

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

Topic: ACCEPTANCE OF SEAL OF BILITERACY PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION: It is proposed that the Governing Board of the Pasadena Unified School District accept the Seal of Biliteracy Program which promotes the development of language proficiency skills.

District Priority/Strategy: To provide a rigorous comprehensive curriculum that challenges and engages all students to reach academic excellence.

I. BACKGROUND:

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. Students would be recognized with a seal on their high school diploma as well as their transcript. They would wear a medal cord at their high school graduation which would indicate that they have earned this distinction. The Seal of Biliteracy Program supports PUSD's Graduate Profile in the Strategic Plan: "Students will acquire strong, multilingual verbal and written skills."

The purpose of the Seal of Biliteracy is to honor students who have demonstrated proficiency in English and at least one other language. Californians Together recommend that all California school districts adopt the Seal of Biliteracy in order to increase participation in the global community as well as to honor cultural identities. Districts who have already implemented this program include Glendale Unified School District, Ventura Unified School District, Rowland Unified School District, Sweetwater Union High School District, and Eastside Union High School District. In January, 2010, the DELAC Committee gave their support to this effort. A committee was then formed to further explore implementing this Program and to determine what the criteria would be. Counselors and principals have been informed about this as well.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS:

The Language Assessment and Development Department (LADD) will inform high school students about the Seal of Biliteracy Program next fall by way of mailing to all juniors and seniors as well as through counselors, LDRTs, foreign language teachers and parent groups. Students will be informed about the criteria for the award which includes being proficient or advanced on the California Standards Test (11th grade) as well as obtaining a passing score on an AP foreign language exam, receiving a score of 5 or better on the International Baccalaureate foreign language test (Blair) or passing an oral or written proficiency test in a foreign language. In addition, students would need to have a grade point average of at least 2.5. Students would turn in an application by February 15th to indicate their interest. Students not taking the AP or IB foreign language examination would take an oral and written examination on a Saturday in March. Applications and qualifications would be reviewed by the LADD

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Office and students would be informed as to their receipt of the Seal by early June. This program would be coordinated by the Language Assessment and Development Department. High School Language Development Resource Teachers would assist in identifying students and collecting applications. School personnel would be hired on an hourly basis to annually administer and score foreign language tests. The Language Assessment and Development Department would work with high schools to identify students who qualify for this award. The LADD Office would coordinate the foreign language assessment for students utilizing this method to demonstrate proficiency, employing district personnel to administer and score the examinations. The first year's students of the Seal of Biliteracy program would have an opportunity to help design the award. Future plans are to recognize 5th or 8th grade students leaving elementary or middle school with a "Biliteracy Pathway" award. Students enrolled in the dual immersion program could be recognized. The criteria for this award will be developed at a later time.

Attachments: Parent Recommendations.

- II. FISCAL IMPACT:** Cost involved in this award would include printing materials and hiring examiners to conduct and score the oral and written foreign language exams. Estimated annual costs are approximately \$3,500.00 to be paid out of EIA-LEP funding.

Pasadena Unified School District
Board of Education Agenda
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Prepared by: Alice Petrossian

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Originator: Joan Morris

My name is Martha Calenzano. I have four grandchildren in Pasadena schools. I support the idea of bringing the Biliteracy Program to Pasadena. When you learn another language you learn about another culture and its history, therefore, you become more worldly and cultured. Being bilingual encourages people to take pride in their own language and heritage. Being bilingual increases your vocabulary and comprehension in English. It opens up career and business opportunities and students will have more job options. But the most important reason is because it enables you to communicate with more people. Thank you!

My name is Mariana De La Torre. I have two students currently attending PUSD, one at Field and one at Marshall. Coming from a Mexican background, it is very important to me that my children are bilingual simply because that is part of who they are, not to mention that being bilingual is an asset, especially in our community. As a parent, I strongly support that the Biliteracy program be accepted by PUSD because it will encourage more students to be bilingual. Thank you.

Mi nombre es Claudia Estevez. Tengo tres hijos, uno en Eliot y dos niñas en Jefferson School.

En mi opinion ser bilingüe es tener más recursos para aprender mejor sobre todos los temás. Ya creo que cuando un niño aprende otro idioma tiene más conexiones interneuronales por lo cual más flexibilidad de pensamiento para explicarlos, como si tuvieran un canal extra para pensar y recibir información de diversos temas como historia, filosofía, arte, matematicas, etc.

Estoy muy orgullosa de que este programa se vaya a integrar en nuestro distrito escolar.

ENGLISH VERSION – TRANSLATION PROVIDED BY PUSD-COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

My name is Claudia Estevez. I am the mother of two girls and one boy. My son attends Eliot and my two daughters attend Jefferson.

In my opinion, being bilingual is a good resource for learning and understanding in all topics. I believe that when a child learns another language, he or she develops more interneuronal connections, which in turn gives him or her greater depth of thought to explain things. It is as if they have an extra channel to think and receive information on various subjects such as History, Philosophy, Arts, Mathematics, etc.

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I am very proud that this program is to be integrated into our school district.