

Policy 5126: Awards For Achievement

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 03/01/2009 | **Last Revised Date:** 03/01/2024 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 03/01/2024

The Governing Board encourages excellence as a goal for all students and wishes to publicly recognize students for exemplary achievement in academic, artistic, extracurricular, athletic, and community service activities.

CSBA NOTE: Generally, state law requires that the educational program be made available to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background. For example, Education Code 51455 and 51464, prohibit districts from charging students a fee or other cost in relation to any requirements in qualifying for or receiving the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma or the State Seal of Biliteracy. Additionally, Education Code 51007 requires that all students enrolled in the state's public elementary and secondary schools, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have equitable access to educational programs designed to strengthen technological skills. The following paragraph reflects the intent of these laws. For more information regarding the promotion of equity in district programs and activities, see BP 0415 - Equity.

No fee or other cost shall be charged to any student in relation to any requirements in qualifying for or receiving any district achievement awards.

District/School Awards

CSBA NOTE: Education Code 44015 authorizes the Governing Board to give district-level awards to students for "excellence" and mandates that the district adopt rules and regulations implementing any such awards program. See the accompanying administrative regulation for language implementing this mandate.

Pursuant to Education Code 44015, when such an awards program is established in a district, the Board is required to budget funds for this purpose, but may authorize awards from funds under its control regardless of whether budgeted funds have been provided or the budgeted funds are exhausted.

Student awards may include verbal recognition, a letter, a certificate, a Board resolution, public ceremony, trophy, gift, plaque, or monetary gift. The Board shall establish a budget for this purpose. (Education Code 44015)

The Superintendent or designee shall develop criteria for the selection of student award recipients.

Golden State Seal Merit Diploma

CSBA NOTE: The following optional section is for use by districts that maintain high schools. Education Code 51450-51455 establish the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma which may be awarded by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and the State Board of Education to students identified as demonstrating mastery of the high school core curriculum. See the accompanying administrative regulation for eligibility criteria.

At graduation from high school, students whose academic achievements in core curriculum areas have been outstanding shall receive special recognition.

The Superintendent or designee shall identify graduating high school students who have demonstrated mastery of the high school curriculum qualifying them for the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma. (Education Code 51454)

State Seal of Biliteracy

CSBA NOTE: The following optional section is for use by districts maintaining one or more high schools. Education Code 51460-51464 establish the State Seal of Biliteracy, a voluntary program which recognizes high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. The SPI has created an insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of eligible students which can be obtained by completing a State Seal of Biliteracy insignia request form, available on the California Department of Education's (CDE) website. See the accompanying administrative regulation for eligibility criteria for the award.

The district shall present the State Seal of Biliteracy to each graduating high school student who has attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English, as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 51460-51464).

District Awards for Biliteracy

CSBA NOTE: The following optional paragraph is for use by districts that choose to present awards for biliteracy at other grade levels, and should be revised to reflect district practice. Californians Together, a statewide coalition

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Original Adopted Date: 08/09/2017 | **Last Revised Date:** 01/27/2021 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 01/27/2021

The Governing Board encourages excellence as a goal for all students and wishes to publicly recognize students for exemplary achievement in academic, artistic, extracurricular, athletic, and community service activities.

Student awards may include verbal recognition, a letter, a certificate, a Board resolution, public ceremony, trophy, gift, plaque, or monetary gift.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop criteria for the selection of student award recipients.

Golden State Seal Merit Diploma

At graduation from high school, students whose academic achievements in core curriculum areas have been outstanding shall receive special recognition.

The Superintendent or designee shall identify graduating high school students who have demonstrated mastery of the high school curriculum qualifying them for the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma. (Education Code 51454)

The district shall present the State Seal of Biliteracy to each graduating high school student who has attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. (Education Code 51460-51464)

In order to affirm the value of bilingualism and encourage students' enrollment in world language programs, the Superintendent or designee may present awards at appropriate grade levels to recognize the pursuit and/or attainment of grade-level proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. The Superintendent or designee may also present awards to English learners who are reclassified as fluent English proficient to recognize proficiency in both English and the student's native language.

State Seal of Civic Engagement

The Superintendent or designee shall present the State Seal of Civic Engagement to each student who demonstrates excellence in civics education and participation and has demonstrated an understanding of the U.S. Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government. (Education Code 51470-51474)

All district students shall be afforded the opportunity to earn the State Seal of Civic Engagement, regardless of their background, communities, or experiences. No student shall be denied such opportunity based on academic ability, alternative school setting, or unique or unconventional expression of civic engagement.

