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Will defend their dissertation on

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Time: 9:00 A.M.

Zoom: Link by request ceshs.gradstudies@wsu.edu

Title:

BEYOND RECOGNITION: EXAMINING THE SEAL OF BILITERACY'S LONG-TERM VALUE

Chair: Anne Marie Guerrettaz

Abstract:

This dissertation presents two articles that explore the benefits of the Seal of Biliteracy (SoBL) to direct education policy planning and implementation towards necessary improvements. The SoBL is an award across the United States that students can earn by demonstrating proficiency in English and an additional language by the end of high school. Chapter One introduces the rationale, context, and methodology for each article along with the significance of the two articles together.

The first article presented in Chapter Two assesses the longevity of SoBL benefits that are both officially stated (by states and districts) and that are perceived by the interview participants to be outcomes of the award. Through one-on-one Zoom interviews with four recipients and four high school administrators, the findings show that while some participants did see the benefits of the SoBL extending past high school, most participants did not have that experience. This highlights the difference in expectation and experience when earning the SoBL, revealing an essential area for policy improvement that will likely help maintain the relevancy and students' interest in the award.

Chapter Three includes a short connection between the two articles. Beginning with a review of the overall context, this chapter summarizes the findings in Chapter Two, identifies an area of SoBL policy that lacks critical information, and presents the next article found in Chapter Four.

The second article presented in Chapter Four narrows in on one commonly perceived post-secondary benefit of the SoBL: college credit. For many students pursuing the SoBL, college credit is a major motivator and has the potential to help them work towards their post-secondary goals efficiently. Through an analysis of 52 official SoBL websites (51 states, Washington D.C, and sealofbiliteracy.com) and eight, one-on-one Zoom interviews with administrators (state-, district-, and university-level), this study evaluates the accessibility—the ability to access information in a clear and reasonable manner—and consistency of information related to college and post-secondary credit for the SoBL. The findings highlight varying levels of accessibility across state SoBL websites when searching for information about these benefits. Additionally, the findings identify challenges that the different levels of administrators (state, district, and university) face when communicating SoBL information.

The final chapter presents the discussion, implications, and limitations of the studies. Suggestions for future research and improved SoBL policy include increased collaborative opportunities for policy agents, continued conversation with recipients to understand the effectiveness of the policy and being more intentional about the SoBL benefits presented to students.