

# Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



**Agenda Item:** G

**Date:** June 25, 2015

<b>Title</b>	Final Review of Criteria for Awarding the Seal of Biliteracy		
<b>Presenter</b>	Dr. Lisa Harris, Specialist for Foreign Languages		
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**Purpose of Presentation:**

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

**Previous Review or Action:**

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:

First Review: May 28, 2015

**Action Requested:**

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

**Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:**

	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
X	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Senate Bill 916 was signed into law by Governor Terry McAuliffe on March 23, 2015. The legislation requires the Board to establish criteria for awarding a diploma Seal of Biliteracy in time for any student graduating from a public high school in the Commonwealth in 2016 to be awarded such a diploma seal.

The revised Code is shown below in an abridged format to show only the areas specific to the Seal of Biliteracy. The full unabridged text of the legislation is shown in Attachment B, Appendix A.

*Code of Virginia*, § 22.1-253.13:4. Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements.

**1. That § 22.1-253.13:4 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows: § 22.1-253.13:4. Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements.**

E. In the exercise of its authority to recognize exemplary academic performance by providing for diploma seals, ~~the~~:

*4. The Board shall establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy to any student who demonstrates proficiency in English and at least one other language for the Board of Education-approved diplomas. The Board shall consider criteria including the student's (i) score on a College Board Advanced Placement foreign language examination, (ii) score on an SAT II Subject Test in a foreign language, (iii) proficiency level on an ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) measure or another nationally or internationally recognized language proficiency test, or (iv) cumulative grade point average in a sequence of foreign language courses approved by the Board.*

**2. That the Board of Education shall establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy pursuant to this act in time for any student graduating from a public high school in the Commonwealth in 2016 to be awarded such a diploma seal.**

The Standards of Accreditation (SOA) are being reviewed by the Board of Education, with the initiation at this meeting of a Fast Track regulatory review according to the Administrative Process Act for implementation of legislation only. The following language pertaining to the Seal of Biliteracy is included in the proposed revisions to the SOA:

*6. The Board of Education's Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one other language and meet additional criteria established by the Board. Such seal will be awarded to eligible students graduating from public high schools in the Commonwealth in 2016.*

**Summary of Important Issues:**

In the 2015 legislative session, § 22.1-253.13:4 of the *Code of Virginia* was amended and directs the Board of Education to establish criteria for awarding a diploma Seal of Biliteracy. The final legislation contains a second enactment clause that requires the Board to establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy in time for any student graduating from a public high school in the Commonwealth in 2016 to be awarded such a diploma seal.

In order to meet the timeline requirement of the legislation, and to allow the Board to consider the recommended criteria as part of the revisions to the Standards of Accreditation (SOA), the Virginia Department of Education convened an Advisory Committee to review and make recommendations regarding the criteria. During the meeting, the Committee considered draft criteria proposed by the stakeholder organizations based on legislative requirements. Discussion included a review of the national guidelines, demonstrating proficiency in both English and a second language, equity of access, assessment options, and design of the Seal.

Attachment A reflects the proposed criteria and guidance on issuing the Seal of Biliteracy. The

proposed guidance has been amended since the time of first review to include two adjustments to recommended testing level equivalencies. These adjustments are highlighted in yellow in Attachment A, and include:

- A change in the level of accepted score on assessments authorized through the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages from A2 to B1; and
- A change in the level of accepted score on the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) from 2.0 to 3.0.

Both of these changes were made following input from language experts to more closely align the minimum accepted score for these assessments to the base proficiency level of Intermediate-Mid on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency scale.

In addition, following the recommendation of language experts in American Sign Language (ASL), the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI:ASL) was added as acceptable evidence of proficiency with a score of intermediate or higher. This assessment is separate from and scored differently from the ASLPI already included in the list of acceptable evidence.

The section called Additional Recommendations was stricken as regulations already give localities options for the transcript format and content.

Attachment B, “Virginia Seal of Biliteracy Recommended Criteria” committee report, contains background information on the process used to develop the proposed criteria.

The committee reached consensus as follows on guidelines for implementing the Seal of Biliteracy in Virginia:

- Students should demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting state high school graduation requirements in English.
- Students should demonstrate proficiency in a world language other than English through one of a range of approved language assessment options, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and other national or international assessments at a level comparable to Intermediate Mid on the ACTFL Proficiency Scale.
- A list of approved assessments and target levels for the Seal should be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and be published by the Virginia Department of Education.
- School divisions should include a notation on the student’s official high school transcripts indicating attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy.

Based on the Committee’s recommended guidelines, the Department recommends the following criteria:

*The Board of Education’s Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency by a graduating high school student in one or more languages in addition to English, and certifies that the graduate meets all of the following criteria:*

- a) The Board of Education’s Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who earn either a Board of Education-approved diploma and (i) pass all required End-of-Course Assessments in English reading and writing at the proficient or higher level; and (ii) be proficient at the intermediate-mid level or higher in one or more languages other than English, as demonstrated through an assessment from a list to be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.*

- b) *For purposes of this article, "foreign language" means a language other than English, and includes American Sign Language.*

**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

The agency's existing resources can absorb this fiscal responsibility at this time. The diploma seals are printed by a third party contractor and school divisions order the seals directly from the contractor. The Department pays the printing and production costs for all current diploma seals.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

If the Board accepts the Superintendent's recommendation, the Department will notify school divisions of the approved criteria for awarding a Seal of Biliteracy via a Superintendent's Memorandum and by posting the information on the appropriate sections of the Department's Web site. The Department will proceed with the design of the Seal and take all necessary actions to ensure that the Seal is available for students in the 2016 graduating class.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the proposed criteria for awarding the Seal of Biliteracy.

**Rationale for Action:**

The amended *Code of Virginia* requires the Board of Education to establish criteria for awarding a diploma Seal of Biliteracy beginning with the 2016 graduating class. The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes a student who has attained proficiency in both English and one or more other world languages<sup>1</sup>. The Seal may take the form of a gold seal or notation that appears on the transcript and diploma of the graduating senior. It is a statement of accomplishment that helps to signal evidence of a student's readiness for career and college, and to engage as a global citizen.

The proposed criteria were developed by an Advisory Committee comprised of 27 representatives of various stakeholder groups from around the Commonwealth. The Committee came to near unanimous consensus of the proposed criteria, which are also reflective of the recommendations in the national guidelines for awarding a Seal of Biliteracy.

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<sup>1</sup> The term world language is used in place of foreign language when not referencing regulations or Code.

## Proposed Guidelines for Issuing a Virginia Seal of Biliteracy

### Part I: Legislation

HB 1351 and SB 916 (2015) direct the Board of Education to establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy.

*Code of Virginia*, § 22.1-253.13:4. Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements.

**1. That § 22.1-253.13:4 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows: § 22.1-253.13:4. Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements.**

E. In the exercise of its authority to recognize exemplary academic performance by providing for diploma seals, ~~the~~:

*4. The Board shall establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy to any student who demonstrates proficiency in English and at least one other language for the Board of Education-approved diplomas. The Board shall consider criteria including the student's (i) score on a College Board Advanced Placement foreign language examination, (ii) score on an SAT II Subject Test in a foreign language, (iii) proficiency level on an ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) measure or another nationally or internationally recognized language proficiency test, or (iv) cumulative grade point average in a sequence of foreign language courses approved by the Board.*

**2. That the Board of Education shall establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy pursuant to this act in time for any student graduating from a public high school in the Commonwealth in 2016 to be awarded such a diploma seal.**

### Part II: Proposed Criteria

*The Board of Education's Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency by a graduating high school student in one or more languages in addition to English, and certifies that the graduate meets all of the following criteria:*

- a. The Board of Education's Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who earn a Board of Education-approved diploma and (i) pass all required End-of-Course Assessments in English reading and writing at the proficient or higher level; and (ii) be proficient at the intermediate-mid level or higher in one or more languages other than English, as demonstrated through an assessment from a list to be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.*
- b. For purposes of this article, "foreign language" means a language other than English, and includes American Sign Language.*

## Proposed Guidelines for Issuing a Virginia Seal of Bilingualism

### Part III: Proposed Guidance

**Criteria (i):** pass all required End-of-Course Assessments in English reading and writing at the proficient or higher level

#### Guidance

Students should demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting English language arts requirements for high school graduation through whatever means are currently in place to document attainment of that requirement.

**Criteria (ii):** be proficient at the intermediate-mid level or higher in one or more languages other than English, as demonstrated through an assessment from a list to be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

#### Guidance

Students should demonstrate proficiency in a world language other than English through one of a range of approved language assessment options, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and other national or international assessments at a level comparable to Intermediate Mid on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines.

