1. What is the State Seal of Biliteracy?
   The State Seal of Biliteracy is a recognition given by a district/school to graduating high school students who have demonstrated a high level of proficiency in English and in reading, writing, listening and speaking in another language.

2. What is the State Commendation toward Biliteracy?
   The State Commendation toward Biliteracy is a recognition given by a district/school to graduating high school students who have demonstrated significant progress toward achieving a high level of proficiency in English and in reading, writing, listening and speaking in another language. Districts/schools may choose to award the Commendation toward Biliteracy in addition to the Seal each year, however it is not required to participate.

3. Where can I learn more about participation in this program?
   The State Seal of Biliteracy website at https://www.isbe.net/sealofbiliteracy contains information and resources, including a training module, a list of language assessments, and a program administration checklist, among other resources.

Application Process

4. How does a district notify the Illinois State Board of Education that it will offer the State Seal of Biliteracy (and Commendation toward Biliteracy, if applicable)?
   Districts must notify ISBE each year of their intent to award the State Seal of Biliteracy, and Commendation toward Biliteracy if the district chooses, by submitting an application in SIS. The Seal of Biliteracy coordinator must have access to SIS from the district superintendent to complete the application. Districts must first enter enrolled students into SIS for the application to be submitted, however entering one enrolled 11th grade student and one 12th grade student will suffice. This is due by October 1 of each year. If a district makes the decision to participate after that date, it must notify ISBE of its participation no later than 45 calendar days prior to the issuance of any State Seals or State Commendations and include in the notification evidence that the district has met all the requirements in the rules for participation.

5. How does a school notify the Illinois State Board of Education that it will offer the State Seal of Biliteracy (and Commendation toward Biliteracy, if applicable)?
   Schools must notify ISBE each year of their intent to award the State Seal of Biliteracy, and Commendation toward Biliteracy if the district chooses, by submitting an application form and an Excel template with award projections; these forms can be found under “Nonpublic
Schools Only” on the State Seal of Biliteracy’s website and are due by October 1 of each year, with the exception of the 2019-2020 school year during which the application is due by February 1, 2020. These forms must be emailed to biliteracy@isbe.net. If a school makes the decision to participate after that date, it must notify the State Board of Education of its participation no later than 45 calendar days prior to the issuance of any State Seals or State Commendations and include in the notification evidence that the school has met all the requirements in the rules for participation.

Annual End of Year Report

6. How does a district notify ISBE of the awards that were given each school year? Districts must submit to ISBE an annual report in SIS, no later than 30 days after the school year has ended, that includes information on each student that received an award and which award, the targeted world language, and methods used to demonstrate proficiency.

7. How does a school notify ISBE of the awards that were given each school year? Schools must submit to ISBE an annual report using the reporting template found under “Nonpublic Schools Only” on the State Seal of Biliteracy’s website, no later than 30 days after the school year has ended, that includes information on each student that received an award and which award, the targeted world language, and methods used to demonstrate proficiency. Schools may send this report to biliteracy@isbe.net.

Placing the Seal or Commendation on the Diploma and Transcript

8. How are the Seal of Biliteracy and the Commendation toward Biliteracy included on the student’s diploma and transcript? The diploma must contain the Seal or Commendation symbol that ISBE provides as a picture file, and the transcript must contain the written statement provided by ISBE. If this is a district’s/school’s first time applying for the Seal of Biliteracy, the district/school must send an email to biliteracy@isbe.net after submitting the application to receive the award graphics.

9. May the Seal be affixed to the diploma after it is printed? Yes. The Seal and the Commendation may be affixed to the diploma before or after printing.

10. Does ISBE offer printed stickers with the Seal/Commendation? No. It is the responsibility of the district/school to print the State Seal or Commendation symbol on student diplomas or on stickers that are affixed to the diplomas.

11. May a district/school place the Seal or Commendation language on the transcript as soon as the student meets the criteria at any time during their enrollment in high school? Yes. The Seal or Commendation language may be added to the student’s transcript as soon as it is determined that the student meets the criteria, which can be at any time during the student’s enrollment in high school. The Seal or Commendation must also be included on the diploma when the student graduates. When the determination takes place prior to a student’s graduation year (i.e. junior year), the student should be reported as receiving the Seal in their graduation year.

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12. If a student is proficient in English and two or more other languages, how should this be recognized on the diploma and transcript?

*The district/school should award a Seal of Biliteracy or Commendation for each language other than English in which the student demonstrates proficiency.*

13. May a district/school give recipients of the Seal or Commendation other forms of recognition such as ribbons or certificates?

*Yes. A district/school may give recipients other forms of recognition in addition to the required designation on the diploma and transcript. Regardless of any other forms of recognition offered to the student, the transcript and diploma must show the award.*

**Meeting Criteria for the Seal or Commendation**

14. Where can I find information on using assessment results to determine whether a student meets the criteria for English proficiency and proficiency in a world language for either the State Seal of Biliteracy or the State Commendation toward Biliteracy?

