

DESE World Languages Newsletter

June 2020, Vol 2, No 2

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From the Office of Language Acquisition

Greetings from DESE. The last time our office sent a newsletter to World Language educators, we were working at our desks in the Malden office, wearing clothes that had buttons and zippers, and sometimes sitting or standing mere inches apart from one another. We sent that newsletter to teachers who had spent the morning hurriedly pouring coffee into travel mugs as they rushed out the door, fighting traffic to get to school in time to prepare their classrooms for the noisy, hugging, high-fiving throngs of students who would spend their days in crowded classrooms and hallways with their peers and teachers. Like many of you, we in the Office of Language Acquisition, spent our winter talking about holidays, Super Bowls, and upcoming meetings. As February wrapped up, we began hearing more and more of a novel coronavirus that had been a faraway concern, but was now causing us to hum *Happy Birthday* every time we washed our hands. In March, every breakroom conversation was about the coronavirus. Then the state canceled all official travel, and all our external meetings. Then we watched as European countries entirely shut down their public life and wondered if that could ever happen here. On March 16th, we, like many of you, began working from home for a couple of weeks; then until May; then indefinitely. What a difference 3 months can make.

We send this newsletter to you in an entirely different context. In the past three months, the luckiest

among us in the World Language community lost only our leisure activities. Some of us lost opportunities, economic security, or jobs. Some have felt the pain of racial injustice, and many of us have experienced a variety of emotions in the wake of the tragedy regarding George Floyd in Minneapolis. To those of you who have experienced loss and grief during this time, OLA extends to you our support and our solidarity.

The Office of Language Acquisition would like to offer our recognition and thanks to the educators who acted quickly in the most difficult of circumstances to continue to support and educate students. No one foresaw this educational crisis at the beginning of the school year, but schools and educators across the state and across the world immediately found ways to continue educating students even when they could not be physically with them. This big a change in this short a time frame is unprecedented in our field, and we commend you for your professionalism during this trying time.

As World Language educators, the importance of this moment is not lost on us. We have seen more clearly than ever how interconnected our world is. Problems on the other side of the planet become problems everywhere if all parties are not communicating. Study after study reminds us that proficiency in world languages is necessary for our nation's security. Now we

see that need playing out. We also see the need for more language education as state and local governments, school districts, and community groups strive to make sure that all people in Massachusetts have the information they need to be safe. With the high infection rate of this virus, the general public is much safer when everyone in Massachusetts knows how to protect themselves and others. Proficiency in languages other than English is essential to provide critical information to all residents of the Commonwealth. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the ASL community, who translate all the State's televised communications into ASL on the spot. I recommend to you [this article about Rupert Dubler](#), the ASL interpreter for the Commonwealth as not only a great piece about a heroic public service but also as an informational piece about how our students can use their language skills to serve their communities and enhance their careers. Thank you to Amy St. Arnaud from North Reading for sending that article to us.

As you wrap up an unprecedented school year, and as you prepare for the unknown of the upcoming one, OLA is here to support you. Thank you for all you do, and please reach out to us if we can be any assistance.

Andy McDonie is the Language Acquisition Support Specialist for World Languages at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Feel free to contact Andy with questions or concerns regarding World Languages and the State Seal of Biliteracy in Massachusetts.

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Click here to join the [DESE World Language Mailing List](#)

We wish you the best of luck as you conclude your school year.

Response to COVID-19

When schools initially closed due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and in particular the Office of Language Acquisition acted quickly to support teachers and students as they transitioned to remote instruction. OLA quickly produced guidance for English Learners, and on the World Languages front, we produced a list of online resources that could be useful for World Language teachers, students, and programs. [The resources can be found on our website.](#)

As it became clear that this crisis would last beyond a couple of weeks, we began to change our focus to some more challenging problems. We wanted to go beyond resources and activities that could serve as good substitute teacher lesson plans. We wanted to tackle the issue of teaching for proficiency in a remote learning environment. In order to address this challenge, OLA has attended virtual sessions with the National Council for State Supervisors of Foreign Languages, and we are continuing to learn from other states. Additionally, the Department created the Spring Virtual Conferences for

