

AN ACT concerning education.

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

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section 2-3.159 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.159)

Sec. 2-3.159. 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. These rules shall ensure that the criteria that pupils must achieve to earn a State Seal of Biliteracy meet the course credit criteria established under subsection (i) of this Section.

(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.

(i) For admissions purposes, each public university in this State shall accept the State Seal of Biliteracy as equivalent to 2 years of foreign language coursework taken during high school if a student's high school transcript indicates that he or she will be receiving or has received the State Seal of Biliteracy.

(j) Each public community college and public university in

this State shall establish criteria to translate a State Seal of Biliteracy into course credit based on foreign language course equivalencies identified by the community college's or university's faculty and staff and, upon request from an enrolled student, the community college or university shall award foreign language course credit to a student who has received a State Seal of Biliteracy. Students enrolled in a public community college or public university who have received a State Seal of Biliteracy must request course credit for their seal within 3 academic years after graduating from high school.

(Source: P.A. 98-560, eff. 8-27-13; 98-756, eff. 7-16-14.)