



2022

NH Seal of Biliteracy Award: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do districts have to offer the Seal if NH offers it?

The State Seal of Biliteracy program is optional to districts, schools, and students.

2. Why should a district participate in New Hampshire's Seal of Biliteracy program?

The award allows districts to acknowledge the achievements of NH's bilingual or multilingual students; having a common process and standard for all students ensures consistency across the state.

3. Who is eligible to receive the Seal?

The award is open to ALL eligible students in the district at the high school level. Eligible students should submit their application to the school or district award coordinator who will help the student determine the next steps. The award coordinator will submit a list of student awardees to the state committee. The state committee will provide the award materials and announce the school or district's awardees in official state publications (with student/family permission).

4. Can homeschool and non-public schools students receive the Seal?

Yes, absolutely! Home school students must simply fulfill all of the requirements stated above. The student or family should contact the state committee for additional support.

5. What is the cost for the Seal?

The cost for the promotional materials associated with the award program (i.e., diploma seal, award certificate, honors cord or medal) are provided by the NH Department of Education (NHDOE). The cost for English proficiency testing, SATs and ACCESS, is also paid for by NHDOE. The World Language proficiency tests are typically paid for by participating schools or districts. Districts are encouraged to use Title IV, Title III or other state, federal, and local funding to cover the fees for student applicants. If a school is unable to find funding for the testing, the NHDOE may have additional funding available to support students.

6. How do I promote the program in my district?

Schools or districts are encouraged to provide written notification about the State Seal of Biliteracy to students and families. Language are encouraged to discuss the Seal of Biliteracy with students and families.

Participating schools are also encouraged to honor award recipients during graduation ceremonies or award events. Schools can post photos or press releases of Seal of Biliteracy ceremonies and awardees on school and district websites.

7. Why do English Learners need to show competency in their nativelanguages?

All students must demonstrate intermediate high level language proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and listening in all languages for which they are applying. ELs can choose a portfolio assessment option if a formal language assessment is not available in the target or heritage language.

8. How do I know if a student should take a language test versus create a portfolio?

Generally, portfolios are used for less-frequent languages for which there are no standardized assessments.

9. How should our district begin preparations?

First, choose a test. The two most commonly used tests are: [AAPPL](#) and [STAMP](#). Most tests have online demos available. It is important to have teachers in the world language and/or ELL departments and school counselors participate in the decision making. Testing timelines, test construct, platform and technology requirements should be considered. The state committee highly recommends students also participate in a test demo to reduce test anxiety.

10. When should we test students?

It is advantageous to test seniors as early as possible so there is time for retakes as needed. At the latest, late February or early March is recommended. The state committee recommends testing of juniors in March of their junior year; that way, if they choose to retest in June or even in late September, they have time to receive their results before submitting college applications. Students who are on-track to graduate may tell colleges that they are "Seal of Biliteracy eligible." AP scores will only be useful for awarding the Seal if the enrolled students are juniors. Seniors enrolled in AP and IB courses will not have their scores in time to qualify them for the Seal, therefore, they may want to take another option during junior year. Many districts are using AAPPL or STAMP the year prior to the AP or IB to prepare students for those rigorous assessments at the end of Senior year.

11. Can a student earn the Seal of Biliteracy in more than one language?

Yes! If the student demonstrates intermediate-high or above using the external assessments listed in the NH Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines, a student can add the Seal for multiple languages. Counseling departments will be instrumental in determining how to add the Seal of Biliteracy to the transcripts denoting Seal of Biliteracy Spanish, Urdu, German, etc.

12. How will attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy benefit students with their post high school plans?

Students will be recognized at graduation with a Seal of Biliteracy diploma. It is also encouraged that you plan to recognize these students for their academic accomplishment at your schools' annual (senior) awards night prior to graduation. Published by ACTFL, this [document](#) links oral proficiency levels and language functions to corresponding professions/positions and who is likely to function at these levels. The NH Seal of Biliteracy Committee is actively engaged in ongoing conversations with professors and department chairs from the state's institutions of higher education to help them understand the value of awarding the Seal of Biliteracy using these external assessments with scoring validity.

