



Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy: A Resource Guide for Districts

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent

Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy: A Resource Guide for Districts

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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Foreword

The Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy (Seal) is awarded to graduating high school students in districts with a Department of Public Instruction-approved program, who have demonstrated achievement in bilingualism, biliteracy, and multicultural competence in and through two or more languages (English and a partner language) by successfully participating in the development of the languages through our schools, their families, and the community.

The Wisconsin Seal policy is aligned with [Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy](#), written by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL), and the Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Association (March 10, 2015). Work on the Wisconsin Seal was a response to requests made by Wisconsin school districts wanting to recognize the linguistic achievements and sociocultural competencies of their multilingual and emergent bilingual students.

The Wisconsin Seal supports student literacy as defined by state standards and provides a pathway for every student to have the opportunity to graduate prepared and equipped with the cultural and linguistic capacity to participate effectively in a multilingual and global 21st century society. We see Wisconsin's Global Education Achievement Certificate (GEAC) as a complementary pathway to the Wisconsin Seal, with the former relating to breadth of global knowledge and awareness, and the latter relating to depth of cultural and linguistic competency; language is the common denominator. We suggest districts encourage students to work toward both awards.

The Wisconsin Seal promotes excellence for all by building upon the rich cultural and linguistic assets of the state's students. It communicates a policy-level commitment to advance mastery of two or more languages. In our ever-shifting global landscape, it is essential to provide the opportunity for students to graduate prepared and equipped with the cultural and linguistic capacity to participate effectively in a multilingual and global 21st century society.

Tony Evers
State Superintendent

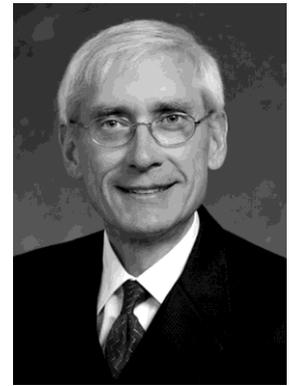


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Policy

The Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy Purpose Statement

The Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy promotes excellence for all by building upon the rich cultural and linguistic assets of Wisconsin's students. The Wisconsin Seal will communicate a policy-level commitment to develop strong proficiency in two or more languages in an ever-shifting global landscape so that every student has the opportunity to graduate prepared and equipped with the cultural and linguistic capacity to participate effectively in a multilingual and global 21st century society.

The Seal will require:

- Criteria for advanced biliteracy attainment using a data-based, nationally recognized assessment framework¹ valued by employers, communities, and institutions of higher education.
- Criteria for demonstration of sociocultural competency to address the needs of local and global communities.

Background and Rationale

Our communities and our 21st century global economy demand the expertise of socioculturally competent individuals who are also fully bilingual and bicultural. As such, multilingualism at high levels ought to be nurtured within Wisconsin's students.

The Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy seeks to develop, maintain, and revitalize the attitudes and dispositions regarding high levels of bilingualism and biliteracy; raise awareness of the benefits of biliteracy and biculturalism; and elevate the status of languages other than English.

With the establishment of a Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy, the state publicly demonstrates that it values high levels of bilingualism and biculturalism in its communities and workforce.

Work on the Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy was inspired by the California Seal of Biliteracy developed by *Californians Together* and is a response to requests made by Wisconsin school districts wanting to recognize the linguistic achievements and sociocultural competencies of their multilingual and emergent bilingual students.

Definition of Seal of Biliteracy

A seal of biliteracy is an award given by a school or district in recognition of students who have attained proficiency in English and one or more partner languages and have demonstrated high levels of sociocultural competency by high school graduation.

¹ Note: For less commonly spoken languages for which there is no nationally recognized measure, districts will be able to submit an alternate method of measuring proficiency in the partner language.

Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy

Introduction

At the national level, a Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school, district, or state office of education in recognition of students who have attained proficiency in English and one or more additional languages by high school graduation.

Purpose

The Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy (Seal) promotes excellence for all by building upon the rich cultural and linguistic assets of the state's students. The Seal will communicate a policy-level commitment to advance mastery of two or more languages in an ever-shifting global landscape so that every student has the opportunity to graduate prepared and equipped with the cultural and linguistic capacity to participate effectively in a multilingual and global 21st century society.

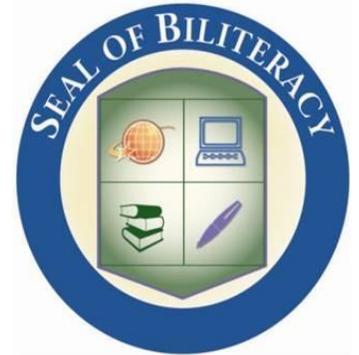
The Seal will require:

- Criteria for advanced biliteracy attainment using a data-based, nationally recognized assessment framework² (valued by employers, communities, and institutions of higher education).
- Criteria for demonstration of sociocultural competency to address the needs of local and global communities.

