

The Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy



Background, Overview, &
Considerations for Multilingual Learners

September 2024 Bilingual Program Directors Meeting

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Seal of Biliteracy Agenda



What is the Seal of Biliteracy?



How Students Qualify for the Award



Considerations for Multilingual Students



Award Trends and Data

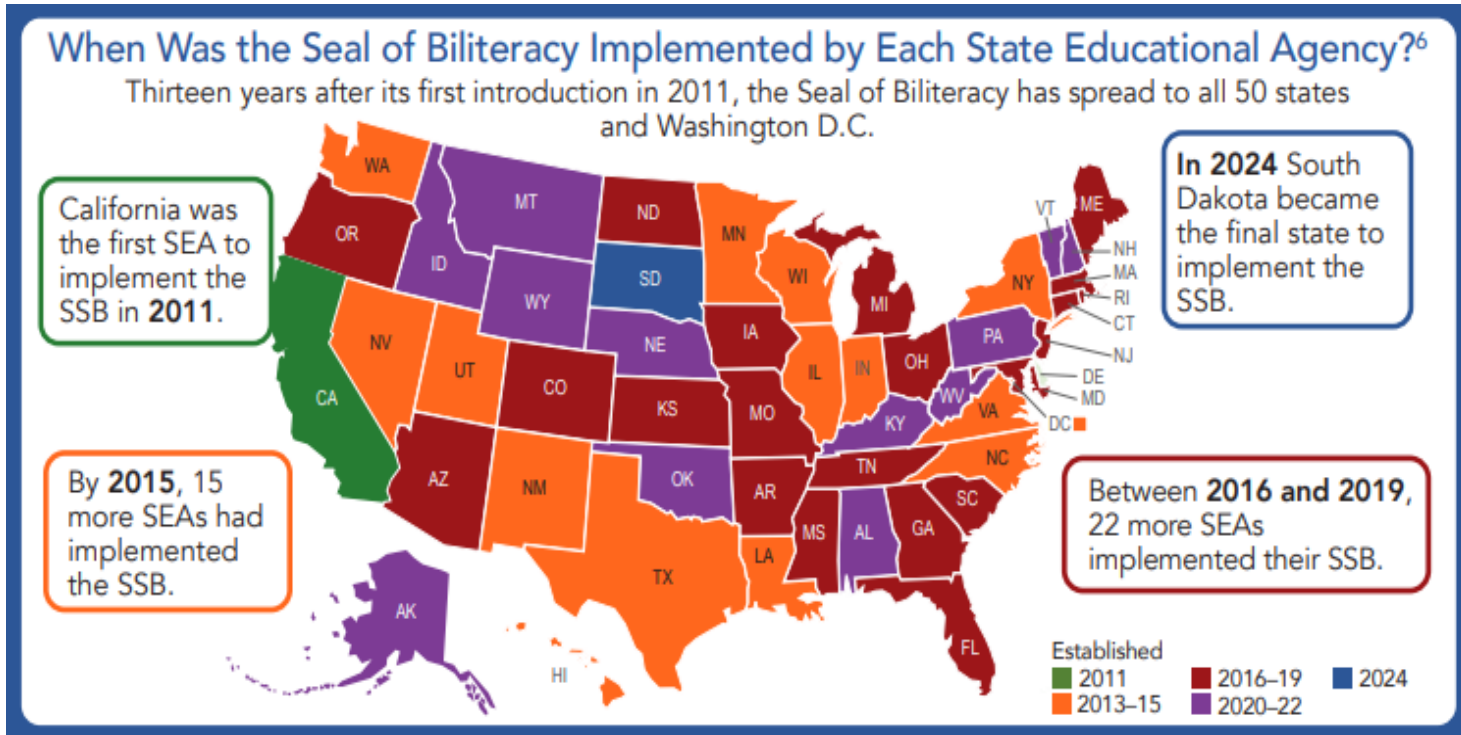


District Steps to Participate and Establish the Award



Future considerations for the Seal

What is the Seal of Biliteracy?



- **THEN:** A concept that began in California in 2011 to honor the non-English linguistic backgrounds of students (in response to “English Only” mandates)
- **NOW:** In 2024, every state in the country has its own state seal of biliteracy award program for high schoolers!
- A **graduation award** earned by students who demonstrate proficiency in English as well as at least one additional language. (*English Learners **and** Never ELs!*)
- Officially documented on a student’s high school diploma and transcript.
- The Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy equates to college credit at all public colleges and universities in the state of Illinois
 - The idea of reciprocity/credit at out of state institutions is gaining traction as state coordinators collaborate with SOBL programs.
- Each state has its own program, policy, procedures, administrative rules, etc.

