

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and State Seal of Biliteracy Program Coordinators

FROM: Joanne Clyde, Director of Multilingual / Language Development

DATE: September 30, 2025

SUBJECT: Qualifying ACT Score for the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy

Per Ill. Admin. Rule 680.20, students can demonstrate English proficiency for the State Seal of Biliteracy via “attainment of college and career benchmarks for English language arts on the State assessments administered at the secondary level.”

At the August Illinois State Board of Education meeting, the new, unified performance levels were approved. The Illinois State Board of Education advises districts participating in the State Seal of Biliteracy that the ACT college readiness benchmark for the ELA portion of the exam has changed to an 18 or higher.

Beginning Oct 1, 2025, any student who has not yet qualified with an ACT score will need to qualify with the ELA subject area score of 18 or above. Students who have already qualified with an 18 composite prior to Oct 1st may still be awarded the seal upon graduation. The composite score for the ACT will no longer qualify students to be awarded the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy.

The ACT with writing must be administered to calculate an ELA score. If students seeking to qualify for the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy with an ACT ELA score are taking the ACT on a national testing day, please be advised they must register for the ACT with writing in order to generate an ELA score.

This guidance is effective immediately. If you have any questions, please see the ACT procurement FAQ or go to the Seal of Biliteracy website. You may also email biliteracy@isbe.net.