

Policy JNB: Seal of Biliteracy

Status: DRAFT

Original Adopted Date: Pending

In order to recognize its high achieving students, the Jackson County School District offers to those students who are proficient in more than one language the Seal of Biliteracy. The Seal of Biliteracy is a statement of accomplishment that helps to signal evidence of a student's readiness for college and career and for engagement as a global citizen. Recognition for demonstrating a level of biliteracy shall be indicated on the high school transcript for students.

All students (including those whose native language is English or another world language and a student with disabilities), are eligible to attain one of the two following levels of biliteracy:

1. Silver Seal of Biliteracy – which demonstrates a functional fluency at the intermediate-mid range,
2. Gold Seal of Biliteracy – which demonstrates a working fluency at the advanced-low range.

In order to encourage and recognize linguistic proficiency and cultural literacy, the district will present a Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy as a recognition on a student's transcript, to each graduating high school student who demonstrates proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. The most updated version provided by MDE will be used to determine awards. For the most current vetted list of the Mississippi Department of Education approved assessment vendors and updated requirements, see the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy website www.mdek12.org/ese/Mississippi-Seal-of-Biliteracy.

Seal of Biliteracy Eligibility

Every Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy student candidate needs to complete an application with his/her counselor in order to begin the process to obtain the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy. Native or non-native English speakers who meet the following criteria before the senior year or the spring semester before graduation:

1. Show evidence of proficiency in literacy in English by meeting the current MDE minimum score requirements as outlined on the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy website. www.mdek12.org/ese/Mississippi-Seal-of-Biliteracy.
2. Show evidence of proficiency in literacy in a world language other than English by meeting the criteria as outlined on the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy website. www.mdek12.org/ese/Mississippi-Seal-of-Biliteracy.

Standards

Students shall demonstrate a minimal level of proficiency in English, and one or more additional languages, whether it be a native language, heritage language, a language learned in school or another setting. Standards for the award include:

1. The Seal shall be completed by an eligible student's high school graduation date.
2. The Seal shall be noted on the high school transcript as a credential that can be viewed by colleges, universities, and future employers.
3. Students shall be informed of the Seal in the 5th and 6th grade along with MDE requirements.
4. Students should meet regularly with their high school counselor to track their progress towards biliteracy.
5. After meeting the requirements for the Seal, the counselor and student should work together to complete and submit an application where the evidence will then be verified by the counselor.
6. The school will then be required to report the information to MDE.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH:

English

Students must demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting language arts requirements for high school graduation or by demonstrating proficiency on a validated assessment of proficiency for English learners or other acceptable assessments as listed on the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy website www.mdek12.org/ese/Mississippi-Seal-of-Biliteracy. Assessments in English may include one or more of the following as determined by the district:

- State assessments of English Language Arts as required for all learners, or
- State assessments of English language development for English learners, or
- Other assessments identified by the state as appropriate for demonstrating English proficiency equivalent to meeting high school graduation requirements.

NOTE: *The district's procedures for collection, recording and maintaining the data for students receiving the Seal of Biliteracy will be implemented and executed by each high school educational team, to include the high school counselor. This includes reviewing the evidence and verifying the criteria for the Seal had been met upon which attaining the Seal is based, the number of Silver Seals of Biliteracy and Gold Seals of Biliteracy awarded, and the languages other than English in which students earned the Seal. Annually, the data shall also be divided into subgroups specifying the following:*

Data will include but is not limited to:

1. English and World Language assessment scores and levels of achievement
2. Languages other than English in which students earned the seal,
3. Number earning the seal who are former English learners, and
4. Seal level earned by each student.

Awarding

Awarding of the Silver Seal of Biliteracy or the Gold Seal of Biliteracy shall be completed by high school graduation. In addition to other awarding and recognizing processes set by the district, the district will perform the following:

1. The seal shall be added to the high school transcript as it is the credential that is viewed by post-secondary institutions and future employers.
2. The achievement of biliteracy shall be recognized at graduation and awards ceremonies.

Reporting

The district must report their District Participation form, local board policy, and agenda with approved board minutes adopting their local seal of biliteracy to MDE. When recognizing students for earning a seal of biliteracy, the district must also determine practical methods for identifying and recording the name(s) of students who have met the requirements. The district must report this information to MDE through MSIS.