- pass a foreign language AP examination with a score of three or higher or an IB examination with a score of four or higher; or
- score 600 or higher on a Latin SAT II test (SAT Subject Test); or
- receive a rating of Intermediate Mid or higher on a nationally or internationally available assessment of proficiency across language skills based on ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines; or
- pass a foreign government's approved language exam, or a nation's high school level standardized exam in a language from a country in which the language is taught in school at a level comparable to Intermediate-mid or higher on the ACTFL proficiency scale; or
- provide evidence of success at the **A2 B1 level** or higher on an assessment authorized through the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; or
- provide evidence of attaining **Level 2- 3.0** or higher on the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI);
- **provide evidence of attaining an Intermediate level or higher rating on the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI:ASL); or**
- if the school division can certify to the Superintendent that the test meets the rigor of a four-year high school course of study in that foreign language, passing a school division language examination that, at a minimum, assesses speaking, reading, listening, and writing in a language other than English at the Intermediate-mid proficiency level or higher. Any school division language examination offered as evidence for awarding the Seal of Bilingualism shall be approved in advance by the Superintendent for the purpose of determining proficiency in a language other than English.

## **Proposed Guidelines for Issuing a Virginia Seal of Biliteracy**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will maintain a list of acceptable national and international tests with qualifying scores for reference in awarding the Seal of Biliteracy. The list of approved tests will be reviewed on a regular basis and published on the VDOE website for use by school divisions.

### **Additional Guidance**

School divisions may include a notation on the student's official high school transcripts indicating attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BRIEFING

# Virginia Seal of Biliteracy Recommended Criteria

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Recommendations to the Superintendent of Public Instruction from the Seal of Biliteracy Advisory Committee, which met on April 17, 2015.

Dr. Lisa A. Harris, Specialist for Foreign Languages and International Education

5/28/2015

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the 2015 legislative session, bills were introduced by Representative David I. Ramadan in the House of Representatives and Senator Jennifer T. Wexton in the Senate. Senate Bill 916 passed and was used as the vehicle for the final bill, which passed both houses in March and was signed into law by Governor Terry McAuliffe on March 23, 2015.

The final legislation contains a second enactment clause that requires the Board of Education to establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy in time for any student graduating from a public high school in the Commonwealth in 2016 to be awarded such a diploma seal. In order to meet the timeline requirement of the legislation, and to allow the Board to consider the recommended criteria as part of the revisions to the Standards of Accreditation (SOA), the Virginia Department of Education convened an Advisory Committee to review and make recommendations regarding the criteria.

During the meeting, the Committee considered draft criteria proposed by the stakeholder organizations based on legislative requirements and the national guidelines. Brief presentations were made on a variety of topics, including Introduction to the VA State Seal Legislation, Overview of National Efforts, and Understanding Proficiency. Discussion followed and included a review of the national guidelines, demonstrating proficiency in both English and a second language, equity of access, assessment options, and design of the Seal.

The committee reached consensus as follows on criteria to recommend to Superintendent Steven R. Staples for implementing the Seal of Biliteracy in Virginia:

- Students should demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting state high school graduation requirements in English.
- Students should demonstrate proficiency in a world language other than English through one of a range of approved language assessment options, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), other national or international assessments at a level comparable to Intermediate Mid on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines.
- A list of approved assessments and target levels for the Seal should be available from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).
- Include a notation on the student's official high school transcripts indicating attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy.

The committee recommends the following criteria:

*The Board of Education's Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency by a graduating high school student in one or more languages in addition to English, and certifies that the graduate meets all of the following criteria:*

- a. The Board of Education's Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who earn either a Board of Education-approved diploma and (i) pass all required End-of-Course Assessments in English reading and writing at the proficient or higher level; and (ii) be proficient at the intermediate-mid level or higher in one or more languages other than English, as demonstrated through an assessment from a list to be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.*
- b. For purposes of this article, "foreign language" means a language other than English, and includes American Sign Language.*

In addition, the Committee recommends including a provision for a notation on the student's official high school transcripts indicating attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy.

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND AND TIMELINE

In October 2011, California instituted the nation's first Seal of Biliteracy, which honors graduating seniors with a gold insignia on their diplomas from the Superintendent of Public Instruction if they show evidence of their academic proficiency in English and at least one other world language. In February 2012, The National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) commended California for being the first state in the nation to pass legislation allowing graduating seniors to qualify for the State Seal of Biliteracy award. NABE strongly encouraged all of their state affiliates and members to join the Seal of Biliteracy movement through the recognition of bilingual, biliterate students.

On March 16, 2012, the President of the Virginia Foreign Language Supervisors Association (VFLSA) contacted the Virginia Department of Education specialist for foreign languages to initiate discussion of a Virginia State Seal of Biliteracy. At that time, the Superintendent indicated a willingness to review the topic when the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) were opened for a comprehensive review. On May 30, 2012, the ESL Coordinator for the Office of Program Administration and Accountability indicated support for the Seal for English Language Learners.

In July 2012, a representative from Chesterfield County public schools contacted the specialist for foreign languages to ask about a possible Seal of Biliteracy for Virginia after reading news accounts of legislative action in New York State to implement a Seal of Biliteracy there. Between July 2012 and May 2013, the Department received e-mails and phone calls from several more school divisions seeking to support a Virginia Seal of Biliteracy. The response to each inquiry at the time indicated we were waiting for the SOA to be opened for comprehensive review and we informed divisions that they could consider local options. Fairfax County then initiated the process to develop a local Seal. During this period, several other states also began the process to implement a State Seal, including Washington State and Illinois.

On May 6, 2013, a Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) was filed and a public comment period was opened for a Comprehensive Review of the SOA. At this time, a draft of proposed wording for a Virginia Seal of Biliteracy was developed with input from the Specialist for Foreign Languages, ESL Coordinator, Director of Humanities and Early Childhood, Director of Program Administration and Accountability, and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. Additional input was gathered from the Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications.

In March 2014, the Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA) formed a task force of representatives from Stakeholder groups from around Virginia to advocate for a State Seal of Biliteracy. In September 2014, representatives from three of the organizations

participating in the task force sent letters to Dr. Steven R. Staples, superintendent of public instruction, advocating and requesting support for the State Seal. The president of the VFLSA lobbied for and obtained a sponsor for a bill to add a Seal of Biliteracy to the *Code of Virginia*.

As seen in the timeline above, there has been a growing interest across the Commonwealth in establishing a State Seal of Biliteracy for Virginia. A number of state and national organizations have formally endorsed a Virginia Seal of Biliteracy, including

- The Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA)
- The Virginia Foreign Language Supervisors Association (VFLSA)
- The National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL)
- The National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NADSFL)
- The Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS)

In the 2015 legislative session, bills were introduced by Representative David I. Ramadan in the House of Representatives and Senator Jennifer T. Wexton in the Senate. Senate Bill 916 passed and was used as the vehicle for the final bill, which passed both houses in March and was signed into law by Governor Terry McAuliffe on March 23, 2015.

The final legislation contains a second enactment clause that requires the Board to establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy in time for any student graduating from a public high school in the Commonwealth in 2016 to be awarded such a diploma seal. In order to meet the timeline requirement of the legislation, and to allow the Board to consider the recommended criteria as part of the revisions to the SOA, the Department convened an Advisory Committee to review and make recommendations regarding the criteria.

## WHAT IS THE SEAL OF BILITERACY?

The definition of *biliteracy* from the USLegal definitions Web site is given as follows: “Biliteracy is the ability to read and write proficiently in two languages. A biliterate is a person who is proficient in two different languages. Fluency in both reading and writing are present in biliteracy. Usually a biliterate has knowledge and skill to read and write in one's home language and in a second language.”

The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes a student who has attained proficiency in both English and one or more other world languages. The Seal may take the form of a gold seal or notation that appears on the transcript and diploma of the graduating senior. It is a statement of accomplishment that helps to signal evidence of a student’s readiness for career and college, and to engage as a global citizen.

## VIRGINIA LEGISLATION

The legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor is shown below in an abridged format in Figure 1 to show only the areas specific to the Seal of Biliteracy. The full unabridged text of the legislation is shown in Appendix A.

