

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

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31.01: Scope and Purposes

- (1) 603 CMR 31.00 establishes the criteria for the Certificate of Mastery, the Certificate of Mastery with Distinction, and the State Seal of Biliteracy.
- (2) The purposes of the Certificate of Mastery and the Certificate of Mastery with Distinction 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.

Candidate for the Certificate of Mastery. A student who has met the criteria contained in 603 CMR 31.04.

Certificate of Mastery. An award given to students demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and mathematics and completing coursework necessary for college and career readiness.

31.02: continued

Certificate of Mastery with Distinction. 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 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. The term is further defined in 603 CMR 31.05(3).

SAT II Exam. An examination in subject matter produced by the College Board under the name SAT II.

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 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:

- (a) Achieve a scaled score of at least 240 or its equivalent on the grade 10 English Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS by February 1st of the year in which the student graduates. Alternate tests and equivalent scores may be determined by the Department in guidelines on the Certificate of Mastery.
- (b) Complete high school with a grade point average equal to or greater than any minimum grade point average established by the Department in guidelines for the Certificate of Mastery.
- (c) Achieve the passing standard on any test identified by the Department to establish proficiency in Algebra II or more advanced mathematics.
- (d) Demonstrate proficiency in writing through an assessment identified for this purpose by the Department.
- (e) Meet one of the following criteria:
 1. Complete a high school curriculum designed to prepare students for college and career readiness, consistent with any standards established by the Board; or
 2. Earn a Certificate of Occupational Proficiency, under the requirements found in 603 CMR 4.14(2).

31.04: Criteria for Candidacy for the Certificate of Mastery

In order to qualify as a Candidate for the Certificate of Mastery with Distinction, a student must score "Advanced" on at least one grade 10 MCAS test subject, and score "Proficient" or "Advanced" on the remaining subjects tested in the grade 10 MCAS.

31.05: Criteria for the Certificate of Mastery with Distinction

- (1) To be eligible for the Certificate of Mastery with Distinction, a student must:
 - (a) qualify as a Candidate for the Certificate of Mastery with Distinction;
 - (b) demonstrate accomplishment in both Arts/Humanities and Mathematics/Science; and
 - (c) be in good standing to graduate from the high school in which the student is enrolled.

- (2) To qualify for the Certificate of Mastery with Distinction, a Candidate for the Certificate of Mastery with Distinction must submit evidence establishing that he or she met or surpassed the performance standards established in 603 CMR 31.05(3) in one of the following combinations of accomplishments, with at least one accomplishment in the fields of Art/Humanities if the Candidate did not score Advanced on the grade 10 English MCAS, and at least one accomplishment in the fields of Mathematics/Science if the Candidate did not score Advanced on the grade 10 Mathematics or Science and Technology MCAS:
 - (a) Two SAT II exams;
 - (b) Two AP exams;
 - (c) One SAT II exam and one AP exam;
 - (d) One SAT II exam and one Other Achievement; or
 - (e) One AP exam and one Other Achievement.

- (3) To qualify as an accomplishment for the purposes of 603 CMR 31.05(1) and (2), a student must meet or exceed the following levels of performance:
 - (a) A score of three on an AP exam;
 - (b) A score on an SAT II exam determined by the Department to be comparable to a score of three on an AP exam where there exist SAT II and AP exams in the same subject area; provided that, in subject areas where there are no corresponding AP exams, a student must achieve a score designated by the Department;
The Department shall review and publish the required minimum scores for all SAT II exams every three years.
 - (c) A Candidate may not count both an AP exam score and an SAT II exam score in the same subject area as accomplishments for the purposes of 603 CMR 31.04(2).
 - (d) Other Achievements shall include, but are not limited to, the following:
 1. Intel Science Talent Search Competition winner;
 2. Regional, State or National Science Fair winner;
 3. Publication of writing in a competitive publication (*e.g.*, *The Concord Review*);
 4. Selection for activity, beyond local school level, based on excellence in artistic or literary achievement (*e.g.*, Greater Boston Youth Symphony, Boston Ballet, prize in Art Competition);
 5. Additional achievements as approved by the Department.

- (4) The Department shall issue guidelines to schools defining the Certificate of Mastery and Certificate of Mastery with Distinction application process. The Certificate of Mastery and Certificate of Mastery with Distinction will be awarded to students annually on a schedule to be determined by the Department.

31.06: Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery with Distinction Award

A Student who fulfills the requirements of 603 CMR 31.05 will receive the Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery with Distinction Award.

31.07: 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 31.07(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 31.07(2).

31.07: continued

(2) Criteria. To qualify for the State Seal of Biliteracy, a student must meet all graduation requirements and the criteria listed in 603 CMR 31.07(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);
2. The English Language Arts requirement of the Competency Determination described in 603 CMR 30.03(3)(a); or
3. Students who are required to complete an Educational Proficiency Plan pursuant to 603 CMR 30.03(2)(b) or 603 CMR 30.03(3)(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) and 603 CMR 30.03(3)(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 31.07(2)(a)3. and 603 CMR 31.07(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.