Seal Recipients Earn College Credit

- School Code states that public community colleges and universities in the state of Illinois "shall establish criteria to translate a State Seal of Biliteracy into course credit."
- Entities award course credit in different ways based on criteria that they have established
- [College credit document](#) available on the ISBE State Seal of Biliteracy [webpage](#) (is updated as IHEs change their policies)

While the legislation requires that schools translate the Seal into course credit, many schools also use the Seal as a placement tool or to satisfy certain graduation requirements. It is the student's responsibility to seek these credits and approvals in a timely manner at the institution of higher education.

The following information was gathered from individual college and university websites and is subject to change as unique entities update their websites. If you encounter a broken link or incorrect information, please send an email to biliteracy@isbe.net.

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Chicago State University | A student who has received the State Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded a total of 6 credits (lower division). This is the equivalent of first semester (3 credits) and second semester (3 credits) of language study at CSU. When the seal is granted in a language not offered at Chicago State University, 6 credit hours of lower division foreign language elective will be awarded. | Published yearly in the CSU course catalog PDF |
| Eastern Illinois University | A student who has received the State Seal of Biliteracy will receive a total of 8 credits (lower division). This is the equivalent of first semester (4 credits) and second semester (4 credits) of language study at EIU. | Registrar: Biliteracy |
| Governors State University | Students who present appropriate documentation of the Seal to their advisor within three years of high school graduation will be awarded six hours of foreign language credit. | Admission Information |
| Illinois State University | Illinois State University accepts the State Seal of Biliteracy from any state as equivalent to two semesters (8 credits) of language study (LAN 111-112) in languages offered at the University. If the seal is granted in a language not offered at Illinois State University, eight credit hours of lower division foreign language will be awarded. | Office of the Registrar |
| | If you are earning a B.S. in the College of Arts and Sciences, then your language requirement is to complete a world languages class at the level of 112 or higher, or completion of Level III of one high school world language or earning the Seal of Biliteracy. | Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures |
| Northeastern Illinois University | Students who receive the State Seal of Biliteracy will receive a total of 6 credits (lower division) of language study at Northeastern. | Transfer Center |

How Students Qualify for the Seal

- Proficiency must be demonstrated as Intermediate High in both English **and** Language Other Than English (LOTE)
 - Evidence of proficiency must be from the student's 9-12 years
- A "commendation" award available for students who make progress to Intermediate Low

English Proficiency (choose one)

1. ACCESS for ELLs: 4.8 composite
2. AP English Language and Composition exam: 4
3. ELA Dual Credit: 3.0 GPA
4. STAMP 4S: Intermediate High
5. ACT: 21 composite or 20 ELA
6. AAPPL form B: I-5 (Intermediate High)
7. SAT: 480 Evidence Based Reading and Writing
8. International Baccalaureate Language

LOTE Proficiency (choose one)

1. AP Language and Culture exam: 4
2. STAMP 4S: Intermediate High
3. AAPPL form B: 1-5 (Intermediate High)
4. ACTFL OPI + LPT + WPT + RPT: Intermediate High
5. International Baccalaureate Language
6. ALTA exam: 6, 1+ (ILR)
7. NEWL: Intermediate High

A variety of language-specific exams are also approved. Please visit the [ISBE Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy webpage](#) to review a complete list of our most up-to-date approved proficiency assessments, FAQs, and information about Alternative Evidence Portfolios.

Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy:

Reminders to maintain equitable access to the award for multilingual students and/or English Learners

- An ACCESS score of 4.8 during Grades 9-12 qualifies the student for the English half of the Seal. They are halfway there! However, exiting via ACCESS is just ONE method to show English proficiency.
 - Other assessments of English are [approved](#) and may be more suitable for your EL or former EL population.
 - Even if a student exited EL status during K-8, they should still be identified as a potential earner of the Seal. This data can be shared with 9-12 buildings so that Seal coordinators can seek out students who have diverse linguistic backgrounds and offer other assessments for 9-12.
- [An assessment approval form](#) is available to request review of a language proficiency test that may not currently be on the list.
 - Many ethnic language schools use European assessments to evaluate their students. These exams have potential to be approved by ISBE as well to reduce double-testing of students.
- There is a portfolio option if an ISBE-approved assessment is not available.