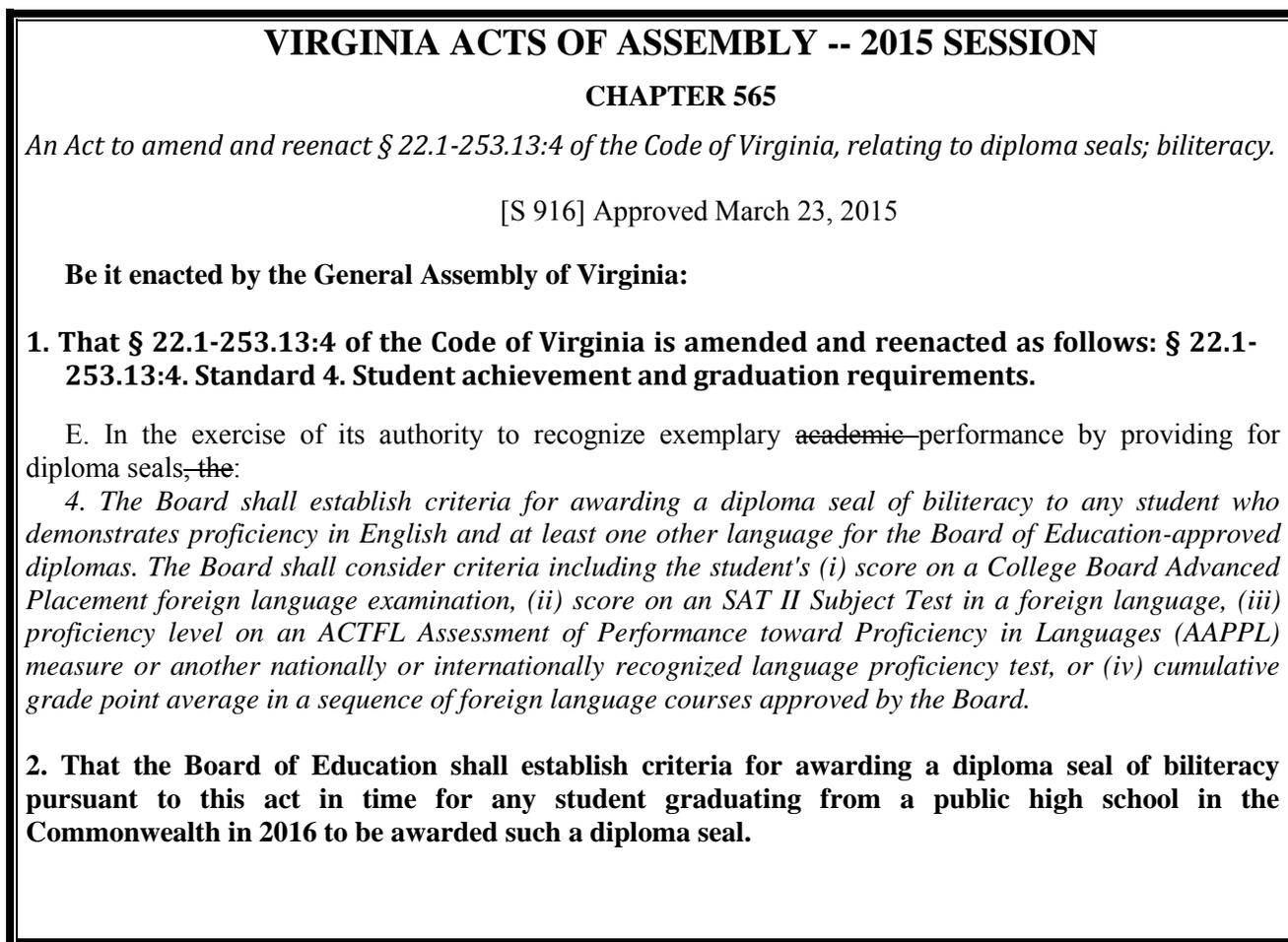


FIGURE 1: VIRGINIA LEGISLATION

## NATIONAL GUIDELINES

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. These draft guidelines, included as Appendix B, helped guide the discussion of the Virginia recommended criteria.

## SEAL OF BILITERACY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee convened on April 17, 2015, in Richmond, Virginia. The full committee is comprised of 27 representatives of various stakeholder groups from around the Commonwealth, of whom 20 attended the full day work session in April. Each committee member brought a range of knowledge and skills to assist in completing the assigned tasks. Table 1 shows the general background knowledge of the team at the start of the meeting. Appendix C is a full list of committee members with their affiliations.

**TABLE 1: COMMITTEE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**

What is a "Seal of Biliteracy"?	
A. I know what this is and have a good idea of the purpose for it.	63%
B. I have heard about it and have some idea what the purpose is for it.	32%
C. I have heard about it but have no idea what the purpose is for it.	5%
D. I know nothing about it.	0%
How familiar are you with the National Guidelines?	
A. I have read them and I am familiar with the recommendations in the document.	26%
B. I have heard about them and have some idea what they say.	53%
C. I have heard about them but have no idea what they say.	21%
D. I know nothing about them.	0%

The committee work centered around six pre-selected tasks designed to generate discussion of the entire concept of the Seal of Biliteracy from multiple viewpoints. The six areas of discussion and the associated essential question for each topic are shown in Table 2 below. The agenda with the list of topics and discussion items is located in Appendix D.

**TABLE 2: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Essential Question</b>
Purpose and Rationale	What does the Seal of Biliteracy mean for Virginia?
Pathway to Awards	How will students earn the Seal of Biliteracy?
Criteria for Granting Awards	How will students demonstrate biliteracy?
Demonstrating proficiency	What assessments and scores best reflect the attainment of the target level of proficiency?
Award design and Presentation	What should the Seal and any associated awards look like?
Endorsements and Outreach	Who will support the award? How will students know about the Seal?

## **PURPOSE AND RATIONALE**

The Advisory Committee submitted comments to be included with any Purpose and Rationale statements to be used in communications about the Seal. A full list of the submitted comments is located in Appendix E: Committee Comments; Task 1: Establishing Purpose and Rationale. The committee selected the Purpose Statement as written in the national guidelines to be sufficient without amendment for Virginia. The Vision and Rationale statements incorporate comments selected by the Committee that reflect the needs of Virginia’s various stakeholder groups.

### **PURPOSE**

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. The Seal serves to certify attainment of biliteracy for students, employers and institutions of higher education. 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.

### **VISION**

The mission of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction, in cooperation with their partners, is to develop policies and provide leadership that improve student achievement and prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education and the workplace. In support of this mission, the vision of the Seal of Biliteracy Advisory Board is to establish a means by which students can be recognized as proficient in more than one language. The Seal symbolizes the value placed on the ability to communicate and interact in diverse linguistic and cultural communities within local and global contexts.

### **RATIONALE**

In an increasingly connected world, Virginia’s international education and global initiatives prepare Virginia students to live, work and participate in the world economy. By recognizing students who develop literacy and multilingual skills, the prestige that comes with a State Seal program encourages students to develop a high level of global, linguistic, cultural, and communicative competence. Literacy in two or more languages represents a challenging academic standard. Second and third language development contributes to cognitive development, which in turn enables students to participate more fully in a global arena.

Maintaining and increasing Virginia’s economic prosperity requires citizens to be more skillful today, more globally engaged, and hence, more competent to take on the challenges of the rapidly evolving global realities. Consciously orienting our K-12 education policy towards the global economic challenge is a necessity. It is no longer sufficient for students to demonstrate competence on standardized tests that measure their ability to succeed in a local

economy; it has become paramount for Virginia’s students to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to successfully enter college, the work force, and participate as active citizens in an increasingly interdependent world. Language proficiency and intercultural competence are skills that provide a foundation for college and career readiness in any field, at home or abroad.

The School for International Studies at the University of Washington states that the Seal of Biliteracy “recognizes, validates and honors our rich and diverse language assets, promotes the development of cross-cultural understanding, and benefits employers through the development of staff who are proficient in more than one language.” Around the country, the State Seal of Biliteracy is becoming an increasingly recognized symbol of academic excellence.

## **PATHWAY TO AWARDS**

In addition to the Seal of Biliteracy that marks attainment of high level mastery of two or more languages, schools and districts in other states are also instituting Bilingual Pathway Awards, recognizing significant steps towards developing biliteracy along a student’s trajectory from preschool into high school.

The Committee was asked to respond to the discussion question “Should this committee draft recommendations to the Board for Pathway Awards?” The results of this poll were mixed, with 40 percent in favor, 30 percent opting to postpone discussion until after the Seal has been in place for a period of time, 12 percent against, and 18 percent not sure.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

After discussion, the consensus was to delay any recommendations for this area until the Seal has been in place for a period of time.

