



Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Program Guidance Massachusetts

February 2024

A certificate program overseen by the [Language Opportunity Coalition](#)
to supplement the official [Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy](#)



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Introduction

LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Program

The Language Opportunity Coalition (LOC) Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program is designed to celebrate the linguistic diversity of students and encourage long-term language learning. It consists of a series of Biliteracy Pathway Certificates that celebrate and recognize a student's language skills. The certificates can be awarded to students at different points in their education at three different proficiency levels (Novice-High, Intermediate-Low, and Intermediate-Mid), based on proficiency assessments in English and one or more partner languages¹. The LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program can also play a role in preparing students to earn the State Seal of Biliteracy at high school graduation by encouraging continued language development.

The LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificates can be given to any student, at any age and grade level, and to students in any type of language learning program. Recipients may include students in World Language, English Language Education, Dual Language Education, Language Immersion, and Transitional Bilingual Education programs, as well as students who are learning languages at home, in after school language programs or in private schools.

The language proficiency criteria for the certificates is based on the proficiency guidelines of the [American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages \(ACTFL\)](#) and [WIDA](#). The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines provide "a description of what learners can do with the language in speaking, listening, reading and writing in real-world situations and in spontaneous, non-rehearsed context." The [WIDA English Language Development \(ELD\) Standard Frameworks](#) for teachers of English Learners define the performance criteria of social, instructional, and academic language in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The [WIDA Performance Definitions](#) are a description of how ELs process or produce language to comprehend or express information, ideas, or concepts in oral and written communication, and are the foundation of the ACCESS test.

Guidance and Website

The suggestions and resources in this document are based on the practices and materials originally developed by World Language, English Language and Bilingual teachers in school districts that participated in the Seal of Biliteracy pilot from 2014-2017. The document serves as a complement to the information and resources on the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program website <http://BiliteracyPathwayMA.us>, which is maintained by the LOC. Visit the website to find links to download certificate templates, submit annual data on your certificate program, and get updates related to the program.

The LOC also manages two Google Groups where educators can connect with colleagues in other districts who are implementing the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificates and the State Seal of Biliteracy. There is one general group with over 300 members (some of them who have been participating since 2015) and a second group specifically for teachers in Career, Vocational, and Technical Education (CVTE). See <https://BiliteracyPathwayMA.us/google-group/> for links to join both groups.

¹ At this time, the LOC is not offering certificates at higher proficiency levels (Intermediate-High and above). Districts can consider offering the Global Seal of Biliteracy at <https://theglobalseal.com/>.

Background

The LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program was originally developed in Massachusetts as part of the Seal of Biliteracy pilot program in 2014-2017, which was coordinated by the Language Opportunity Coalition (LOC) prior to passage of the LOOK Act. The pilot project involved teachers at different grade levels and program types (ESL, World Language, Dual Language and Transitional Bilingual Education). These teachers collaboratively created the criteria and parameters for a multi-tiered certificate award structure, informed by the [Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy](#) released by ACTFL, TESOL, NABE and NCSSFL in 2015.

Once the LOOK Act became law, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education assumed oversight of the [State Seal of Biliteracy](#), which awards students at two proficiency levels (Intermediate-High and Advanced-Low). For information on the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy, see <https://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/biliteracy/>

The two programs -- the State Seal of Biliteracy and the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Program -- are complementary and uphold the same goals: to help students recognize the value of language learning and see the tangible benefits of being bilingual or multilingual.

The Language Opportunity Coalition

The Language Opportunity Coalition (LOC) is a [collaboration](#) between world language (MAFLA), dual language (MABE) and English learner (MATSOL) professional organizations to increase high quality language learning opportunities for students learning languages in all types of programs and levels and to value biliteracy as a critical skill.

The LOC continues to independently manage the Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Program to support language learning and biliteracy development for all students. The Coalition's work includes:

- Managing the Seal of Biliteracy Google which connects more than 350 educators who implement the State Seal of Biliteracy and Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Programs.
- Maintaining the [BiliteracyPathwayMA.us](#) web site with information and resources for the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Program.
- Supporting initiatives of the MA Office of Language Acquisition related to the State Seal of Biliteracy and language program development.

