



# The New Mexico State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy

# STATE SEAL OF BILINGUALISM-BILITERACY

- The **New Mexico State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy (SSBB)** is a formal recognition for high school graduates who have demonstrated proficiency in a language other than English.
- Adopted in 2014 and first implemented in the 2015-2016 school year, the seal is **placed on a student's New Mexico Diploma of Excellence** and noted in their transcript, certifying their ability to use a second language for college, career, and community needs.
- There are **four options** for earning the SSBB.
- The SSBB is intended for **all students**: English learners (EL), initial fluent English proficient (IFEP), and reclassified fluent English (RFEP).
- The SSBB is grounded in state statute (**NMSA 22-1-9.1**) and administrative code (**6.32.3 NMAC**).

# Why a New Mexico State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy?

It is no secret that people who are bilingual and biliterate are **better equipped** to meet the demands of an increasingly interconnected, **multicultural world**. For many students in New Mexico, bilingualism and biliteracy are assets that aid in **sustaining community knowledge and lifeways**. The State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy (SSBB) is intended to honor and celebrate these assets.

***New Mexico has always been a multilingual place.***

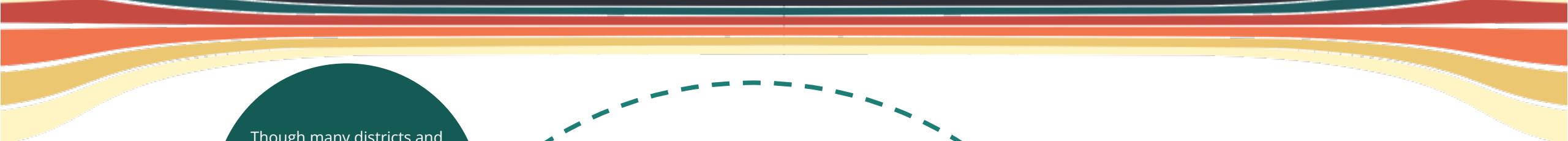
For thousands of years, numerous Indigenous languages thrived in the enchanted land that would one day come to be known as the state of New Mexico. With the arrival of Europeans and Mexicans in 1540, the Spanish language entered the linguistic landscape. When New Mexico became a US territory in 1850, English became prominent. Today, New Mexicans speak many languages from all around the world. The State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy was created to **honor and celebrate every language spoken by students in New Mexico**.

# How We Got Here

The first statewide Seal of Biliteracy was developed in [California](#) in 2008 and first implemented in 2010 with the support and partnership of Spanish language publisher Velázquez Press. In 2011, legislation creating a California State Seal of Biliteracy was passed. Since then, bilingualism-biliteracy seals have been adopted by 50 states and the District of Columbia. Each state has established its own award criteria.

New Mexico was the [fifth state](#) in the U.S. to pass legislation allowing students to earn a Seal of Biliteracy, officially referred to as the [State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy \(SSBB\)](#). [22-1-9.1 NMSA](#) was signed into law on March 8, 2014, and districts and charter schools began adopting and implementing the SSBB in the 2015-2016 school year. The "SSBB on the Diploma of Excellence Taskforce" was established to draft New Mexico Administrative Code pertaining to the SSBB. This taskforce met four times in 2019. The result of their efforts is [6.32.3 NMAC](#).