## **CRITERIA FOR GRANTING AWARDS**

### **UNDERSTANDING PROFICIENCY**

To ensure that each committee member was considering the criteria with the same understanding, the discussion began with a brief overview of proficiency as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The discussion included the concept of proficiency development in relationship to time spent studying the language as demonstrated in Figure 2, and how the ACTFL “Inverted Pyramid” shown in Figure 3 illustrates the increasing breadth and depth for each sublevel. The ACTFL guidelines define proficiency as a “...description of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.” There are five major levels of proficiency in the ACTFL guidelines:

- Novice (Low, Mid, High)

- Intermediate (Low, Mid High)
- Advanced (Low, Mid, High)
- Superior
- Distinguished

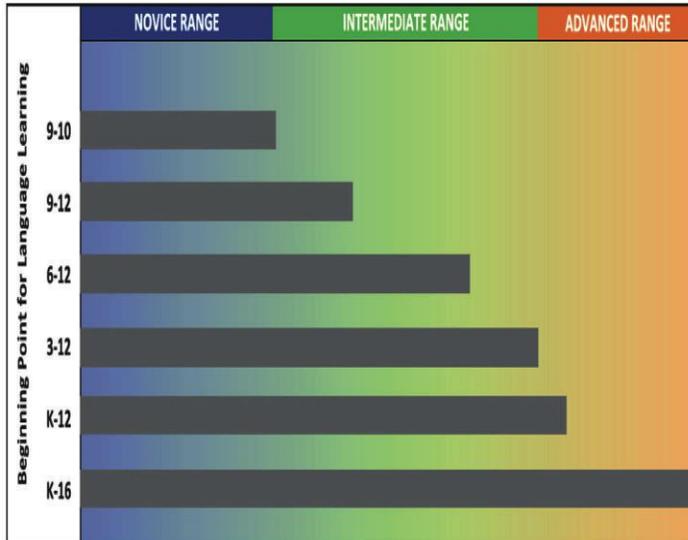


FIGURE 2: PROFICIENCY OVER TIME

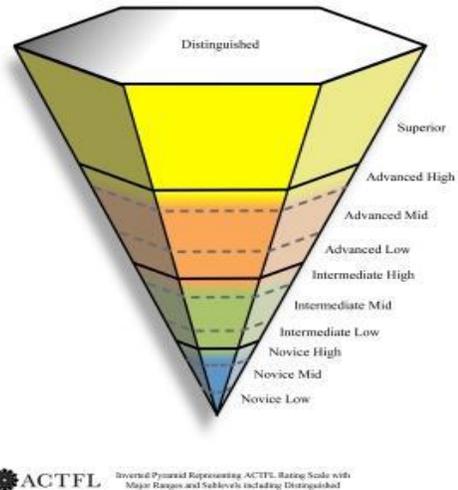


FIGURE 3: ACTFL INVERTED PYRAMID

## DEMONSTRATING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

The committee began deliberations by first discussing how students should demonstrate proficiency in English as required by the legislation. Consensus was quickly reached on this criterion. Specific comments are located in Appendix E: Task 3A.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that students demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting English language arts requirements for high school graduation through whatever means are currently in place to document attainment of that requirement.

## DEMONSTRATING PROFICIENCY IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

The Committee began discussions of this point by first reviewing the results of a survey conducted by the Virginia Foreign Language Supervisors Association (VFLSA). The VFLSA discussed the legislation at its annual meeting in March 2015 and subsequently surveyed the membership regarding draft criteria. The survey was conducted online and 26 members of the VFLSA responded to the survey. Members include division-level foreign language supervisors and teacher leaders who serve as a designee for their division. Table 3 is a summary of the responses from the VFLSA members.

After reviewing the VFLSA results, the committee members were then asked to respond as to their level of agreement with each criterion. Any item with less than 90 percent agreement was discussed in small groups and then in the full committee. At the conclusion of each small group discussion, committee members gave written comment on each item presented. The collected comments are listed in Appendix E.

The Committee discussed in depth the issue of seat-time credits. There was 100 percent agreement that seat-time credits are not an adequate way of demonstrating proficiency as Virginia's *Foreign Language Standards of Learning* and diploma credits are not tied a specific proficiency target. Since there is not one state-sanctioned grading scale, using the grade point average (GPA) would not provide consistency. The grading scale is a local decision. Some divisions weight grades for honors or AP levels, while others don't. The Committee also discussed the issue of cost, especially for smaller divisions to offer the proficiency assessments.

The Committee also thoroughly discussed the option of including other national and international assessments as an option. There was much discussion around the inclusion of locally developed assessments. The Committee was mixed in this response and no consensus was reached. The Committee responses to the VFLSA recommended criteria are summarized in Table 4.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

At the conclusion of the discussion period, the Committee reached consensus on the following recommendations:

- A score of three or higher on a College Board Advanced Placement foreign language examination should be accepted as evidence of proficiency.
- The SAT II Subject Test in a foreign language should be accepted as evidence of proficiency for Latin, but not for modern languages.
- Proficiency level of Intermediate-Mid or higher on an AAPPL measure or another recognized language proficiency test should be accepted as evidence of proficiency.
- A cumulative grade point average in a sequence of foreign language courses should not be accepted as proof of proficiency. If the Board strongly desires to include an option for GPA as a proxy for proficiency, then require a cumulative GPA of 3.5+ in a sequence of at least four foreign language courses that includes an AP or IB level course.
- The Department should maintain a list of acceptable national and international tests (and levels) that divisions could refer to in qualifying students to earn the Seal of Biliteracy. In order to provide flexibility over time, the list of approved tests should be housed at the Department rather than trying to list all of them out specifically in the SOA. A process should be established for adding or changing approved tests on a language-by-language basis through the Department's foreign language specialist and published on a regular basis for use by school divisions.

**TABLE 3: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE VFLSA**

<p>The Virginia General Assembly recently approved a new Seal of Biliteracy for students who demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one other language. The legislation requires the Board of Education to consider several possible criteria, which are annotated below with notes from the Virginia Foreign Language Supervisors Association (VFLSA).</p> <p>VFLSA believes that meaningful proficiency means being able to create with language, not simply using a few memorized phrases but effectively engaging in spoken, written, and person-to-person communication. As such, VFLSA recommends using Intermediate-Mid (on the ACTFL proficiency scale) as a baseline for judging a student as “proficient” and has recommended test scores that correlate with Intermediate Mid or higher.</p>	
Criteria to be considered by Board	Discussion/recommendations from VFLSA
(i) score on a College Board Advanced Placement foreign language examination	<b>INCLUDE.</b> <a href="#">Guidance from ACTFL</a> indicates a rough correlation of Intermediate-Mid skills for students scoring a 3 or higher on AP tests. AP tests are already in wide use around Virginia.
(ii) score on an SAT II Subject Test in a foreign language	<b>INCLUDE.</b>
(iii) proficiency level on an ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) measure or another nationally or internationally recognized language proficiency test	<b>INCLUDE.</b> A list of specific tests recommended for approval can be found <a href="#">here</a> . With the exception of classical languages such as Latin, all three communicative modes (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) should be assessed as well as all four communicative skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening).
(iv) cumulative grade point average in a sequence of foreign language courses approved by the Board	<b>DO NOT INCLUDE.</b> VFLSA believes that “seat time” is not an indication of actual language proficiency (how students function using language.)  If required, then cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher in a sequence of at least three sequential foreign language courses that includes at least one AP or IB level course.
<p>VFLSA further recommends that a process be established for adding or changing approved tests on a language-by-language basis through the Department’s foreign language specialist and that the list be published on a regular basis for use by Virginia school divisions.</p>	

TABLE 4: DRAFT CRITERIA FROM COMMITTEE

Criterion	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Meaningful proficiency means being able to create with language, not simply using a few memorized phrases but effectively engaging in spoken, written, and person-to-person communication. Intermediate-Mid (on the ACTFL proficiency scale) should be the baseline for judging a student as "proficient".	93%	7%	0
A score of three or higher on a College Board Advanced Placement foreign language examination should be accepted as evidence of proficiency.	86%	13%	0
The SAT II Subject Test in a foreign language should be accepted as evidence of proficiency.	0%	86%	13%
Proficiency level on an AAPPL measure or another recognized language proficiency test should be accepted as evidence of proficiency.	86%	0	13%
A cumulative grade point average in a sequence of foreign language courses approved by the Board should be accepted as evidence of proficiency.	0	100%	0
IF the Board strongly desires to include an option for "seat time" as a proxy for proficiency, then require a cumulative GPA of 3.5+ in a sequence of at least three foreign language courses that includes an AP or IB level course.	93%	0	7%
A process should be established for adding or changing approved tests on a language-by-language basis through the Department's foreign language specialist and published on a regular basis for use by school divisions.	100%	0	0

## TWO-TIER MODEL

During the working lunch, the members of the committee were asked to consider and discuss a proposal in Utah to offer two levels of the Seal:

- Gold, Intermediate-Mid: For students who wait until secondary school to start a world language; or heritage students that have average proficiency in their native language
- Platinum, Advanced-Low: For students who start in Dual Language Immersion programs, or students who have higher proficiency in their native language other than English

The discussion was very rich and many points of view came to light. There was genuine interest in the possibility of offering a higher level Seal. This would both recognize the many

ELL and heritage language learners who have received Advanced level ratings on the ACTFL tests, for example, as well as provide an incentive to students in the growing number of Dual Language Immersion programs in the state to continue their language study through high school with the goal of reaching advanced proficiency before college. The committee had the following concerns or reservations about a two-tiered system:

- Concern over equity across the state. There is no state-level support for Dual Language Immersion programs and only a few divisions have them.
- Concern over managing a two-tiered system.
- Concern over whether or not the higher level Seal would devalue the lower level.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends staying with a single tier gold seal for now.