Credits

The original version of this guidance document was developed between 2014-2017 as part of the Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project. The project was overseen by the LOC Steering Committee: Phyllis Hardy, Multistate Association for Bilingual Education, Northeast (MABE), Nicole Sherf, MAFLA and Salem State University, Kim Talbot, MAFLA and Melrose Public Schools, and Helen Solorzano, Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other languages (MATSOL). Educators who piloted the awards and helped develop the guidance include: Kim Talbot, Anna Tirone, Pat DiPillo, Amy St. Arnaud, Gen Grieci, Carlos Brown, Dawn Carney, and Nancy Marrinucci.

The updated guidance was revised in 2024 by Helen Solorzano and Phyllis Hardy, with input from Katia Marticorena, Sara Hamerla, Amy St. Arnaud, Maria Zak, Michelle Huaman and Gloria Cho.

Overview

Implementation Timeline

Annual Implementation Timeline			
Taking Inventory <i>Ongoing</i>	Planning & Communication <i>Fall–Winter</i>	Assessment <i>Winter–Spring</i>	Celebration <i>Spring</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify stakeholders at the school, district and community level. Identify philosophy for language learning and language program goals. Identify funding sources and personnel to support the certificate program. With an equity focus, identify students to include in the certificate program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact colleagues and allies involved in the program. Select assessments to demonstrate English and partner language proficiency. Plan logistics for assessment and/or portfolio review. Order assessments. Inform students and families of the test, criteria, and celebrations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare students for the assessment tasks and procedures. Administer assessments and/or coordinate student portfolio development. Obtain ACCESS assessment results. Evaluate portfolios (if applicable). Review assessment results and determine certificate recipients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download and print custom Biliteracy Pathway Certificates. Plan celebration activities. Share information about certificate recipients and celebration with the district and community. Report certificate award data to the LOC. Review student participation data.

Program Registration

Participation in the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate is voluntary for districts. The Language Opportunity Coalition asks that districts register and submit annual data on the certificate awards to document and evaluate the success of this program and produce reports on state-wide use of the awards. Registration also provides the LOC with contact information to update participating districts about the program.

Districts that wish to participate should:

- Fill out a short registration form to let the LOC know that your district² are participating in the program;
- Follow the guidance in this document to do outreach, administer assessments, and award certificates;
- Maintain a record of all students who have earned the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate and the assessment results used to substantiate the student’s biliteracy; and
- Annually report the number and type of awards of the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate to the LOC.

² In this document, the term “district” will be used to refer to all types of organizations participating in the program: language program, public school district, or public, charter or independent school.

Taking Inventory

Stakeholders and Roles

Implementation of the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Program is most effective when there is cooperation, collaboration and engagement by a diverse group of stakeholders.

To start the implementation process, a first step may be to assemble a district-level Working Group that includes district administrators and educators in all language programs in a district at all levels PK-12, including World Language, English Language Education, Dual Language Education, Immersion, and/or Transitional Bilingual Education programs. It is also beneficial to include additional staff (computer lab coordinators, guidance counselors, and special education teachers), parents/guardians and families, students, the English/Bilingual Parent Advisory Council, school committee members, and interested community members.

A next step is to identify the school personnel who will take charge of coordinating the logistics and planning involved in implementation. The LOC recommends appointing a *Biliteracy Pathway Program Coordinator* to manage the details of implementation and ensure collaboration between language learning programs to create a school-wide celebration of biliteracy. At the high school level, the coordinator may also oversee the State Seal of Biliteracy Awards.

SMART TASK: Stakeholders & Collaborators³

- How can you collaborate with **district departments and school leaders**, as well as with world language, ESL, dual language, TBE and/or immersion teachers, Special Educators, CTE educators, Gifted and Talented educators, and guidance counselors, to create an inclusive and comprehensive LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program?
- How can you collaborate with departments and leaders, world language, ESL, dual language, TBE and/or immersion teachers, Special Educators, CTE educators, Gifted and Talented educators, and guidance counselors **at the school level** to create an inclusive and comprehensive award of the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate?

Language Learning Philosophy

It is important to articulate the district's language learning philosophy and goals to guide language instruction and support the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Program. The philosophy may take the form of a mission statement, vision, or series of principles guiding the program. The philosophy can help guide language proficiency development for all students, through English Language Benchmarks, world language programmatic proficiency targets, and/or dual language program proficiency norms. Since the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate is not intended to be restricted to any one program, the language learning philosophy should unify the goals and practices of all the various language learning programs in the district.

