World Language Proficiency Certificate & Seals: FAQ's

In May 2015, the Minnesota Legislature passed Statute 120B.022, which states that school districts that offer world languages "must use the current world languages standards developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages" (ACTFL). The ACTFL Standards are proficiency based. This represents a shift in instruction and assessment from performance for credit completion to actual language proficiency.

What does proficiency mean?
How will students' proficiency be assessed?
How will the State of Minnesota recognize students' proficiency achievement?
Do the Certificate or Seals translate to college credits?
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What does proficiency mean?

ACTFL defines proficiency along a continuum of five levels of proficiency, from Novice to Distinguished. Each level is further subdivided into three stages: low, mid, and high. For example, a student who has successfully achieved proficiency at the Intermediate-Low level would have demonstrated that level of language in the four modalities of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Proficiency means that students are demonstrating accurate language skills (grammar, syntax, appropriate context and register) in unrehearsed situations, applying their skills to a new context. The levels are explained in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Additional information is also on the Edina World Language website: http://tinyurl.com/WL-EPS.

How will the State of Minnesota recognize students' proficiency achievement?

As per Statute 120B.022, subdivision B:

- Students who achieve the Intermediate-Low level of proficiency in the four modalities (listening, speaking, reading and writing) will earn a Minnesota World Language Proficiency Certificate, a separate paper document.

- Students who achieve the Intermediate-High level of proficiency in the four modalities in one language will earn the Minnesota **Bilingual Gold Seal** on their high school transcript. Students who reach the Intermediate-High level of proficiency in the four modalities in two languages will earn the Minnesota **Multilingual Gold Seal** on their high school transcript.

- Students who reach the Advanced-Low level of proficiency in the four modalities in one language will earn the Minnesota **Bilingual Platinum Seal** on their high school transcript. Students who reach the Advanced-Low level of proficiency in the four modalities in two languages will earn the Minnesota **Multilingual Platinum Seal** on their high school transcript.

How will students' proficiency be assessed?

Students must be enrolled in grades 9-12 when being assessed for a seal, not any earlier in order to be eligible for college credit**.** To qualify for a seal, students must take one of the state-approved assessments, which are listed on the Minnesota Department of Education website here. Edina High School students are offered an opportunity to take a proficiency assessment in the spring of their senior year. Families of seniors will receive information via email in March. Students who wish to be assessed before their senior year may sign up for their language AP test. For additional details, please see the EPS World Language Website.

Do the Certificate or Seals translate to college credits?

Only Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) will award college credit to students who receive a certificate or seal. Students must request the college credit within three academic years of their high school graduation and upon enrollment in a MnSCU institution. Further information is available on the Minnesota Department of Education website. Colleges outside the MnSCU system (e.g. University of Minnesota, institutions in other states) will use their own guidelines to evaluate a student's language proficiency.

Are there other requirements for students?

In order to receive a Seal (Intermediate-High and Advanced-Low levels) students must also "satisfactorily complete all required English Language Arts credits" and "demonstrate mastery of Minnesota's English language proficiency standards." *This is why the certificate or seal award can only be added to a student's transcript at the end of his/her senior year.*

If a grade 9-12 student is a native speaker or proficient in a language other than English, can that student get a certificate or seal in his/her native language?

Yes, if:

- the student has met the other requirements of the law relative to English language proficiency (see question above), and
- the student demonstrates the level of proficiency in the four modalities (listening, reading, speaking and writing)

Is there a cost for the assessment, the certificate or the seal?

Families are responsible for the cost of the assessments. Scholarships based on financial need are available at the high school. There is no additional charge for the certificate of proficiency or to have a seal affixed to a high school transcript.

Additional information from the Minnesota Department of Education is available in its FAQ document and its World Language webpage.

This document is available electronically at http://tinyurl.com/EHSWorldLanguage