## AWARD DESIGN AND PRESENTATION

The Committee considered various options for representing the Seal of Biliteracy. After reviewing the current Seal designs as shown in Figure 4, the Committee made recommendations and considered other options including:

- Gold Seal (sticker) for the diploma
- Option of offering a Biliteracy medallion
- Signed Certificate with the criteria (tests) and results that qualified the student for the Seal with a digital badge or option to attach the gold seal

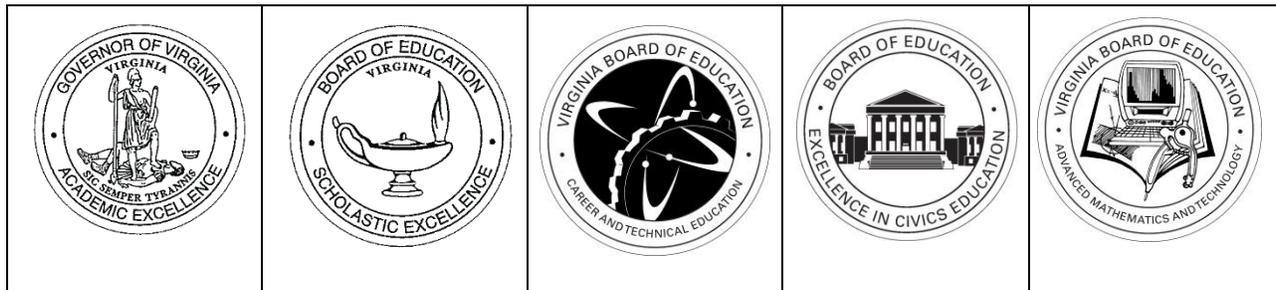
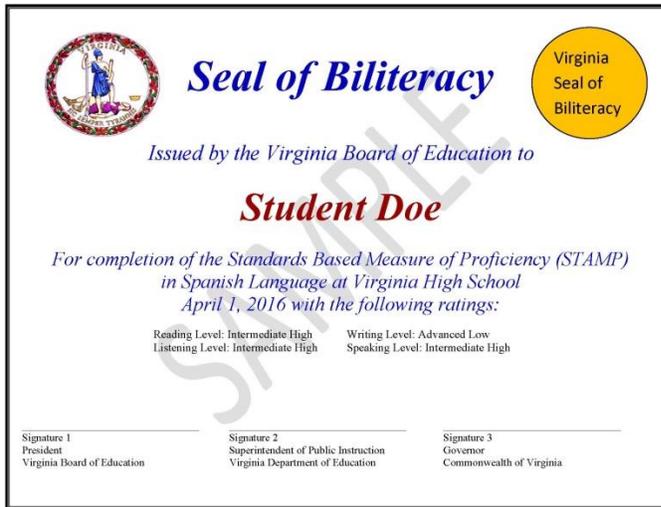


FIGURE 4: EXAMPLES: OTHER VIRGINIA DIPLOMA SEALS

The committee made several recommendations as to the graphics to include in the Seal design. The most frequent recommendation was to include a world or globe, as well as to highlight the word “biliteracy” prominently. The Committee also favored making a certificate available that would document the proficiency levels attained in each assessed area, similar to the example shown in Figure 5.



**FIGURE 5: SAMPLE CERTIFICATE**

## RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends having a gold seal similar in style to the other diploma seals. The Committee also recommends adding the option for a certificate if the technology exists to do so in a cost efficient manner. The Committee further recommends that information be provided to school divisions on options for medallions and wallet cards to be made available at their discretion and cost.

In addition, the Committee recommends that the Board consider adding a provision for a notation indicating attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy on a student’s official high school transcripts.

## ENDORSEMENTS AND OUTREACH

The final task for the Committee was to consider how to involve stakeholder groups in supporting the Seal of Biliteracy. The members made recommendations for including various groups and how best to communicate with them. The comments pertaining to this area are included in Appendix E: Task 6.

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee was diverse geographically, linguistically, and professionally. They worked exceptionally well together and gave careful consideration to all options. By the end of the day, there was clear consensus on most criteria. With the consideration of all input, the committee makes the following recommendations:

*The Board of Education's Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency by a graduating high school student in one or more languages in addition to English, and certifies that the graduate meets all of the following criteria:*

- a. The Board of Education's Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who earn either a Board of Education-approved diploma and (i) pass all required End-of-Course Assessments in English reading and writing at the proficient or higher level; and (ii) be proficient at the intermediate-mid level or higher in one or more languages other than English, as demonstrated through an assessment from a list to be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.*
  
- b. For purposes of this article, "foreign language" means a language other than English, and includes American Sign Language.*

The Committee recommends that a list of approved assessments and acceptable evidence of proficiency be maintained by the Virginia Department of Education and made available to school divisions. A sample list is located in Appendix E and includes the following recommended options:

- pass a foreign language Advanced Placement examination with a score of three or higher or an International Baccalaureate examination with a score of four or higher; or
- score 600 or higher on a Latin SAT II test (SAT Subject Test); or
- receive a rating of Intermediate-Mid or higher on a nationally or internationally available assessment of proficiency across language skills based on The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines; or
- pass a foreign government's approved language exam, or a nation's high school level standardized exam in a language from a country in which the language is taught in school at a level comparable to Intermediate-mid or higher on the ACTFL proficiency scale; or
- provide evidence of success at the A2 level or higher on an assessment authorized through the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; or
- provide evidence of attaining Level 2 or higher on the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview; or
- if the school division can certify to the Superintendent that the test meets the rigor of a four-year high school course of study in that foreign language, passing a school division language examination that, at a minimum, assesses speaking, reading, listening, and writing in a language other than English at the Intermediate-mid proficiency level or higher. Any school division language examination offered as evidence for awarding the Seal of Biliteracy shall be approved in advance by the Superintendent for the purpose of determining proficiency in a language other than English.

# APPENDIX A: VIRGINIA LEGISLATION

## VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY – 2015 SESSION

### CHAPTER 565

*An Act to amend and reenact § 22.1-253.13:4 of the Code of Virginia, relating to diploma seals; biliteracy.*

[S 916]

Approved March 23, 2015

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 22.1-253.13:4 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 22.1-253.13:4. Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements.**

A. Each local school board shall award diplomas to all secondary school students, including students who transfer from nonpublic schools or from home instruction, who earn the units of credit prescribed by the Board of Education, pass the prescribed tests, and meet such other requirements as may be prescribed by the local school board and approved by the Board of Education. Provisions shall be made to facilitate the transfer and appropriate grade placement of students from other public secondary schools, from nonpublic schools, or from home instruction as outlined in the standards for accreditation. Course credits earned for online courses taken in the Department of Education's Virtual Virginia program shall transfer to Virginia public schools in accordance with provisions of the standards for accreditation. Further, reasonable accommodation to meet the requirements for diplomas shall be provided for otherwise qualified students with disabilities as needed.

In addition, each local school board may devise, vis-a-vis the award of diplomas to secondary school students, a mechanism for calculating class rankings that takes into consideration whether the student has taken a required class more than one time and has had any prior earned grade for such required class expunged.

Each local school board shall notify the parents of rising eleventh and twelfth grade students of (i) the number and subject area requirements of standard and verified units of credit required for graduation pursuant to the standards for accreditation and (ii) the remaining number and subject area requirements of such units of credit the individual student requires for graduation.

B. Students identified as disabled who complete the requirements of their individualized education programs shall be awarded special diplomas by local school boards.

Each local school board shall notify the parent of such students with disabilities who have an individualized education program and who fail to meet the requirements for a standard or advanced studies diploma of the student's right to a free and appropriate education to age 21, inclusive, pursuant to Article 2 (§ 22.1-213 et seq.) of Chapter 13.

C. Students who have completed a prescribed course of study as defined by the local school board shall be awarded certificates of program completion by local school boards if they are not eligible to receive a Board of Education-approved diploma.

Each local school board shall provide notification of the right to a free public education for students who have not reached 20 years of age on or before August 1 of the school year, pursuant to Chapter 1 (§ 22.1-1 et seq.), to the parent of students who fail to graduate or who have failed to achieve the number of verified units of credit required for graduation as provided in the standards for accreditation. If such student who does not graduate or achieve such verified units of credit is a student for whom English is a second language, the local school board shall notify the parent of the student's opportunity for a free public education in accordance with § 22.1-5.

D. In establishing course and credit requirements for a high school diploma, the Board shall:

1. Provide for the selection of integrated learning courses meeting the Standards of Learning and approved by the Board to satisfy graduation credit requirements, which shall include Standards of Learning testing, as necessary.