If the district has a statement of language learning philosophy, the Working Group can review it and update it, if needed to include the certificate program. If no such statement exists, the Working Group can draft one. The LOC recommends that the group request approval for the philosophy by the district administration or school committee, creating a policy to clarify the district's purpose in awarding the certificates and advocating for biliteracy.

³ **SMART** stands for Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based.

Table1: Example Language Learning Philosophies

Framingham Public Schools: Multilingual Education Department Mission Statement and Guiding Principles: <https://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/Domain/67>

Salem Public Schools: Vision for Multilingual Learner Education: <https://salemk12.org/district-departments/multilingual-learning/>

Worcester Public Schools: Multilingual Education Mission, Vision, and Values: <https://worcesterschools.org/about/departments-offices/multilingual-education>

SMART TASK: Language Philosophy & Language Program Goals

- How can the district establish expectations for all language learners? Does the program teach with a focus on proficiency? How can you create a district-wide philosophy of language learning and celebration?
- To what extent do students participate in World Language programming? When do students begin World Language programming? Do students have the opportunity to continue language learning over multiple years? How can different programs (WL, ESL, SEI, Gen Ed) at different grade levels (elementary, middle and high school) be involved in the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program?
- Equity Focus: Are Heritage Language programs available?
- In WL programming, does your department teach for proficiency? Does your department have proficiency goal targets? What are developmental norms (proficiency targets) for the students in your program? How is proficiency in the target language being consistently determined and normed?

Program Goals

This Working Group can be charged with setting goals for how the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Program will work in their community, taking into account the mix of schools, and variety of language programs. If the district awards the State Seal of Biliteracy, the group can consider how the two award programs should be aligned to support long-term language learning. It can be decided which certificates to award and for which grades, when in the school year to present them, and how the awards will be celebrated.

SMART TASK: Accolades

- How is biliteracy achievement currently celebrated? How can Biliteracy Pathway Certificates be incorporated in current practice?
- How and when will the certificates be awarded? Will they be presented at a departmental ceremony, a school ceremony, or in combination with other awards or honor societies?
- How will all language learners -- those with both heritage and world language proficiency -- be included in the celebrations?

Funding Sources

Districts should consider the funding needed to support the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program for partner language assessments, certificates or other tokens of recognition for students, as well as funding for Biliteracy Pathway Program Coordinator and, if needed, to train staff to administer language

assessments. Districts can investigate the use of Title I or Title III funds, WL or ELE/MLE department funds, or outside grants for purchasing assessments, and determine whether Title II funds can be used to train assessors. Districts can also consider asking students to pay for partner language assessments, although this may create a barrier to participation for some families. In addition, districts can consider a policy for students who want to be tested more than once, either with a retest because they did not meet the certificate proficiency level, or because they would like to demonstrate proficiency in more than one language.

SMART TASK: Funding

- Where will funds come from to pay for assessments and materials for recognition? Options to consider: Student-funded, Title I or III funds, district/department funds, grants.
- Are there funds to support a program coordinator and/or Title II funds to train assessors?

Student Participation

Focus on Equity

The LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificates were created with the goal of recognizing and celebrating language development of students from all language backgrounds. School districts offering the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate should encourage as many qualified students as possible to pursue the opportunity to earn an award, including heritage language speakers, students with disabilities, and speakers of languages that are not taught in school. Throughout the planning and implementation of the certificate program, districts should be mindful of practices that support equitable opportunities for all students.

The district should consider which student groups to target as potential applicants for the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate, and how the application process will take place. For example, the district can decide that all students in certain classes (e.g., all students in a world language class or dual language education program) will participate in the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program, or that individual students must complete a form indicating the intent to participate. Districts may also consider additional criteria for participation, such as performing community service hours. (see Table 3: Example Optional Portfolio Elements.)

SMART TASK: Equity

- Do students from all language backgrounds have equitable opportunities to earn certificates?
- Are English Learner and English proficient students subject to the same requirements, such as the number of assessments required and the time allowed to complete assessment?
- Is information about the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program available to families in different languages?

