



The Ithaca City School District

New York State Seal of Biliteracy

Student Handbook

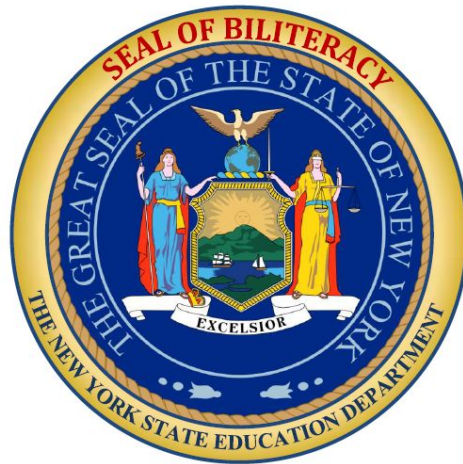


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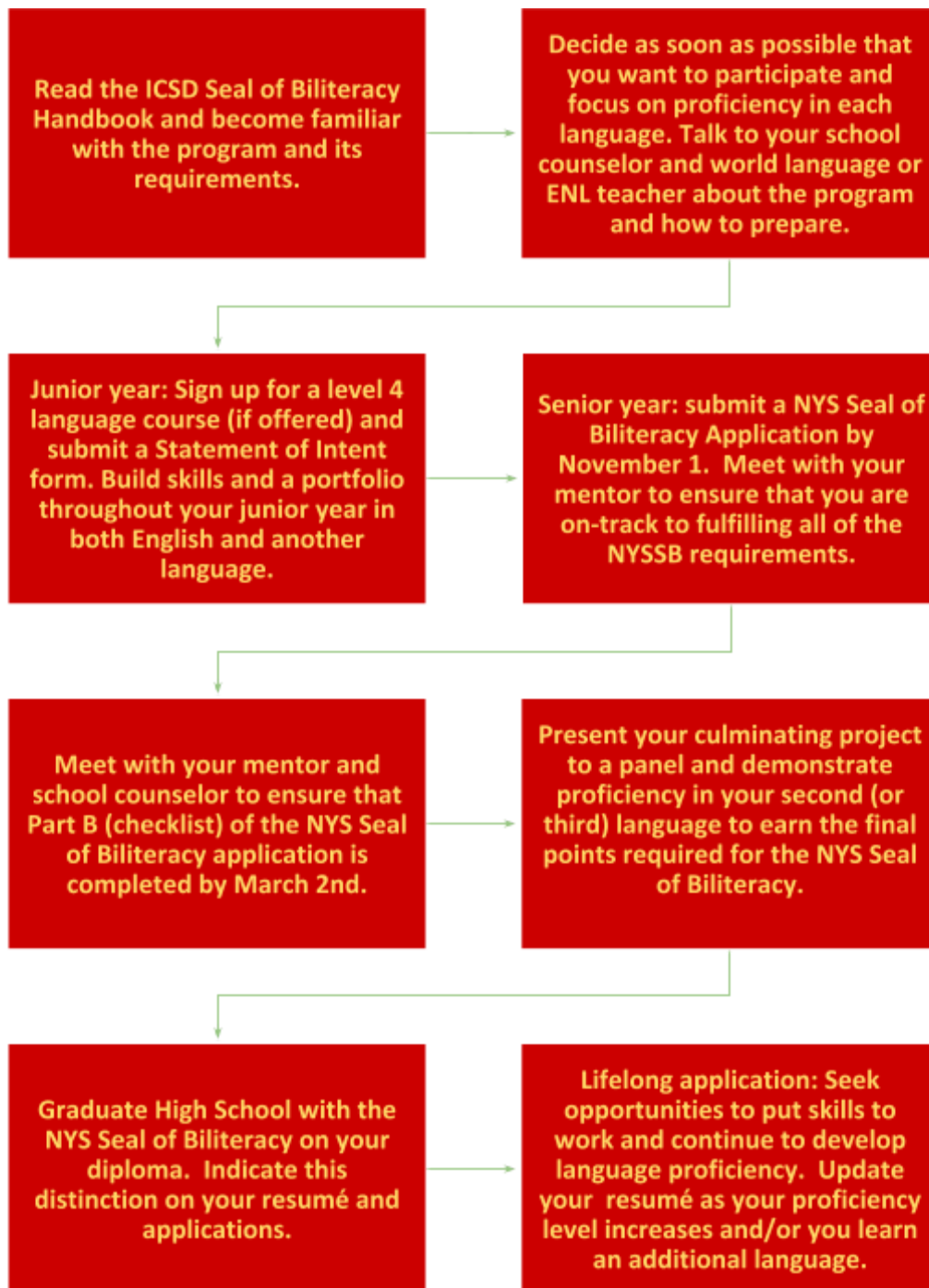
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Is the Seal of Biliteracy for you?