Which students will be eligible for a Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy?

The Wisconsin Seal is intended to be earned by students who have learned English and one or more languages. Students may learn language in a variety of ways, for example, through school-based programming, community-based programming, their families, or other experiences, to be eligible for a Seal. Students eligible for a Seal will also demonstrate high levels of sociocultural competency.

² Note: For less commonly spoken languages for which there is no nationally recognized measure, districts will be able to submit an alternate method of measuring proficiency in the partner language.



Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy/Distinguished Seal of Biliteracy Awards

Twelfth grade students who achieve a Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy will receive special recognition as determined by their school district. This might consist of an actual seal on the high school diploma and/or a special designation on a student's transcript. Districts may also choose to recognize twelfth grade students earning a Seal in other ways, including:

- recognition ceremonies (including graduation or other senior award ceremonies for 12th graders);
- publication of students' names in a school or district newsletter or a local newspaper; or,
- small trophies, certificates, or medals.

Twelfth grade students who have been working toward a Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy but do not meet all of the specified criteria may meet criteria for a [Wisconsin Global Education Achievement Certificate](#) (GEAC), or districts may choose to give a *Seal of Biliteracy Participation Award*. It is recommended that districts encourage students to meet criteria for both a GEAC and a *Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy*.

Pathway Awards

Districts are encouraged to acknowledge student progress toward a Wisconsin Seal by recognizing students who have achieved specific benchmarks along the way. This may be done through participation or grade level awards. Districts may consider honoring students with recognition ceremonies, publication of awardees in the media, small trophies, certificates, medals, or another honor of the district's choosing.

Pathways—Backward Design

The Wisconsin Seal, while earned by 12th graders, is something that students may work toward throughout their 4K-12 education. In designing a pathway toward a Seal, districts are encouraged to consider minimum criteria for participation and achievement at each grade level.

In the process of designing pathways toward a Seal, districts should reflect upon the following questions:

- How do students in your district become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural?
- Which school district program models exist to help students become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural?



- Which language development programs exist in the community?
- What other existing school or district requirements could support students in earning a Wisconsin Seal (for example, service learning)?
How do the requirements for the Seal overlap with others?

Districts are encouraged to consider pathways that meet or exceed the benchmarks outlined in the chart below.

Grade Levels	Pathway for Participation <i>Participation in developing a positive disposition towards bilingualism³.</i>	Pathway for Achievement <i>Achievement in developing a positive disposition and grade appropriate skills related to bilingualism.</i>
Pre-Kindergarten	Pathway for Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programming that values bilingualism • home language oral and literacy development 	Pathway for Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Elementary	Pathway for Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a partner language • use of English and a partner language • positive attitude toward bilingualism 	Pathway for Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstration of all of the participation criteria • increasing proficiency in English and a partner language
Middle School	Pathway for Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • growth in a partner language • use of English and a partner language • positive attitude toward bilingualism 	Pathway for Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstration of all of the participation criteria • growth in English and a partner language • growth in the 5Cs* of world language learning • demonstration of active use of two languages • positive attitude toward bilingualism
By the End of Grade 12	Pathway for Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation in one or more language classes • growth in the 5Cs* of world language learning • use and application of English and a partner language • positive attitude toward bilingualism 	Seal of Biliteracy Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proficiency in English and a partner language • competency in the 5Cs* of world language learning • active use and application of English and a partner language in socioculturally competent ways • positive disposition toward lifelong bilingualism and biliteracy

*Note: The 5Cs of world language learning, as defined by [the World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages](#), are: communication; cultures; connections; comparisons; and, communities.

³ Bilingualism implies the development of biliteracy and biculturalism.

Completion of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Program Approval Form

Any school or district may establish their own criteria for awarding their own seal of biliteracy to students in that school or district.

In order for a district to call their seal a *Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy*, the district must submit the Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy form (PI-9962) to, and be approved by, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Only one submission of the form will be necessary; annual submissions will not be requested unless the district substantially changes its Wisconsin Seal program or criteria.

Section I: General Information

The *Seal of Biliteracy Coordinator* is the school or district staff member coordinating the district's seal of biliteracy program. The coordinator will also be the contact for DPI staff.

Section II: Certification/Signatures

The application must be signed by the district administrator (also referred to as the superintendent) and the person who will be coordinating the program, as indicated in Section I.

