

# World Language Credit Testing and the Seal of Biliteracy: 10 Years' Experience in Seattle

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# The Power of Language

“Language is part of our heritage. It is part of our roots; and it is part of our culture. It is our everyday life. Giving value to that is always very important and making students always feel welcome and always feel supported.”

- Jenesis Garcia, bilingual graduate

“Our language is our representation of who we are.”

- Ana Licon (bilingual mother)



# It began with Students Earning Credits for Languages they know



- State Board of Education (SBE) and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) researched options for awarding students credit for languages based on proficiency (2009).
- SBE endorsed a Washington State School Directors' [Sample Policy](#) and [Sample Procedure](#) for awarding Competency-Based Credits for World Languages (2010).
- Seattle Public Schools was one of the first two districts in the state to offer testing to students (spring 2011).



Seattle's Director of Bilingual Education, Veronica Gallardo, applied for a Gates Foundation grant to fund and expand the testing in 7 districts in South King County through the [Road Map World Language Credit Program](#) (2012).

Michele was the project director at OSPI.



### HOW DOES IT WORK?

**STEP 1: Determine if you're eligible**  
Do you speak a language other than English?

Can you read and write in it too?

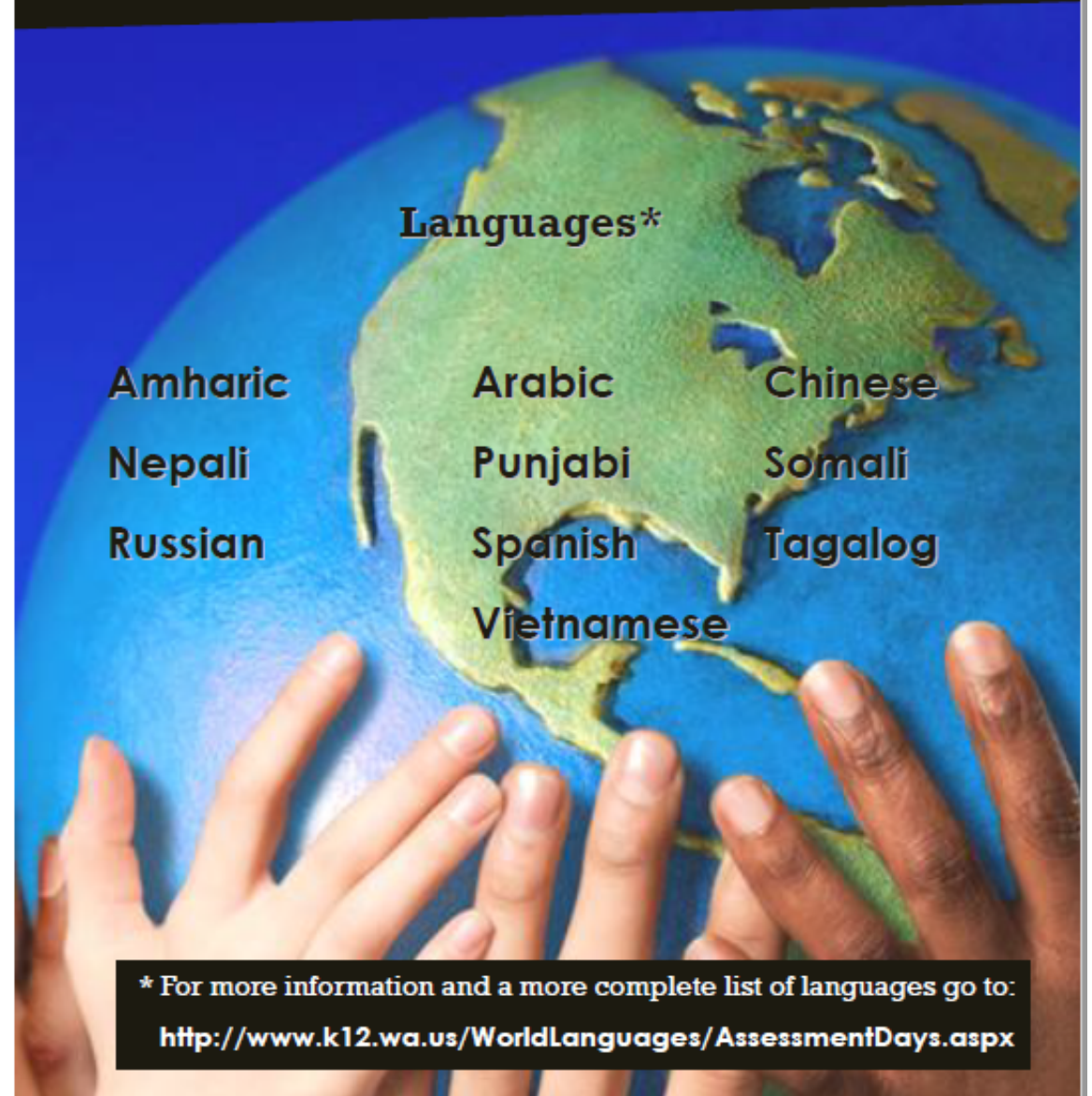
**STEP 2: Take the tests**  
Learn about the tests and sign up at:

[www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/StudentsEarnCredits.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/StudentsEarnCredits.aspx)

**STEP 3: Get credit**  
Contact your high school counselor with your test results to add the credits to your school transcript.

That's it!

## WORLD LANGUAGE CREDIT PROGRAM



# OSPI Approves the Following Tests:

- Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) offered through Avant Assessment. (Try out the Sample Tests.) The STAMP test typically takes about 1 1/2 hours to 3 hours. It is not timed.
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Writing Proficiency Test (WPT), Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), OPI computer-based (OPIc), and ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency (AAPPL) offered through Language Testing International (LTI).
- WorldSpeak offered through Avant Assessment. The format is similar to STAMP but just tests Writing and Speaking in Somali (Maay Maay and Maxaa), Tagalog, Vietnamese and several other languages.
- ALTA Writing Skills Assessment and Speaking and Listening Assessment offered through ALTA Language Services.
- Custom tests in Writing and Speaking for other languages not available through Avant, LTI, or ALTA offered through the Washington Association for Language Teaching (WAFLT Custom Testing).
- SLPI: Sign Language Proficiency Interview for American Sign Language (ASL) offered through North Carolina ASLTA.

# How are credits earned?

Credit will be granted if students meet the following levels of proficiency\* across the language skills tested for each language:

- Novice Mid earns 1 credit
- Novice High earns 2 credits
- Intermediate Low earns 3 credits
- Intermediate Mid earns 4 credits

Comp Credits are identified by language on the common transcript.

\*based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines





State Seal of Biliteracy SB Bill 6424

Signing on March 27, 2014

Photo courtesy of Washington State Legislative Support Service

# Video about World Language Competency-Based Credits (2014)



<https://youtu.be/tgCMhiM1N-o>

[https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international\\_education/world\\_language\\_credit\\_testing](https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international_education/world_language_credit_testing)



# From World Language Credit Testing to the Seal of Biliteracy

Seattle was already testing students in dozens of languages each year (through World Language Competency-Based Credit Testing), so implementing the new State Seal of Biliteracy was a natural next step.

## Main Challenges:

- Getting AP and IB test data to report for the State Seal of Biliteracy (the district did not capture that data centrally)
- Expanding the times and places for students to participate in World Language Credit Testing and finding district funding to pay for the testing
- Getting the Seal of Biliteracy Data properly transferred to OSPI each summer



# Integrating the State Seal of Biliteracy into Seattle's Dual Language Immersion Programs



Seattle had already developed proficiency targets and benchmark years for testing in their Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin DLI programs:

- End of 3rd Grade: Novice Mid – Novice High
- End of 5th Grade: Novice High – Intermediate Low
- End of 8th Grade: Intermediate Low – Intermediate Mid
- End of 12th Grade: Advanced Low – Advanced Mid

At 8th Grade benchmark, DLI students take the STAMP\* test and can qualify for 1-4 high school credits based on demonstrated proficiency. If they earn 4 credits, they qualify as Proficient for the State Seal of Biliteracy when they enter high school.

