

1 AN ACT concerning education.

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

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

6 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.159)

7 Sec. 2-3.159. State Seal of Biliteracy.

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

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

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

21 (1) To encourage pupils to study languages.

22 (2) To certify attainment of biliteracy.

23 (3) To provide employers with a method of identifying

1 people with language and biliteracy skills.

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

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

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

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

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

15 (e) The State Board of Education shall adopt such rules as
16 may be necessary to establish the criteria that pupils must
17 achieve to earn a State Seal of Biliteracy, which may include
18 without limitation attainment of units of credit in English
19 language arts and languages other than English and passage of
20 such assessments of foreign language proficiency as may be
21 approved by the State Board of Education for this purpose.
22 These rules shall ensure that the criteria that pupils must
23 achieve to earn a State Seal of Biliteracy meet the course
24 credit criteria established under subsection (i) of this
25 Section.

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

1 following:

2 (1) Prepare and deliver to participating school
3 districts and non-public schools an appropriate mechanism
4 for designating the State Seal of Biliteracy on the diploma
5 and transcript of the pupil indicating that the pupil has
6 been awarded a State Seal of Biliteracy by the State Board
7 of Education.

8 (2) Provide other information the State Board of
9 Education deems necessary for school districts and
10 non-public schools to successfully participate in the
11 program.

12 (g) A school district or non-public school that
13 participates in the program under this Section shall do both of
14 the following:

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

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

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

25 (i) For admissions purposes, each public university in this
26 State shall accept the State Seal of Biliteracy as equivalent

1 to 2 years of foreign language coursework taken during high
2 school if a student's high school transcript indicates that he
3 or she will be receiving or has received the State Seal of
4 Biliteracy.

5 (j) Each public community college and public university in
6 this State shall establish criteria to translate a State Seal
7 of Biliteracy into course credit based on foreign language
8 course equivalencies identified by the community college's or
9 university's faculty and staff and, upon request from an
10 enrolled student, the community college or university shall
11 award foreign language course credit to a student who has
12 received a State Seal of Biliteracy. Students enrolled in a
13 public community college or public university who have received
14 a State Seal of Biliteracy must request course credit for their
15 seal within 3 academic years after graduating from high school.
16 (Source: P.A. 98-560, eff. 8-27-13; 98-756, eff. 7-16-14;
17 99-600, eff. 1-1-17.)