**New Initiative Gives Everyone a Path to Their Own Seal of Biliteracy**

Global Seal of Biliteracy will close the “opportunity gap” and recognize anyone who can demonstrate a high standard of proficiency in two or more languages.

**EUGENE, OR** – An initiative has been created to expand the current Seal of Biliteracy movement that has been adopted by 33 states and the District of Columbia. Unfortunately, this existing movement is by in large only for public schools, and then only for the districts and schools that “opt in”, leaving many public school students, as well as most private school, charter school, and home schooled students disenfranchised. In addition, individuals in college or those who are currently in the workforce have never had a credible way to certify themselves for their proficiency in English and another language or languages. Until now.

The Global Seal of Biliteracy (<http://www.globalsealofbliteracy.net>) initiative was announced on August 6 to close this “opportunity gap.” For the first time anyone can be credentialed for their language skills - not just students - by making a seal of biliteracy available to anyone, anytime, anywhere. Beginning on September 10 applications will be accepted.

As more U.S. employers and colleges recognize the value of language fluency in both English and another language or languages, the Global Seal of Biliteracy will certify an individual’s language skills and will meet or exceed the standards currently set for all existing state-sponsored Seal of Biliteracy programs.

“We believe that no matter what language you speak, how you learned it, or where you live, every multilingual person deserves the chance to showcase their language proficiency to schools and employers.” said Global Seal of Biliteracy Executive Director Linda Egnatz. “This new program closes the ‘opportunity gap’ that exists for language learners who do not have access to state-sponsored Seal of Biliteracy programs. For the first time there is a pathway for everyone to earn their language passport to local and global success.”

In our global economy and multi-cultural society, the demand for multilingual individuals has skyrocketed.  A recent study from the [New American Economy](https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/press-release/demand-for-bilingual-workers-more-than-doubled-in-5-years-new-report-shows/) showed that demand for bilingual workers more than doubled between 2010 and 2015. And a [study](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/12/20/the-surprising-thing-google-learned-about-its-employees-and-what-it-means-for-todays-students/?utm_term=.59092d8b240e&wpisrc=nl_sb_smartbrief) by Google revealed  that the most important skills connected to success within the company were soft skills, such as effective communication and listening skills that research has linked to language learners.

Avant Assessment is the proud founder and sponsor of the Global Seal of Biliteracy. We are thrilled to have Linda Egnatz as the Executive Director to lead the Global Seal initiative. Linda is a veteran Spanish teacher, 2014 National Language Teacher of The Year, and a leading advocate for the Seal of Biliteracy. We are also honored to have enlisted an outstanding team of leading K-12 and higher education faculty and second language acquisition and assessment experts to serve on the independent board of advisors that will set the standards for qualifying for the Global Seal and guide the program’s mission. See all of our Board members at: <https://www.globalsealofbiliteracy.net/our-story/>

“The Global Seal of Biliteracy will benefit millions of American students, and its creation demonstrates real leadership and commitment to America’s Languages on the part of Avant Assessment." said William P. Rivers, Executive Director at Joint National Commission for Languages - The National Council for Languages and International Studies. "Every child must learn English, in order to fully participate in the economic and civic life of our nation; every child who hears another language at home should have the opportunity to master it, and every child, regardless of first language, should have the opportunity to master additional languages. This Seal recognizes the hard work and achievements of those students who do acquire biliteracy, and it fills a huge gap in the national movement for biliteracy by recognizing students in schools of choice, private schools, homeschooling, and districts which have not yet chosen to implement a state Seal of biliteracy.”

For further information, people can visit <http://www.globalsealofbiliteracy.net>

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