



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: World Languages and the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy

2022

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.300.575](#)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington’s K–12 students embody a heritage of many cultures and languages. The Legislature created the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy in 2014 to recognize the importance of multilingual communication skills and the value of the cultural backgrounds of the state’s students. The Seal of Biliteracy (the Seal) is an award earned by graduating seniors who meet certain proficiency standards in both English and a second language.

The intent of the Seal was to increase the number of students who are proficient in at least two languages. In 2021–22, 4,689 high school seniors earned the Seal in 120 school districts.

In addition to the Seal, students may also earn competency-based credits in high school if they complete all proficiency components of an assessment in a language other than English. Districts award world language competency-based credits when students meet the level of proficiency established by their district’s world languages competency-based credit policy. In 2021–22, 10,431 students earned world languages competency-based high school credits.

BACKGROUND

The Legislature requires Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to provide a summary report each year on:

- The annual number of graduating high school seniors within the district earning the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy (the Seal); and
- The number of high school students earning competency-based high school credits for world languages by demonstrating proficiency in a language other than English.

Washington State Seal of Biliteracy

The 2014 Legislature established the Seal to recognize public high school graduates who attain a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. See Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.300.575. OSPI adopted rules to implement the Seal and provides ongoing technical assistance to support districts to help students attain the Seal. See Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 392-415-070 (mandatory high school transcript contents) and WAC 392-410-350 (Seal of Biliteracy).

English Requirement

The awarding of the Seal recognizes the significance of second language proficiency while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of cultivating and maintaining strong proficiency in English language arts. To earn the Seal, students must present proficiency in English and in one or more other languages and graduate. English proficiency is documented when a graduating student completes all English language arts requirements in accordance with [Chapter 252, Laws of 2019](#) (High School Graduation Requirements).

World Language Requirement

To demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English, students must receive a passing score determined by OSPI on a performance-based language exam (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or Cambridge International) or earn four World Language competency-based credits by demonstrating Intermediate-Mid proficiency, the equivalent of four years of high school World Language courses. OSPI revised WAC 392-410-350 to expand the English proficiency strategies to align with the new law.

Tribal Languages

To honor tribal sovereignty, tribal consultation, and government-to-government relationships between tribes and districts, each tribe determines the level of proficiency students need in order to be considered biliterate in tribal languages. Tribes develop the methods and processes for determining proficiency in their respective tribal languages. Teachers who instruct tribal languages must be certified through the First Peoples' Language, Culture, and Oral Traditions Certification Program (WAC 181-78A-700). Affirmation that students have successfully earned the Seal of Biliteracy for tribal languages follows the agreed processes determined through consultation with each tribe.

Competency-Based Credits

Competency-based credits can be earned by students in high school who speak, read, write, and listen in a language other than English (RCW 28A.230.090). Students may receive up to four competency credits on their high school transcript based upon their level of proficiency established by their district's world languages competency-based credit policy. The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) model policy for world languages recommends proficiency levels based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language's (ACTFL's) proficiency guidelines for world languages.

For American Sign Language, WSSDA's policy defers to OSPI's credit alignment chart for Gallaudet University's American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) and the Sign Language Proficiency Interview: American Sign Language (SLPI:ASL), which has multiple providers, including Bridges Oregon and Rochester Institute of Technology (NY).