Remote Instruction of World Languages. These virtual meetups allowed current practitioners to share their successes, failures, and challenges through this crisis, and discussed best practices over several different topics including planning, social and emotional support, staying in the target language, interpersonal methodologies, and more. Hundreds of educators from around the state attended these conferences and shared their ideas. DESE archived the notes that were taken during these conferences, and they are available for our review on our [World Languages website.](#)

Moving forward, the Department anticipates posting guidance regarding the teaching of world languages for proficiency in remote environments. We will base our guidance off the notes from the virtual spring conferences and from ongoing conversations with our partners and stakeholders. We hope to publish the guidance later this summer, once we have a clearer picture of what the 2020-2021 academic year may look like.

Update on the Update: Revising the World Languages Framework

Since the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) issued its report in last June regarding the Massachusetts Foreign Language Curriculum Framework, the Department has been hard at work enacting its recommendations. We are rewriting the curriculum framework based off the 2015 World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (the ACTFL standards); we are updating the name terminology from *foreign* languages to *world* languages; and once we publish the standards, we will provide supporting documents and professional development. Last fall, the Department assembled a team of facilitators to provide a philosophical framework for the standards. This same team also led review panels in the drafting of the standards. On May 1 of this year, the facilitators submitted their draft of the standards to the Department. It was an enormous effort on their part and on the part of the review panelists that they led. Their efforts yielded a draft that was faithful to the 2015 World-Readiness Standards and included a focus on social and emotional development and social justice. Moreover, despite all the chaos of the first half of 2020, the team submitted this rich document on time! The Department would like to thank all facilitators and panelists who participated in this effort. Please see the list of their names below, and the next time you see them, please thank these individuals for their long hours of volunteer service.

On May 1, when we met with the facilitation team, it felt as though the work was done. However, to borrow a cliché, this is not the end, and it is not even the beginning of the end. But it is the end of the beginning. The draft that the facilitators submitted is the jumping-off point for future work, but the framework still has a long road ahead of it. Currently the draft is undergoing internal review and revisions. The purpose of this is to bring the document into alignment with other DESE frameworks. This is important, because the closer it resembles the existing frameworks, the more school districts and administrators will feel comfortable with the standards. This will allow them to understand the framework better and in return to support the framework, their world language department, and world language students more completely. Once the internal review is complete (early June), the Department will send the new draft of the framework to CAL, who will conduct focus groups around the document. These focus groups will consist of teams of teachers who specialize in classical languages, ASL, languages that do not use the Latin alphabet, elementary world language education, special education in world languages, and heritage languages. They

WORLD LANGUAGES FRAMEWORK PROCESS

CREATING THE DRAFT

Facilitators and Review Panelists Create Draft



Facilitators lead review panels to create a draft that is faithful to World-Readiness standards and enriched with SEL and Social Justice (Oct 2019-May 2020).

DESE-fication

Department Revisions of the Draft



DESE aligns the draft to existing DESE frameworks to ensure universal understanding and increased support for the framework (May-June, 2020).

MAKING THE DRAFT INCLUSIVE

Focus Group Study of the Draft



Specialized focus groups study the draft to ensure that it is inclusive of all areas of World Language education (July 2020).

BOARD APPROVAL

In the Board of Education's Hands



After focus group revisions, the Board must approve the draft for public comment (Sept 2020). After revisions based on public comment, the Board must vote to adopt (Jan 2021).

ON TO IMPLEMENTATION

will study the draft to ensure that it is inclusive and impactful for their specialized audiences. **Please note: We still need more ASL content advisors.** When CAL has completed their study, they will supply the Department with recommendations, and we will revise accordingly. The next step is presenting this new draft to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), which we hope to do in September. If the Board approves of these comments, we will publicize the draft and open a window for public comment We will announce widely when this occurs, because we will want your feedback. Please be on the lookout for that announcement this fall. When the public comment window closes, we will once again revise the draft, and submit our framework to the Board for final approval in January 2021.

