



Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines Released

Date — Washington, DC

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE), the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL), and TESOL International Association, have officially drafted recommendations for the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy.

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award made by a state department of education or local district to recognize a student who has attained proficiency in English and one or more other world languages by high school graduation. The recognition of attaining biliteracy becomes part of the high school transcript and diploma for these students. “This is an unprecedented collaboration by language educators to guide states in the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy to ensure that students in each state are encouraged to demonstrate language proficiency in both English and another language,” Jacque Van Houten, ACTFL President, added. The Seal serves to certify attainment of biliteracy for students, employers, and universities. It is a statement of accomplishment that helps to signal evidence of a student’s readiness for career and college, and for engagement as a global citizen.

NCSSFL President, Ryan Wertz, comments, “As more states and local education entities consider the merits of formally recognizing the multilingual and multicultural abilities of their graduates as strong assets in today’s global society, the members of NCSSFL enthusiastically endorse these guidelines as a viable source of guidance backed by current research and reflective of best practices.”

To ensure consistency in the meaning of this recognition, the guidelines for implementation for state departments of education and for local school districts were developed. All students are eligible to attain the Seal of Biliteracy based on evidence of achieving the designated level of language proficiency in English plus one or more other languages during their high school years. TESOL President Yilin Sun stated, “TESOL International Association highly values multilingualism as an asset to be cultivated among students in American schools. We are pleased to have participated in this effort, which may encourage more schools to reassess how they view English language learners.”

Students must demonstrate the state-determined level of proficiency in English, as well as one or more additional languages, be that language a native language, heritage language, or a language learned in school or another setting. “NABE is completely committed to the vision of preparing biliterate individuals who will lead the nation’s global economic, political and social advancement,” NABE Board Member Dr. Yee Wan, comments.

Schools, districts, or states are encouraged to provide other forms of recognition prior to high school reflecting progress along the pathway toward achieving the specified level of biliteracy, which may occur earlier (as with immersion, two-way or dual language immersion programs; English language learners; and other populations). The focus is on achieving the level of proficiency required for English and the level of proficiency required for one or more other languages. Biliteracy refers to having a functional level of proficiency in each language: The level of proficiency is not necessarily identical for both languages.

Click here to view the official Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines. [will link to the guidelines]



ABOUT ACTFL

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is the national association for language education professionals from all levels of instruction and representing all languages. With more than 12,300 active members, ACTFL provides innovative professional development opportunities, acclaimed training and certification programs, and widely cited books, publications, scholarly journals, research studies and language education resources, including *Foreign Language Annals* and *The Language Educator* magazine. As part of its mission and vision, the organization provides guidance to the profession and to the general public regarding issues, policies, and best practices related to the teaching and learning of languages and cultures. ACTFL is a leading national voice among language educators and administrators and is guided by a responsibility to set standards and expectations that will result in high quality language programs.

www.actfl.org

ABOUT NABE

Since 1975, the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) has been a non-profit membership organization that works to ensure that language-minority students have equal opportunities to learn English and succeed academically. NABE's priorities include: Improving instructional practices for linguistically and culturally diverse children; providing bilingual educators with more high-quality professional development opportunities; securing adequate funding for the programs serving limited-English-proficient students; and keeping the rights of language-minority Americans clearly in focus as states and communities move forward with educational reforms. www.nabe.org

ABOUT NCSSFL

The National Council of State Supervisors for Languages is an organization of education agency personnel from all states of the United States who are responsible for providing oversight for foreign/world language education at the K-12 level. The mission of NCSSFL is to provide national leadership in facilitating and promoting policies and practices that support language education. www.ncssfl.org

ABOUT TESOL International Association

Founded in 1966, TESOL International Association is a professional community of educators, researchers, administrators, and students committed to advancing excellence in English language teaching for speakers of other languages worldwide. With more than 13,000 members representing over 150 countries, TESOL fosters the exchange of ideas, research, and peer-to-peer knowledge, and provides expertise, resources, and a powerful voice on issues affecting the profession. Through professional development programs, its international conference, special interest groups, and publications, TESOL engages tens of thousands of professionals to collaborate globally and create a world of opportunity for millions of people of all ages who want to learn English. www.tesol.org

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