More on next slide...

How do school districts identify interested students?

- Each district that chooses to participate **must** have a Seal of Biliteracy coordinator
- Identify candidates from student population:
 - Multilingual students and English Learners (ELs)
 - Students with a home language other than English who may not have been identified as ELs
 - Students who attend community-based heritage language schools
 - World language students
 - Refugees and immigrants

Equity in District Administration of the Seal of Biliteracy

If your district already offers the Seal or if you're interested in starting the program, these questions will help you maintain equitable access.

- **Does your district participate in the Seal of Biliteracy? Why or Why not?**
- **Who coordinates the program? How are candidates identified?**
 - Is the program housed at a district hub or are there school-level staff to assist students and families. (Who is involved and knows about it?)
 - Does a school counselor or administrator coordinate? A bilingual director? A world languages teacher? (Does the coordinator pull candidates from diverse programs?)
- **How is it publicized? To whom?**
 - Translating publicity materials for LEP parents.
 - Career and Technical Education programs – consider benefit of bilingual training in a career field!
 - Newsletters from counseling department, World Languages Department, BPAC ...
- **Have you considered equity in assessments?**
 - Method of demonstrating English proficiency. Does the district offer a variety of assessment options or "just the SAT because they take that anyway"?
 - Cost of assessments. Does the district cover the cost or do families? Are assessments of certain languages more expensive than others?
 - Timing of testing: Keep in mind ACCESS window. Consider offering assessments early enough in 9-12 that a student has time to retest or use a different assessment before graduation.

Funding Options: How to pay for proficiency assessments

Title IV –A:
Supplemental assessments that qualify students for the State Seal of Biliteracy are allowable under Title IV-A.

- Note: The Title IV-A grant has specific funding requirements (percentages of funding spent in three areas). The assessment would fall under Well-Rounded education area.

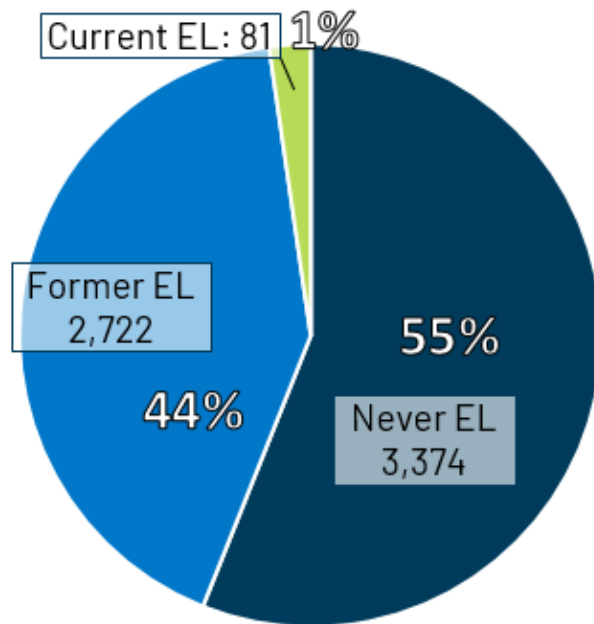
Title III: Can only be used to pay for assessments for students who are English learners at the time of assessment.

- *And **not** if the assessment is something the school purchases for all students regardless of EL status.*

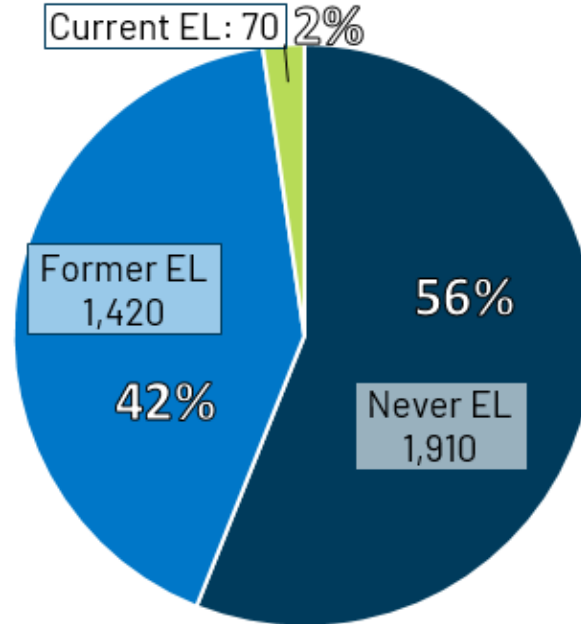
- *There is no money in the state budget to promote or implement the seal of biliteracy.*
- *It is not allowable to charge a fee for seeking the Seal.*
- *These are two federal funding options that come with some caveats*
- *Districts may choose to cover the cost of proficiency assessments **or** may require students/families to pay for the exams.*
- *Regarding equity, take note of the cost of assessments for different languages.*