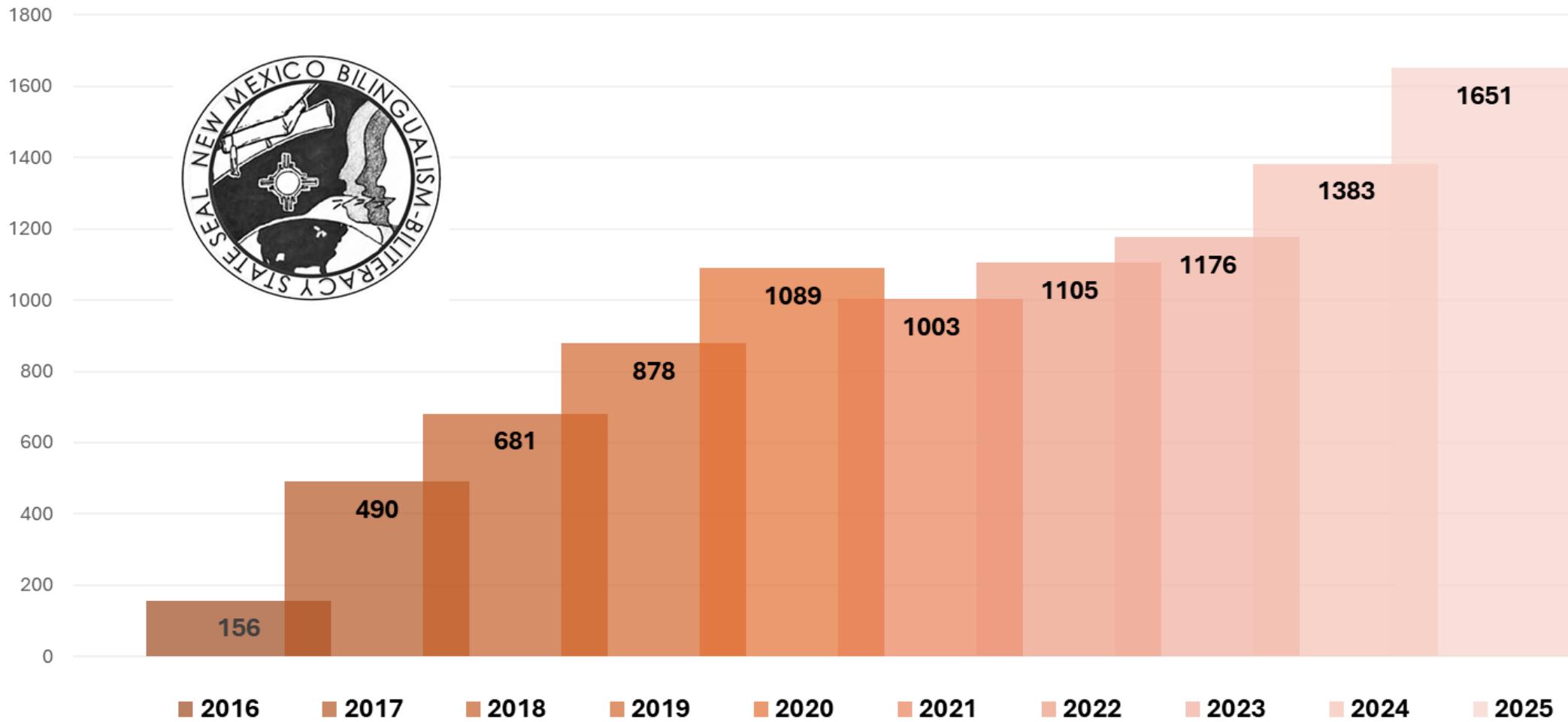


Though many districts and charters with bilingual multicultural education programs (BMEPs) have adopted the SSBB, the two are separate. They can, and often do, stand alone.

6.32.3 NMAC establishes the criteria for students to earn a State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy on a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence. The State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy certifies that the recipient is proficient for meaningful use in college, a career, or to meet a local community language need in a language other than English.

Districts and charters that choose to offer both BMEPs *and* the SSBB are providing the greatest support to multilingual students in New Mexico.

