

Biliteracy Seals in a Large Urban District in New Mexico: Who Earns Them and How Do They Impact College Outcomes?

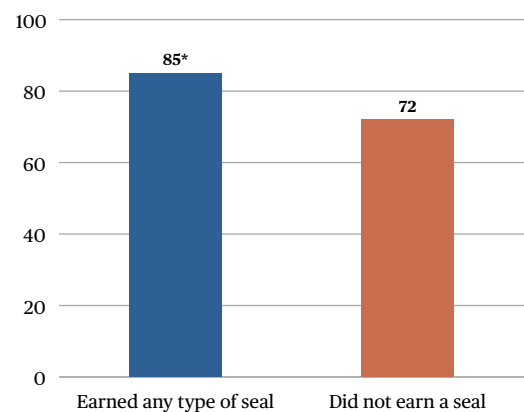
New Mexico is one of 48 states that offer a biliteracy seal to high school graduates to recognize their proficiency in a non-English language. The Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest English Learners Research Partnership collaborated with a large urban district in New Mexico to study the characteristics and college readiness of students who earn different types of biliteracy seals (state, district, and global seals) and whether earning a seal improves college outcomes. The study used data from three cohorts of grade 12 students in the district from 2017/18 to 2019/20. The New Mexico Public Education Department and district leaders can use the findings to decide how to expand access to biliteracy seals.

Key findings

- **About 7 percent of graduates from 2017/18 to 2019/20 earned a biliteracy seal.**
- **Graduates who earned any type of biliteracy seal were more likely than those who did not earn a seal to be Hispanic, to be eligible for the National School Lunch Program, to be a current English learner student, to have ever been an English learner student, and to speak Spanish at home.** Graduates who earned a seal were more likely than graduates who did not to be Hispanic (92 percent versus 63 percent), to be eligible for the National School Lunch Program (83 percent versus 49 percent), to be a current English learner student (17 percent versus 9 percent), to have ever been an English learner student (76 percent versus 24 percent), and to speak Spanish at home (80 percent versus 17 percent).
- **Graduates who earned any type of biliteracy seal were more likely than similar graduates who did not earn a seal to enroll in college.** After demographic characteristics, high school attended, and college readiness of graduates were adjusted for, 85 percent of graduates who earned a biliteracy seal enrolled in college within one year of high school graduation compared with 72 percent of similar graduates who did not earn a seal (see figure).
- **Among graduates who enrolled in college, graduates who earned any type of biliteracy seal were more likely than similar graduates who did not earn a seal to enroll in a four-year college and to enroll in college full time.** Among graduates who enrolled in college within one year of high school graduation, 61 percent of those who earned any type of biliteracy seal enrolled in a four-year college compared with 54 percent of those who did not earn a seal, after prior differences in students' demographic characteristics and college readiness were adjusted for.

After other factors were adjusted for, graduates who earned any type of biliteracy seal in the New Mexico district were more likely than similar graduates who did not earn a seal to enroll in college within one year of high school graduation, 2017/18-2019/20

Adjusted percentage of graduates who enrolled in college



* Significant at $p < .05$.

Note: College enrollment rates are based on all years of data available for each cohort of graduates and were generated using regression models that adjusted for the background characteristics of graduates and their high schools. See appendix B for more details.

Source: Authors' analysis of data provided by a large urban school district in New Mexico.