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Office of P-12**

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TO: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public School Districts
Public School Administrators
Administrators of Nonpublic Schools and Charter Schools

FROM: Lisette Colón-Collins 
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DATE: January 2018

SUBJECT: Clarification on the Criteria for Earning
the New York State Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB)

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide clarification for high school and district administrators on the criteria required for a student to earn the New York State Seal of Biliteracy as pertains to the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT).

The awarding to students of the New York State Seal of Biliteracy was established by legislation passed by the NYS Legislature and signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo in 2012. It was established to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in two or more languages. This recognition of attaining biliteracy becomes part of the high school transcript and diploma for these students and serves as evidence of an important accomplishment to future employers and college admission decision makers. The awarding of the seal of biliteracy is intended 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.

To qualify for the seal of biliteracy a student must complete all of the requirements for a New York State Regents diploma and demonstrate proficiency in both English and

World Language by earning a minimum of three points in each of these two areas, in accordance with the chart provided in “Appendix 1, Earning the New York State Seal of Biliteracy” of the [*The New York State Seal of Biliteracy Handbook*](#). An update to Appendix 1 of the Handbook clarifies that a student meets the criterion necessary to earn one point via the Grades 9-12 New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) by achieving an overall scale score of 290 or higher.

Questions related to this process can be directed to OBEWL@nysed.gov.