2. Establish the requirements for a standard and an advanced studies high school diploma, which shall each include at least one credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education and one credit in United States and Virginia history. The requirements for a standard high school diploma shall, however, include at least two sequential electives chosen from a concentration of courses selected from a variety of options that may be planned to ensure the completion of a focused sequence of elective courses. Such focused sequence of elective courses shall provide a foundation for further education or training or preparation for employment. The advanced studies diploma shall be the recommended diploma for students pursuing baccalaureate study. Both the standard and the advanced studies diploma shall prepare students for post-secondary education and the career readiness required by the Commonwealth's economy.

Beginning with first-time ninth grade students in the 2013-2014 school year, requirements for the standard diploma shall include a requirement to earn a career and technical education credential that has

been approved by the Board, that could include, but not be limited to, the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness skills assessment.

Beginning with first-time ninth grade students in the 2016-2017 school year, requirements for the standard and advanced diplomas shall include a requirement to be trained in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators, including hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

The Board shall make provision in its regulations for students with disabilities to earn a standard diploma.

3. Provide, in the requirements to earn a standard or advanced studies diploma, the successful completion of one virtual course. The virtual course may be a noncredit-bearing course.

4. Provide, in the requirements for the verified units of credit stipulated for obtaining the standard or advanced studies diploma, that students completing elective classes into which the Standards of Learning for any required course have been integrated may take the relevant Standards of Learning test for the relevant required course and receive, upon achieving a satisfactory score on the specific Standards of Learning assessment, a verified unit of credit for such elective class that shall be deemed to satisfy the Board's requirement for verified credit for the required course.

5. Establish a procedure to facilitate the acceleration of students that allows qualified students, with the recommendation of the division superintendent, without completing the 140-hour class, to obtain credit for such class upon demonstration of mastery of the course content and objectives. Having received credit for the course, the student shall be permitted to sit for the relevant Standards of Learning assessment and, upon receiving a passing score, shall earn a verified credit. Nothing in this section shall preclude relevant school division personnel from enforcing compulsory attendance in public schools.

6. Provide for the award of verified units of credit for passing scores on industry certifications, state licensure examinations, and national occupational competency assessments approved by the Board of Education.

School boards shall report annually to the Board of Education the number of Board-approved industry certifications obtained, state licensure examinations passed, national occupational competency assessments passed, Virginia workplace readiness skills assessments passed, and the number of career and technical education completers who graduated. These numbers shall be reported as separate categories on the School Performance Report Card.

For the purposes of this subdivision, "career and technical education completer" means a student who has met the requirements for a career and technical concentration or specialization and all requirements for high school graduation or an approved alternative education program.

In addition, the Board may:

a. For the purpose of awarding verified units of credit, approve the use of additional or substitute tests for the correlated Standards of Learning assessment, such as academic achievement tests, industry certifications or state licensure examinations; and

b. Permit students completing career and technical education programs designed to enable such students to pass such industry certification examinations or state licensure examinations to be awarded, upon obtaining satisfactory scores on such industry certification or licensure examinations, the appropriate verified units of credit for one or more career and technical education classes into which relevant Standards of Learning for various classes taught at the same level have been integrated. Such industry certification and state licensure examinations may cover relevant Standards of Learning for various required classes and may, at the discretion of the Board, address some Standards of Learning for several required classes.

7. Provide for the waiver of certain graduation requirements (i) upon the Board's initiative or (ii) at the request of a local school board. Such waivers shall be granted only for good cause and shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

8. Consider all computer science course credits earned by students to be science course credits, mathematics course credits, or career and technical education credits. The Board of Education shall develop guidelines addressing how computer science courses can satisfy graduation requirements.

E. In the exercise of its authority to recognize exemplary academic performance by providing for diploma seals, the:

1. ~~The Board of Education~~ shall develop criteria for recognizing exemplary performance in career and technical education programs by students who have completed the requirements for a Board of Education-approved diploma and shall award seals on the diplomas of students meeting such criteria.

~~In addition, the~~ 2. ~~The~~ Board shall establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal for advanced mathematics and technology for the Board of Education-approved diplomas. The Board shall consider including criteria for (i) technology courses; (ii) technical writing, reading, and oral communication skills; (iii) technology-related training; and (iv) industry, professional, and trade association national certifications.

~~The~~ 3. ~~The~~ Board shall also establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal for excellence in civics education and understanding of our state and federal constitutions and the democratic model of

government for the Board of Education-approved diplomas. The Board shall consider including criteria for (i) successful completion of history, government, and civics courses, including courses that incorporate character education; (ii) voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities that includes the types of activities that shall qualify as community service and the number of hours required; and (iii) related requirements as it deems appropriate.

4. *The Board shall establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy to any student who demonstrates proficiency in English and at least one other language for the Board of Education-approved diplomas. The Board shall consider criteria including the student's (i) score on a College Board Advanced Placement foreign language examination, (ii) score on an SAT II Subject Test in a foreign language, (iii) proficiency level on an ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) measure or another nationally or internationally recognized language proficiency test, or (iv) cumulative grade point average in a sequence of foreign language courses approved by the Board.*

F. The Board shall establish, by regulation, requirements for the award of a general achievement adult high school diploma for those persons who are not subject to the compulsory school attendance requirements of § 22.1-254 and have (i) achieved a passing score on a high school equivalency examination approved by the Board of Education; (ii) successfully completed an education and training program designated by the Board of Education; (iii) earned a Board of Education-approved career and technical education credential such as the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia workplace readiness skills assessment; and (iv) satisfied other requirements as may be established by the Board for the award of such diploma.

G. To ensure the uniform assessment of high school graduation rates, the Board shall collect, analyze, and report high school graduation and dropout data using a formula prescribed by the Board.

The Board may promulgate such regulations as may be necessary and appropriate for the collection, analysis, and reporting of such data.

2. That the Board of Education shall establish criteria for awarding a diploma seal of biliteracy pursuant to this act in time for any student graduating from a public high school in the Commonwealth in 2016 to be awarded such a diploma seal.

## APPENDIX B: NATIONAL GUIDELINES



# Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy

March 10, 2015

## Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy

### Purpose

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. 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.

"We must acquire the ability to understand and be understood in the languages of the worldwide neighborhood." (*World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*, 2015)

"Knowledge of more than one language and culture is advantageous for all students...Bilingualism is an individual and societal asset." (*PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards*, TESOL International Association, 2006)

"Students' languages and cultures are valuable resources to be tapped and incorporated into schooling." (WIDA Guiding Principles of Language Development, # 1)

"Monolingualism is the illiteracy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century." (Gregg Roberts, Utah State Office of Education)

Four national organizations collaborated to draft recommendations for the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy: 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. To ensure consistency in the meaning of this recognition, we offer the following guidelines for state departments of education and for local school districts:

### Who Qualifies for the Seal of Biliteracy?

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. 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. 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

Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines – March 10, 2015

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.

### **Level of Language Proficiency Required**

#### **English:**

Both native and non-native speakers of English need to provide comparable evidence of English Proficiency, as determined by the state guidelines. The language performance should be demonstrated in both social and academic use of the language, in all modes of communication.

#### **Other Languages:**

Native and non-native users of a language other than English need to provide evidence of proficiency in that language. The *minimum* target level should be Intermediate Mid based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. The student should demonstrate proficiency in the modes of communication appropriate for that language; not all languages have all modes of communication (Interpersonal communication involving conversational speaking and listening or signed exchanges; Interpretive reading, listening, or viewing; and Presentational communication shown by creating messages for a reader, listener, or viewer through writing, speaking, or signing). The language performance should be demonstrated in both social and academic (content-based) use of the language, where possible.

States could consider a two-tier Seal of Biliteracy providing a higher option in the Advanced range. This is especially appropriate for bilingual or dual language programs.

#### **Unique requirements for specific languages:**

Due to unique characteristics of certain languages, special allowances may need to be made. We recommend that in cases where language assessments across all three modes of communication may not be appropriate or available, states/districts have the right to substitute a different assessment that meets the spirit of the Seal of Biliteracy. Students seeking the Seal through languages not characterized by the use of listening, speaking, reading, or for which there is not a writing system, will demonstrate the expected level of proficiency on an assessment of the modalities that characterize communication in that language.

#### **Examples include:**

- Latin and Classical Greek – recommend assessment of interpretive reading and presentational writing, not of listening or interpersonal face-to-face communication
- American Sign Language (ASL) – recommend assessment of interpersonal signed exchange, presentational signing, and demonstrating understanding of ASL (such as interpreting a signed lecture or by summarizing and responding to questions aimed at overarching understanding)
- Native American Languages – recommend assessment of interpersonal face-to-face communication as well as interpretive listening and presentational speaking, and writing and reading where a written code exists.