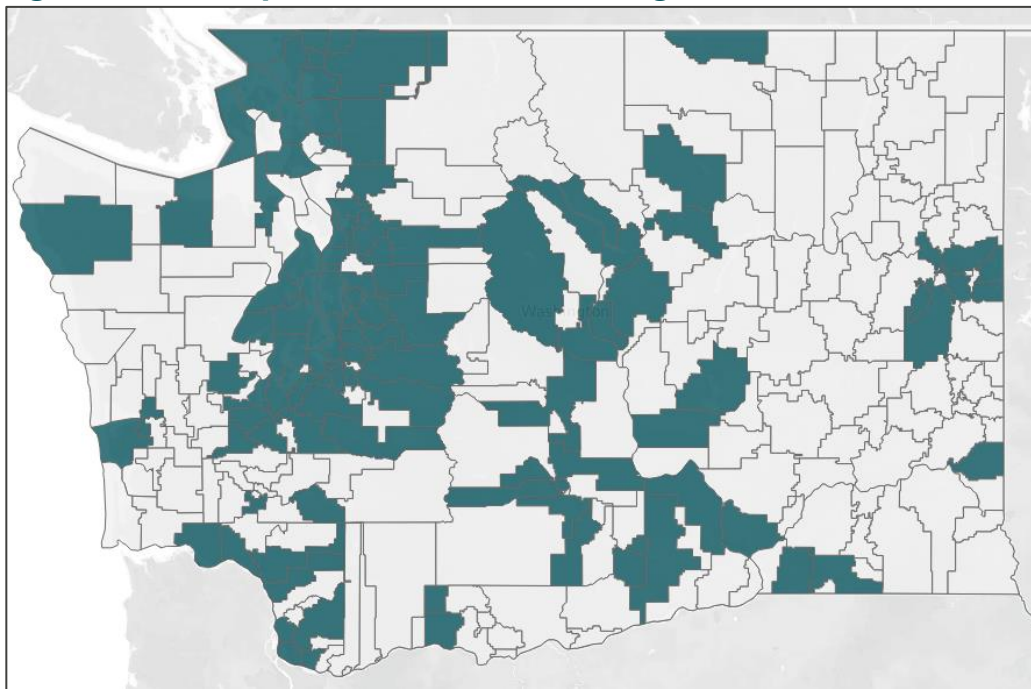
To honor tribal sovereignty and in accordance with Chapter 43.376 RCW, each tribe determines their own assessment proficiency levels and assessments.

UPDATE STATUS

Seal of Biliteracy

In 2021–22, 4,536 graduating seniors earned the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy. These figures include the number of students enrolled or previously enrolled in the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program and the languages spoken by those students. In the 2021–22 school year, 120 school districts reported awarding the Seal and 8 languages were tested. The top five languages tested were Spanish, Russian, Chinese-Mandarin, Vietnamese, and French. The top five districts awarding Seals were Bellevue (461), Seattle (411), Yakima (274), Lake Washington (270), and Everett (176).

Figure 1: Heatmap of 120 Districts Awarding the Seal, 2021–22



Key: Dark areas indicate districts which awarded one or more Seals in 2022.

Source: Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), 2022. Interactive map can also be found at on [Tableau Public](#).

Figure 2: Five-Year Trends of Top Five Languages Tested

| Language | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Spanish | 1008 | 1672 | 2281 | 1946 | 2190 | 2986 |
| Russian | 68 | 133 | 159 | 197 | 183 | 245 |
| Chinese-Mandarin | 80 | 29 | 56 | 206 | 167 | 195 |
| French | 193 | 132 | 144 | 189 | 114 | 168 |
| Vietnamese | 73 | 109 | 105 | 97 | 132 | 132 |
| Total | 1,422 | 2,075 | 2,745 | 2,635 | 2,786 | 3,726 |

Source: CEDARS, 2022.

Appendix A includes the full list of districts who reported data for 2021–22. Appendix B includes a full list of languages reported being tested in the 2021–22 school year.

Language Proficiency Assessment

Website Updates

In March 2022, OSPI unveiled a new [World Languages Proficiency Assessment Options](#) page on the OSPI website. This new page allows districts and families to search directly online for assessments by both language and assessment provider. Previously this information was available on multiple Excel spreadsheets but now all of this information is available in one searchable format.

Assessment Options

World Languages, along with Student Information, has worked to increase the number of assessment providers which qualify students for Competency-based Credits, the Seal of Biliteracy, or both. Newly approved assessments include Cambridge International, National Examination in World Languages (NEWL), STAMP Monolingual, and more Custom Tests. There are 18 total assessments available for students. The top 5 used assessments to earn the Seal were the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (3059), Advanced Placement (725), ALTA Language Services (319), International Baccalaureate (154), and ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (112). A complete list of all eligible assessments is in Appendix C.

Custom Testing

OSPI entered into a contract with Avant Assessment to provide Custom Tests for languages which have one or fewer available assessments. With support from Extempore, an online platform designed for language education, 17 districts had 38 students take a Custom Test, resulting in students earning a total of 125 Competency-based Credits. A complete list of all languages tested is available in Appendix D.

Competency-Based Credits in Languages Other than English

In 2021–21, 10,431 students earned at least one competency-based world language credit. Not all students who earned competency-based world language credits also earned the Seal.

A student might earn competency-based world language credit but not demonstrate the proficiency in the language needed to earn the Seal. While most students awarded the Seal probably also earned at least one competency-based world languages credit, not all students who earned competency-based world languages credits were awarded the Seal.

