Heritage Languages in Maryland

Nearly 17% of Maryland’s students speak a language other than English at home. Some of these students take weekend classes in their heritage language for many years. These students will also be eligible to be recognized for their language proficiency with a Seal of Biliteracy in their heritage language. They must meet the same eligibility requirements listed in this brochure.

Cost

There is no cost to the student to apply for the voluntary Seal of Biliteracy. However, students are responsible for any assessment fees not covered by their school or school system.

The Maryland Seal of Biliteracy Program is voluntary. However if a school system elects to participate, all schools in the school system must participate.

Participating School Systems in 2019-20

- Allegany County
- Anne Arundel County
- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Calvert County
- Carroll County
- Cecil County
- Frederick County
- Howard County
- Kent County
- Montgomery County
- Prince George’s County
- Queen Anne’s County
- St. Mary’s County
- Talbot County
- Washington County
- Wicomico County
- Worcester County

For more information, contact your school system’s world language office or visit:

bit.ly/mdsb17

or contact:

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410-767-0331
What is a Seal of Biliteracy?

A Seal of Biliteracy is a state award that recognizes a student’s high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing in one or more languages other than English. It is awarded to eligible high school students by participating public school systems in Maryland.

Begun in California in 2011, the Seal of Biliteracy is now offered in 36 states and the District of Columbia. Maryland’s Seal of Biliteracy Bill was signed into law in 2016.

Why is Maryland Awarding a Seal of Biliteracy?

High school graduates who can function in two or more languages are equipped with the knowledge and skills to participate successfully in college, careers, and a diverse 21st century society.

The purpose of the Seal of Biliteracy is to:
- Recognize the value of language learning in public schools.
- Encourage students to attain high proficiency levels in one or more languages in addition to English.
- Affirm native or heritage languages.
- Provide employers with a method of identifying individuals with language and biliteracy skills.
- Prepare students with the critical skills necessary to function in a global society.
- Strengthen cross-cultural communication, affirm the value of diversity and honor the multiple cultures and languages in our communities.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a Seal of Biliteracy, a student must fulfill the following requirements:
- Pass the Maryland High School Assessment in English.
- Score Intermediate High Proficiency or equivalent on an approved world language assessment. Below is a partial list of assessments and their qualifying scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Minimum Qualifying Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Placement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Baccalaureate</td>
<td>6 (Standard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTFL Assessments: (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)</td>
<td>Intermediate High</td>
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For a complete list of approved assessments, please visit: bit.ly/mdsb17