

PA Seal of Biliteracy Recognizes High School Students

<https://www.papincipals.org/>

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In March of 2022, PDE announced the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy (PASB) to recognize students who attain intermediate-high proficiency or higher in English and one or more additional world languages upon high school graduation. According to the PA Seal of Biliteracy Toolkit (pg. 6), several goals of the PASB are to encourage students to acquire proficiency in English and a second language, to affirm the value of cultural and linguistic diversity in our schools and communities and to provide employers and universities with a way to identify bilingual candidates.

For high school students who attend college, the PA Seal of Biliteracy can also result in college credits. ACE (American Council on Education) now recognizes the Avant Assessment STAMP4S Test for proficiency, which means that colleges now offer credit for being proficient in a second language. In PA, there are over 100 ACE institutions, while there are 1500 across the United States. ACE recommends 12 credits for intermediate-high proficiency and 14 credits for advanced-low proficiency. Moreover, colleges may even offer credit for intermediate-mid proficiency which would result in 8 credits.

In the past year, the PA Seal of Biliteracy has had a positive impact in schools across the state. First of all, it rewards proficiency-based world language programs that require students to read, write, listen and speak the target language in a natural context. It also provides recognition for the importance of world language programs that create bilingual and multilingual students by high school graduation, thus preparing them for upper level language college courses and even more importantly, the workplace. This is crucial to our state's economy, especially since there are approximately 7,000 vacant bilingual jobs in Pennsylvania (indeed.com). In addition to students studying a world language, the PASB provides incentive to ELs (English Learners) to become proficient in English while maintaining fluency in their native language. Furthermore, it recognizes and celebrates the diversity in both the school and the community.

The process of offering the PASB to students entails providing proof of intermediate-high or advanced proficiency in English and the second language(s). Proficiency in English is most frequently provided by the Keystone Literature Exam or the WIDA for ELs while proficiency in the other language is typically provided by the AP or IB exams or from the AAPPL or STAMP4S. Once both language requirements are met, the school district can reward the PASB to the students. More information about offering the PASB can be found on the PDE SAS website (<https://www.pdesas.org/Page/Viewer/ViewPage/57/>) or on the PSMLA (PA State Modern Language Association) website (<https://psmla.org/seal-biliteracy>). If you have specific questions, please contact the PSMLA Advocacy Chair, Cherie Garrett, at cherie.garrett@dallastown.net.