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Pennsylvania Officials Celebrate Western PA Students Excelling in Biliteracy, Civic Engagement

Pittsburgh, PA – Secretary of Education Dr. Noe Ortega and state Senator Lindsey Williams joined educators and students at Shaler Area High School in Allegheny County to honor students who helped launch the [Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy](#), a statewide program to recognize students proficient in more than one world language.

“These students used their voices to advocate for a statewide biliteracy program, and they stand as a model of the importance of student engagement in policymaking,” said Sec. Ortega. “The commonwealth Seal of Biliteracy encourages students to attain proficiency in English and another world language to actively participate in the global economy, and through their efforts these students demonstrate the qualities of civic and community engagement.”

The Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy is presented to students who have attained intermediate-high proficiency in English and one or more additional world language upon high school graduation. Through the rigor needed to obtain proficiency in two or more languages, the program encourages college and career readiness and engagement as a global citizen.

“I’m thrilled to celebrate the success of these Shaler Area students in their advocacy for the seal of biliteracy program here in Pennsylvania,” said Senator Lindsey Williams, Democratic Chair of the Senate Education Committee. “Student voices are essential to crafting good public policy that meets the needs of our current students and the next generation of students.”

To earn a Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy, a student must demonstrate competency in two or more languages (English and an additional world language, including American Sign Language) upon graduation from high school.

The program will:

- recognize the value of world language and dual language programs in Pennsylvania schools;
- affirm the value of cultural and linguistic diversity in our schools and communities;
- encourage family and community support for the development of home languages other than English, as well as the study of additional world languages and cultures;
- encourage all students to acquire proficiency in English and another world language;
- certify intermediate-high proficiency in English and another world language;
- provide employers with a method of identifying candidates with biliteracy skills;
- provide universities with a method to recognize biliterate students; and
- promote civic and global engagement.

“The Shaler Area School District is so proud of our students and staff for advocating for this Seal of Biliteracy,” said Shaler Area School District Superintendent Dr. Sean Aiken. “This persistent action personifies what we believe and who we are as a school district. Our students and staff believe in the importance of being global citizens and this designation will empower our students and others to be competitive in a global marketplace.”

The national Seal of Biliteracy [website](#) notes, “A Seal of Biliteracy and the Pathway awards are a statement by the school system that mastery of two or more languages is important. It encourages students to pursue biliteracy, honors the skills our students attain, and can be evidence of skills that are attractive to future employers and college admissions offices.”

All students who have met proficiency criteria in both English and another world language through school-based programs, community-based language programs, or life experiences can earn the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy.

Schools and school entities can request the PASB logo by emailing ra-seal@pa.gov to create seals for awards or certificates. Pennsylvania does not require schools to offer the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy nor does it provide financial support or incentives for offering a PASB program.

For more information about Pennsylvania’s education policies and programs, please visit the [Department of Education’s website](#). Follow PDE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#), or [Pinterest](#).

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