Once the Board approves our framework, the real work begins. The Department is currently creating an extended implementation plan that will provide for training and ongoing support as districts begin to implement the standards. Please consider joining the implementation team. Invitations are likely to go out as soon as the framework is approved.

The Department would like to send a special thanks to the student volunteers from the State Student Advisory Council’s Global Outreach work group. Not only did they collaborate on this framework, but they conducted a student survey about World Language and ELE education. [See their video here.](#) You will be glad you took the time to watch it!

Thank you to our contributors

Facilitators

Carlos-Luis Brown
 Grace Lytle
 Sarah Moghtader
 Katherine Nessel
 Jessica Nollet
 Marieangie Ocasio-Varela
 Terresa Pietro
 Karin Portocarrero-Heisler
 Amy St. Arnaud
 Anna Tirone
 Dominique Trotin

Review Panelists

Jeremiah Ames
 Beckie Bray Rankin
 Maura Bulman
 Julie Caldarone
 Katie Cardamone
 Chris Carroll
 Amy Chacharone
 Sharon Charbonnier
 Jessica Clifford
 Kelly Cooney
 Marilia Coreia
 Dana Curran
 Justine DeOliveira
 Lauren Downey
 Tim Eagan
 Jennifer Faulkner
 Ann Ferriter
 Dina Gorelik
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Nancy Kundl
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 Emily Loughlin
 Na Lu-Hogan
 Lisa Machnik
 Diane Mehegan
 Amy Moran
 Catherine Moss
 Ana Pimentel
 Erica Pollard
 Susan Olsen
 Heidi Olson
 Lindsey Perry
 Catherine Ritz
 Amy Roberts
 Vula Roumis
 Jess Sapp
 Kate Shah
 Kelly Shamgochian
 Nicole Sherf
 Gale Stafford
 Katie Tomptson
 Madelyn Torchin
 Ellen Toubman
 Michael Travers
 Melissa Walles
 Ronie Webster

Seal of Biliteracy

The State of the Seal – 2019-2020

In 2019-2020, 151 districts reported that they are participating in the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. This surpassed the Department's Goal of 125 and came close to doubling the 2018-2019 numbers. The Department would like to thank all districts who are participating in this initiative for making it a success. Because of your efforts, 1,177 graduates in 2019 recognized for their linguistic assets, and we hope to add many more to their numbers this year.

See the next page for the list of 2019-2020 participants (as of June 1, 2020). [Click here to see the interactive map of participating districts](#). Don't see your district? Talk to your district administration, and send an email to MAStateSealofBiliteracy@doe.mass.edu. Then follow the directions in the autoreply email to complete the opt-in process.

Changes in 2019-2020

The 2019-2020 school year brought a lot of changes to the Seal of Biliteracy. We were proud to host over two hundred district leaders to our inaugural World Language Leadership Network meeting in Devens last fall, where we were able to discuss the Seal in depth. We have added resources to [the Seal of Biliteracy website](#), such as a timeline and checklist for implementation, a sample letter to parents, and more recently instructions for accessing the new insignias and a letter to Seal-earning graduates from the Department. If your district participates in the Seal, please have your administrators ensure that they provide this letter to all graduates who earned the Seal, as it provides information about vouchers and rewards for which they are eligible.

This year DESE began regular discussions with the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to offer post-secondary incentives for students to earn the Seal. These discussions resulted in DHE issuing a call for collaboration with world language department chairs and admissions counselors from all public universities in the Commonwealth. It is our hope that through these

continuing discussions we will begin to standardize how public universities recognize and reward Seal-earners.

2019-2020 also brought new insignias to the Seal of Biliteracy. After the Fall Network meeting, Mashpee Schools reached out to the Department to tell us that their district was excited to recognize several students with heritage proficiency in Wampanaug; however the former insignia displayed a representation of indigenous peoples that they feared would be rejected by the very students the Seal is meant to honor. In an effort to ensure that the Seal equitably recognizes and rewards members of all language communities, we designed new insignias. They are now available for download in the WBMS Security Portal. Thank you to Mashpee for bringing this important concern to our attention.