Seal of Biliteracy Award Trends by EL Status

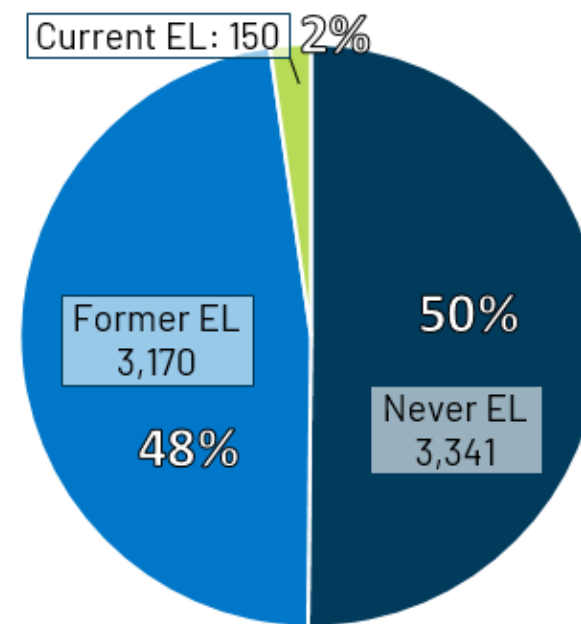
2020



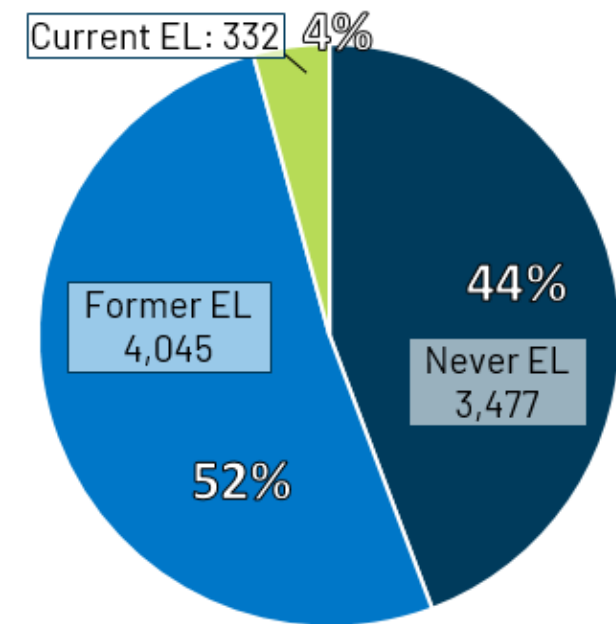
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2023