# TEN YEARS OF THE NEW MEXICO STATE SEAL OF BILINGUALISM-BILITERACY





**Since 2016, more than 9,000 New Mexico high school graduates have earned the SSBB in the following languages:**

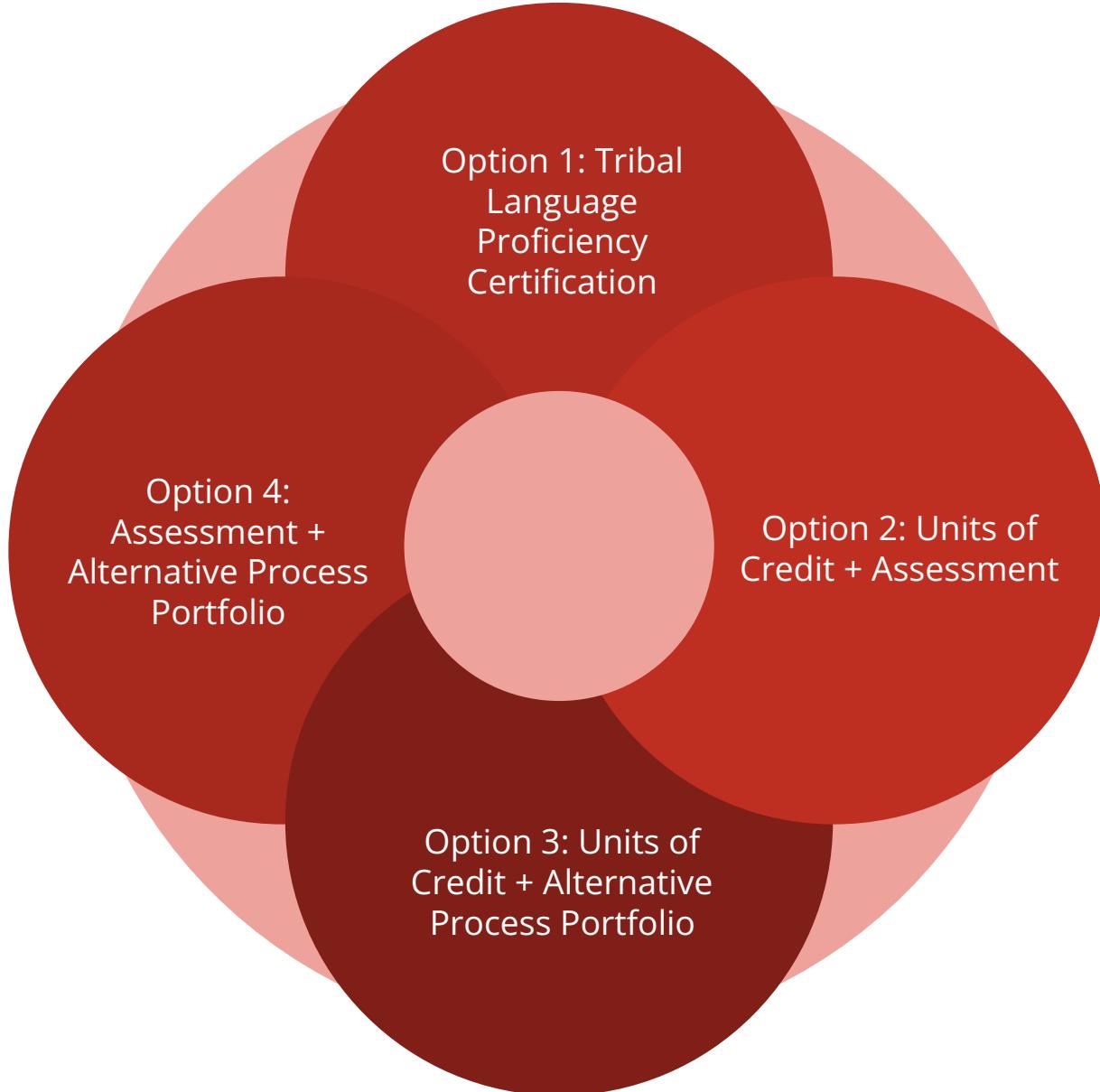
American Sign Language, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Czech, Filipino, French, German, Hakha Chin (Burmese dialect), Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Keres, Korean, Latin, Mandarin, Navajo, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovakian, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Telugu, Tewa, Tiwa, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, and Zuni

# Equity for English Learners

New Mexico consistently awards the highest percentage of State Seals to English Learners out of all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Number of English Learners Awarded the State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy									
School Year	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
English Learner (EL)	72	98	156	286	237	309	332	416	607
Reclassified fluent English Proficient (RFEP)	226	345	265	438	423	509	446	406	483
Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP)	192	238	457	381	343	287	403	417	463
% EL + RFEP ("ever ELs")	61%	65%	48%	66%	66%	74%	66%	59%	70%

# Four Options to Earn the SSBB



## Option 1: Tribal Language Proficiency Certification

- Pueblos, tribes, and nations determine language proficiency criteria, process, and procedure.
- Schools receive proficiency certification from the pueblo, tribe, or nation.
- Students fulfill SSBB and graduation requirements and receive the SSBB on their Diploma of Excellence.

## Option 2: Units of Credit and Assessment

- Students earn four units of course credit (with a C or higher) in a home/heritage language taught by a teacher with the appropriate high school endorsement.
- Students take and pass an assessment approved by the PED. Avant assessments will be paid for by the PED (up to two per student). Approved assessments and passing scores can be found in the SSBB Technical Assistance Manual.
- Students fulfill SSBB and graduation requirements and receive the SSBB on their Diploma of Excellence.

## Option 3: Units of Credit and Alternative Process Portfolio

- Students earn **four units of course credit** (with a C or higher) in a home/heritage language taught by a teacher with the appropriate high school endorsement.
- Students successfully deliver a **presentation**, participate in an **interview with a panel of language experts**, and produce a **work sample** in the Home/Heritage language.
- Students fulfill SSBB and graduation requirements and receive the SSBB on their Diploma of Excellence.

## Option 4: Assessment and Alternative Process Portfolio

- Students take and pass an **assessment** approved by the PED. Avant assessments will be paid for by the PED (up to two per student). Approved assessments and passing scores can be found in the SSBB Technical Assistance Manual.
- Students successfully deliver a presentation, participate in an **interview with a panel of language experts**, and produce a work sample in the Home/Heritage language.
- Students fulfill SSBB and graduation requirements and receive the SSBB on their Diploma of Excellence.

# Adopting the SSBB

## Step One

School board or charter school governing body chooses to adopt the SSBB into their graduation policy before offering students the opportunity to earn the SSBB.

If the school has Native American students, a Memorandum of Understanding must be established with all relevant tribal groups.