Response to COVID-19

As schools and public places began shutting their doors this spring in an effort to flatten the curve, it became clear that many districts were struggling to fulfill Seal requirements in the remote learning environment. In response, the Department made the following changes:

- extended the reporting deadline to July 9th (formerly it was the district's graduation date),
- endorsed test-from-home options offered by approved vendors, and
- extended the use of portfolios to any language whose regular assessments could not be deployed remotely.

We were disappointed to have to remove the 2020 AP exam from the list of qualifying assessments, due to its inability to test reading, writing, and listening this year, and we look forward to once again accepting the College Board's AP exams in future years. We are also disappointed that many districts were unable to continue with the Seal as planned due to the COVID-19 crisis. We understand that districts had difficult choices to make this year, and we will be happy to welcome you all back in 2020-2021.

2020 Seal of Biliteracy Districts

Abby Kelley Foster Charter	Fall River	Mashpee	Somerville
Acton Boxborough	Falmouth	Maynard	South Hadley
Adv. Math and Science Academy	Fitchburg	Medfield	South Middlesex RVT
Agawam	Foxborough	Medford	South Shore Charter
Amherst	Foxborough Regional Charter	Medway	Southeastern RVTHS
Andover	Framingham	Melrose	Southern Berkshire
Ashland	Freetown-Lakeville	Mendon-Upton	Southwick-Tolland-Granville
Auburn	Frontier Regional	Methuen	Spencer-E Brookfield
Barnstable	Gill-Montague	Millbury	Springfield
Bedford	Global Learning Charter	Millis	Stoneham
Belchertown	Grafton	Minuteman RVT	Stoughton
Berkshire Hills	Greater Lawrence RVT	Mystic Valley	Sutton
Berlin-Boylston	Groton-Dunstable	Nashoba	Swampscott
Blackstone Valley RVT	Hadley	Nauset	Tantasqua
Boston	Hamilton-Wenham	Needham	Taunton
Boston Collegiate Charter	Harvard	New Bedford	Tewksbury
Braintree	Haverhill	Newburyport	Triton
Brockton	Hingham	Newton	Wachusett
Burlington	Holliston	Norfolk County Agricultural	Wakefield
Cambridge	Holyoke	North Andover	Walpole
Cape Cod RTHS	Hopedale	North Attleborough	Waltham
Carver	Hopkinton	North Reading	Ware
Chelmsford	Hudson	Northampton-Smith	Watertown
Chelsea	Ipswich	Voc. Ag.	Wayland
Chicopee	Lawrence	Norton	Wellesley
Clinton	Lee	Norwood	West Bridgewater
Cohasset	Lexington	Pentucket	West Springfield
Danvers	Lincoln Sudbury	Pioneer Ch. Sch. of Science	Westborough
Dartmouth	Littleton	Pioneer Valley	Westford
Dedham	Longmeadow	Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter	Weston
Dracut	Lowell	Pittsfield	Westport
Dudley-Charlton Reg	Ludlow	Quincy	Westwood
Duxbury	Lunenburg	Randolph	Whittier RVT
East Bridgewater	Lynn	Salem	Wilmington
E M Kennedy Academy for Health Careers	Lynnfield	Salem Academy Charter	Winchester
Everett	Manchester Essex Charter	Sharon	Winthrop
Excel Academy Charter	Marlborough	Silver Lake	Woburn
	Marshfield		Worcester
	Martha's Vineyard		

How to report Seal data

Now that many districts have received their test scores from various assessments, it is important that they report the names of those **2020 graduates only** to the Department. This reporting must be done through SIMS. Usually, the district's data administrator is responsible for completing the SIMS report. In order to report the names of 2020 graduates who earned the Seal, please ensure that your district data administrator has the name of all graduates who earned the Seal. Please specify whether each graduate earned the *Seal of Biliteracy* or the *Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction*. It is important for the validity of our data that you only submit the names of students from the Class of 2020. The due date for this submission is July 9th. The Seal of Biliteracy is Criteria 028 on SIMS.