Planning & Communication

Inform School/District Allies

The district administration, school committee, school leadership, guidance counselors, computer laboratory coordinators, parents, students, and community leaders are some of the stakeholders who will need information about the implementation process of the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate. Once they are informed about the award program, these stakeholders can help facilitate implementation and then participate in the celebration of biliteracy. The advocacy impact will be multiplied when the stakeholder group is more diverse.

SMART TASK: School/District Communication

- How can you inform all stakeholders about the goals and timeline for the program?
- What do you need to tell different stakeholders about their role in the program?

Inform Students and Families

Students and parents must be informed about the certificate criteria, assessments, award levels, and celebrations for the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program. The district should determine the varied means to inform the district community about the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate process and results.

Districts can use their district website, newspapers, social media, and cable/radio stations to spread the word about the opportunity to earn a certificate. By this time, the district will have decided if all students in certain classes will participate in the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate or if students will need to complete an application or intent-to-participate form, and if there are additional criteria for participation. Districts should prepare translations of the information in languages spoken by families in the school community.

In addition, various means of communicating at the school level can be used to inform students and parents about the benefits, timeline, and application process for the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate. Each school should consider using class discussions, student assemblies, parents' night, open houses, notes or emails sent home, school departmental newsletters, newspapers, social media, and cable/radio stations to spread the word about the opportunity.

The LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program is also a great advocacy tool to promote language programs. The certificate levels are fully attainable by students in programs that are designed to produce proficiency. As student success spreads, this in turn motivates more students to become involved in the following year. In addition, the program can encourage students to participate in the State Seal of Biliteracy awards at high school graduation.

SMART TASK: Student and Family Communication

- How can you inform all stakeholders about the goals and timeline for the program?
- What do you need to tell different stakeholders about their role in the program?

Assessment

To earn a LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate, students must demonstrate developing proficiency in English and one or more partner languages. This requires an assessment of proficiency in both English and the partner language. In determining the assessments for the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificates, the goal is to create an assessment policy that is:

- Accurate: assessments accurately demonstrate language proficiency
- Equitable: assessments provide opportunity for all students and do not require extra unnecessary testing
- Feasible: schools have the capacity to administer and support use of the assessments
- Flexible: assessments meet the needs of different students and language programs

Language proficiency assessed and connected to proficiency targets provides strong evidence of student learning that directly relates to what the student is able to say, read, write, and understand in a second, foreign, or heritage language. Students who understand the language development process are more able to participate actively in their progress.

Proficiency Criteria and Certificate Levels

To determine the certificate level, students must demonstrate proficiency in all four language domains -- listening, speaking, reading and writing -- in English and the partner language, in alignment with the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#) (Interpretive Reading and Listening; Interpersonal Listening/Speaking and Presentational Writing).

The certificate level should be determined by the *lowest* language proficiency score. If a student demonstrates a high level of proficiency in one language (English or the partner language) and a lower level of proficiency in the other language, the certificate should be awarded at the lower proficiency level.

Assessment Summary

English Assessment

- English Learners: Use overall ACCESS Score
- Other students: Completion of English language arts (ELA) course of study
- Optional for all students: Portfolio

Partner Language Assessment

- Districts may select one assessment for all students OR different assessments for different languages and student needs.

Students with Disabilities

- Proficiency in English and the partner language may be demonstrated in two domains instead of four domains, depending on the student's needs.

See the next page for a detailed list of certificate levels and assessments.

Language Opportunity Coalition Biliteracy Pathway Certificate Levels

Certificates may be awarded at any grade level.