### **Evidence of Language Proficiency Required**

For many languages, including English, specific assessments exist and provide a valid and reliable means of measuring students' language performance. The evidence needs to evaluate students' use of the language, not knowledge about the language. We recommend that schools help students maintain a portfolio of their language performance, such as the LinguaFolio®, tracking improvement and progress toward the level required for the Seal of Biliteracy. One element of such a portfolio is assessment measures that are outside the assessments for a specific course. We recommend that states may determine the process for assessing students to meet the requirements of the Seal of Biliteracy in cases where assessments of specific languages may not be available.

#### **English:**

We recommend demonstrating proficiency in English by meeting language arts requirements for high school graduation or demonstrating proficiency on a validated test of proficiency for English learners. Assessments in English may include one or more of the following as determined by the state:

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

#### **Other Languages:**

We recommend demonstrating proficiency in the language other than English by demonstrating proficiency on a validated test of proficiency as determined by the state. States will determine the assessments that are acceptable for purposes of demonstrating proficiency in a language other than English. Examples include:

- Advanced Placement Exam
- International Baccalaureate Exam
- Oral Proficiency Interview, Reading Proficiency Test, or Writing Proficiency Test
- Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP4S)
- ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)
- Tribal language assessments
- Signed Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) for American Sign Language
- ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Exam (ALIRA)
- Other assessments correlated to the required minimum level of language proficiency.

### **Equitable Access**

ALL students means "all," regardless of language background or any identified condition that may exclude demonstration of language proficiency in one of the modes of communication, conditions such as blindness, deaf or hearing impaired, cognitive disabilities, or learning disabilities. All students should receive information on the Seal of

Biliteracy upon entering middle and high school settings so that they are able to organize their schedules and meet the requirements to receive this honor. Accommodations, such as those already in place for state-required assessments of language, should be included for assessments used to qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy. Technology provides the resources and means to make the assessments for the Seal of Biliteracy available to all students.

#### **State/District Process to Award the Seal of Biliteracy**

Awarding of the Seal of Biliteracy should be done by high school graduation. States implementing the Seal of Biliteracy should determine practical methods for recording the name and identification of students who have earned the Seal of Biliteracy. It is recommended that schools send the names of students receiving the Seal and the language(s) of biliteracy to their state department of education.

Each state may determine the process for awarding the Seal of Biliteracy, including the following:

- The Seal may be added to the high school diploma or transcript as well as displayed on a certificate or medal awarded to the student
- The Seal may be noted on the high school transcript as this is the credential that is viewed by colleges and universities and future employers
- States may wish to encourage local districts and schools to make the awarding of the Seal of Biliteracy visible at graduation and any senior award ceremonies
- States may set up their own process for collecting, recording, and maintaining the data on students receiving the Seal of Biliteracy and the evidence upon which it is based including the languages other than English in which students earned the Seal and the number of students earning the Seal who are former English learners
- States may provide a process that determines how a learner under certain circumstances could complete the requirements to demonstrate proficiency up to one year following high school graduation.

## APPENDIX C: ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name	Affiliation	Stakeholder Groups	Attended workgroup meeting
Martha Abbott	Executive Director, American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)	Foreign Language Teachers	No
Barbara Acosta	Dual Language Coordinator, Alexandria City Public Schools	Region 4 Public Schools, English as a Second Language (ESL), Spanish language, Elementary Schools	Yes
Jeremy Aldrich	World Languages Coordinator, Harrisonburg City Public Schools	Region 5 Public Schools, Virginia Foreign Language Supervisors Association (VFLSA), ESL	No
Friederike Braun	German Language Advisor, Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA)	German language	Yes
Travis Burns	Principal, Northumberland High School	Region 3 Public Schools, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP)	No
Jennifer Carson	K-12 World Languages Coordinator, Virginia Beach City Public Schools	Region 2 Public Schools, VFLSA, Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA), Alliance Française (AF), National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NADSFL)	Yes
Adriene Cunningham	Teacher, Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School	Latin, Private schools	Yes
Shane Goodpasture	Teacher, Smyth County Public Schools	Region 7 Public Schools, Holston Language Association (HLA), Spanish language	No
Valerie Gooss	ESL and World Languages Coordinator, Henrico County Public Schools	Region 1 Public Schools, ESL, VFLSA	Yes
Jin Hailstork	Executive Director, Confucius Institute, Old Dominion University	Chinese language, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)	No

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Stakeholder Groups</b>	<b>Attended workgroup meeting</b>
Lisa Harris	Specialist for Foreign Languages, Virginia Department of Education	Foreign Languages, VDOE	Yes
Margaret Hicks	Latin Teacher, L.C. Bird High School, Chesterfield County	Latin Language, FLAVA, Classical Association of Virginia (CAV)	Yes
Paul R. (Dick) Kuettner	Professor of Romance Languages and Teacher Education, Washington and Lee University	IHE, FLAVA	Yes
Elena Marshall	Teacher, Virginia Beach City Public Schools	Russian Language, FLAVA, American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL)	Yes
Michael Moore	Adjunct Instructor, Virginia Tech	French Language, American Association of Teachers of French (AATF-VA), FLAVA	Yes
Kathryn Murphy-Judy	Associate Professor of French, School of World Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University	IHE, FLAVA, French Language	Yes
Scott Navitsky	Vice President, Chinese Language Teachers Association of Virginia (CLTA-VA), Chinese teacher, Woodberry Forest School	Chinese language, CLTA-VA, private schools	Yes
Gregory Propp	Director, American Sign Language Program, University of Virginia	American Sign Language (ASL), IHE	Yes
Tracy Robertson	English Coordinator, VDOE	English Language, VDOE	Yes
Marcel Rotter	Associate Professor of German, University of Mary Washington	German Language, IHE, American Association of Teachers of German (AATG-VA)	No
Deborah Sommer	ESL and World Languages Coordinator, Hampton City Public Schools	Region 2 Public Schools, Spanish Language, American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP-VA)	No

Name	Affiliation	Stakeholder Groups	Attended workgroup meeting
Thomas Sones	Teacher, Richmond City Public Schools	Region 1 Public Schools, Japanese language, Mid-Atlantic Association of Teachers of Japanese (MAATJ-VA)	Yes
Peggy Thompson	Senior Education Advisor, VIF International Education	Business and Industry	Yes
Shyla Vesitis	Title I/III Specialist, VDOE	VDOE, ESL	Yes
Joseph Wharff	School Counseling Career Connections Specialist, Virginia Department of Education	VDOE, School Counseling	Yes
Suzette Wyhs	World Languages Coordinator, Loudoun County Public Schools	Region 4 Public Schools, VFLSA	Yes
Lisa Zajur	Director, Passport to Education, Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (VAHCC)	Business and Industry, VAHCC	Yes

## APPENDIX D: APRIL 17, 2015 MEETING AGENDA

### Agenda

- Welcome
- Introduction of participants
- Introduction of the State Seal of Biliteracy
  - Review of legislation
  - Overview of national guidelines
- Establish Purpose and Rationale
- Pathways to earning the Seal of Biliteracy
- Understanding Proficiency Levels
- Criteria for Granting the Award
  - Virginia draft criteria
  - Summary of comparison of other states to VA draft criteria
  - Results of VFLSA survey
  - Other considerations
    - American Sign Language
    - Latin and Classical Languages
- Working Lunch:
  - Topic: Utah's Model for the Seal: 2 levels
    - Gold Seal (Intermediate Mid Proficiency Level)
    - Platinum Seal (Advanced Low Proficiency Level)
- Demonstrating Proficiency
  - Assessment Options
  - Heritage/Native speakers of languages not taught at their schools
  - Less-commonly-taught languages with no available assessments
  - Other Considerations
- Award Design and Presentation
  - What will students actually receive?
  - Design of the Seal
  - Notations and certificates
- Endorsements and Outreach
  - Who will support the Seal?
  - What resources will school divisions need?
  - How will students know about the Seal?
- Deliberation and final recommendations

## APPENDIX E: COMMITTEE COMMENTS

### TASK 1: PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

Comment	Vision (V), Purpose (P), or Rationale (R)
The Seal is recognition of the value of the ability to communicate and interact within and among diverse linguistic and cultural communities within local and global contexts.	V
Prepare students for success in a multilingual/ multicultural world.	V
Articulation whereby the seal promotes a healthy articulation of FLES/ SLA from PreK – PhD.	V
Importance in developing personal relationships among citizens/ our citizenry	V
To graduate and be recognized as proficient in more than one language.	V
Students gain the aptitude and altitude to acquire additional languages (self-reflection and metacognition)	V
Certify the attainment of biliteracy.	P
Value linguistic and cultural diversity	P
Recognize success (literacy, proficiency), diversity, ability	P
Recognize the achievement of biliteracy and cultural awareness.	P
Establish credentials to support college and career readiness	P
Encourage K12 programs to support biliteracy development and address the academic and linguistic needs of the diverse groups of students in Virginia’s schools.	P
Equip students with the knowledge and skills to be successful in college, career, and a diverse society.	P
Recognize the value of language diversity.	P
Prepare students with 21st century skills that will benefit them in the labor market and the global society	P
Strengthen intergroup relationships and honor the multiple cultures and languages in Virginia’s communities.	P
The study of world languages prepares students to communicate effectively in a global political, social, and economic context.	R
Literacy in two or more languages represents a challenging academic standard.	R
Developing a child’s home language is a strong foundation for academic literacy in English.	R
Bilingualism builds trust and understanding across languages and cultural groups in our community.	R
The demand for employees to be fluent in more than one language is increasing both in Virginia and throughout the world.	R

TASK 2: PATHWAYS

<b>Committee Comments</b>
Tiered Latitude/ tiered longitude
Character based languages vs. non character based languages
How do we ensure equity between languages of varying levels of difficulty?