The Board shall establish and maintain a scholarship and loan fund which shall be used to provide interest-free loans for educational advancement, scholarship, and/or grants-in-aid to bona fide organizations, students, or graduates of district schools. (Education Code 35310, 35315)

The district's scholarship and loan fund shall be administered by a district committee composed of Board members, the Superintendent, and such other community, staff, administrative, and/or student representatives as determined by the Board. (Education Code 35310)

The Board shall select its own representatives to the committee. Staff, community, and/or student representatives shall be selected by the Superintendent. Members of this committee shall serve two-year terms.

The committee may accept gifts, donations, and bequests made for the purposes of the fund and may prescribe conditions or restrictions on these gifts and bequests. If the donor imposes any conditions, the committee shall review the conditions and make a recommendation to the Board as to the compatibility of such conditions with the intent and purpose of the fund. The Board may prohibit the committee from accepting any donation under conditions it finds incompatible with the fund's intents and purposes. (Education Code 35313)

The Superintendent or designee shall report to the Board at least annually regarding the status and activity of the fund. (Education Code 35319)

working to enhance the success of English learners, recommends issuing local "pathway awards" recognizing benchmarks toward biliteracy at preschool, grade 3, end of elementary school, end of middle school, and when a student who is an English learner is reclassified as fluent English proficient.

In order to affirm the value of bilingualism and encourage students' enrollment in world language programs, the Superintendent or designee may present awards at appropriate grade levels to recognize the pursuit and/or attainment of grade-level proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. The Superintendent or designee may also present awards to English learners who are reclassified as fluent English proficient to recognize proficiency in both English and the student's native language.

State Seal of Civic Engagement

CSBA NOTE: The following optional section is for use by districts that recognize students who have demonstrated excellence in civics education and participation and an understanding of the U.S. Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government. Education Code 51470-51475 establish the State Seal of Civic Engagement, a voluntary program which encourages and creates pathways for students in elementary and secondary schools to become civically engaged in democratic governmental institutions at the local, state, and national levels.

The SPI has created an insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of eligible students which can be obtained by completing a State Seal of Civic Engagement insignia request form, available on CDE's website. See the accompanying administrative regulation for eligibility criteria for the award.

Education Code 51475 established the California Serves program which provides grants to eligible districts with the goal of expanding access for students to obtain a State Seal of Civic Engagement through service learning.

The Superintendent or designee shall present the State Seal of Civic Engagement to each 11th or 12th grade student who demonstrates excellence in civics education and participation and has demonstrated an understanding of the U.S. Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government. (Education Code 51470-51475)

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph reflects information on CDE's website emphasizing that the criteria are written to ensure that no student is excluded from the opportunity to earn the State Seal of Civic Engagement based on academic ability, alternative school settings, or unique or unconventional expressions of civic engagement.

All district students shall be afforded the opportunity to earn the State Seal of Civic Engagement, regardless of their background, communities, or experiences. No student shall be denied such opportunity based on academic ability, alternative school setting, or unique or unconventional expression of civic engagement.

Scholarship and Loan Fund

CSBA NOTE: The following section is for use by districts that choose to establish and maintain a scholarship and loan fund pursuant to Education Code 35310-35319. If the district chooses to establish such a fund, it should revise the following paragraph to reflect only those purposes for which it wishes to make funds available.

The Board shall establish and maintain a scholarship and loan fund which shall be used to provide interest-free loans for educational advancement, scholarship, and/or grants-in-aid to bona fide organizations, students, or graduates of district schools. (Education Code 35310, 35315)

CSBA NOTE: If the district establishes a committee to administer the scholarship and loan fund, or if the number of Board members who serve on the committee constitutes a majority of the Board, the committee is required to comply with open meeting laws pursuant to Government Code 54950-54963 (the Brown Act). See AR 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees and BB 9130 - Board Committees.

The district's scholarship and loan fund shall be administered by a district committee composed of Board members, the Superintendent, and such other community, staff, administrative, and/or student representatives as determined by the Board. (Education Code 35310)

CSBA NOTE: If the district chooses to establish and maintain a scholarship and loan fund, it is mandated pursuant to Education Code 35310 to develop rules and regulations specifying the term of office and method of selection of the community, faculty, administrative, and student representative members of the committee appointed to administer the fund. The following paragraph may be revised to reflect district practice.

The Board shall select its own representatives to the committee. Staff, community, and/or student representatives shall be selected by the Superintendent. Members of this committee shall serve two-year terms.

The committee may accept gifts, donations, and bequests made for the purposes of the fund and may prescribe conditions or restrictions on these gifts and bequests. If the donor imposes any conditions, the committee shall review the conditions and make a recommendation to the Board as to the compatibility of such conditions with the intent and purpose of the fund. The Board may prohibit the committee from accepting any donation under conditions it finds incompatible with the fund's intents and purposes as specified in Board Policy 3290 - Gifts, Grants and Requests. (Education Code 35313)

The Superintendent or designee shall report to the Board at least annually regarding the status and activity of the fund. (Education Code 35319)