Certificate Level	English Assessment	Partner Language Assessment
LOC Bilingual Participation Certificate Novice-High	English Assessment English Learners: Use overall ACCESS Score Other students: Completion of English language arts (ELA) course of study Required: English Learners only: Overall ACCESS Level 2 Other students: Completion of English language arts (ELA) course of study Optional: All students: Portfolio documenting Novice-High proficiency in four domains	Partner Language Assessment Districts may select one assessment for all students OR different assessments for different languages and student needs. Required: - Portfolio documenting Novice-High proficiency in four domains - AAPPL/ALIRA: N4 - STAMP: 3 - SLPI: Novice - Other assessments approved by DESE of the Seal of Biliteracy
LOC Bilingual Attainment Certificate Intermediate-Low	English Assessment English Learners only: Overall ACCESS Level 2.1-3.5 Other students: Completion of English language arts (ELA) course of study Required: English Learners only: Overall ACCESS Level 2.1-3.5 Other students: Completion of English language arts (ELA) course of study Optional: All students: Portfolio documenting Intermediate-Low proficiency in four domains	Partner Language Assessment Districts may select one assessment for all students OR different assessments for different languages and student needs. Required: - Portfolio documenting Intermediate-Low proficiency in four domains - AAPPL/ALIRA: I1 - STAMP: 4 - AP: 2 - SLPI: Novice Plus - Aprenda: 50th% - Other assessments approved by DESE of the Seal of Biliteracy
LOC Bilingual Achievement Certificate Intermediate-Mid	English Assessment English Learners only: Overall ACCESS Level 3.6 - 4.2 Other students: Completion of English language arts (ELA) course of study Required: English Learners only: Overall ACCESS Level 3.6 - 4.2 Other students: Completion of English language arts (ELA) course of study Optional: All students: Portfolio documenting Intermediate-Mid proficiency in four domains	Partner Language Assessment Districts may select one assessment for all students OR different assessments for different languages and student needs. Required: - Portfolio documenting Intermediate-Mid proficiency in four domains - AAPPL/ALIRA: I2, I3, I4 in all domains - STAMP: 5 - SLPI: Intermediate - AP: 3 - Other assessments approved by DESE of the Seal of Biliteracy

Students with Disabilities: Proficiency in English and the partner language may be demonstrated in two domains instead of four domains, depending on the student’s needs.

Selecting Assessment Instruments

Language assessment practices differ depending on language program type. Therefore, the assessment requirements for the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificates allow flexibility to select assessments that align with program goals and practices.

For example, “Dual language programs require the use of multiple measures in both languages to assess students’ progress toward meeting bilingualism and biliteracy goals as well as curricular and

content-related goals.”⁴. (See Strand 4 Assessment, Principle 3, Key Point E Assessment is consistently conducted in the two languages of the program.) In contrast, in a World Language program, assessments for English proficiency are not typically conducted.

English Language Assessment

Districts may use ACCESS scores for English Learners and/or use portfolios to assess all students⁵:

- English proficiency criteria for *English Learners* can be demonstrated with an overall ACCESS score of between 2.0 and 4.2.
- Students *not identified as English Learners* are by definition English-proficient for the purpose of awarding the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificates. Therefore, an English proficiency assessment is not required for those students. Rather, successfully completing the requirements of the English language arts (ELA) course of study should be the assessment.
- Districts also have the option of requiring all students to demonstrate English and partner language proficiency using a portfolio assessment. (See the section below on Portfolio Assessment for details).

ACCESS Scores and EL Status: Students in Massachusetts public schools are screened for English proficiency upon entry and classified as either English Learners or English proficient. Following this initial identification, EL English language proficiency is assessed annually using ACCESS for ELs. Students with a minimum 4.2 overall ACCESS score may be “reclassified” and exited from EL status. For the highest Biliteracy Pathway Certificate level, Intermediate-Mid, the ACCESS score criteria is 4.2, the same score required for EL reclassification.

Partner Language Assessment

A student must demonstrate partner language proficiency through a world language assessment or portfolio. Districts may choose partner language assessment(s), depending on the partner languages of the students and the goals and practices of the language program.

Assessments change and evolve in response to the needs in the field. Districts should do research to determine the best options for their student population. Many districts use the [STAMP](#) and [AAPPL](#) assessments. Other districts elect to use another standardized assessment appropriate for the students’ age level, such as [SOLOM](#) or [APRENDA](#). Since fewer tests are available for the elementary level, schools may decide to rely on the assessment of [portfolios](#). Many language learning programs use the [AAPPL](#) and [STAMP](#) in middle school to determine World Language proficiency for the awards and to assess programmatic progress toward the high school goals. Some high school programs are using the [AAPPL](#) and [STAMP](#) as a mid-year or final exam. Other factors to consider include which partner language(s) must be tested and the choice between testing language domains (STAMP) and testing language modes (AAPPL). ([See this overview of the two tests.](#)) Also keep in mind that remaining with a particular test over time will facilitate data comparison from one year to the next.