Do you love languages and value biliteracy skills? Do you enjoy a challenge and want to be prepared for the 21st century job market? Do you believe in the value of a multilingual society? Do you want recognition for your linguistic abilities and hard work in your language studies?

If so, follow these steps to the NY State Seal of Biliteracy:



Introduction:

The Ithaca City School District is proud to offer the New York State Seal of Biliteracy Program for the first time to students graduating in the class of 2019 and henceforth. Students who fulfill the criteria for the Seal of Biliteracy will have this seal placed on their diploma upon graduation. The purpose and intent of the seal is described as follows on page one of the NYSSB handbook

(<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/world-languages/handbook-for-the-seal-of-biliteracy-10-1-16.pdf>):

“In recognition of the importance of bilingualism, many states, including New York, are beginning to award a seal of biliteracy in formal recognition of students who have studied and attained a high proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. “The intent of a seal of biliteracy is to: encourage the study of languages; identify high school graduates with language and biliteracy skills for employers; provide universities with additional information about applicants seeking admission; prepare students with twenty-first century skills; recognize the value of foreign and native language instruction in schools; and affirm the value of diversity in a multilingual society.”(Slentz, 2012)” (Page 1)

Reasons for participating in the NYSSB program:

In the NYSSB handbook the following reason is given for why districts should implement this program:

“The NYSSB acknowledges the importance of being bilingual in today’s global society. It highlights the hard work and achievement of students, and encourages students to pursue language study while in school. The recognition of attaining biliteracy becomes part of the high school transcript and diploma for these students and is a statement of accomplishment for future employers and for college admission.” (Page 2)

By successfully participating in this program, working to develop the required level of proficiency and receiving the seal, you ensure that you leave high school with real skills in another language that are recognized and understood by employers (for paid work or internships), study abroad programs and colleges. A grade on a transcript for a language course does not tell someone what you can actually do with that language. The ACTFL standard of *intermediate high* that you must achieve in order to receive the seal is a clear indication to those seeking candidates who possess language skills of your language abilities.

This is an exciting opportunity that not only recognizes your abilities and efforts in language learning, but will also help you to focus on the idea of lifelong proficiency in more than one language and the possibilities that these accomplishments present.

What proficiency level do I need to demonstrate to receive the NYS Seal of Biliteracy?

NYS has set the target level of proficiency at **Intermediate High** based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines.

(<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>).

Understanding the difference between **performance** and **proficiency** is important. It will help you understand why consistent progress in language throughout your studies in the Ithaca City School District is essential to attaining the level of proficiency required for the Seal of Biliteracy. According to the ACTFL,

“Performance is the ability to use language that has been learned and practiced in an instructional setting. Coached by an instructor, whether in a classroom or online, or guided by instructional materials, performance refers to language ability that has been practiced and is within familiar contexts and content areas.” (Page 4)

When you learn material in class, study and take an assessment, your grade is a reflection of your performance that day. Paying attention in class, participating and studying the night before can greatly improve your performance on a test or exam. Proficiency, however, requires long-term application and practice and develops over time. It is described by ACTFL as follows:

