



# MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## Seal of Biliteracy Frequently Asked Questions

### 1.) What is the New Jersey Seal of Biliteracy?

On January 19, 2016 New Jersey became the fifteenth state to pass legislation for the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy. The goal for passing statewide legislation for the Seal of Biliteracy was "...to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more world languages in addition to English" (New Jersey Assembly, No. 4415). Since the initial passing of this legislation, the Seal of Biliteracy has successfully been implemented in school districts throughout New Jersey with thousands of graduating students receiving this much deserved recognition.

### 2.) Who is eligible to pursue the Seal of Biliteracy?

All seniors at Montclair High School are eligible to apply for the New Jersey Seal of Biliteracy starting in the 2018-2019 school year. Please note that senior students do not have to be currently enrolled in a world language course at Montclair High School in order to be eligible to apply for the Seal of Biliteracy. Additionally, students may pursue the Seal of Biliteracy in a language other than those offered in the Montclair Public Schools. Participation in the Seal of Biliteracy is entirely voluntary and based upon the self-nomination of students.

### 3.) What is the purpose of seeking the Seal of Biliteracy?

In an increasingly globalized world, the demand for bilingual and multilingual citizens continues to rise at an unprecedented rate. The Seal of Biliteracy offers those pursuing higher education and/or joining the workforce an array of opportunities. In this sense, the Seal of Biliteracy achieves the following goals for students:

- Encourage students to study languages
- Certify attainment of biliteracy
- Provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills
- Provide universities with a method to recognize and award academic credit to applicants seeking admission
- Prepare students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
- Recognize and promote second language instruction in public schools
- Strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages of a community

#### 4.) How does one demonstrate language proficiency to qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy?

In order for students to be eligible to receive the Seal of Biliteracy they must meet the following criteria:

- Students must demonstrate a proficiency level of Intermediate-Mid or higher in a world language. Proficiency in the language of a student's choice may be demonstrated in one of the following two ways in the Montclair Public Schools:
  - Receiving a four or five on an Advanced Placement world language and culture exam administered in the spring of their junior year of high school.
  - Receiving a score of Intermediate-Mid or higher in each of the four domains (i.e. reading, listening, writing & speaking) assessed on the Avant STAMP 4S assessment.
- Students must demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting the New Jersey State high school graduation requirements in English Language Arts or its alternatives, including through State ELA assessment.

**\*Please note:** All assessment data submitted to receive the Seal of Biliteracy must come from a testing administration that occurred after January of a student's junior year of high school. Therefore, Advanced Placement, STAMP, and other assessment scores that were achieved prior to January of a student's junior year may not be used to satisfy the Seal of Biliteracy requirements.

#### 5.) What is the implementation timeline of the Seal of Biliteracy for the 2018-2019 school year?

The following implementation timeline will be followed for the Seal of Biliteracy in the Montclair Public Schools for the 2018-2019 school year:

- **December 2018:** All Montclair High School seniors will be provided with information pertaining to the Seal of Biliteracy through both digital and printed communications. These communications will be disseminated to students via MHS world language classes, guidance, as well as grade-wide digital communications. This information will also be made accessible to the public through both the district and MHS portion of the MPS website. Additionally, students who received a four or higher on an Advanced Placement world language and culture exam taken during their junior year of high school will receive an additional written and digital correspondence notifying them of their eligibility to apply for the Seal of Biliteracy based upon their respective scores. All interested students will be asked to take a brief Google survey formally expressing their interest, as well as providing the necessary information to continue with the process.
- **January 2019:** Students who completed the Google survey will be notified via email and a mailing regarding details pertaining to the administration of Avant STAMP assessment in early January 2019. This assessment is required in order for students to demonstrate Intermediate-Mid proficiency in each of the four domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the language of their choice. Arrangements will be made for students to

take the Avant STAMP assessment during the school day at MHS sometime in mid-January 2019. The Avant STAMP test takes approximately four hours to administer. Applicant students who received a four or five on an Advanced Placement language & culture exam during the spring of their Junior year are not required to take the Avant STAMP assessment as they may submit their AP exam score to demonstrate the required level of language proficiency.

- **February 2019:** A second make-up Avant STAMP testing session will be scheduled for some time in mid-February 2019. This will provide interested students who were absent for the January testing administration to still partake in the assessment. This make-up session will also be offered during the school day at MHS.
- **March 2019:** Once the Avant STAMP or Advanced Placement scores are received and reviewed, scores will be crosschecked to ensure that applicants have fulfilled their New Jersey State high school graduation requirement in the area of English Language Arts. Once this information has been verified, the student's candidature for the Seal of Biliteracy will be forwarded for final review and approval by the New Jersey Department of Education.
- **May 2019:** Students will receive notification regarding the status of their application via a written and digital communication. Information pertaining to district recognition will be shared with those students who have been awarded the honor by the New Jersey Department of Education.
- **June 2019:** Students who have been awarded the Seal of Biliteracy will be presented with their official Seal of Biliteracy certificate at a district-sponsored event. Details regarding this recognition will be shared sometime in May 2019.

**6.) Should I wish to take the Avant STAMP test what is the timeline and cost associated with this assessment?**

All interested students who have not received a four or a five on an Advanced Placement language and culture exam from their junior year must demonstrate Intermediate-Mid or higher proficiency in the target language of their choice by partaking in the Avant STAMP 4S assessment. This assessment measures student proficiency in the domains of listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Students must demonstrate Intermediate-Mid proficiency in each tested domain in order to be eligible to receive the Seal of Biliteracy. The Avant STAMP assessment will be administered during the school day at MHS sometime in mid-January 2019. Additionally, a make-up testing day will be held during a school day sometime in February 2019. Details pertaining to the administration of the Avant STAMP assessment will be shared with applicant students sometime in early January 2019. There is currently no cost associated with taking the Avant STAMP Assessment in the Montclair Public Schools. Additional information pertaining to the Avant STAMP assessment may be found at the following link:

<https://avantassessment.com/stamp4s>.

**7.) How are students who qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy honored?**

Students who have been awarded the Seal of Biliteracy by the New Jersey Department of Education will be recognized at a district-sponsored event (i.e. Senior Awards Ceremony & Board of Education public meeting). Student recipients will be awarded an official certificate containing the State Seal that attests to their wonderful achievement. Additionally, notation of students' attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy will appear on their official high school transcript. Official documentation permits students to highlight this accolade when pursuing opportunities in the workforce and postsecondary level where bilingualism/multilingualism is valued as a remarkable asset well beyond their high school career.

**9.) Where may I find additional information regarding the Seal of Biliteracy?**

The following resources provide additional information pertaining to the Seal of Biliteracy both at the state and national level:

- New Jersey Department of Education:  
<https://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl/biliteracy/>
- Seal of Biliteracy National Website: <https://sealofbiliteracy.org/index.php>

**10.) Who may I contact should I have any further questions pertaining to the Seal of Biliteracy in the Montclair Public Schools?**

All inquiries concerning the implementation of the New Jersey Seal of Biliteracy may be directed to Mr. Frank Sedita, Supervisor of World Languages & ESL K-12. Mr. Sedita may be contacted anytime via phone at 973-509-4230 or email [fsedita@montclair.k12.nj.us](mailto:fsedita@montclair.k12.nj.us).