## Step Two

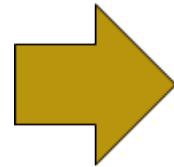
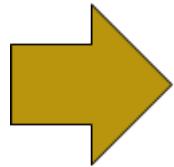
The district or charter school downloads the SSBB Adoption Request form from the [SSBB webpage](#). This application will include the district/charter SSBB policy (created locally) and must be signed by the chair of the school board or charter school governing body, as well as the registrar and head counselor.

## Step Three

Email SSBB Adoption Request forms to [Language.Culture@ped.nm.gov](mailto:Language.Culture@ped.nm.gov). If a Memorandum of Understanding has been created, it will be included with this application. As needed, the Language and Culture Division will work with the districts/charters to ensure alignment with SSBB law. Once SSBB Requests are approved, the district/charter will digitally receive the SSBB image.

## Step Four

The district or charter school will work with a vendor to create an embossing stamp from the digital SSBB image and purchase gold seal stickers to be embossed. Students are awarded the SSBB on their Diplomas of Excellence and the award is noted in their transcripts. SSBB data must be reported to Nova at EOY.



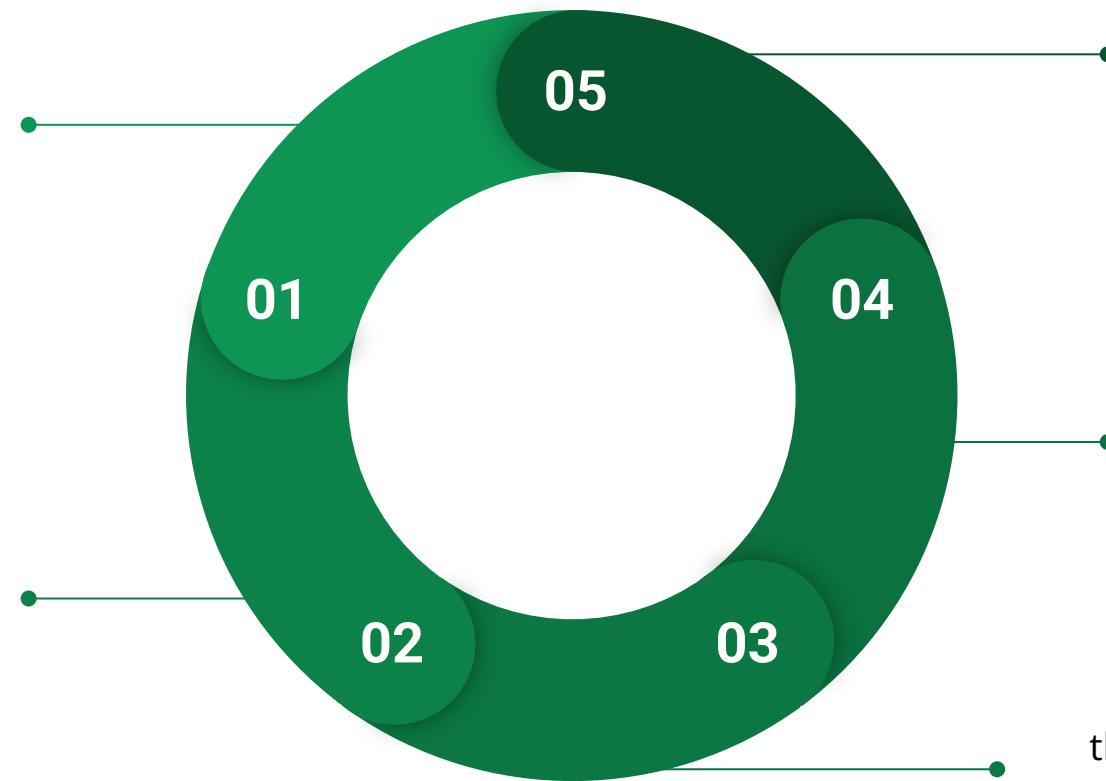
# Don't Forget to Celebrate!



# End of Year Data Reporting

In May, Nova sends out a notification that the EOY Reporting Period Spreadsheet is ready for data reporting and validation.

There is no set date for LEAs to submit EOY data. It is submitted after the last day of school, which varies throughout the state.



The LCD will reach out to the school's Nova coordinator to verify Nova data. Any difficulties with Nova data reporting should be addressed directly to Nova using a FreshDesk help ticket.

The Nova coordinator will need the following information to report SSB data: District Code, School Year Date, Student ID, Award Code, Award Type.

Districts and charter schools that use the AP exam for their assessment will submit data via flat file in July.

# QUESTIONS?

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## 質問

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## 问题

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## Вопросы

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## preguntas

## سوالات

Reach out any time to [Language.Culture@ped.nm.gov](mailto:Language.Culture@ped.nm.gov).