“Proficiency is the ability to use language in real world situations in a spontaneous interaction and non-rehearsed context and in a manner acceptable and appropriate to native speakers of the language. Proficiency demonstrates what a language user is able to do regardless of where, when or how the language was acquired. The demonstration is independent of how the language was learned; the context may or may not be familiar; the evaluation of proficiency is not limited to the content of a particular curriculum that has been taught and learned.” (Page 4)

In recognition of the importance of being bilingual in today’s global society, we want to prepare you to use your language skills and hope to encourage you to continue to improve your proficiency level. The NYS Seal of Biliteracy supports this goal by recognizing students “who have attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, writing and reading in a one or more languages, in addition to English.” (NYSSB Handbook page 2)

Can I earn the seal for a language that is not taught in the Ithaca City Schools?

Yes. If a student can demonstrate Intermediate High proficiency in speaking, reading, listening and writing in a language that is not taught at Ithaca High School or Lehman Alternative Community School, we will work with local resources to assess those language skills. We welcome all eligible students, including students who know American Sign Language (ASL), to apply and hope that there are many languages represented on presentation day!

Can I earn the seal if I have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

Yes. Special Education students are eligible to receive the Seal of Biliteracy. All accommodations listed on the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP), including assessment and classroom accommodations, are applicable as the student proceeds to meet the New York State Seal of Biliteracy requirements. We welcome all eligible students to apply for the seal!

What are the requirements for earning the NYSSB?

Below is a copy of Appendix 1 from the NYSSB handbook which describes the criteria for demonstrating proficiency:

- A. Students wishing to receive the New York State (NYS) Seal of Biliteracy must complete all requirements for graduating with a NYS Regents diploma*;
- B. In addition to the above minimum requirement, students wishing to receive a NYS Seal of Biliteracy must earn **three (3) points** in each of the **two (2) areas** listed below:

Criteria for Demonstrating Proficiency in <u>English</u>	Point Value	Criteria for Demonstrating Proficiency in a <u>World Language</u>	Point Value
Score 75 or higher on the NYS Comprehensive English Regents Examination or score 80 or higher on the NYS Regents Examination in English Language Arts (Common Core)* or English Language Learners (ELLs) score 75 or above on two Regents exams other than English, without translation.	1	Complete a Checkpoint C level World Language course, with a grade of 85 or higher, or a comparable score using another scoring system set by the district and approved by the Commissioner, for both the coursework <u>and</u> final examination consistent with Checkpoint C standards.	1
ELLs score at the Commanding level on two modalities on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT).	1	Provide transcripts from a school in a country outside of the U.S. showing at least three years of instruction in the student’s home/native language in Grade 8 or beyond, with an equivalent grade average of B or higher.	1
Complete all 11 th and 12 th grade ELA courses with an average of 85 or higher or a comparable score using another scoring system set by the district and approved by the Commissioner.	1	For students enrolled in a Bilingual Education program, complete all required Home Language Arts (HLA) coursework and the district HLA exam with an 85 or higher or a comparable score using another scoring system set by the district and approved by the Commissioner.	1
Achieve the following scores on the examinations listed below: -3 or higher on an Advanced Placement (AP) English Language or English Literature examination, or -80 or higher on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).	1	Score at a proficient level on an accredited Checkpoint C World Language assessment (See “Checkpoint C World Language Assessments and Minimum Scores” on the following page.)	1
Present a culminating project, scholarly essay or portfolio that meets the criteria for speaking, listening, reading, and writing established by the district’s NYS Seal of Biliteracy Committee to a panel of reviewers with proficiency in English.	2	Present a culminating project, scholarly essay, or portfolio that meets the criteria for speaking, listening, reading, and writing established by the district’s NYS Seal of Biliteracy Committee and that is aligned to the NYS Checkpoint C Learning Standards to a panel of reviewers with proficiency in the target language.	2

World language refers to Spanish, German, and French, as well as languages that are not taught in the Ithaca City School District, such as Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Karen, Italian, American Sign Language (ASL), Hebrew, Uzbek, Bosnian, Swahili, Burmese, etc.

How can I prepare myself for success?