Please remember that it is the district's responsibility to retain the records of the world language assessment that qualified the Seal-earners for the Seal of Biliteracy. Although the Department does not ask districts to report that data, it is still important that the district keep that information in students' records, regardless of their year of graduation.

How to download the insignia

The Department only provides the electronic insignia. It is the district's decision as to how to affix the

insignia to the students' records, so long it conforms to the Department's guidance — *A school district that awards the State Seal of Biliteracy must affix the unaltered state insignia on the diploma or the transcript, or both, of students who meet the requirements listed in this document.* The full guidance is available on the [Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy website](#). To download the Seal, follow the steps outlined below.

- The insignias are available for download on the WBMS Security Portal. Your district data administrator can grant you access to that site if necessary.
- Click on *PQA Web Monitoring* (you might have to click to expand your *Applications* list to see that option).
- Click on *Look Act*,
- Click on *Seal of Biliteracy*. Once there, you should find the link for the insignias.

Seal Survey

Let us know how we can serve you better. Whether your district participated in the Seal of Biliteracy or not, we want to hear how we could serve you through the Seal of Biliteracy. Please choose one administrator or world language leader in your district to [complete this survey](#). The survey closes on June 30, 2020.

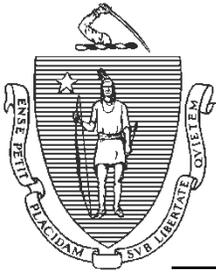
Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities

With all the changes that have occurred in World Language education this year, and with the uncertainty of next year, professional development is more important than ever. As always, when the Department becomes aware of opportunities for World Language teachers to grow professionally, we wish to make those opportunities known. This does not serve as an endorsement of these organizations or companies. All these opportunities are online to promote physical distancing.

- DESE Webinars – TBD. We will pass along information when we have it via email blasts and the website.
- [MaFLA – Spring Webinars](#) – available for free on MaFLA website
- [MaFLA Classroom Collaborative](#) (weekly from July 6-Aug 14) -
- [OWLanguage Leadership Proficiency and Strategic Planning Forum](#) – biweekly from June 3 to July 15 -
- [OWLanguage Virtual Symposium](#) – Monthly from June-August -
- [Idioma Summer Language Institute](#) – June 29-July 1 -

Letter to Graduates

Please see the next page for a copy of our letter to Seal earning graduates. It is also available [on our website](#).



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

May 26, 2020

Dear Graduate,

Congratulations on your accomplishment. As a graduate who has obtained the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy, you join an elite group of young adults who are able to work, study, and thrive in English and at least one other language. We at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) celebrate your success and join your loved ones in feeling pride for you in this success.

The Department would like to encourage you to continue to use your multilingual and multicultural skills in your future endeavors. Whether you are planning on attending a post-secondary institution, entering directly into the workforce, serving our country in the armed forces, investing in your family or community, traveling abroad, or simply taking some time to celebrate your success, we encourage you to seek out opportunities to use your language skills to advance yourself and your community.

It is our hope that you consider a career in education, where you can use your language skills to become a multilingual role model to our linguistically diverse students in schools and classrooms throughout the Commonwealth. So many of our students are waiting for a teacher that speaks their home language or identifies with their home culture. Many of them may never see a teacher that looks like them or talks like them. Many of them are waiting on teachers like you. We ask you to consider sharing your language skills in a world language class, an ESL class, a bilingual program, or any other area of public education. To that end, we would like to invite you to use your language skills to invest in the next generation of multilingual Massachusetts students. Having earned the state Seal of Biliteracy, **DESE is pleased to award you with a voucher to take a Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL) at no cost to you.** You may choose to apply this award to either the *Communication and Literacy* MTEL or the *Bilingual Education* MTEL. To take advantage of this offer, please contact el@doe.mass.edu at least one month prior to taking the MTEL.

Once again, congratulations on your achievement in earning the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors, and the fullest future imaginable.

Sincerely,

Andy McDonie
World Language Acquisition Specialist
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education