The MA Office of Language Acquisition maintains an updated list of World Language assessments, including less commonly spoken languages, for use for the State Seal of Biliteracy. The assessments on

⁴ Howard, E. R., Lindholm-Leary, K. J., Rogers, D., Olague, N., Medina, J., Kennedy, D., Sugarman, J., & Christian, D. (2018). *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics., p. 74

⁵ ELA MCAS scores are not included as an option to demonstrate English proficiency for the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate because MCAS measures English Language Arts content knowledge through reading and writing and is not a four-domain language proficiency assessment.

this list can also be used for the certificate program. See the “Assessment” section at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/biliteracy/default.html>.

SMART TASK: Assessment

- How will students demonstrate proficiency in English and a partner language?
- What partner language assessment(s) will be used? Will the district use standardized assessments or portfolios?
- Who will be responsible for ordering and coordinating assessments?

Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio can be used to demonstrate proficiency. Some districts and schools use a portfolio to document proficiency development over time or to enhance the acquisition of a target proficiency level. Portfolios can also showcase a more dynamic and creative demonstration of holistic bilingualism than standardized assessments.

The portfolio should contain evidence in the four language domains: speaking, writing, listening, and reading (the three ACTFL modes: Interpretive Reading and Listening; Interpersonal Listening/Speaking and Presentational Speaking/Writing) at the designated level of proficiency for the certificate level. For Students with Disabilities, proficiency in English and the partner language may be demonstrated in two domains, depending on the student’s needs.

The [NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements](#) and/or the [WIDA Can-Do Descriptors](#) can serve as an inspiration for the variety of tasks in all the domains and modes. You can also use the language-specific examples of “Sample Performance Indicators” in the [ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages](#) for ideas on activities in the various modes. The district should create or adopt rubrics to be used to determine whether or not the evidence presented by the student documents the designated level of proficiency. The district can also use [Linguafolio](#) or create optional portfolio elements.

The MA Office of Language Acquisition provides resources for portfolio assessment for the State Seal of Biliteracy that can be adapted or help inform portfolio practices for the certificate program. See the “Assessment” section at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/biliteracy/default.html>.

Table 2: Example Portfolio Elements

Districts may elect to add additional elements, such as use of biliteracy skills during community service activities, a district writing assessment, an oral interview or oral presentation assessment, use of the LinguaFolio, or other district-developed performance criteria.

Specific examples used during the Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project include:

- Completion of a set number of hours of community service, completion of an internship or tutoring using primary language skills in service to the school or community, and/or a demonstration of the ability to use translation in social situations;
- Reading logs signed by their teachers of a certain number of books (at grade level) read independently in English and in a language other than English;

- A written response to a task in two languages (translation) using a rubric for scoring proficiency level;
- A written essay on why bilingualism is important to them personally, to their community, and to the world;
- A video or podcast of an unrehearsed, spontaneous interaction between the student and another speaker responding to the prompt in the target language;
- A summary of (or some other response to) a prompt about a news report, article, or television/radio program in the target language;
- A written or oral presentation about a specific cultural topic related to the language;
- Oral presentation about career(s) where bilingualism is important and why and how bilingualism is a benefit in those careers;
- A personal response essay after attending one or more cultural events from the second language/ culture they are studying.

Smart Task: Portfolios

- When will a portfolio be used: For low incidence languages, “on the cusp” levels of proficiency, students in elementary schools, students in dual language education programs?
- What will be included in the portfolio?
- How will the components of the portfolio be evaluated (rubrics, ACTFL and/or WIDA proficiency descriptors)?
- How will calibration be achieved amongst the teachers or community members assisting with assessing portfolios?

Assessment Schedule

Determine when the testing best fits within the district testing schedule, and if a re-test option will be scheduled for those students who fail to meet the standard on the first try. Dual Language Education programs have assessments in place to assess their students’ growth in proficiency of both English and the partner language.

Partner language assessment tests are delivered through the computer and involve listening to audio and recording speech. A system check must be conducted on the computer and may include headphones with a microphone. Demo tests are available and are useful for informing students on the format and expectations of the test. Keep in mind that the AAPPL, STAMP, and ALIRA assessments can each take from two to four hours to administer.

Investigate the timing for ordering and receiving assessments. For example, the AAPPL and STAMP tests should be ordered at least two weeks before testing.

