

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 1. Legislative intent.

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

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

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

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

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

1 communication with customers and businesses in other  
2 countries.

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

11 Section 5. The School Code is amended by adding Section  
12 2-3.157 as follows:

13 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.157 new)

14 Sec. 2-3.157. State Seal of Biliteracy.

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

19 (b) The State Seal of Biliteracy program is established to  
20 recognize public high school graduates who have attained a high  
21 level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and  
22 writing in one or more languages in addition to English. The  
23 State Seal of Biliteracy shall be awarded by the State Board of  
24 Education beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. School

1 district participation in this program is voluntary.

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

4 (1) To encourage pupils to study languages.

5 (2) To certify attainment of biliteracy.

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

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

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

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

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

16 (d) The State Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of a  
17 high level of proficiency by a graduating public high school  
18 pupil in one or more languages in addition to English.

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

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

1 following:

2 (1) Prepare and deliver to participating school  
3 districts an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the  
4 diploma and transcript of the pupil indicating that the  
5 pupil has been awarded a State Seal of Biliteracy by the  
6 State Board of Education.

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

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

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

14 (2) Affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma and  
15 transcript of each pupil who earns a State Seal of  
16 Biliteracy.

17 (h) No fee shall be charged to a pupil pursuant to this  
18 Section.

19 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1,  
20 2013.