

News Release

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Students fluent in languages other than English earn high school credits

ARLINGTON- Seventy-six students in Arlington Public Schools (APS) earned 208 high school credits this year by passing a world language assessment showing they were proficient in a language other than English. Since 2017, APS has offered the exam so students could earn credits to graduate from high school. Students currently need to earn 24 high school credits to graduate.

“The first year, we only had five students earn 19 credits and they only participated in the Spanish world language assessment,” said Evelyn Modahl, APS Executive Assistant of Teaching and Learning and Assessments. “This year, we tested in 10 different languages.”

A student must demonstrate their language proficiency by testing their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Modahl visits with students at the middle schools and high schools to promote the test.

“We show the students that keeping up with their home language can really be an asset and can help them earn high school credits,” said Modahl.

“It’s a great way to satisfy the language requirement in high school,” said Arlington High School ninth grader, Victor Zambrano, who is fluent in Spanish. “I was able to earn three credits towards my graduation requirement.”

Arlington High School 10th grader, Hong Tran, moved from Vietnam to the United States in 2018. At home, her family only speaks Vietnamese and she’s had to learn English.

“I took the world language assessment last spring and earned four credits,” said Tran. “I encourage any student who’s fluent in another language to take the test.”

“The 24-credit graduation requirement can be a barrier for some students, so we wanted to offer alternative ways for students to earn credits,” said Karl Olson, APS Director of Categorical Programs. “In addition to paying for the tests for all participating students, which can range from \$20 to \$150, students who pass all four sections of the exam and meet a certain score on their Smarter Balanced Assessment earn a Seal of Biliteracy and receive a special medal that they can wear during graduation. The Seal of Biliteracy can also be attractive to future employers who may be looking for individuals who are bilingual to join their workforce.”

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Congratulations!

We are proud to recognize your proficiency in English and another world language.

We invite you to wear this Seal of Biliteracy medallion during your graduation ceremony.