south dakota
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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South Dakota
SEAL OF BILITERACY
Implementation Guide



Updated Oct. 2026

Introduction:

To recognize South Dakota's growing diverse population of students and highlight the importance of mastering multiple languages, the South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) has developed the South Dakota Seal of Biliteracy. The Seal of Biliteracy honors students' home languages and encourages students who are learning multiple languages to continue to pursue biliteracy skills and provides them the opportunity to demonstrate these skills. The seal is provided by the DOE to schools that request them for their students' diplomas.

Providing this opportunity for students will help them with college, career, and life opportunities post high school graduation. The South Dakota Seal of Biliteracy is a recognition by local school districts identifying students who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. Awarding the South Dakota Seal of Biliteracy encourages students to develop mastery in multiple languages. The South Dakota Department of Education has developed guidelines that are followed for schools interested in granting the Seal of Biliteracy.

Requirements for earning a South Dakota Seal of Biliteracy:

Any student who meets the following requirements is eligible:

- Students are on track to meet all South Dakota High School Graduation Requirements.
- Demonstrated English proficiency in one of the English assessments found in Table 1.
- Demonstrated proficiency in one or more languages found in Table 2.

Table 1- Demonstration of English proficiency:

English Assessment Option	Silver Seal of Biliteracy	Gold Seal of Biliteracy
SD State ELA Assessment	ELA Level 3	ELA Level 4
South Dakota English Language Proficiency Assessment	Composite score of 4.5	Composite score of 5.5 and above
ACT ELA (English, Reading, and Writing)	ELA score of 19	ELA score of 26

Table 2- Demonstrate proficiency in another language:

World Language Assessment Option	World Language(s) Assessed	Silver Seal of Biliteracy	Gold Seal of Biliteracy
Assessment of Performance towards proficiency in Languages AAPPL-ACTFL	Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish	Score of Intermediate Mid I-2 on all components.	Score of Intermediate High-I-5 on all components.
AP World Language and Culture Exam	Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish Language and Culture	Score of 3.0 or higher	Score of 5.0 or higher
Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency -STAMP 45 Test	Arabic, Mandarin Chinese (Traditional or Simplified), French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese (Brazilian), Russian, Spanish	Score of 5.0 or higher on all 4 parts (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing)	Score of 7.0 or higher on all 4 parts (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing)
American Sign Language Proficiency Interview ASLPI	American Sign Language	Level 4	Level 5
South Dakota Indigenous languages and Hutterisch language	See guidance below		

This is a working document that will be updated as needed. If a school is aware of an assessment that might be appropriate for this list, please share that information with DOE for possible inclusion in this chart.

A number of indigenous languages exist in South Dakota. School districts should collaborate with local tribes to develop methods for students to demonstrate proficiency. Hutterisch is another commonly spoken language in the state of South Dakota. School districts should collaborate with the colony community to develop methods for demonstrating proficiency.

Recommended Process for Awarding the Seal of Biliteracy:

The DOE recommends schools and districts observe the following steps to officially award the Seal of Biliteracy:

Planning & Setup (Before the School Year)

- **Designate a Coordinator:** Identify and assign a dedicated Seal of Biliteracy Contact Person to manage the program for your school or district.
- **Establish the Application Process:** Create a clear, student-friendly application process outlining exactly how and when students can apply to obtain the Seal.

Promotion & Engagement (Fall/Ongoing)

- **Promote to Families & Students:** Share program details, benefits, and the application process with students and families using newsletters, social media, and informational meetings.

Evaluation

- **Review Student Eligibility:** Audit student records, language assessment data, and requirements to determine final awardees.

Data Entry and Ordering (Spring/Graduation Prep)

- **Record in the Student Information System:** Log the designation in your student information system under Graduation Endorsement/State Seals in Infinite Campus for all qualifying students.
- **Order Diplomas Seals:** Submit the DOE Order Form to request physical South Dakota Seal of Biliteracy stickers to adhere to local diplomas.

Celebration

- **Celebrate Student Success:** Recognize and honor your students' bilingual accomplishments during graduation ceremonies or end of school year award nights!

NOTE: There is no official sign-up or registration with the DOE for schools and districts that wish to offer the Seal of Biliteracy to their students. However, schools and districts, are asked to provide year-end data to DOE.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Are South Dakota schools obligated to award the Seal of Biliteracy to interested students?
No, participation in the program is voluntary.

Who qualifies for the Seal of Biliteracy?
The DOE recommends that any student who meets the following requirements is eligible:

- Graduation Track: The student is on track to meet all South Dakota High School Graduation Requirements.
- English Proficiency: Demonstrated English proficiency through one of the approved assessments in Table 1.
- World Language Proficiency: Demonstrated proficiency in one or more world languages through an approved assessment in Table 2.

What are the steps to officially award the Seal of Biliteracy?
To successfully implement the program, the DOE recommends schools observe this 7-step workflow:

- Appoint Contact
- Create a local process
- Promote Opportunity
- Verify Data
- Identify designation in Student Information System
- Order the Seals
- Celebrate the students

How will schools obtain the actual seals?
Schools and districts will complete the DOE Order Form to order seals to adhere to their students' diplomas. Upon receipt of an order, DOE will mail the appropriate number of seals.

What are the responsibilities of a school's Seal of Biliteracy contact person?

- Informing families and students of the opportunity
- Overseeing the local application or process
- Collecting student Seal of Biliteracy data and information
- Verifying qualifications of students wanting the Seal of Biliteracy
- Ordering seals to adhere to local diploma
- Ensuring proper awarding of the Seal of Biliteracy to the students

Who will pay for the proficiency exams?
Proficiency exams may be paid for by the school district or the student or student's family.

When and how do students learn about the Seal of Biliteracy?

The Seal of Biliteracy school contact should provide information to students and families on how to earn the South Dakota Seal of Biliteracy. It is best to provide this information as students are entering middle and high school.

How do we assure access for the Seal of Biliteracy?

It is important that schools and districts ensure that ALL students have access to earning the South Dakota Seal of Biliteracy.

Accommodations, such as those already in place for the South Dakota state-required assessments of language, should be included for assessments used to qualify for South Dakota's Seal of Biliteracy. Technology provides the resources and means to make the assessments for the Seal of Biliteracy available to all students. For more information on state assessment information, visit: doe.sd.gov/Assessment.

If you have any questions, contact Yutzil Becker at Yutzil.Becker@state.sd.us.


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