

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Legislative intent.

(a) It is the intent of the legislature to encourage excellence for all pupils, and the legislature wishes to publicly recognize pupils for exemplary achievements in academic studies.

(b) The study of languages other than English in elementary and secondary schools should be encouraged because it contributes to a pupil's cognitive development and to our national economy and security.

(c) Proficiency in multiple languages is critical in enabling this State to participate effectively in a global political, social, and economic context and in expanding trade with other countries.

(d) The demand for employees to be fluent in more than one language is increasing both in this State and throughout the world.

(e) The benefits to employers in having staff fluent in more than one language are clear: access to an expanded market, allowing business owners to better serve their customers' needs, and the sparking of new marketing ideas that better target a particular audience and open a channel of

communication with customers and businesses in other countries.

(f) It is the intent of the legislature to promote linguistic proficiency and cultural literacy in one or more languages in addition to English and to provide recognition of the attainment of those needed and important skills through the establishment of the State Seal of Biliteracy. A State Seal of Biliteracy would be designated on the high school diplomas and transcripts of graduating public school pupils attaining proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English.

Section 5. The School Code is amended by adding Section 2-3.157 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.157 new)

Sec. 2-3.157. State Seal of Biliteracy.

(a) In this Section, "foreign language" means any language other than English, including all modern languages, Latin, American Sign Language, Native American languages, and native languages.

(b) The State Seal of Biliteracy program is established to recognize public high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. The State Seal of Biliteracy shall be awarded beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. School district participation in this program is voluntary.

(c) The purposes of the State Seal of Biliteracy are as follows:

(1) To encourage pupils to study languages.

(2) To certify attainment of biliteracy.

(3) To provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills.

(4) To provide universities with an additional method to recognize applicants seeking admission.

(5) To prepare pupils with 21st century skills.

(6) To recognize the value of foreign language and native language instruction in public schools.

(7) To strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages of a community.

(d) The State Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency, sufficient for meaningful use in college and a career, by a graduating public high school pupil in one or more languages in addition to English.

(e) The State Board of Education shall adopt such rules as may be necessary to establish the criteria that pupils must achieve to earn a State Seal of Biliteracy, which may include without limitation attainment of units of credit in English language arts and languages other than English and passage of such assessments of foreign language proficiency as may be approved by the State Board of Education for this purpose.

(f) The State Board of Education shall do both of the

following:

(1) Prepare and deliver to participating school districts an appropriate mechanism for designating the State Seal of Biliteracy on the diploma and transcript of the pupil indicating that the pupil has been awarded a State Seal of Biliteracy by the State Board of Education.

(2) Provide other information the State Board of Education deems necessary for school districts to successfully participate in the program.

(g) A school district that participates in the program under this Section shall do both of the following:

(1) Maintain appropriate records in order to identify pupils who have earned a State Seal of Biliteracy.

(2) Make the appropriate designation on the diploma and transcript of each pupil who earns a State Seal of Biliteracy.

(h) No fee shall be charged to a pupil to receive the designation pursuant to this Section. Notwithstanding this prohibition, costs may be incurred by the pupil in demonstrating proficiency, including without limitation any assessments required under subsection (e) of this Section.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1, 2013.