
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that biliteracy is a
2 valuable skill that Hawaii students should be encouraged to
3 acquire. The study of world languages in elementary and
4 secondary schools contributes to a student's cognitive
5 development and to our national economy and security. A
6 workforce proficient in multiple languages is critical to
7 Hawaii's effective global participation politically, socially,
8 and economically. Multilingualism is also important in
9 addressing the needs of Hawaii's diverse citizenry and visitor
10 population. The demand for employees to be fluent in more than
11 one language is increasing in Hawaii and throughout the world.
12 Employers benefit from staff who are fluent in more than one
13 language because the ease of communication creates access to an
14 expanded market, allows business owners to better serve their
15 customers' needs, and sparks new marketing ideas that better
16 target particular audiences. A multilingual workforce at the
17 government level ensures fair and equal access to state services
18 for all, as mandated by federal and state law.



1 The legislature further finds that recognizing students'
2 linguistic proficiency upon graduation from high school with a
3 state seal of biliteracy will encourage students to develop and
4 maintain language skills. Since 2011, eight states have
5 approved state seals of biliteracy and thirteen others are
6 considering them. The seal would be awarded in recognition of a
7 demonstrated level of proficiency in speaking, listening,
8 reading, and writing in English and one or more world languages
9 including olelo Hawaii, other indigenous languages, and American
10 sign language.

11 The seal would motivate students to strive for language
12 proficiency and demonstrate the department of education's
13 commitment to language proficiency among students. It would
14 also be a motivator for English language learners to maintain
15 proficiency in their home language while developing proficiency
16 in English. By emphasizing the value of biliteracy, English
17 language learners would not only be recognized for their
18 efforts, but could also share the wealth of world language
19 resources they bring from personal experience. The seal would
20 not only serve as recognition of personal achievement, but as a



1 uniform credential for all public high school graduates,
2 enabling them to market their language skills.

3 The purpose of this Act is to establish a state seal of
4 biliteracy to be affixed to certificates of recognition awarded
5 to graduating students who attain proficiency in English and at
6 least one other language.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
8 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
9 and to read as follows:

10 "§302A- State seal of biliteracy. (a) There shall be
11 established a Hawaii state seal of biliteracy program to
12 recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level
13 of proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in
14 English and one or more other languages, including American Sign
15 Language.

16 (b) The state seal of biliteracy shall be awarded by the
17 superintendent; provided that individual school participation in
18 the program shall be voluntary.

19 (c) The purposes of the state seal of biliteracy are to:

20 (1) Encourage students to study languages;



- 1 (2) Certify attainment of a designated level of
- 2 biliteracy;
- 3 (3) Provide employers with a method for identifying people
- 4 with biliteracy skills;
- 5 (4) Provide universities with a method for recognizing and
- 6 awarding academic credit to applicants seeking
- 7 admission;
- 8 (5) Prepare students with twenty-first century skills;
- 9 (6) Recognize and promote world language instruction in
- 10 public schools;
- 11 (7) Protect and support the revitalization of olelo
- 12 Hawaii, the indigenous language of Hawaii;
- 13 (8) Recognize the importance of world language resources
- 14 that immigrant English language learner students bring
- 15 to department of education schools;
- 16 (9) Recognize and promote the continual development of the
- 17 first languages of immigrant students as a means of
- 18 achieving biliteracy; and
- 19 (10) Strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value
- 20 of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and
- 21 languages of a community.



1 (d) The state seal of biliteracy certifies attainment of a
2 high level of proficiency by a graduating high school student in
3 one or more languages in addition to English, and certifies that
4 the graduate has achieved the following:

5 (1) Passing grades in all English/language arts courses
6 required for high school graduation;

7 (2) Demonstrated a high level of proficiency in one or
8 more languages other than English by:

9 (A) Earning a score of three or higher on a foreign
10 language advanced placement examination;

11 (B) Earning a score of four or higher on a foreign
12 language international baccalaureate examination;

13 (C) Earning a passing score on a nationally
14 recognized foreign language assessment comparable
15 to the foreign language advanced placement or
16 international baccalaureate examinations which
17 includes assessment of speaking, listening,
18 reading, and writing;

19 (D) Demonstrating foreign language proficiency in
20 speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as



1 certified by the student's high school to the
2 superintendent; or

3 (E) Demonstrating first language proficiency in
4 speaking, listening, reading, and writing, in a
5 language other than English as certified by the
6 student's high school to the superintendent.

7 (e) The superintendent shall:

8 (1) Provide participating schools a template for a
9 statewide certificate of recognition of biliteracy to
10 which the state seal of biliteracy shall be affixed;

11 (2) Provide an insignia to serve as the state seal of
12 biliteracy to be affixed to the certificate; and

13 (3) Provide participating schools with any additional
14 information the superintendent deems necessary for
15 successful participation in the program.

16 (f) Any high school that participates in the state seal of
17 biliteracy program shall:

18 (1) Maintain records necessary to identify students
19 eligible to receive a state seal of biliteracy; and



1 (2) Award a certificate of recognition and include a
2 record of the certificate upon the transcript of each
3 student who earns a state seal of biliteracy.

4 (g) No fee shall be charged to any student pursuant to
5 this section."

6 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
8 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2015-2016 and
9 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
10 year 2016-2017 to establish and award the Hawaii state seal of
11 biliteracy.

12 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
13 of education for the purposes of this Act.

14 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

15 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2015.

16



Report Title:

Department of Education; State Seal of Biliteracy; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the state seal of biliteracy program and appropriates funds for the implementation of the program. (SD1)

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