

# Council Designations

---

## Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the intent of the Council Designations, made allowable by the Rhode Island Secondary School Regulations. The guidance provided in this document is one piece of a larger, ongoing effort by the Rhode Island Department of Education to provide schools and districts with support and technical assistance toward meeting the goals of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education-adopted Secondary School Regulations. This is not an exhaustive or all-purpose document.

## Overview and Intent of Council Designations

The Rhode Island 2020 Vision for Education defines an ideal Rhode Island graduate to be “one who is well prepared for postsecondary education, work, and life. He or she can think critically and collaboratively and can act as a creative self-motivated, culturally competent learner and citizen.” The updated Secondary School Regulations, which go into effect in the 2017-2018 school year for the graduating class of 2021 and beyond, are intended to encourage all schools to further develop a system of opportunity by which every student can achieve this vision of the Rhode Island graduate.

The Secondary School Regulations strive to increase and improve equitable learning opportunities for every student through personalization, graduation by proficiency, and multiple pathways. All learning experiences should be facilitated in a way that allows students to find relevance and applicability to their own life, interests, and / or previous knowledge. Students should have opportunities for choice in how, when, and in what ways they learn and demonstrate their learning. Learning opportunities should be diverse, rigorous, and connected to the world outside the school. By ensuring that learning is relevant, students are more likely to find joy in the learning process and want to continue to learn throughout their lives. Further, by learning how to make well-informed decisions in the secondary grades, students will be more adept at advocating for themselves as adult learners and citizens.

As part of the revised diploma system outlined in the Secondary School Regulations, the Council Designations serve as a means to personalize the diploma. Each Council Designation externally validates achievements of high school students, through flexible and personalized high school learning experiences, to allow public recognition of specific skills and to incentivize students to meet additional high standards beyond those needed to earn a high school diploma.

The following three Council Designations have been adopted by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education and will be made available to students who meet the defined criteria for each, beginning with the graduating class of 2021:

The **Commissioner’s Seal Council Designation** certifies that a student is proficient in standards aligned to high school expectations in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as confirmed by external evidence.

The **Seal of Biliteracy Council Designation** certifies that a student has demonstrated skill in the use of the English language and one or more other world languages.

The **Pathway Endorsement Council Designation** certifies that a student has accomplished deep learning in a chosen area of interest and is prepared for employment or further education in a career path.

### Earning Commissioner’s Seal Council Designation: Student Requirements

To earn a **Commissioner’s Seal**, students must successfully meet the established benchmark on RIDE-approved assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Students must meet the benchmark on both an approved ELA assessment and an approved mathematics assessment in order to earn the Commissioner’s Seal. More information about the Commissioner’s Seal, including the approved assessment list and associated cut scores can be found in the Commissioner’s Seal section of this guidance document.

### Earning Seal of Biliteracy Council Designation: Student Requirements

To earn a **Seal of Biliteracy**, students must successfully meet the established benchmark on RIDE-approved assessments in English and another world language. Students may earn either a Silver Seal or a Gold Seal depending on the skill level demonstrated on the assessments. Students must meet the benchmark on both an approved English language assessment and an approved world language assessment in order to earn the Silver Seal of Biliteracy or the Gold Seal of Biliteracy. More information about the Seal of Biliteracy can be found in the Seal of Biliteracy section of this guidance document.

### Earning Pathway Endorsement Council Designation: Student Requirements

To earn a **Pathway Endorsement**, students must successfully complete three components: (1) academic study; (2) career and interest engagement; and (3) application of skills demonstrated through the performance-based diploma assessment. Pathway Endorsements may be earned in six discipline areas:

- The Arts Pathway Endorsement
- Business and Industry Pathway Endorsement
- Humanities and World Languages Pathway Endorsement
- Public Service Pathway Endorsement
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Pathway Endorsement
- Teaching Pathway Endorsement

More information about the Pathway Endorsements, including requirements of academic study and career and interest engagement experiences, can be found in the Pathway Endorsement section of this guidance document.

### Logistics of the Council Designations

Beginning with the graduating class of 2021, LEAs must include a designation notation on high school transcripts and on the diplomas of all students who meet Council-defined criteria for each respective Council Designation. Students may earn Council Designations at any time during their high school experience. Anticipated Council Designations should be noted on students’ transcripts as soon as they meet the requirements for a Council Designation. Council Designations are contingent on earning a high school diploma.

Council Designations are optional for students. Students may choose to pursue any combination of Council Designations. Students and families must be made aware of Council Designation options and requirements by October 1 of the cohort’s ninth grade year, or when a student enrolls in the district.

### Additional Guidance

Additional information for each Council Designation can be found at [www.ride.ri.gov/DiplomaSystem](http://www.ride.ri.gov/DiplomaSystem).