FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who qualifies for the Seal of Biliteracy award?
ALL students are eligible to attain the Seal of Biliteracy based on evidence of achieving the designated level of language proficiency in English, plus one or more additional languages, during their high school years. Students must demonstrate the state-determined level of proficiency in English, as well as one or more additional languages, be that language a native language, heritage language, or a language learned in school or in another setting.

If I am taking a French IV/Spanish IV or AP French IV/AP Spanish IV class, what is my next step? To provide guidance and preparation for obtaining the Seal of Biliteracy, students currently enrolled in French IV/Spanish IV and AP French IV/AP Spanish IV classes are encouraged to continue on to French V (Seal of Biliteracy)/Spanish V (Seal of Biliteracy).

What do I have to do to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy? To obtain the Seal of Biliteracy award, students have to show proficiency in two or more languages, with English as one of the required languages. The French V (Seal of Biliteracy)/Spanish V (Seal of Biliteracy) classes will include a continued development of the student’s world language proficiency by incorporating literacy, auditory, oral and writing skills that are aligned with the expectations required to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy and further language study in post-secondary environments. Students’ English Language proficiency will be determined through scores obtained from their ACT, SAT, or ELPA exams. Students also have to complete other requirements such as a portfolio project, an interactive interview in the target language, and a determined amount of volunteer service hours. These additional requirements will be embedded within the class activities and modified for the 2019-2020 school year.

Is the Seal of Biliteracy class considered an honors level class? Yes! Given that the Seal of Biliteracy award is a national recognition to students who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English, the Seal of Biliteracy class is considered an honors level course. The class does meet the honor requirement for weighted grades consideration. However, the class does not carry the AP designation* because the course curriculum is not created around the thematic expectations of the AP Language and Culture exam.

*If I did not take the AP Language and Culture exam when I was enrolled in and AP French IV/AP Spanish IV, can I still take the exam for college credit in addition to receiving the Seal award? YES! The AP Language and Culture exam is skill based. The French V (Seal of Biliteracy)/Spanish V (Seal of Biliteracy) class is designed to enhance students' advanced language proficiency, while applying all the skills previously acquired in their AP French IV/AP Spanish IV class. Any student is eligible to take an AP exam regardless of whether they currently are or have ever been enrolled in an AP class.

Do I have to take the AP Language and Culture exam to achieve the Seal of Biliteracy award? No. Students pursuing the Seal of Biliteracy award have to successfully complete a language proficiency exam but that assessment does not have to be the AP Language and Culture exam. An alternate exam used to assess language proficiency will be the AAPPL exam.

If I have already taken the AP Language and Culture exam and want to pursue the Seal of Biliteracy award, should I take the class? Yes! That would be the next best option. If you received a passing score on the AP Language and Culture exam, you would have already completed one of the four requirements towards achieving the Seal of Biliteracy award. Being in the class will provide you with continued language application and the necessary time and guidance to complete the remaining requirements.
How is the Seal of Biliteracy class different from an AP Language and Culture class? Both classes are highly encouraged for students interested in achieving a high level of language proficiency. The AP Language and Culture course is constructed around a pre-determined thematic curriculum that is later assessed by the AP Language and Culture exam. Some colleges award college credit and consider students for specific scholarships based on students' AP Language and Culture exam result.

While considered an honors course, the Seal of Biliteracy class is not structured around an AP Language and Culture curriculum. With distinction, the Seal of Biliteracy award is a national recognition that promotes and validates bilingualism and biliteracy in English and another language. Proficiency in a language other than English will benefit students in our current world that is linguistically and culturally diverse. Employers in today's current market seek individuals that have bilingual skills and cultural proficiency. Students who receive a Seal of Biliteracy award can promote this accomplishment on their resumes, as well as scholarship and university applications. Bilingual and biliterate individuals are more marketable to employers and institutions of higher learning. Many universities nationwide are awarding recognition to students that have achieved the Seal of Biliteracy with college credits and/or college scholarships.

Who awards the Seal of Biliteracy?
Each school will submit the names of students that have completed all of the requirements for receiving the Seal of Biliteracy. The ICCSD will have a committee that will review criteria for completion and determine students' eligibility for receiving the Seal. Students will receive the Seal on their High School Diploma. Each school may choose to host an award ceremony or celebration to honor students' achievement.