



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **20 Graduates Earn Top Biliteracy Distinction**

*Bend-La Pine Schools awards first-ever Seal of Biliteracy for graduates demonstrating high academic fluency in English and another language*

For the first time, Bend-La Pine Schools will award graduates a special distinction for bilingual academic achievement. Twenty members of the Class of 2019 will receive the prestigious statewide Seal of Biliteracy on their diplomas in recognition of their high academic fluency in English and another World Language.

“We are tremendously proud to honor the achievements of these students, who have developed skills that will help prepare them for success in our ever-changing world,” said Superintendent Shay Mikalson. “Our students are not only learning language skills at a high level, they are also learning about other cultures and becoming engaged members of our global society.”

To earn the Seal of Biliteracy, students must perform well on rigorous academic assessments that demonstrate students can understand, speak, read and write in English and another World Language at an extremely advanced level. This award is noted on these students’ transcripts and each will earn an intertwined purple and silver cord they can wear at graduation to represent the two languages they have mastered.

Of the 20 students earning the Seal of Biliteracy, 18 earned the distinction in Spanish, 1 in Vietnamese and 1 in Korean.

Kinsey Martin, Assistant Director of ELL and Dual Language Programs, says the number of Bend-La Pine Schools’ graduates earning this prestigious distinction is likely to increase in the coming years, particularly as students enrolled in the Spanish Dual Immersion program graduate. The language immersion program is currently a strand at Bear Creek Elementary School and High Desert Middle School and will expand to Bend Senior High School in fall of 2019. Fifth-graders in the program can earn bronze level seals recognizing their biliteracy and bilingual skills; eighth-graders can earn silver level seals.

“Being bilingual and biliterate is not only beneficial for a student’s future career and academic prospects, research shows us that becoming bilingual trains students’ brains to be more creative, better at critical thinking and better at communicating,” said Martin.

**Bend-La Pine Schools, Educating Thriving Citizens**  
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