

603 CMR 31.00: MASSACHUSETTS CERTIFICATE OF MASTERY AND STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY

Section

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31.01: Scope and Purposes

- (1) 603 CMR 31.00 establishes the criteria for the Certificate of Mastery and the State Seal of Biliteracy.
- (2) The purposes of the Certificate of Mastery are to:
 - (a) Recognize high academic achievement;
 - (b) Motivate students to perform to their best abilities on MCAS and other measures throughout high school;
 - (c) Recognize high academic achievement in areas not included in MCAS; and
 - (d) Recognize high academic achievement as identified by outside forums, including competitions, student publications, and awards.
- (3) The purposes of the State Seal of Biliteracy are to:
 - (a) Encourage students to study and master languages;
 - (b) Certify attainment of biliteracy skills;
 - (c) Recognize the value of language diversity;
 - (d) Provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills;
 - (e) Provide universities with a method to recognize and give credit to applicants for attainment of high level skills in languages;
 - (f) Prepare students with skills that will benefit them in the labor market and the global society; and
 - (g) Strengthen intergroup communication and honor the multiple cultures and languages in a community.

31.02: Definitions

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Descriptions of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context published by the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Advanced Placement (AP) Exam. An examination in subject matter produced by the College Board.

Arts/Humanities. Literature, composition, history, social science, foreign language and the arts.

Board. The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, appointed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 15, § 1E.

31.02: continued

Certificate of Mastery. An award given to students demonstrating mastery across several content areas, including arts/humanities and mathematics/science through performance on MCAS, other achievement tests, and other forms of high academic, literary, or artistic achievement.

College Board. A membership organization made up of high schools and colleges.

Commissioner. The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education or his or her designee.

Department. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Mathematics/Science. Mathematics, science, engineering and computer science.

MCAS. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, the statewide assessment of individual students' academic performance, as required by M.G.L. c. 69, § 1I.

Other Achievements. Recognition of high academic, literary, or artistic accomplishments as validated by activities outside the student's school, other than through standardized tests.

School District. A municipal school department or regional school district, acting through its school committee or superintendent of schools; a county agricultural school, acting through its board of trustees or superintendent/director; or a charter school or a Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual school, acting through its board of trustees.

State Seal of Biliteracy. An award given by school districts to students who have attained a high level of proficiency in English and not less than one other language in addition to English.

Student. A Massachusetts resident who attends secondary school.

31.03: Criteria for the Stanley J. Koplik Certificate of Mastery

Beginning with the students in the Class of 2009, to be eligible for a Certificate of Mastery, a student must earn a competency determination and:

(1) Meet the following criteria:

(a) For members of the classes of 2009 through 2025, score "Advanced" or its equivalent on at least one grade 10 MCAS test subject, and score "Proficient" or "Advanced" or their equivalent on the remaining subjects tested in the grade 10 MCAS.

(b) For members of the classes of 2026 and beyond, students must score Exceeding Expectations on at least one grade 10 MCAS test subject, and score Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the remaining subjects tested in the grade 10 MCAS; and

(2) Demonstrate accomplishment in two of the following content areas: English, foreign languages, mathematics, history and social studies, science, computer science, and art/music.

(a) For a member of the classes of 2009 through 2025, at least one accomplishment must be in the fields of art/humanities if the student did not score Advanced or its equivalent on the grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS, and at least one accomplishment must be in the fields of mathematics/science if the student did not score Advanced or its equivalent on the grade 10 Mathematics or Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS.

(b) For a member of the class of 2026 and beyond, at least one accomplishment must be in the fields of art/humanities if the student did not score Exceeding Expectations on the grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS, and at least one accomplishment must be in the fields of mathematics/science if the student did not score Exceeding Expectations on the grade 10 Mathematics or Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS.

(c) To use an AP exam as an accomplishment for the purposes of 603 CMR 31.03(2), a student must score a three or higher on the exam.

(d) The Department shall publish guidelines identifying other achievements which will qualify as accomplishments for the purposes of 603 CMR 31.03(2).

31.04: Criteria for the State Seal of Biliteracy

- (1) School District Participation in the State Seal of Biliteracy Program.
 - (a) School districts may award the State Seal of Biliteracy to students who meet the academic criteria listed in 603 CMR 31.04(2).
 - (b) A school district participating in the State Seal of Biliteracy program shall provide written notification to parents or legal guardians of all students enrolled in the district about the State Seal of Biliteracy program, its purposes, and eligibility requirements, in a language that the parent or legal guardian can understand.
 - (c) A school district that awards the State Seal of Biliteracy shall affix the unaltered state insignia developed by the Department on the diploma or the transcript, or both, of students who meet the requirements listed in 603 CMR 31.04(2).

- (2) Criteria. To qualify for the State Seal of Biliteracy, a student must meet all graduation requirements and the criteria listed in 603 CMR 31.04(2)(a) and (b).
 - (a) Demonstrate a high level of proficiency in English by satisfying one of the following:
 1. The English Language Arts requirement of the Competency Determination described in 603 CMR 30.03(2)(a); or
 2. The English Language Arts requirement of the Competency Determination described in 603 CMR 30.03(3)(a); or
 3. The English Language Arts requirement of the Competency Determination described in 603 CMR 30.03(4)(a); or
 4. Students who are required to complete an Educational Proficiency Plan pursuant to 603 CMR 30.03(2)(b), 30.03(3)(b) or 30.03(4)(b) to satisfy the requirements of the Competency Determination must attain a minimum score or level on a nationally recognized and readily available English proficiency assessment approved by the Department. The Commissioner shall determine the minimum score or level, which shall be comparable to the minimum scaled score on the grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS required to satisfy the requirements of the Competency Determination under 603 CMR 30.03(2)(a), 30.03(3)(a) and 30.03(4)(a).
 - (b) Demonstrate a high level of proficiency in a foreign language through one of the following:
 1. Attaining a minimum score or level on a nationally recognized and readily available assessment approved by the Department that measures literacy in a language other than English. The Commissioner shall determine the minimum score or level, which shall be aligned to higher education standards for awarding advanced credit by examination and ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.
 2. An alternative evidence method established by the Department in guidance.

- (3) The Department shall annually publish a list of approved assessments and acceptable minimum scores or levels for purposes of 603 CMR 31.04(2)(a)4. and 603 CMR 31.04(2)(b)1.

- (4) The Department shall establish levels of distinction for the State Seal of Biliteracy in guidance.

- (5) School districts must ensure that low-income students as described in M.G.L. c. 70, § 2 have access to any assessment required to qualify for the State Seal of Biliteracy at no cost.

- (6) Implementation and Reporting.
 - (a) A school district that awards the State Seal of Biliteracy shall maintain a record of all students who have earned the seal and the assessment results used to substantiate the student's biliteracy.
 - (b) Each school district shall report annually to the Department the names of all students who earned the State Seal of Biliteracy.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

603 CMR 31.00: M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, 1D and 1Q.