

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and State Seal of Biliteracy Program Coordinators

FROM: Joanne Clyde, Director, Multilingual/Language Development Department

DATE: September 4, 2024

SUBJECT: Approved Assessments for the Seal of Biliteracy

The Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy program aims to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. Students must demonstrate proficiency in the four language domains -- reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The ALTA exam was approved as a standardized method to assess these domains, particularly for less-common languages, following a thorough review by the Multilingual/Language Development Department in 2022.

A memo was published on June 4, 2024, stating that the ALTA assessment was under review to determine whether one or more of the domains it used to evaluate were level-appropriate for high school students to demonstrate proficiency for the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy.

It has been determined that ALTA does not administer any assessment of the reading domain of a language that can be scored below a 2+, which is equivalent to an Advanced High on the [ACTFL proficiency scale](#). As such, it is not a valid assessment of the reading domain, since the Intermediate level is not documented in the official score reports. Despite these concerns, the ALTA exam remains an approved assessment method for the 2024-25 school year -- *on the condition that no other approved assessment is available for the target language*.

Continuing to allow the use of the ALTA exam is a strategic decision that upholds equity, consistency, and stability in the State Seal of Biliteracy program. The ALTA exam provides a standardized method for assessing a wide range of less-common languages, ensuring that students from diverse linguistic backgrounds have equitable opportunities to pursue the Seal of Biliteracy.

For further updates and details on approved assessments, we encourage stakeholders to visit the [ISBE Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy webpage](#) and [subscribe](#) to the Multilingual/Language Development Department newsletter.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this decision, please contact the Multilingual/Language Development Department at biliteracy@isbe.net.