged to collaborate to establish interstate recognition of the Seal of Biliteracy.

WHAT:
SEAs provide guidance, technical assistance, advocacy, consistency in implementation, connections across and among various educational entities, formulation of policy and administrative rules, data collection, and oversight for high school graduation requirements. SEAs should create policy and establish practices to address issues of equity and advocacy to ensure the Seal of Biliteracy is available to all learners, issues of data collection, and issues of recognition of the Seal of Biliteracy by postsecondary institutions. SEAs are a logical entity for oversight and data collection related to the Seal of Biliteracy. In many areas, SEAs already have reciprocal agreements among states in place (such as for teacher certification). Thus, the precedent exists for creating reciprocal recognition of learners achieving the Seal of Biliteracy in one state being honored in another state.

HOW:
Equity and advocacy with public and non-public schools
The common goal for SEAs is to guarantee equal access for all learners to an education that prepares them for what they will need to succeed in their future learning opportunities, work, and citizenship. SEAs implement the Seal of Biliteracy by identifying the requirements for achieving and the processes for recognition of the Seal of Biliteracy. To guarantee equal access, SEAs are encouraged to identify the means of demonstrating how a learner meets the Seal of Biliteracy requirements that may be documented through any educational institution, including both public and non-public schools (independent, private, parochial, and community-based/weekend schools). Any learner should be able to present evidence of achieving the Seal of Biliteracy as outlined by the SEA, whether through assessments or other means of demonstrating the required level of language proficiency, and the SEA should allow such evidence to be recognized by the school awarding the learner's high school diploma. Currently, this option may be constrained by some states' policies or legislation.

To advocate for the Seal of Biliteracy, the recommendation is for the SEA to connect with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including business roundtables, councils on world affairs, and other business and community-based groups. SEAs serve an important role to inform members of such groups about the Seal of Biliteracy program and the qualifications of the graduates who earn them.

Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy

Recognition with Postsecondary Institutions:
SEAs should partner with the state's higher education agency to promote recognition of K-12 Seals of Biliteracy for purposes of college admission and placement into language courses and to encourage the creation of post-secondary Seals of Biliteracy. The Seal of Biliteracy should be considered a "portable" credential, since it is based on evidence of achieving a specific level of language proficiency. Therefore, SEAs are encouraged to implement interstate recognition of the Seal of Biliteracy. Helpful to this process would be an official list of state proficiency requirements to be maintained, updated regularly, and made available to the public where each state's proficiency requirements are clearly identified along with the means of demonstrating the requirements, and any other requirements or alternatives.

The Seal of Biliteracy can create a consistent and equitable system for admission and placement into postsecondary language programs or courses, honoring the skills that learners bring regardless of how these skills were developed. This is an especially important incentive for heritage or native speakers of languages other than English. Since the Seal of Biliteracy is designed to encourage lifelong language learning, it should not be used to waive existing degree requirements in languages other than English, but rather to place students into appropriate college-level courses so that they can maintain and further develop their language proficiency. Faculty members at postsecondary institutions need to ensure that the Seal of Biliteracy serves as a bridge to continued language study and application to students' majors and careers. To that end, faculty members, in collaboration with their institution's advising staff, are encouraged to create pathways for the growing number of students who enter their programs with the Seal of Biliteracy, review their curricula to ensure that they serve and appeal to recent high school graduates with proficiency in the Intermediate range or higher, and actively contribute to the development of a postsecondary credential that builds upon the Seal of Biliteracy. In order for these efforts to be successful, programs need to move beyond the traditional division of language versus literature[9], seek advice from and maintain a dialog with K-12 language teachers, and collaborate with other experts in their districts, states, and national organizations.

Based on the proficiency level comparison chart maintained and updated by SealofBiliteracy.org, the state university system and private colleges and universities can recognize the proficiency represented by learners presenting the Seal of Biliteracy from other states. This recognition could translate into meeting any requirement of high school language credits for college or university admission. The Intermediate or higher level of proficiency to earn the seal represents more than the common admissions requirement of showing two years of high school language study. This also provides a common yardstick for postsecondary institutions to award credit on a consistent basis for Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams, as states identify the proficiency level required to earn the Seal of Biliteracy based on such exam scores.