Students have earned competency credits in Spanish, Russian, German, Vietnamese, Tagalog, American Indian Languages, French, Japanese, and Ukrainian.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The Seal's recognition as an award of value for Washington state graduates is growing, as demonstrated by the gradual increase in the number of districts offering proficiency assessment and of students earning. OSPI will be asking to change the Seal from optional for districts to a mandatory program. Through the [Building a Multiliterate Washington through Statewide Dual Language Education, 2023–25 Biennial Operating Budget Decision Package](#) request, World Languages is asking for \$850,000 to provide equitable, statewide access to the Seal of Biliteracy and world language competency-based credits. The total cost of this component is \$175,000 in one-time funds for FY 2024, and \$625,000 each year for custom language testing.

This proposal provides funding to support:

- Contracts of up to \$10,000 each for up to 15 world languages educators who have experience and specialized knowledge in a variety of districts (for example, small, rural, multi-high school, institutional education, and online learning). These educators will support school districts with differentiated support and models to develop equitable language testing systems and knowledge of language proficiency development. They will also host statewide professional learning convenings. In addition, this would provide \$25,000 to fund regional convenings at each of the 9 educational service districts.
- Continued collaboration with Avant Assessment and Extempore to offer Custom Testing to meet the increasing demands related to languages less commonly taught and assessed. Part of this work is accepting requests for all languages with one or fewer available assessments, and the development of custom language testing for the approximately 2,500 students with less commonly tested languages at \$250 for each test.

OSPI will continue to develop and revise the Seal and competency testing/credit websites to keep districts and families notified of news, professional development opportunities, and guidelines for success in pursuing the Seal of Biliteracy. World Languages sends out a monthly newsletter to keep the greater Washington World Languages educator community informed of all updates. Finally, OSPI will continue to provide technical guidance to school districts, families, community members, and organizations in response to the increasing interest in the Seal.

In [Chapter 252, Laws of 2019](#) (High School Graduation Requirements), the Legislature created new graduation pathways and ways for students to demonstrate English ability. In order to support all pathways, World Languages has collaborated with Career and Technical Education, specifically Family and Consumer Sciences, to help both general high schools and skills centers to build out Translation and Interpretation (T&I) programs. Currently Sno Isle Skills Center has a language-neutral T&I class while Yakima Valley Tech has a Spanish for Medical Interpretation class. These can hopefully become models for other districts and skills centers around the state to provide language learning options for multilingual students beyond introductory course work. The American Translators Association has been invested and looks forward to continued collaboration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals and organizations should be commended for their efforts in helping grow the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy and competency-based world language credits, including but not limited to:

- Washington Association for Language Teaching (WAFLT)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
- National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NCSSFL)
- American Translators Association (ATA)

REFERENCES

Comprehensive Education Data and Research System. (2022). *High School Competency-based Credits* (vers. 2021–2022) [Data set]. CEDARS.

Comprehensive Education Data and Research System. (2022). *Seals of Biliteracy Earned* (vers. 2021–2022) [Data set]. CEDARS.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Districts Reporting Earned Seals of Biliteracy, SY2021–22

Aberdeen School District

Anacortes School District

Arlington School District

Auburn School District

Bainbridge Island School District

Battle Ground School District

Bellevue School District

Bellingham School District

Bethel School District

Blaine School District

Bremerton School District

Bridgeport School District

Burlington-Edison School District

Cascade School District

Central Kitsap School District

Central Valley School District

Cheney School District

Clover Park School District

East Valley School District (Spokane)

Eastmont School District

Eatonville School District

Edmonds School District

Ellensburg School District

Enumclaw School District

Everett School District

Evergreen School District (Clark)

Federal Way School District

Ferndale School District

Fife School District

Franklin Pierce School District

Grandview School District

Highland School District

Highline School District

Issaquah School District

Kalama School District

Kelso School District

Kent School District

Lake Chelan School District

Lake Stevens School District

Lake Washington Institute of Technology

Lake Washington School District

Longview School District

Lynden School District

Mabton School District

Manson School District

Marysville School District

Mead School District

Medical Lake School District

Mercer Island School District

Meridian School District

Monroe School District
Moses Lake School District
Mossyrock School District
Mount Baker School District
Mount Vernon School District
Mukilteo School District
Nine Mile Falls School District
Nooksack Valley School District
North Kitsap School District
North Mason School District
North Thurston Public Schools
Northshore School District
Oak Harbor School District
Ocosta School District
Okanogan School District
Olympia School District
Orcas Island School District
Oroville School District
Pasco School District
Peninsula School District
Port Angeles School District
Port Townsend School District
PRIDE Prep Charter School District
Prosser School District
Pullman School District
Puyallup School District
Quillayute Valley School District
Rainier Prep Charter School District