Smart Task: Assessment

- Which students will be tested and at which grade levels?
- What is the timeline for giving assessments? When will testing take place?
- Who will proctor or administer the tests? Who will proctor the test?

Table 3. Example Assessment Practices

The examples below were created during the Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project and can be revised to support the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate program.

- Portfolio Framework developed by subgroup of Seal of Biliteracy Workgroup: [Sample Framework and Rubric for Seal Of Biliteracy Qualifying Portfolio](#)
- [Sample Seal of Biliteracy Portfolio_Melrose Public School](#)
- [Sample Portfolio for ELs in TBE Programs Framingham Public School](#)
- [Partner Language Tests for the Seal of Biliteracy](#): An overview of language assessments with a focus on the AAPPL and STAMP test. (Powerpoint Slides)
- Protocol to help teachers calibrate assessment scores on oral language assessments: [Protocol for DDM Spoken Production Wilmington Public Schools](#),

Data and Reporting

Assessment Data Access

Determine where the ACCESS and partner language proficiency data is housed in your district and/or school, and whether the information will be provided by a district/school leader or the student. Determine where World Language or partner language proficiency data is housed in your district and/or school, and whether the information will be provided by a district/school leader or the student.

Smart Task: Data Access, Record-Keeping and Reporting

- Where is ACCESS and partner language proficiency data housed? Who has access to the data for the certificate program?
- Where will district-wide certificate award records be stored?
- How will the data be recorded in individual student records?

Data Collection to Reach All Students

Data analysis should take place to document the number and type of biliteracy awards given, including data on the proficiency levels, partner languages, and language program types. Develop a departmental, school, and district system to look at the student work and analyze the trends in the data. The trends can point to areas of focus for the coming year as well as areas in which students are excelling. Determine a process to share the individual results with students (and decide whether parents will also be informed) and provide feedback to students on how to improve. Effective programs use data analysis as part of an ongoing discussion with students about proficiency development and how they can improve their own performance.

The Language Opportunity Coalition requests that school districts report data on the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate so that we may monitor and evaluate the program statewide. Report your data to the Language Opportunity Coalition at <https://BiliteracyPathwayMA.us>. The LOC asks for data on the number and level of the certificates awarded, the partner languages, the language programs offered in the district, and the participation of English Learners.

SMART TASK: Data Collection and Reporting

- From which language programs are students earning the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate (World Language, ESL, Dual Language, Transitional Bilingual, or other)?
- Which languages are being assessed?
- How many students are earning each level of the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate?
- How long is it taking students to prepare for earning the awards?
- Are there any language groups or student subgroups that are not participating in the awards, and if so, how can they be supported?

Appendix A: Language Proficiency

What is proficiency?

The proficiency movement began in the 1970s when the government needed to describe what communicative functions were necessary for diplomats and the armed forces that were working abroad with the understanding that there would be a need for those personnel to interact with the native population. Certainly, the linguistic needs of a clerk are different from those of a soldier or a hostage negotiator. The levels extend from Novice, to Intermediate, to Advanced, to Superior to Distinguished and each have sub-levels of low, mid and high. Each sub-level outlines the range of tasks or communicative functions that the person can complete, in which communicative contexts and how well the person can understand and be understood. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) adapted the scale for use in language development in K-12 and beyond. Though it has taken some time to become the national movement that it is now, best practices in World Language teaching now focus on what the learner can do with the language. The purpose of language learning is to develop proficiency to be able to interact with the language in real-world communicative contexts for authentic purposes.

The State Seal of Biliteracy award has pushed districts to focus on proficiency development and teachers create a learning environment that focuses on the communicative needs of the target proficiency level of the awards. This encourages programs and teachers to move away from the historic grammatical focus of language learning that did not develop proficiency or lead to much enjoyment in language learning. Language teachers are united in frustration over consistently hearing some version of the statement; “I took X number of years of X language in high school and I can’t say a word now.” Historically, language learning has not focused on what students can communicate as a result of programming.

How is proficiency measured?

Along with the proficiency scale, the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) was created as a formal assessment process through interview to assign the specific level of proficiency that the person can sustain in the language. In 2015, ACTFL in cooperation with the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE), the National Association of Teachers of Other Languages (TESOL), and the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) designated Intermediate-Mid as the minimum standard of functional proficiency for the Seal of Biliteracy. See the 2020 updated [Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy \(2020\)](#).