If you are reading this, you probably have been doing a lot of what you need to be doing already! The most important thing that you can do is ensure that you are making adequate and consistent progress throughout your language studies. Focus on building proficiency rather than worrying about your performance on a specific test or task. Material must be retained and skills must develop over time. Focus on study methods that work for long-term retention.

You will need to become comfortable speaking and making mistakes. It will be important to come into each new course or level with strong skills that can develop and get you to the required Intermediate High level by April of your senior year. It will also be critical to use the target language inside and outside of class as much as possible.

The sooner you decide that you would like to participate in this program the better. It will help you focus on a goal of proficiency in every level of language that you take and set you up for success. The higher your level of proficiency coming into your junior year when you will submit your Statement of Intent, the easier it will be to reach the Intermediate High (or even higher) level of proficiency required in your senior year.

Do I need to submit an application?

Yes. In your senior year you will fill out a **Seal of Biliteracy Application** that is due in the Student Services office by **November 1**. This is your formal declaration of candidacy and includes a checklist of requirements, some of which you will have met in your junior year.

What can I do to prepare if I am not yet a senior?

If you are a junior and would like to participate in the program, talk with your school counselor, world language, ENL or English teacher. If you are interested in working towards earning the seal, you may request and fill out an ICSD NYSSB **Statement of Intent** form.

Who will support me on my journey to earning the seal?

You will be assigned a mentor who will support you in your Seal of Biliteracy journey and discuss where you are, go through the checklist of requirements and suggest what you need to do next. Your mentor will share an online folder of documents with you, including information that will help you understand what the “Intermediate High” level of proficiency looks and sounds like. You will check in with your mentor on a regular basis.

Your mentor will work with you to help you determine what your culminating project and presentation will look like and help you stay on track to complete all of the requirements.

Culminating project:

The student will research a topic of interest and create a culminating project that showcases his/her skills, abilities and talents in the target language. The project must include all four modalities of the target language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) unless otherwise stated in an IEP.

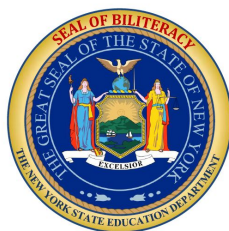
Students will earn 2 of the 3 required points by developing and presenting the culminating project to an interview panel in the target language (English for the English project and the world language for the world language project). These projects will be presented in the spring of your senior year. The NYSSB handbook defines the role of the interview panel as follows:

“The role of the interview panel is to measure the students’ knowledge of the project/essay topics and/or portfolios being presented and the proficiency of the target language. Students may be asked questions regarding the presented topic, the students’ process, personal feelings about the topic and other questions the panel feels necessary to measure the students’ knowledge of the topic and proficiency level.” (Page 8)

Although this may sound nerve-wracking, being able to interact in a spontaneous manner in the target language is a key skill. You will have lots of time and support to build these essential skills and come to understand that “perfection” is not what the panel will be looking for. Much of your presentation will be well-rehearsed but the question and discussion section will allow you to demonstrate your ability to understand comments and questions and respond using language appropriate for your level. The ability to produce and understand spontaneous and unscripted language will allow you to function in a multilingual setting and truly use and further develop your language abilities.

Final steps:

After the culminating projects have been presented and you have demonstrated your proficiency level for the final two points, the NYS Seal of Biliteracy Committee and school counselors will submit all necessary paperwork to the NYS Seal of Biliteracy program (May of senior year). They will also submit a Seal Image Request Form and a digital seal will be applied to your diploma. Students receiving this distinction will be identified as such at graduation and during senior awards or other such appropriate award ceremony.



Resources:

The New York State Seal of Biliteracy Handbook from the NYS Education Department

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/bilingual-ed/handbook-for-the-seal-of-biliteracy-2018-19.pdf>

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012

<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>

ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners

<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-performance-descriptors-language-learners>

ACTFL Can-Do Statements (see Intermediate High for NYSSB level)

<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements>



For more information or questions, see your school counselor,
world language, English or ENL teacher,
or email eufford@icsd.k12.ny.us
Emily Ufford, NYS Seal of Biliteracy Committee Chair