TASK 3A: DEMONSTRATING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

<b>Committee Comments</b>
Meet graduation requirements for English by meeting the Standards of Learning.
Graduation from high school is proof enough of proficiency in English. Students have to take chemistry, social studies, etc. How could they pass without proficiency in English?
Worry that there needs to be a premium on the level of English. English proficiency should be aligned to the English SOL. Perhaps have a minimum test score.
Students demonstrate attainment of proficiency in English by meeting high school graduation requirements. (x 4)

TASK 3B: DEMONSTRATING PROFICIENCY IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

<b>Committee Comments</b>
Accept SAT2 to demonstrate proficiency for Heritage learners of that language.
AP score of three is too low. Why go third class on a train ride? A three gives little credibility to the Seal.
SAT II test would work for Latin because there is no listening component necessary.
Consider 3.0 as the cumulative GPA if seat time and GPA are an option.
GPA 3.5 + four foreign language courses in sequence that includes AP or IV level course if seat time must be included.
If seat time is accepted, we think more than three years should be required. (x3)

TASK 4: OTHER ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

<b>Committee Comments</b>
How will we assess Latin? ASL? Less commonly taught languages without an exam?
Any test based on the CEFR is compatible with ACTFL standards.
Any assessments used should be statistically valid and reliable if the Seal is to have merit.
Consider university or college assessments such as placement interviews for ASL.
LinguaFolio® could be allowed if students presented material to non-district evaluators or trained outside evaluators (not their teachers). (x2)
Local assessments are too costly and too subjective.
Allow locally developed testing with VDOE approval.
Accept locally developed tests at Intermediate Low as accepted by the foreign language specialist of the VDOE.
Maintain a list of acceptable assessments. This will be crucial for ASL (ASLPI, SLPI, RID assessment)
Other languages, especially with non-written language, might be delayed to when program is

reassessed.
Some tests such as SAT2 or International tests may be adequate for heritage speakers to prove literacy in those languages.
International assessments would not be appropriate or valid for emerging bilinguals born in the U.S.
For Chinese, consider HSK, Hanyu Shuiping, Kaoshi
LinguaFolio® with training guidelines, moderated outside division.
International tests make sense as an option or as long as the level is verified as equivalent to ACTFL intermediate-mid or higher. (x3)
LinguaFolio® is a good course progression assessment tool, but question its use as language proficiency tool or measurement, i.e. spontaneity.
National Latin Exam V – VI, magna cum laude award or better.
No local tests please.
Accept test for competency based credit used by districts.

TASK 5: AWARD DESIGN AND PRESENTATION

<b>Committee Comments</b>
Offer a wallet card. This would spread the word – kids would flash it to each other and it would promote the idea – status symbol.
Gold seal – include the outline of Virginia – BILITERACY (all caps) and oval textbox – word “Virginia State Seal of” at top in the shallow side of the state map. Picture of open book at bottom.
Include a gold seal for the diploma plus a certificate with the proficiency level attained in each skill area.
Include an outline of Virginia with a world superimposed over it and the words “Virginia Seal of Biliteracy around the outside of the circle. (x2)
Offer a medallion option to be purchased by students for graduation. (x2)
Offer a certificate and digital badge. (x2)
Include the word “Virginia” in multiple languages

TASK 6: ENDORSEMENTS AND OUTREACH

<b>Committee Comments</b>
CAV and other language affiliates could promote this through Facebook pages, newsletters, websites, and at meetings.
Contact Virginia Area Independent Schools to include their students in receiving the Seal.
ACTFL and DOE could put info designed for parents and students on their websites.
ACTFL could make a commercial that could promote the Seal “Talk to your local school districts to find out more about it”
Title III department at VDOE could potentially help to disseminate information to divisions regarding the implications for ELLs.
Be sure to address issues of accessibility and proper accommodations for persons with disabilities, i.e. all testing options should be accessible, issues of Braille and cued speech?

Include communications to Embassies, Confucius Institute centers (3 in VA)
Tri-literacy? Quad-literacy?
Seek support from: VESA, PTA, VASSP, Rotary, Chambers of Commerce.
Office of Workforce Development – need to be aware, sponsor, highlight
Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Job Fair or Recognition Luncheon. AATF/ Alliance Française luncheon.
Promote at Superintendent and Principal conferences, BOE conference, HS Counselors' conference
Letter to colleges with recommendations for course credits/ class placements
Look at IB group that advocates for credit from colleges.

# APPENDIX F: EVIDENCE OF PROFICIENCY

## Seal of Biliteracy Acceptable Evidence of Proficiency 2015-2016

The following general criteria may be used to evaluate evidence of proficiency in languages other than English:

- pass a foreign language Advanced Placement examination with a score of 3 or higher or an International Baccalaureate examination with a score of 4 or higher; or
- score 600 or higher on a “foreign language with listening” or Latin SAT II test (SAT Subject Test); or
- receive a rating of Intermediate Mid or higher on a nationally or internationally available assessment of proficiency across language skills based on The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines; or
- pass a foreign government’s approved language exam, or a nation’s high school level standardized exam in a language from a country in which the language is taught in school at a level comparable to Intermediate-mid or higher on the ACTFL proficiency scale; or
- provide evidence of success at the A2 level or higher on an assessment authorized through the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; or
- provide evidence of attaining Level 2 or higher on the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview; or
- if no Advanced Placement examination or other nationally or internationally validated assessment exists and the school division can certify to the Superintendent that the test meets the rigor of a four-year high school course of study in that foreign language, passing a school division language examination that, at a minimum, assesses speaking, reading, listening, and writing in a language other than English at the Intermediate-mid proficiency level or higher. Any school division language examination offered as evidence for awarding the Seal of Biliteracy shall be approved in advance by the Superintendent for the purpose of determining proficiency in a language other than English.

Languages Other Than English - The following options are acceptable evidence of proficiency in any language for which an assessment is available:		
Assessment or Evidence	Minimum Score	Access Information
Advanced Placement (AP) language examination	3	<a href="https://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/ap/coordinate/prep/language">https://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/ap/coordinate/prep/language</a>
International Baccalaureate (IB) language examination	4	Available only to students currently enrolled in IB programs.
Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)	12	<a href="http://aappl.actfl.org/">http://aappl.actfl.org/</a>
ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)	Intermediate-Mid	<a href="http://www.languagestesting.com/oral-proficiency-interview-opi-2">http://www.languagestesting.com/oral-proficiency-interview-opi-2</a>
Oral Proficiency Interview by Computer® (OPIC)	Intermediate-Mid	<a href="http://www.languagestesting.com/oral-proficiency-interview-by-computer-opic">http://www.languagestesting.com/oral-proficiency-interview-by-computer-opic</a>
ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)	Intermediate-Mid	<a href="http://www.languagestesting.com/writing-proficiency-test">http://www.languagestesting.com/writing-proficiency-test</a>
Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP4S)	Intermediate-Mid	<a href="http://www.avantassessment.com/stamp4s.html">http://www.avantassessment.com/stamp4s.html</a>

Seal of Biliteracy  
 Acceptable Evidence of Proficiency  
 2015-2016

**Language Specific Options**

American Sign Language		
Assessment or Evidence	Minimum Score	Access Information
Signed Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI)	Intermediate Plus	<a href="https://www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi/home">https://www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi/home</a>

Latin		
Assessment or Evidence	Minimum Score	Access Information
SAT II Latin	600	<a href="https://sat.collegeboard.org/home">https://sat.collegeboard.org/home</a>
National Latin Exam (NLE) level 4	Silver	<a href="http://www.nle.org/">http://www.nle.org/</a>
NLE Level 5-8	<i>cum laude</i>	
ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment (ALIRA)	12	<a href="http://www.languagetesting.com/alira-the-actfl-latin-interpretive-reading-assessment">http://www.languagetesting.com/alira-the-actfl-latin-interpretive-reading-assessment</a>

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