Renton School District
Richland School District
Ridgefield School District
Riverview School District
Rochester School District
Royal School District
San Juan Island School District
Seattle Public Schools
Sedro-Woolley School District
Selah School District
Shelton School District
Shoreline School District
Snohomish School District
Snoqualmie Valley School District
South Kitsap School District
Spokane School District
Steilacoom Hist. School District
Sultan School District
Sumner School District
Tacoma School District
Tahoma School District
Tenino School District
Toppenish School District
Touchet School District
Trout Lake School District
Tukwila School District
Tumwater School District
Vancouver School District

Vashon Island School District
 Wahkiakum School District
 Walla Walla Public Schools
 Wapato School District
 Waterville School District
 Wenatchee School District

West Valley School District (Yakima)
 White River School District
 White Salmon Valley School District
 Winlock School District
 Yakima School District
 Yelm School District

Appendix B: Seals-Earned Languages, SY2021–22

Student count for each language tested:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Spanish: 2986 | Samoan: 16 | Urdu: 5 |
| Russian: 245 | Hebrew, Modern: 15 | Polish: 4 |
| Mandarin: 195 | Romanian: 13 | Serbian: 4 |
| French: 168 | Rumanian: 13 | Tamil: 4 |
| Vietnamese: 132 | Pilipino/Filipino: 12 | Chin: 4 |
| Japanese: 96 | Indonesian: 9 | Bosnian: 3 |
| Korean: 86 | Marshallese: 9 | Albanian: 3 |
| Tagalog: 76 | Dari: 9 | Swedish: 3 |
| Ukrainian: 52 | Tigrinya: 9 | Mandinka: 3 |
| Chinese: 39 | Cantonese: 7 | Nepali: 3 |
| German: 31 | Mongolian: 7 | Yakima: 3 |
| Punjabi: 30 | Italian: 7 | Wolof: 2 |
| Somali: 30 | Finnish: 6 | Turkic: 2 |
| Hindi: 28 | Hungarian: 6 | Norwegian: 2 |
| Amharic: 24 | Bulgarian: 6 | Pashto: 2 |
| Arabic: 20 | Cambodian: 5 | Kinyarwanda: 2 |
| Swahili: 19 | Farsi: 5 | Bisaya: 2 |
| Portuguese: 19 | Oromo: 5 | Taiwanese: 2 |
| Turkish: 19 | Telugu: 5 | Dutch: 2 |
| American Sign Language: 17 | Thai: 5 | Chuuk: 2 |

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| Ilokano: 2 | Akan: 1 | Latin: 1 |
| Hmong: 1 | Armenian: 1 | Lithuanian: 1 |
| Fula: 1 | Balochi: 1 | Macedonian: 1 |
| Czech: 1 | Tedim: 1 | Malayalam: 1 |
| Danish: 1 | Shona: 1 | Unknown: 1 |
| Burmese: 1 | Khmer: 1 | Tok Pisin: 1 |
| Afrikaans: 1 | Lao: 1 | |

Appendix C: Language Proficiency Assessment Options

AAPPL - ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages

Advanced Placement Language and Culture (AP)

ALIRA - ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment

ALTA Language Services

American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI)

Cambridge International (CI)

Custom Testing

International Baccalaureate (IB)

National Examination in World Languages (NEWL)

Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)

Oral Proficiency Interview Computer (OPIc)

Oral Proficiency Interview for the Seal of Biliteracy (OPI SOBL)

Sign Language Proficiency Interview: American Sign Language (SLPI: ASL)

STAMP 3S & 4S - Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency

STAMP Monolingual

STAMP WS (Formerly WorldSpeak)

Tribal

Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)

Appendix D: Custom Testing Languages, SY 2021–22

Bisaya/Visaya

Cantonese

Fijian

Icelandic

Kosraean

Mandinka

Palauan

Pohnpeian

Q'anjob'al/Kanjobal

Sanskrit

Shona

Tedim

Tongan

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