

From: Lindsey Whitehurst < >

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Subject: The ASL State Seal of Biliteracy for the Class of 2022

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To Whom This Matter Concerns,

Hello, my name is Lindsey Whitehurst and I am a soon-to-be graduate of Granada High School in about three weeks. I have taken all three years of American Sign Language available at Granada High and 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. This was an option written on the document given out that was required to be read, signed, and submitted to the school to apply for the state seal at the time of completion of the course. These requirements were set and approved two years ago and my class met those requirements while enrolled in the course and after.

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 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) as a "holistic language evaluation used to determine global ASL proficiency." The Praxis website also describes this test as a test that is aimed to examine, "candidates who plan to teach American Sign Language (ASL) as a language other than English" or "candidates who plan to teach students who are deaf or hard of hearing." 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. We were made aware of this new requirement on May 18th, 2022, and asked to submit intent to take the test as of May 23rd, 2022. This is only 5 days to decide to take a test costing \$185, that would be required for an award my class had already met the requirements for, in less than three weeks of graduating high school. 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 at the time it was still relevant. 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.

Respectfully,

Lindsey Whitehurst