



# THE STATE SEAL OF BILINGUALISM-BILITERACY: A Capstone of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Education

In the 21st century, the world economy is increasingly global and multicultural, which requires the workforce of the future to have linguistic and cultural competence. Thus, bilingualism and biliteracy enhance future employees' "human capital" (the measure of the economic value of a person's skill set) by providing linguistic and cross-cultural skills in the global job market (*Language Magazine, 2018*). For instance, over the past five years, the demand for bilingual workers in the United States has more than doubled (*Not Lost In Translation, 2017*).

The State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy (SSBB) does not only prepare New Mexico students to be global citizens and meet local community needs but more importantly, honors New Mexico's heritage and the heritage languages of the State. The SSBB is the capstone of culturally and linguistically responsive education that the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) envisions for NM Students.

The SSBB state regulation was published in September 2015; it set the adoption criteria for school districts and state charter schools to award the SSBB for their high school graduates. To earn the SSBB, students must meet the graduation requirements and demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English, through one of the following options: 1-language certification by an individual Tribe, 2-units of credit and an assessment, 3-units of credit and an alternative process portfolio; or 4-an assessment and an alternative process portfolio.

Across NM, around 3,305 high school graduates received the State Seal of Bilingualism-Biliteracy since 2015 in a variety of languages.

Since the State of New Mexico adopted the SSBB in 2015, 25 school districts and four (4) state charter schools have adopted the SSBB. Within this time frame, around 3,280 students have received a diploma of excellence with the SSBB. In 2019-2020, 1,100 students graduated with the SSBB by attaining proficiency in a variety of languages. The data reported to NMPED between 2016 and 2020 details that high school graduates attained the state seal in *American Sign Language, Arabic, Chinese, Czech, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Keres, Korean, Latin, Navajo, Portuguese, Spanish, Somali, Tagalog, Tewa, Tiwa, Turkish, Vietnamese and Zuni*. Reflecting on the data, districts and charter schools that awarded the SSBB have recognized their students for being fluent in a language other than English and importantly exemplified the practices of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning environments that validate, affirm, build and bridge their students' culture and language. To ensure that all students are secure in their identity and holistically prepared for college, career and life, the Language and Culture Division at NMPED will continue to highlight the importance of the SSBB and provide guidance to districts and charter schools.

The data for the SSBB is periodically updated, please see the link below for the latest data. [https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/19-20\\_Bilingual-Seal-Awarded-Tracking-Log.pdf](https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/19-20_Bilingual-Seal-Awarded-Tracking-Log.pdf). To receive more information about the SSBB adoption and implementation practices, please review the non-regulatory guidance handbook at [https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018-Seal-Handbook-Final-11\\_9\\_18.pdf](https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018-Seal-Handbook-Final-11_9_18.pdf). As we move toward reopening schools for 2020-2021 academic year, it is critically important to plan how seniors intending to earn the SSBB will be able to complete all requirements to earn the SSBB by the end of the school year. For further information, please see the link below to review the supporting document for SSBB during SY 2020-2021: [https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NMPED\\_SupportDoc\\_ELSBMEPsSSBB.pdf](https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NMPED_SupportDoc_ELSBMEPsSSBB.pdf)