To honor the proficiency demonstrated by these learners, postsecondary institutions are encouraged to award university undergraduate credits based on the language proficiency requirement of their state. For example, if the Seal of Biliteracy can be earned by demonstrating Intermediate Mid proficiency, the university awards fewer university credits; if the Seal of Biliteracy threshold level is Intermediate High or Advanced Low, the university awards more university credits. A helpful guideline is provided by the ACTFL chart approved through collaboration with the American Council on Education: http://www2.acenet.edu/credit/?fuseaction=browse.getOrganizationDetail&FICE=300017

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Once learners' proficiency is honored by a postsecondary institution, a subsequent level of attainment for awarding a postsecondary Seal of Biliteracy will motivate learners to achieve a higher level of proficiency and thus position themselves for adding this important skill to their future career resumé.

SEA Point of Contact:
It is highly recommended that each SEA identify a point person for centralized oversight and data collection at the state level, preferably someone working at the SEA with duties related to languages, such as the SEA point person overseeing and coordinating English Language Development, bilingual education, world languages, Title III, or state assessments. If no one at the SEA has those duties, someone connected with the state's associations for educators of World Languages or English Language Learners could be identified as the SEA's point of contact for issues related to the Seal of Biliteracy. For the purpose of communicating with the general public, one person should be identified as the primary point of contact to respond to inquiries from any stakeholders in order to ensure the cohesiveness of the responses.

It is recommended that SEAs collect at least these three data points:
1. Number of students who receive the Seal of Biliteracy
2. Number of English Language Learners and former English Language Learners who receive the Seal
3. Languages for which the Seal was awarded

SEAs are encouraged to maintain these records and make the information available to educational institutions and stakeholders. It is further recommended that the SEA form a group to oversee implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy, identifying participants from various sectors. This working group should involve participants from at least two areas (e.g. World Language /Title III/Assessment) to implement and promote the state Seal of Biliteracy.

5. Implementation Guidelines for Public School Districts

WHY:

Schools or districts are encouraged to develop tools to capture linguistic diversity beyond the population of English learners. For example, the Home Language Survey can be used to identify whether students have access to languages other than English at home. Schools can then be partners with families to support additional development of language and also be proactive to continue the development of the learner's language other than English (LOTE), including collaboration with community-based programs or after-school clubs/programs. Districts should purposefully contact the business community (chamber of commerce, international business community organizations, and international companies) to seek grants, scholarships, and program funding to support outreach encouraging and supporting learners to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy as a step toward their future careers and to support local language communities.

WHAT:

It is recommended that districts implement language learning and language maintenance opportunities beyond regularly scheduled courses. Many students do not have access to instruction in their native or heritage language and would benefit from informal programs to strengthen their language other than English in order to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy. Examples include holding weekly after school or weekend programs for learners to practice using their heritage or native language other than English for discussions, reading and conducting research, and writing reports or editorials; such practice will help learners "level up" to the language proficiency level required for the Seal of Biliteracy. Such weekly sessions could be held in collaboration with local community-based organizations and weekend schools.

HOW:

As part of a Pathways to Biliteracy Plan, schools or districts should consider the creation and implementation of a retention, recruitment and professional development system that results in identifying and hiring teachers with the skills to develop and maintain first and second language proficiency, creating a teaching force that embraces a value of multiliteracy, and has the skills, commitment, and energy essential to achieve the goal of providing a 21st-century language education for all students. Schools and districts need to be mindful of the importance of building an institutional culture and involve educators across all subject areas to nurture and celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity and the pursuit of biliteracy.

Districts should put in place the point person and the process to implement the Seal of Biliteracy, including these practices:
- The Seal may be added to the high school diploma as well as displayed on a certificate or medal awarded to the student
- The Seal of Biliteracy may be awarded in venues to highlight its value, such as at graduation and any senior award ceremonies
- The Seal may be noted on the high school transcript as this is the credential that is viewed by colleges and universities and future employers

6. Implementation Guidelines for Non-Public Entities

WHY:
For many native or heritage speakers of languages other than English, their language is not taught in the school they attend. In addition, in those states that permit only public schools to issue the Seal of Biliteracy, students may be disenfranchised from achieving this recognition. Since SEAs identify the evidence that is required to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy and since the requirement is to demonstrate a specified level of proficiency in two or more languages, it should not matter whether public or non-public institutions present that evidence.

