

## **PROPOSAL TO AMEND OLDHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS SEAL OF BILITERACY GUIDELINES**

**TO:** Oldham County Board of Education

**FROM:** Mark Robson

**DATE:** February 25, 2026

**RE:** Expanding Seal of Biliteracy Language Options for Greater Student Equity

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### **BACKGROUND**

Oldham County Schools currently serves an increasingly diverse student population, including English Language Learners and refugee students representing numerous language backgrounds. Our district's commitment to "Ignite Passion. Experience Excellence." extends to recognizing and celebrating the multilingual assets our students bring to our schools.

Currently, our Seal of Biliteracy implementation appears limited to languages with AP or IB examinations. However, the **Kentucky Department of Education's Guidelines for Establishing a Local Seal of Biliteracy** explicitly provide pathways for students to demonstrate proficiency in **any world language**, including those without AP/IB testing options.

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

A student has requested an application for the Seal of Biliteracy with **Kinyarwanda** (Rwandan language) as her second language. Under current practice, we lack a clear procedure to assess proficiency in languages beyond those offered through AP/IB examinations. This creates an equity issue that potentially excludes heritage speakers and students from refugee backgrounds.

### **KENTUCKY GUIDELINES FRAMEWORK**

Per KDE's published guidelines, when AP or IB tests are unavailable for a specific language, students may demonstrate proficiency through:

**Nationally valid and reliable assessments aligned with ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, requiring a minimum score of Intermediate-Mid or equivalent in all applicable modes of communication** (Interpretive

Listening, Interpersonal Speaking, Presentational Writing, and Interpretive Reading).

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT**

We recommend amending our Seal of Biliteracy procedures to explicitly include the following approved testing providers for **less commonly taught languages**:

### **Approved Testing Providers**

#### **1. ALTA Language Services**

- Offers proficiency testing in 100+ languages including Kinyarwanda
- ACTFL-aligned assessment in all four modalities
- Cost: Approximately \$70-150 per assessment
- Kinyarwanda does not have reading component but a student could still prove proficiency in the other 3 area of reading, writing, and speaking - would we allow proficiency in these areas to count for the seal?

#### **2. Avant Assessment (any assessment through this program - such as the STAMP 4S or Superlanguage Assessment series)**

- Available in numerous less commonly taught languages
- Standards-based assessment aligned with ACTFL guidelines
- Cost varies by language

#### **3. Language Testing International (ACTFL OPI & WPT)**

- Offers testing in 24 less commonly taught languages
- Oral Proficiency Interview and Writing Proficiency Test
- Specifically designed for Seal of Biliteracy purposes

### **Alternative: Global Seal of Biliteracy**

For languages where district-approved testing may not be immediately available, students may pursue the **Global Seal of Biliteracy** ([theglobalseal.com](http://theglobalseal.com)), which:

- Accepts testing in 100+ languages
- Is recognized nationally and internationally
- Complements (does not replace) local/state Seals
- Can be noted on transcripts alongside other honors

## RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES

### 1. Eligibility Determination

- Student completes standard English proficiency requirements (unchanged)
- Student identifies target language for assessment
- District verifies if AP/IB exam exists for that language

### 2. Alternative Testing Pathway

- For languages without AP/IB options, district approves testing through one of the designated providers
- Student coordinates testing (at family expense or through available funding)
- Results submitted to district for verification
- Minimum Intermediate-Mid proficiency in all tested modalities required

### 3. Recognition

- Seal added to transcript and diploma per current procedures
- Recognized at graduation and senior award ceremonies
- Noted in student records through Infinite Campus

## EQUITY AND ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

**This amendment aligns with our district values by:**

- Recognizing the linguistic assets of **all students**, regardless of heritage language
- Supporting our English Language Learner and refugee student populations
- Eliminating barriers that privilege commonly taught languages (Spanish, French, German, Chinese) over heritage languages (Kinyarwanda, Pashto, Arabic, Somali, etc.)
- Preparing students for a global economy that values multilingual competency
- Strengthening college applications and career opportunities for diverse learners

**Districts nationwide** have successfully implemented similar amendments, including nearby districts in Connecticut, Washington, and Illinois that specifically include Kinyarwanda among their accepted languages.

## FISCAL IMPACT

- If possible, schools will pay for testing for FR lunch students where eligible. If not, families bear cost or seek community/scholarship support)
- **Minimal administrative burden** (same verification process as current AP/IB score submission)
- **Potential benefit:** Enhanced recruitment and retention of diverse families seeking districts that value multilingualism

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- **March 2026:** Board approval of amended guidelines
- **March 2026:** Communication to schools and families; update district website
- **Spring 2026:** First cohort of students able to apply under expanded guidelines
- **May 2026:** Recognition at graduation ceremonies

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

**We recommend the Board of Education approve the amendment of our Seal of Biliteracy procedures to explicitly include ACTFL-aligned testing through approved providers for languages without AP/IB examination options, effective immediately for the Class of 2026.**

This amendment requires no changes to eligibility criteria or English proficiency requirements—it simply clarifies the pathway for demonstrating proficiency in world languages beyond those with AP/IB exams, consistent with Kentucky Department of Education guidance.

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## RESOURCES FOR REFERENCE

- Kentucky Department of Education: *Guidelines for Establishing a Local Seal of Biliteracy*  
<https://www.education.ky.gov/curriculum/hsgradreq/Pages/Seal-of-Biliteracy.aspx>
  - ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and Assessments  
<https://www.actfl.org/assessments>
  - Global Seal of Biliteracy  
<https://theglobalseal.com>
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