\*Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency from Avant Assessment

# How Seattle Tests



- District pays the testing costs for all languages.
  - Based on available funds, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders may be prioritized in the fall.
  - Other grades are added when funds are available.
  - Students currently qualified for English Learner services are encouraged to test in spring of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - All 8<sup>th</sup> grade DLI (Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin) students test in the spring.
- A central testing site at the Seattle World School (Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center) offers testing once a month on a Saturday.
- High Schools throughout the district are encouraged to offer testing to their students, usually after school a couple of times a year.



# Remote World Language Credit Testing



- Continued to follow same approach in prioritizing and recruiting students.
- During the COVID-19 Pandemic we are offering two options:
  - Option 1: Students can test independently with testing companies and SPS covers the cost of testing and collects results.
  - Option 2: Students can test individually through remote proctoring on a Saturday or after school testing session. We use SPS proctors and Microsoft Teams to proctor.
- We are exploring options to increase access to students that remote testing is not a viable option. This could include small group in-person testing or one-on-one testing in collaboration with their world language teachers.

# Seattle Public Schools: 206 Seals of Biliteracy Earned in 2015

## First Year of the Seal of Biliteracy



- 84 for AP (level 3+)
  - French, Japanese, Spanish, Latin
- 52 for IB (level 4+)
  - French, Japanese, Spanish
- 70 for 4 Competency-Based Credits in 20 languages
  - Largest: Amharic, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrinya, Vietnamese

[https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international\\_education/seal\\_of\\_biliteracy/](https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international_education/seal_of_biliteracy/)

# Seattle Public Schools: 1,337 Seals of Biliteracy Earned from 2017 - 2020

Since 2017



- 574 for AP (level 3+)
  - Chinese, French, Japanese, Spanish
- 366 for IB (level 4+)
  - French, Japanese, Spanish
- 397 for 4 Competency-Based Credits
  - Largest: Amharic, Arabic, Dutch, German, Mandarin, Oromo, Persian, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Thai, Tigrinya, Vietnamese

[https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international\\_education/seal\\_of\\_biliteracy/](https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international_education/seal_of_biliteracy/)



# Seattle Public Schools: Global Seals of Biliteracy Earned in 2018 - 2020



Language	Total Student Count
<b>AP</b>	18
Japanese	7
Latin	2
Spanish	9
<b>IB</b>	51
Chinese-Mandarin	4
French	4
Japanese	1
Spanish	39
<b>STAMP</b>	3
Spanish	3
<b>WorldSpeak</b>	4
Vietnamese	4

# What the Seal means to students, especially emergent bilinguals (English Learners)



*“I am extremely excited because I have never gotten the chance to put my language to use at school or to something that will benefit me in the future.”*

*“Having an opportunity where cultural skills learned outside of school are recognized is fantastic!”*

# What World Language Teachers Can Do



- Make sure your AP and IB students know about the Seal of Biliteracy. (Students who pass AP/IB exams in spring of 12th grade can still receive the Seal after graduation.)
- Encourage students who have a first language other than English (or the language you teach) to earn credits in their home language too and earn the Seal for that language.
- For students who speak a language, but lack literacy skills, help them find a way to learn to read and write in their home language and earn credits and the Seal.



## For more information...

[https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international\\_education/world\\_language\\_credit\\_testing](https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international_education/world_language_credit_testing)

[https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international\\_education/seal\\_of\\_biliteracy](https://www.seattleschools.org/academics/international_education/seal_of_biliteracy)

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