Our goal is to build a pipeline from K-12 to post-secondary using the Seal as a way to motivate students to continue language studies, better place them in courses and award credits wherever possible. As the conversations continue, we will update members about opportunities for our students to earn credits upon sharing test scores. Please check with your specific college about accepting the Seal of Biliteracy for college credit.

13. What about elementary and middle school students who are proficient in more than one language?

During the initial implementation of the program, the award will only be available to high school seniors. It is the committee's intention to expand the award program to offer pathway level awards at the elementary and middle school levels.

14. Which language domains must be assessed?

Most languages consist of four domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Exception: languages that do not have a particular domain (e.g., Latin, Sylhet) do not need to be assessed.

15. Can students earn the Seal in American Sign Language or Latin?

Yes, both are considered World Languages.

16. If a student chooses the Portfolio option, what is required?

Please see the [Portfolio Guide](#) for more details.

17. What are the performance measures for intermediate-high language proficiency?

Please review the language standards in Appendix A: SoBL Language Proficiency Benchmarks

18. Can a student take the language assessments more than once?

Yes, there is no limit on the number of times a student can take the approved language assessments.

19. Are accommodations made available for students with IEPs or 504 plans?

Yes, any testing accommodations that are included in the student's IEP or 504 plan and approved for use on any NH statewide assessment must be provided to the student, as consistent with state policy.

20. How does the district obtain the award materials (e.g., diploma seal, award certificate, graduation cords and/or award medals).

The NHDOE, in partnership with the New Hampshire Association of World Language Teachers (NHAWLT) has set up a Seal of Biliteracy (SoBL) award boutique. Please visit the [NHAWLT website](#) for more information about ordering your award materials.

21. Are international exchange students eligible to receive the SoBL award?

Yes, if the student is graduating from a NH high school. International transcripts may be submitted in lieu of language assessments.

For additional questions or suggestions, please contact the State SoBL Committee:
NHSeal@nhawlt.org

Appendix A: Language Proficiency Standards

INTERPRETIVE COMMUNICATION - INTERMEDIATE HIGH PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK

Can do Descriptor	Performance indicators
I can understand the main idea and some pieces of information on familiar topics from sentences and a series of connected sentences within texts that are spoken, written, or signed.	
<i>What can I understand, interpret, or analyze in authentic informational texts?</i>	I can usually follow the main message in various time frames in straightforward, and sometimes descriptive, paragraph-length informational texts.
<i>What can I understand, interpret, or analyze in authentic fictional texts?</i>	I can usually follow the main story and actions expressed in various time frames in paragraph-length fictional texts.
<i>What can I understand, interpret, or analyze in conversations and discussions?</i>	I can usually understand the main idea and flow of events expressed in various time frames in conversations and discussions.

PRESENTATIONAL COMMUNICATION - INTERMEDIATE HIGH PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK

Can do Descriptor	Performance indicators
I can understand the main idea and some pieces of information on familiar topics from sentences and a series of connected sentences within texts that are spoken, written, or signed.	
<i>What can I understand, interpret, or analyze in authentic informational texts?</i>	I can usually follow the main message in various time frames in straightforward, and sometimes descriptive, paragraph-length informational texts.
<i>What can I understand, interpret, or analyze in authentic fictional texts?</i>	I can usually follow the main story and actions expressed in various time frames in paragraph-length fictional texts.
<i>What can I understand, interpret, or analyze in conversations and discussions?</i>	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

Can Do Descriptor	Performance Indicator
<p>I can participate in spontaneous spoken, written, or signed conversations on familiar topics, creating sentences and a series of sentences to ask and answer a variety of questions.</p>	
<p><i>How can I exchange information and ideas in conversations?</i></p>	<p>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</p>
	<p>combine to form paragraphs and asking a variety of questions, often across various time frames.</p>
<p><i>How do I meet my needs or address situations in conversations?</i></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><i>How can I express, react to, and support preferences and opinions in conversations?</i></p>	<p>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.</p>