Section III: Pathways to Biliteracy

In this section of PI-9962, districts will indicate the different ways that students in their communities become bilingual, biliterate, and socioculturally competent through school-based or community-based options.

- School-Based Programming
 - World Language
Students who are native English speakers typically enroll in world language programs in order to become proficient in a partner language. World language programs or language revitalization may start in elementary or secondary schools; however, in contrast to immersion programs (see below), world language programs do not deliver core content instruction in the partner language. On the form, please indicate the world language programs available to students in your district, and at which grade levels these programs are available.
 - Dual Language
The goal of a dual language program is for students to become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural in English and a partner language. Dual language programs will provide a minimum of 50 percent of content/literacy instruction in the partner language, with the possible exception of heritage language programs. (See appendix for graphic representation of dual language programs.)



- One-Way Immersion
Students in a one-way immersion program come from the same language background. One-way immersion programs may include developmental bilingual or world language immersion programs.
- Two-Way Immersion
Students in a two-way immersion program come from backgrounds in the partner language, English, or both English and the partner language. Typically, a two-way immersion classroom consists of a mix of these students.
- Heritage Language
A heritage language program is a school-based or district-based language development program that is designed or tailored to address the needs of heritage language learners. A *heritage language learner* is proficient in or has a cultural connection to that language. Common heritage language programs in Wisconsin include *Spanish for Spanish Speakers* courses and *American Indian language revitalization programs*.
- English as a Second Language
English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are designed to help English language learners (ELLs) become proficient in English. When feasible, native language support may be provided to assist the students with developing English language proficiency, but bilingualism is not the goal of an ESL program.
- Community-Based Learning
 - Home and Community Context
Students may learn a partner language at home or within their community. Students may have learned the partner language in their native countries. These students may or may not be ELLs.
 - Heritage Language Schools
Heritage language schools are community-based schools that are designed or tailored to address the needs of heritage language learners. A *heritage language learner* is a person studying a language who has proficiency in or a cultural connection to that language. Examples of heritage language schools include weekend or after school Hebrew, Chinese, or Arabic programs.
 - Immersion Experiences
Students may have participated in an immersion experience if they have lived abroad with family for an extended period of time or participated in an exchange program. As a result of these experiences, students may be proficient in a partner language.

The roots of the term education imply drawing out children's potential, making them MORE than they were; however, when children come to school fluent in their primary language, and they leave school essentially monolingual in English, then our schools have negated the meaning of the term education, because they have made children LESS than they were.

—Cummins, 1989

Selection of Measures (Sections IV and V)

Proficiency is the ability to use language, in all of its appropriate modes, for real-life social and academic purposes and in culturally authentic ways. Being fully bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural involves having high levels of language proficiency and demonstrable sociocultural competence.

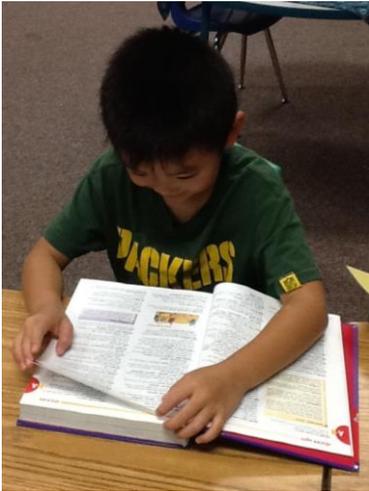
Measures of Language Proficiency for Partner Languages

Students (both native and non-native speakers) must demonstrate proficiency in both English and a partner language. Decisions on selected measures of language proficiency will be decided upon by the district and should align with language proficiency levels described by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ([ACTFL](#)). A minimum achievement of *Intermediate-High* according to ACTFL, or the equivalent on another measure of proficiency, by the end of 12th grade is required to earn a Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy. Students achieving a minimum of *Advanced-Mid* according to ACTFL, or the equivalent on another measure of proficiency, may earn the Wisconsin Distinguished Seal of Biliteracy. Some other examples of language proficiency measures include:

- Advanced Placement (AP) exam;
- International Baccalaureate (IB) exam;
- oral proficiency interviews, reading proficiency tests, or writing proficiency tests;
- tribal language assessments; or,
- other measures correlated to the required minimum level of language proficiency.

In cases of less commonly spoken languages, special permission to use different measures to assess the language may be granted. For example, the following measures are recommended with regard to the languages listed below:

- *Latin and Classical Greek*: Assessment of interpretive reading and presentational writing, rather than listening or interpersonal face-to-face communication.
- *American Sign Language (ASL)*: Assessment of interpersonal signed exchange, presentational signing, and understanding of ASL (such as interpreting a signed lecture or by summarizing and responding to questions aimed at overarching understanding).
- *American Indian Languages or languages such as Hmong*: Assessment of interpersonal face-to-face communication as well as interpretive listening and presentational speaking, and, writing and reading where a written code exists.



