

The Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy

Alternative Evidence Method Portfolio Guidance

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Overview and Introduction

1. What is the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy?

The Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school district or nonpublic school to graduating high school students who have demonstrated an Intermediate High¹ level of proficiency in English and at least one language other than English (LOTE) during Grades 9-12. The Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy program is written into Illinois School Code ([105 ILCS 5/2-3.159](#)) and is guided by [23 Illinois Administrative Code 680](#).

2. What is the portfolio?

Per 23 Ill. Adm. Code 680, students pursuing the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy may be awarded the Seal through an alternative evidence method in the following circumstances:

- i. A student attains an Intermediate Mid score, as defined in the ACTFL guidelines set forth in subsection (a)(1) or its equivalent, on an approved assessment in the targeted language; or
- ii. No standardized assessment has been approved for the targeted language; or
- iii. Evaluating the language proficiency of a student with disabilities for whom the approved assessment in its original form is inappropriate.

The alternative evidence method shall consist of a student portfolio that contains evidence demonstrating communicative equivalent to Intermediate High proficiency in the targeted language.

¹ Defined in the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) [Proficiency Guidelines 2024](#)

Portfolio Components

1. What type of evidence does a student need for the portfolio?

The portfolio shall consist of evidence of experience in the targeted language as well as work samples.

A. Experience in the targeted language:

- The extent to which the student's language background enables the student to gain communicative competence in the targeted language;
- The extent to which the student's participation in intercultural activities provided opportunities to gain communicative competence in the targeted language;
- The courses taken in the targeted language and the grades received; or
- The extent to which any time spent in countries or communities where the targeted language is used contributed to the student's opportunities to gain communicative competence in the targeted language.

B. Work samples:

- Formal presentations in the targeted language;
- Student-produced compositions, articles, papers, recordings, etc. in the targeted language; or
- Certificates, diplomas, results from tests or assessments and additional achievements that demonstrate sufficient proficiency in the targeted language.

2. Which domains of language need to be included in the portfolio?

The portfolio shall include evidence of Intermediate High proficiency for all modes that characterize communication in the targeted language.

Communicative Modes of Languages*

	Interpretive ² Reading	Interpretive Listening/Viewing	Interpersonal Speaking/Signing	Presentational Writing/Signing
Voiced & Written Languages	✓	✓	✓	✓
ASL	✓	✓	✓	
Classical Languages	✓			
Unwritten Languages		✓	✓	

* Please consult with biliteracy@isbe.net to ensure that your student's portfolio contains all the required elements for the targeted language.

² Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational modes are defined in the [World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages](#)

Roles and Responsibilities

1. What is the role of the Seal of Biliteracy coordinator?

- a) The district or nonpublic coordinator maintains knowledge of and acts in accordance with 23 Ill. Adm. Code 680.
- b) The coordinator works with the student to select a credible authority* in the targeted language to serve as the evaluator of the student portfolio. The coordinator must determine and maintain evidence that the evaluator is:
 - i) Proficient in all communicative elements of the target language.
 - ii) Able to assess students' proficiency in all communicative elements of the target language.
 - iii) Willing to cite and document credentials for potential review/confirmation.
- c) The coordinator provides the student with a method to compile and share evidence with the evaluator, ensuring that only items from the student's 9th-12th grade years are included.
- d) The coordinator facilitates any live meetings between the student and the evaluator.
- e) The coordinator provides the evaluation form to the evaluator and reviews the form when it is returned to determine if the student has demonstrated Intermediate High proficiency.
 - ✓ If all indicators on the evaluation rubric are marked **Usually** or **Always**, the student has met the competency threshold for the Seal of Biliteracy.
 - ✗ If any of the indicators on the evaluation rubric are marked Not Yet or Sometimes, the student has **not** met the competency threshold to be awarded the Seal.

** A school district, nonpublic school, or homeschool provider is responsible for evaluating or finding a credible authority to evaluate student portfolios. ISBE does not review or rate student portfolios.*

2. What is the role of the evaluator?

- a) The evaluator uses the evaluation form to assess evidence submitted by the student. Depending on the appropriate methods of communication for the targeted language, the evaluator will assess the corresponding elements of the portfolio indicators. Considering the evidence for each "Can Do," the evaluator determines if the student can:
 - i) Not yet perform that skill.
 - ii) Sometimes perform that skill (less than 50% of the time).
 - iii) Usually perform that skill (50-90% of the time).
 - iv) Always perform that skill (90-100% of the time).
- b) The evaluator returns the form to the district coordinator directly.

3. What is the student's responsibility?

- a) The student should review the evaluation rubric.
- b) The student should work with the coordinator to identify two pieces of evidence for each language indicator on the rubric. Only evidence/work samples from 9th-12th grade school years should be included.

Appendices

Appendix A: [Evaluation Rubric](#)

Appendix B: [Example Evidence](#)