Over the last ten years, as language programming shifts to proficiency development and have wanted to assess how well their students are attaining the departmental targets, two companies have created tests over the computer for use in schools to simulate the OPI interview process but in the four skills or three modes of the language. The tests take about an hour or so and cost about \$20 per student.

- [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#)
- [SSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements](#)
- [Oral Proficiency Levels in the Workplace \(poster created by ACTFL\)](#)
- [WIDA Can Do Descriptors](#)

Where can I find information on language instruction pedagogy?

- [ACTFL Core Practices for Effective Language Learning](#)

- [CAL Fundamental of Sheltering Instruction](#)
- [WIDA workshops and webinars](#)

Appendix B: Acronyms and Terminology

Acronyms

[AAPPL](#) – ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages

[ACCESS](#) – Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State

[ALIRA](#) – ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment

[AP](#) – Advanced Placement

[ACTFL](#) – American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

ELs – English Learners

[ELPAC](#) – English Learner Parent Advisory Council

[LOC](#) – Language Opportunity Coalition

[LOOK Act](#) – Language Opportunity for Our Kids Act

[MABE](#) – Multistate Association of Bilingual Education-Northeast

[MAFLA](#) – Massachusetts Foreign Language Association

[MATSOL](#) – Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages

[MCAS](#) – Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

[NABE](#) – National Association of Bilingual Education

[SLPI](#) – Sign Language Proficiency Interview

[STAMP](#) – Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency

[TESOL International Association](#) – The Trusted Global Community for Knowledge and Expertise in English Language Teaching

Terminology

Academic language use – Use by students of language for academic purposes

Biliteracy – Ability to read and write in two languages

[Biliteracy Achievement Certificate](#) - A certificate of the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate for students who have attained an Intermediate–Mid level of proficiency according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines in elementary and secondary school and to encourage further development of higher levels of biliteracy

[Biliteracy Attainment Certificate](#) – A certificate of the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate for students who have attained an Intermediate–Low level of proficiency according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines in elementary and secondary school and to encourage further development of higher levels of biliteracy

[Biliteracy Pathway Certificate](#) – Levels of awards to demonstrate the ongoing nature of language learning and to foster a mentality of lifelong learning

[Biliteracy Participation Certificate](#) - A certificate of the LOC Biliteracy Pathway Certificate for students who have attained an Novice-High level of proficiency according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines in elementary and secondary school and to encourage further development of higher levels of biliteracy

Domain or Mode – Interpersonal Speaking/Writing (interacts and negotiates meaning in speaking or writing), Interpretive Reading/Listening (understands and interprets what is read, heard or viewed), and Presentational Speaking/Writing (presents information in speaking or writing)

Dual Language Education – Programs in which literacy and content is taught in two languages

English Language Education – Programs to support learners of English

Functional language use – Language used to complete the functions or tasks of daily life

Heritage language - In general, the term “heritage language learner” is used to describe a person studying a language who has proficiency in or a cultural connection to that language. (CAL Heritage Briefs, 2010)

Immersion programs – Programs in which literacy and content are taught in a language other than English

Mode or Domain – Interpersonal (interacts and negotiates meaning in speaking or writing), Interpretive (understands and interprets what is read, heard, or viewed) and Presentational (presents information in speaking or writing)

Performance – the carrying out of a task or language function (e.g., listing, asking and answering questions, describing, etc.)

Portfolio – documentation of a range of performances to demonstrate a sustained level of performance or growth over time

Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project – A collaboration of teachers and leaders of all types of language teaching programs, all languages and levels to create criteria for the Seal in MA, which began in 2014 and continued through spring of 2018

Skill – the four skills of language are speaking, writing, reading and listening

Proficiency – Practiced performances develops language proficiency in increasingly higher levels; Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished (with sub levels of Low, Mid, and High)

[ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#) – a description of what people can do with language in terms of Interpretive Reading and Listening; Interpersonal Listening/Speaking and Presentational Writing/Speaking in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context

Seal – a stamp, emblem or representative insignia

[State Seal of Biliteracy](#) – an award provided by state approved districts that recognizes high school graduates who attain high levels of proficiency in English and a world language by high school graduation.

World Language Education – programs that teach world languages to speakers of other languages