In such cases, the use of community expertise and resources is encouraged when assessing the partner language. For example, the following individuals may assist with measuring proficiency:

- a community member (native speaker) of the partner language;
- members of affiliated community organizations (e.g., Saturday schools); or,
- university instructors or teachers from the community.

Measures of Language Proficiency for English

Non-English language learners (non-ELLs, i.e., both native and non-native English speakers who are proficient in English) must demonstrate a minimum level of proficiency in both social and academic language as determined by the state assessment or a district measure of English literacy. For current ELLs, an ACCESS for ELLs® literacy subscore of four (expanding) or above is required.

Section IV: Measures of Language Proficiency

In this section of PI-9962, the district will indicate how language proficiency will be measured. A measure must be included for each language listed in Section III. For each language, indicate all of the following.

- *Name of Measure*
Include the full title of the measure. The measure may be standardized or district-designed.
- *Languages Assessed*
Indicate all languages that will be measured with this assessment.
- *Population(s) Assessed*
 - English language learners (English Language Proficiency Levels 1-5)
These students are still eligible for English language learner services.
 - Native English speakers/former English language learners (English language proficiency Levels 6-7)
These students have been formally exited from English language learner services or have never been English language learners.

Language is the dress of thought.

—Samuel Johnson



“The denial of a people’s native tongue is a denial of their participation in society and of their very identity.”

—Eduardo Hernández-Chávez (1988)

- *Description of Measure*

Provide a brief description of the measure. Include the language domain(s) it will assess (listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing). Include how the measure is aligned with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency levels. A rubric or scoring guide for each measure must be attached to the application.

Sociocultural Competence

Students must demonstrate high levels of sociocultural competence as it relates to English and a partner language. Decisions on selected measures of sociocultural competence will be decided by the district, and should include measures for demonstrating positive attitudes towards bilingualism and using both languages in culturally appropriate ways. Districts should develop rubrics to use in the assessment of sociocultural competency and articulate minimum criteria for achievement in this area. Some activities that demonstrate sociocultural competency include, but are not limited to:

- active participation in multicultural community events;
- completion of a specific amount of community service using the partner language skills in service to school or community; and,
- documentation of independent reading in English and a partner language.

Section V: Measures of Sociocultural Competence

In this section of PI-9962, the district will describe how students’ sociocultural competence as it relates to both English and the partner language will be measured. The district should include:

- the types of evidence that will be considered acceptable;
- the aspects of sociocultural competency that will be addressed by each measure; and,
- a rubric (to be attached) for each measure proposed.

Section VI: Criteria for Seal of Biliteracy

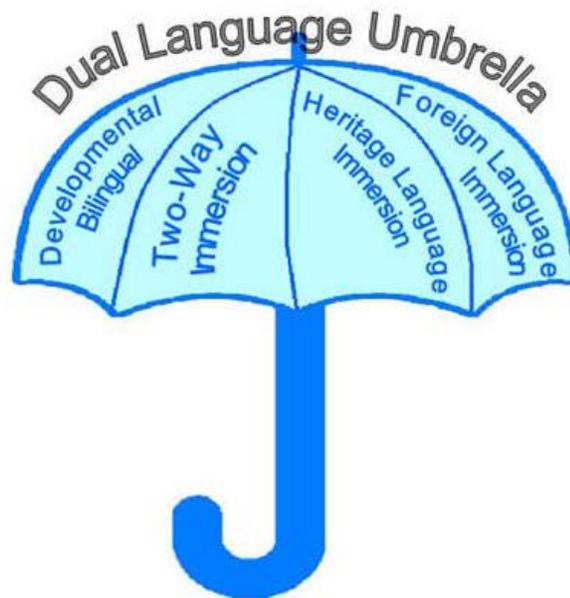
In this section of PI-9962, the district will describe the minimum criteria for earning a *Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy* or a *Wisconsin Distinguished Seal of Biliteracy*. District criteria must meet or exceed the criteria outlined earlier in this document. Minimum criteria must be described for language proficiency in both English and the partner language, as well as criteria established for the demonstration of sociocultural competency.



Appendix A

Dual Language Education Program is the umbrella term for bilingual programs where the goal is for students to become bilingual and biliterate. Dual language programs use the partner language for at least half of the instructional day in the elementary years. These programs generally start in kindergarten or first grade and extend for at least five years, and many continue into middle school and high school.

The “umbrella” image below is often used as a graphic to illustrate the various programs included in the term dual language education.