*As ISBE continues to develop the list of assessments with pre-established correspondence to the ACTFL standards, the most updated assessment list with cut scores may be found using this link: [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/language-proficiency-assessment-list.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/language-proficiency-assessment-list.pdf)*

15. How is the SAT used to determine if a student meets English proficiency for the Seal or Commendation?

*The SAT is the state academic assessment for high school in Illinois and so it is one of the qualifying assessments that a district may choose to recognize as documentation for the Seal or Commendation. As of March 2020, the qualifying SAT cut score for both the Seal and Commendation is 480, which aligns with the College Board’s “College and Career Ready” cut score. Please note that the previously accepted cut score, 540, will still be used by ISBE for district accountability purposes under ESSA.*

16. If a student does not take the SAT or ACCESS for ELLs® during high school, how can the student demonstrate English proficiency for the purposes of the Seal or Commendation?

*A district/school may choose to use the ACT college entrance test. On the ACT, a student must attain either the ACT College Ready Benchmark on the English subject area test or a composite score of at least 21 to be eligible for the Seal or Commendation.*

*Students may take the AP English Language and Composition Exam, qualifying them for the Seal or Commendation by attaining a score of 5 or 4, respectively.*

*For more information, see [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/assessment-list.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/assessment-list.pdf)*

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17. If a student takes the ACCESS for ELLs® and the SAT at different times during enrollment in high school, which assessment results should be used to determine eligibility for the Seal or Commendation?

*The student may qualify for the Seal or Commendation by meeting any one of the criteria for English proficiency at any time during the student’s high school enrollment.*

18. For the Seal of Biliteracy or Commendation in Latin, may a district/school accept the results of the ALIRA, the ACTFL language test in one domain (reading)?

*Yes. Because Latin is not used as a language for ordinary communication in the modern day, the ALIRA may be used to demonstrate proficiency in Latin for the purposes of awarding the Seal of Biliteracy or the Commendation toward Biliteracy.*

19. If a language assessment of four domains does not have a composite score, how does the district/school determine whether the student met the criteria for the Seal or Commendation?

*If the assessment has no composite score, the student must attain the minimum criteria for the award in each domain.*

20. If a student achieves a score on an English assessment that meets the Seal criteria and a score on a world language assessment that meets the Commendation criteria (or vice versa), what award does that student receive?

*If both scores do not meet the criteria needed for the same award, then the student will be awarded the Commendation toward Biliteracy.*

21. May the State Seal of Biliteracy be awarded to seniors after they graduate if the results of a test administered during their final school year are not available at the time of graduation?

*Yes. If the results of an approved language assessment taken while the student was enrolled in high school were not available at the time of graduation, the district/school may award the Seal or Commendation after the student graduates once results become available. The district/school may recognize these students as candidates for the Seal or Commendation at graduation, but no official designation may be included on the diploma or transcript until the district/school obtains assessment results that indicate that the student qualifies for the award. Once the Seal or Commendation is awarded, a designation must be affixed to the student’s diploma and included in the student’s transcript.*

22. May the State Seal of Biliteracy be awarded to high school students if they tested in a grade prior to attending high school?

*No. For a student to qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy or Commendation toward Biliteracy, the English and world language assessments must be taken while the student is enrolled in high school.*

23. May a student who transfers from one high school/district to another earn the Seal or Commendation based on assessments or work done in the previous district/school?

*Assessment results and work completed while the student is enrolled in any high school may be used to document eligibility for the Seal or Commendation. However, only the school/district that the student graduates from may award the Seal or Commendation. Each participating district must verify with the previous school/district that the student has met the criteria for the award.*

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school/district establishes their own procedures and parameters for the Seal of Biliteracy program and may stipulate the type of documentation and procedures required to qualify for the Seal or Commendation that the school/district awards.

24. May a State Seal of Biliteracy be awarded to high school students who meet the assessment criteria but do not enroll in world language courses in high school?
Yes. Enrollment in a world language course or program is not a prerequisite for attaining the State Seal of Biliteracy or Commendation toward Biliteracy.

25. How can I determine whether an assessment that is not on the list of approved assessments would be accepted by ISBE for demonstrating proficiency in a language?
Contact the Department of Multilingual Services at biliteracy@isbe.net or (312) 814-3850.

Publicizing the Program

26. How must participating districts/schools inform parents and students about the Seal of Biliteracy program?
Participating districts/schools must inform parents and students about the Seal of Biliteracy program by including information on the district/school’s website, if a website is maintained, and in the student handbook or comparable publication. The following information must be included:

- General information about the State Seal of Biliteracy program and the opportunity for students to participate;
- A description of the process a student would use to demonstrate proficiency in the targeted language, including details about any alternative evidence that may be required if applicable. While not required, districts/schools should also consider including how students may demonstrate English proficiency; and
- An estimate of the costs, if any and if known, that students might incur to demonstrate proficiency; and
- The name and contact information for the individual designated to serve as the coordinator of the State Seal of Biliteracy program.

27. Our student handbook was published before the district/school applied to offer the Seal of Biliteracy. How are we required to inform parents and students about the program?
The district/school should post the information on the district/school’s website, if the district/school has one, as well as distribute an addendum to the student handbook.