

7522--A

I N S E N A T E

May 31, 2012

Introduced by Sen. ROBACH -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to a state seal of biliteracy

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. (a) It is the intent of the legislature
2 to encourage excellence for all pupils, and the legislature wishes to
3 publicly recognize pupils for exemplary achievements in academic
4 studies.
5 (b) The study of languages other than English in elementary and
6 secondary schools should be encouraged because it contributes to a
7 pupil's cognitive development and to our national economy and security.
8 (c) Proficiency in multiple languages is critical in enabling New York
9 to participate effectively in a global political, social, and economic
10 context, and in expanding trade with other countries.
11 (d) The demand for employees to be fluent in more than one language is
12 increasing both in New York and throughout the world.
13 (e) The benefits to employers in having staff fluent in more than one
14 language are clear: access to an expanded market, allowing business
15 owners to better serve their customers' needs, and the sparking of new
16 marketing ideas that better target a particular audience and open a
17 channel of communication with customers.
18 (f) It is the intent of the legislature to promote linguistic proficiency
19 and cultural literacy in one or more languages in addition to
20 English and to provide recognition of the attainment of those needed and
21 important skills through the establishment of the state seal of biliteracy.
22 A state seal of biliteracy would be affixed on the high school
23 diplomas and transcripts of graduating pupils attaining proficiency in
24 one or more languages in addition to English.
25 S 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 815 to read
26 as follows:

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [] is old law to be omitted.

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1 S 815. STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY. 1. (A) THE STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY
2 IS ESTABLISHED TO RECOGNIZE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO HAVE ATTAINED A
3 HIGH LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY IN LISTENING, SPEAKING, READING, AND WRITING
4 IN ONE OR MORE LANGUAGES IN ADDITION TO ENGLISH. THE STATE SEAL OF BILI-
5 TERACY SHALL BE AWARDED BY THE COMMISSIONER. SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTIC-
6 IPATION IN THIS PROGRAM IS VOLUNTARY.

7 (B) THE PURPOSES OF THE STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

8 (1) TO ENCOURAGE PUPILS TO STUDY LANGUAGES.

9 (2) TO CERTIFY ATTAINMENT OF BILITERACY.

10 (3) TO PROVIDE EMPLOYERS WITH A METHOD OF IDENTIFYING PEOPLE WITH
11 LANGUAGE AND BILITERACY SKILLS.

12 (4) TO PROVIDE UNIVERSITIES WITH AN ADDITIONAL METHOD TO RECOGNIZE
13 APPLICANTS SEEKING ADMISSION.

14 (5) TO PREPARE PUPILS WITH TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SKILLS.

15 (6) TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND NATIVE LANGUAGE
16 INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION FOREIGN
17 LANGUAGE MEANS ANY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH (LOTE) INCLUDING ALL
18 MODERN LANGUAGES, LATIN, AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE, NATIVE AMERICAN
19 LANGUAGES AND NATIVE LANGUAGES.

20 (7) TO STRENGTHEN INTERGROUP RELATIONSHIPS, AFFIRM THE VALUE OF DIVER-
21 SITY, AND HONOR THE MULTIPLE CULTURES AND LANGUAGES OF A COMMUNITY.

22 2. (A) THE STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY CERTIFIES ATTAINMENT OF A HIGH
23 LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY BY A GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL PUPIL IN ONE OR MORE
24 LANGUAGES, IN ADDITION TO ENGLISH.

25 (B) THE BOARD OF REGENTS SHALL PROMULGATE SUCH REGULATIONS OF THE
26 COMMISSIONER AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THE CRITERIA THAT STUDENTS
27 MUST ACHIEVE TO EARN A STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY, WHICH MAY INCLUDE, BUT
28 IS NOT LIMITED TO ATTAINMENT OF UNITS OF CREDIT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
29 AND LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH, PASSAGE OF STATE ASSESSMENTS IN
30 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH, AND PASSAGE OF
31 SUCH ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AS MAY BE
32 APPROVED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR THIS PURPOSE.

33 (C) FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, FOREIGN LANGUAGE MEANS ANY LANGUAGE
34 OTHER THAN ENGLISH (LOTE) INCLUDING ALL MODERN LANGUAGES, LATIN, AMERI-
35 CAN SIGN LANGUAGE, NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES AND NATIVE LANGUAGES.

36 3. THE COMMISSIONER SHALL DO BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING:

37 (A) PREPARE AND DELIVER TO PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS AN APPROPRI-
38 ATE INSIGNIA TO BE AFFIXED TO THE DIPLOMA AND TRANSCRIPT OF THE PUPIL
39 INDICATING THAT THE PUPIL HAS BEEN AWARDED A STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY BY
40 THE COMMISSIONER.

41 (B) PROVIDE OTHER INFORMATION HE OR SHE DEEMS NECESSARY FOR SCHOOL
42 DISTRICTS TO SUCCESSFULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM.

43 4. A SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT PARTICIPATES IN THE PROGRAM UNDER THIS
44 SECTION SHALL DO BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING:

45 (A) MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE RECORDS IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY PUPILS WHO HAVE
46 EARNED A STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY.

47 (B) AFFIX THE APPROPRIATE INSIGNIA TO THE DIPLOMA AND TRANSCRIPT OF
48 EACH PUPIL WHO EARNS A STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY.

49 5. NO FEE SHALL BE CHARGED TO A PUPIL PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

50 S 3. This act shall take effect on the first of September next
51 succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law.