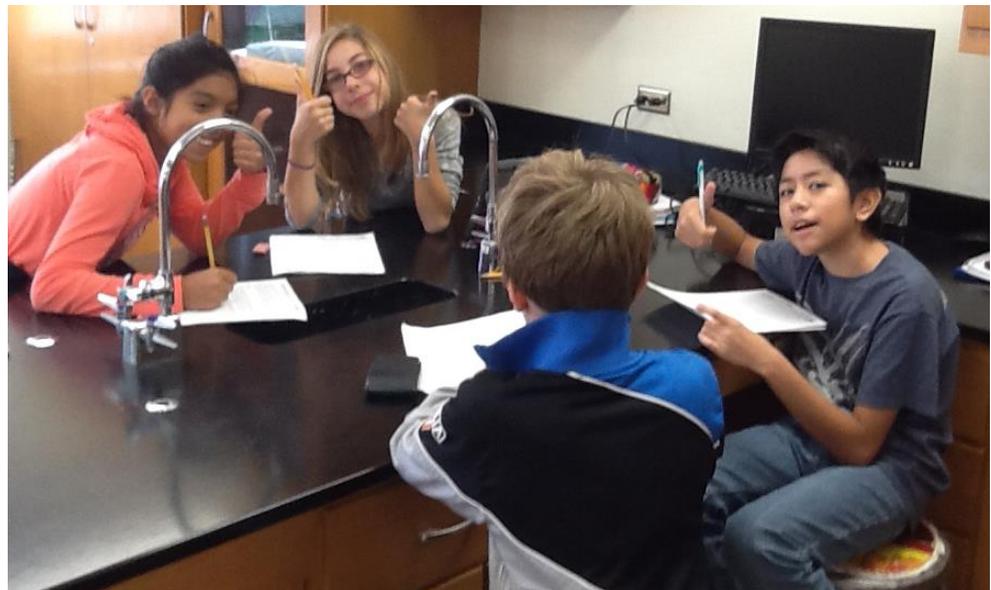
Source: Howard, E. R., Olague, N., & Rogers, D. (2003). *The dual language program planner: A guide for designing and implementing dual language programs* (p. 3). Washington, DC and Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.

Types of Dual Language Programs

There are four main types of dual language programs, differing mainly in the population of students:

- **Developmental bilingual** programs (also referred to as maintenance or late-exit bilingual programs) are those that use the first language of the English language learners (ELLs) in instruction to teach content and ensure that ELLs gain proficiency in English. Students are from the partner language population; developmental programs are one-way immersion programs in that the population is homogeneous.

- **Two-way immersion programs** are dual language bilingual programs that serve English speakers and speakers of the partner language in the same classroom, with a 50-50 mix of students from each language population. Usually, the speakers of the partner language are English language learners (ELLs). Both English and the first or native language of the ELL students are used in content and language arts instruction.
- **Heritage language programs** use the non-English language background (heritage language) of the students. All students share the same non-English language, so programs are considered to be one-way immersion programs. Students may or may not be proficient in the heritage language. That is, the students may be fluent and the program is a developmental or maintenance program (e.g., Spanish for Spanish speakers), or the language is being renewed/reclaimed in the community (e.g., Native American language revitalization programs where the language is not used by all in a community). The partner language is the primary language of content instruction and/or language arts instruction.
- **World language immersion programs** are one-way immersion programs that enroll primarily native English speakers who are learning a world language. The goal of these programs may be for students to become bilingual.



Appendix B

Sample Pathways— Example for Students Studying English and Spanish

All roads lead to the SEAL.

Dual Language Program Students



Native/Heritage Speaker (Regular Education)



World Language Learner



Appendix C

The Wisconsin Seal of Biliteracy (Seal) Workgroup began informally during the 2011-12 school year, with conversations among districts and DPI staff. The consensus was to develop and implement a Wisconsin Seal based on the California seal, but with more rigor. Workgroup members have changed over time, and not all former members are in the same district as when they were part of the workgroup. As the work on this project was completed, current members (those developing this guidance) expressed an interest to continue working on issues related to dual language education, thus forming a dual language education (DLE) coalition.

¡Gracias to all previous workgroup members!

- María Barreras, Madison Metropolitan School District
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- Ruthann Lewis, Madison Metropolitan School District
- Iva Plumley, Kenosha Unified School District
- Jesús Reveles, Madison Metropolitan School District
- Jesús Santos, Milwaukee Public Schools
- Julie Seefeldt, Green Bay Area Public Schools
- Patricia Venegas, WIDA/ Madison Metropolitan School District





“Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to think about things.”

—Flora Lewis