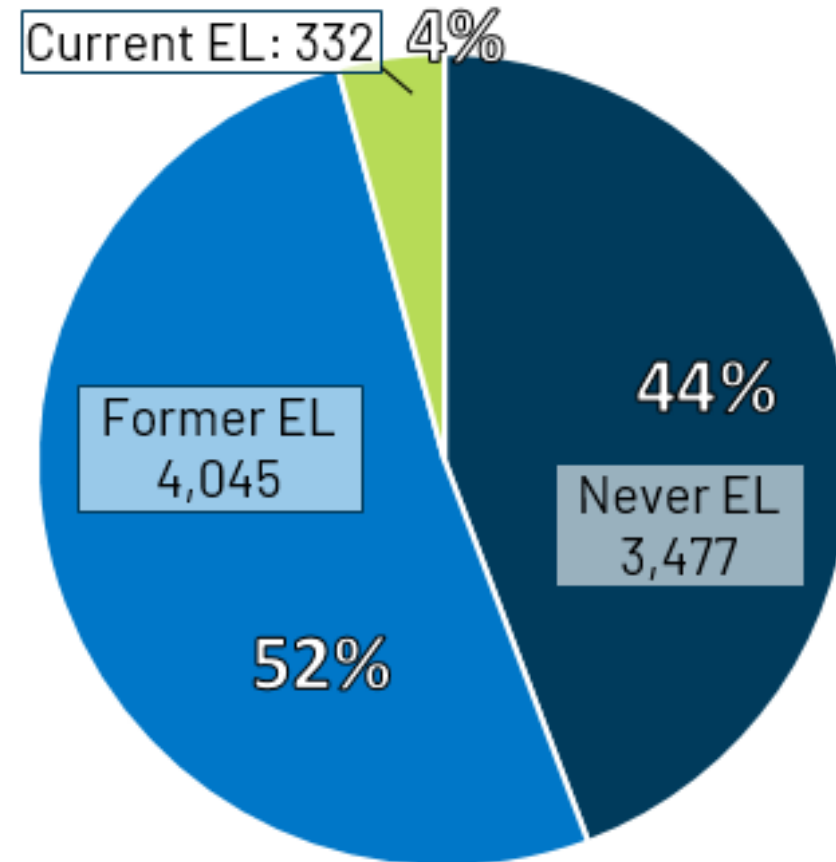


2023 Seal of Biliteracy Awards

51

Languages Awarded

- Akan (Fante/Asante/Twi)
- Albanian/Gheg(Kosovo/Macedon)
- Albanian/Tosk (Albania)
- American Sign Language
- Amharic
- Arabic
- Bengali
- Bosnian
- Bulgarian
- Burmese
- Cantonese (Chinese)
- Chin (Haka)
- Croatian
- Czech
- Danish
- Dutch/Flemish
- Farsi (Persian)
- French
- German
- Greek
- Gujarati
- Hebrew
- Hindi
- Hungarian
- Italian
- Japanese
- Kazakh
- Korean
- Latin
- Lithuanian
- Malayalam
- Mandarin (Chinese)
- Mongolian
- Panjabi (Punjabi)
- Pilipino (Tagalog)
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Russian
- Serbian
- Slovak
- Spanish
- Swedish
- Tamil
- Telugu (Telegu)
- Thai
- Ukrainian
- Urdu
- Vietnamese



Data
pulled
5/17/2023

How to Establish a Seal Program

- Designate a Seal of Biliteracy coordinator.
- ISBE application **yearly**, by October
(Applicant must have RCDT admin access.)
 - Annual training webinar required.
- Identify potential recipients
 - ELs and Former ELs
 - World Language students
 - Heritage speakers who may have never been designated EL

Do any of your students attend ethnic language schools? Check to see if those schools are already assessing students' home languages via an approved assessment. They may already have scores available!

- How will your students qualify?
 - Assessments or portfolios? Which assessments are approved/available for their languages?
- What supports to put in place.
- Timeline for annual testing.
- Publicize program.
 - Website, student handbook, newsletters, etc.
 - Other departments in your school
 - Distribute or link to one-pagers from website.
- Award the Seal
 - Diploma and transcript designation REQUIRED.
 - Anything else is allowable for celebration.
- Annual Report in SIS – Sept. 15.

Heading to College:

A student has earned the Seal of Biliteracy, now what?

- **Get a minor in the language!**
 - Example for Illinois State University:
 - "You already have 8 credit hours. If you take 16 more credit hours, you will graduate with a Spanish Minor. This means..."
- **Global Studies: Students already have the language component for a minor!**
 - Example for University of Illinois @ Champaign:
 - "You already have 8 credit hours of language study. This already fulfills the language requirement for a Global Studies minor. This means..."
- **Business, Healthcare, Hospitality Majors benefit from language!**
 - Example for Western Illinois University:
 - "You have approximately 14 credit hours already. Take 3 classes to earn a minor in the language or 21 more credits to double major in the language. This means..."

Heading to College:

A student has the Seal of Biliteracy, now what?

Become a bilingual teacher in Illinois!

Example for Northern Illinois University:

"You already have 12 credit hours. You need 33 credits to become a French teacher in Illinois. You already passed the language content test to be a Bilingual or World Language teacher because you have the Seal. You are 50% done with the language tests you need to be a teacher in Illinois! This means..."

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Consider consulting with your students and their families as part of your seal of biliteracy program.

What are their unique post-secondary plans?

How can the seal save them time or money or give them a head start based on their personal goals or plans?

Thank you

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