WHAT:
Some types of non-public educational entities currently are allowed to issue high school graduation diplomas. In some states, but not all, non-public educational entities are allowed to also issue the Seal of Biliteracy. Each state identifies the requirements for a high school diploma. Non-public educational institutions include formal schools (independent, private, or parochial) and more informal schools (community-based or weekend schools). Both types of institutions could also verify the evidence that a learner presents for the Seal of Biliteracy. For non-public institutions such as community or weekend schools that do not issue high school graduation diplomas, these schools could still present the evidence that a learner has met the state's requirements for the Seal of Biliteracy.

HOW:
Non-public educational entities could provide a certificate stating that the non-public school followed state guidelines and documented a learner's evidence of achieving the Seal of Biliteracy. Sample wording is: This student meets all requirements for the Seal of Biliteracy in the state of ____ by providing evidence of reaching __ (Level) through ____ (list assessment) as well as meeting the requirements for English.

It is recommended that SEAs share their state guidelines for earning the seal and related guidance, such as frequently asked questions (FAQs) with non-public schools within the state. SEAs further could identify institutions that have submitted documentation showing that they meet the same requirements even if such institutions are not permitted to issue the official state Seal of Biliteracy.

Non-public schools should be encouraged to align with state requirements and follow the same process to certify achievement of the Seal of Biliteracy. These steps are a means to promote equity and provide access to the Seal of Biliteracy to all learners, regardless of where or how they acquired the language.

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Notes:

[1] ACTFL, Californians Together, Modern Language Association, National Association for Bilingual Education, National Association of English Learner Program Administrators, National Council of State Supervisors for Languages, & TESOL International Association. (2020). Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy. Retrieved from https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/resources/SOBL_Updated_Guidelines%20_October_2020.pdf

[2] In Hawaii, Hawaiian, as an official language of the state, can substitute for English.

[3] Unless there is an additional official state language as is the case in Hawaii where learners may substitute Hawaiian for English.

[4] The institutions which are eligible to award the Seal of Biliteracy are determined by each state's policies.

[5] For research on the benefits of biliteracy, see: https://www.actfl.org/center-assessment-research-and-development/what-the-research-shows

[6] Source: http://www.laurieolsen.com/uploads/2/5/4/9/25499564/the_campaign_for_biliteracy_2014_03_21_single_pages.pdf - page 11

[7] Language tasks are well described in the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (https://www.actfl.org/resources/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements) and in the WIDA Can Do Descriptors (https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/can-do/descriptors)

[8] New York State Seal of Biliteracy Handbook, page 7 (adapted from the Buffalo Public Schools Seal of Biliteracy pilot):

> Examples of student work might include projects, problem-solving exercises, personal reflections, tests, essays, written or performed plays, videotaped interviews, PowerPoint presentations, and travel diaries. A portfolio may also include a project involving research on a topic of interest and creation of a culminating project that showcases the learner's skills, abilities, and talents in the target language. Projects may have the following components:
> - Project proposal page and a research reference page citing all sources in the target language
> - Reflective Journal in which the learner records ongoing thoughts, ideas, interactions with sources, and other useful information
> - Artifacts, Data, and Evidence, including any physical objects or artistic creations, data collected, and any visuals or presentations that are part of the project
> - Presentation to explain, defend, demonstrate knowledge, and/or demonstrate understanding and command of the topic to a panel of judges in the target language
> - Reflection Paper in the target language to summarize the process and outcomes.

[9] Modern Language Association, Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World (https://www.mla.org/Resources/Research/Surveys-Reports-and-Other-Documents/Teaching-Enrollments-and-Programs/Foreign-Languages-and-Higher-Education-New-Structures-for-a-Changed-World)