

From: **Mackenzie Hoffman** <

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Subject: American Sign Language Students Deserve a Seal of Biliteracy

To: Kelly Bowers <kbowers@lvjUSD.org>, Kristie Wang <kwangtrustee@lvjUSD.org>, Melissa Theide <mtheide@lvjUSD.org>, Tracie Christmas <tchristmas@lvjUSD.org>, <awhitetrustee@lvjUSD.org>, <cbuenotrustee@lvjUSD.org>, <cvanshaack@lvjUSD.org>, <eprussotrustee@lvjUSD.org>, <y.guzmantrustee@lvjUSD.org>

Hello everyone,

My name is Mackenzie Hoffman and in about three weeks I will be graduating from Granada High School we're i have taken all three years of American Sign Language available and have passed an exam that the district and the school locally approved two years ago, in which previous students have taken, passed, and received their state seals. I understand that when a language only has three years of courses you must choose an exam that will prove you knowledge and fluency of the language, which was listed on the document i signed when i applied to receive my seal. When me, as well as many of my classmates, finished our last trimester of American Sign Language and passed our fluency exam that was previously approved, we applied to receive our seals with complete confidence promoted by our teacher, vice principal, and principal that we would receive and award for all of our hard work. I believe the exam portion of the application is what is in question but these requirements were set and approved two years ago and my class met those requirements while enrolled in the course and after. At Granada we were taught college-level and approved material in this three-year course but the "required" test that is now supposedly mandatory in order to get the state seal of biliteracy does not match the courses offered and taken. The test that we are being told is required is the ASL PI test given out by Gallaudet University as an examination as to if a person is capable of being an interpreter, and is described by the Praxis Program itself (which administers the test). This test is not accurate for our courses at Granada and is not a suitable substitute for the curriculum taught, or the award being given. The state seal for biliteracy is for biliteracy, which is the ability to exhibit proficiency in reading and writing a language, or in this case a basic understanding of signing in specific conditions. The test which was proposed to be required to earn the seal for biliteracy assesses bilingual attributes for those who intend to work with the deaf such as interpreting or teaching, not biliteracy as we students were taught and informed to learn since the beginning of our time in high school. It is also greatly unfair to switch the requirements with three weeks until graduation and a few days until we were supposed to receive this award. It is different if the requirements are changing for oncoming students who will have the opportunity to adjust, but the sudden change applying to senior students in their third trimester after completion of the course and the requirements for the seal is simply unjust. An email from the state informed us that, "According to the Education Code section 51461 (a)(3)(C), if your district determines that the test 'meets the rigor of a four-year high school course of study in that world language' and that it 'at a minimum, assesses speaking, reading, and writing [or the modalities of communication that exist in the language] in a language other than

English at the Proficient level or higher," then your district may use the assessment." The test my class and I completed and passed was approved by the district for its capabilities to prove our knowledge of signing. If this was approved test was discarded before the date we were made aware, then that should not mean we should be punished for it by revoking the seal we had met the requirements for and earned. I hope this aids in the resolution of this injustice and that we, the graduating class of 2022, are able to receive the state seal of biliteracy that we earned during our time here.

Thank you for your time,
Mackenzie Hoffman (Class of 22 at Granada High School)