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ASSEMBLY, No. 4415

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
216th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 11, 2015

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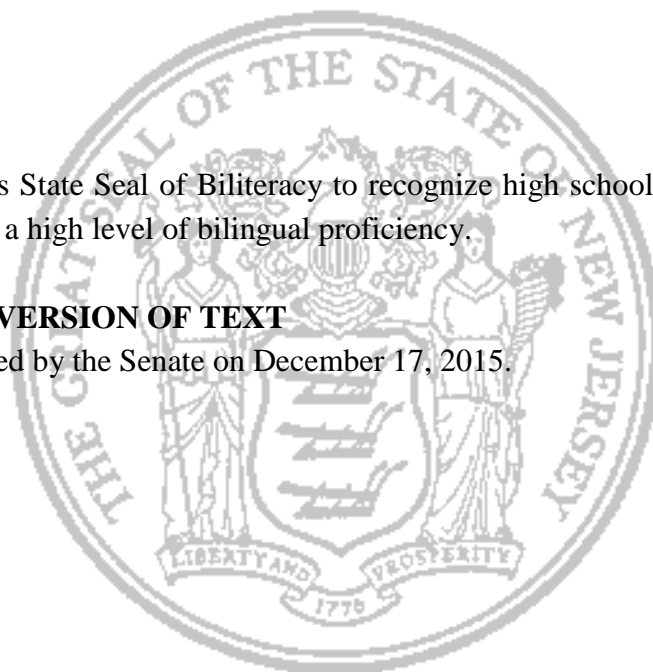
Assemblyman O'Scanlon

SYNOPSIS

Establishes State Seal of Biliteracy to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of bilingual proficiency.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As amended by the Senate on December 17, 2015.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/8/2016)

1 AN ACT establishing the State Seal of Biliteracy and supplementing
2 chapter 7C of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage excellence for
9 all students, and the Legislature wishes to publicly recognize
10 students for exemplary achievements in academic studies;

11 b. The study of ²**[world]** foreign² languages in elementary and
12 secondary schools should be encouraged because it contributes to a
13 student's cognitive development and to the national economy and
14 security;

15 c. Proficiency in multiple languages is critical in enabling New
16 Jersey to participate more effectively in the current global political,
17 social, and economic context, and in expanding trade with other
18 countries;

19 d. The demand for employees to be fluent in more than one
20 language is increasing in New Jersey and throughout the world;

21 e. The benefits to employers in having staff fluent in more than
22 one language are clear: access to expanding markets, allowing
23 business owners to better serve their customers' needs, and the
24 sparking of new marketing ideas that better target a particular
25 audience and open a channel of communication with customers; and

26 f. It is the intent of the Legislature to promote linguistic
27 proficiency and cultural literacy in one or more ²**[world]** foreign²
28 languages in addition to English and to provide recognition of the
29 attainment of those needed and important skills through the
30 establishment of the State Seal of Biliteracy. The State Seal of
31 Biliteracy would be affixed on the high school ¹**[diplomas and]**¹
32 transcripts of graduating students attaining proficiency in one or
33 more ²**[world]** foreign² languages in addition to English.

34

35 2. The State Seal of Biliteracy is established to recognize high
36 school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in
37 speaking, reading, and writing in one or more ²**[world]** foreign²
38 languages in addition to English. The State Seal of Biliteracy shall
39 be awarded by the local board of education to graduating high
40 school seniors who meet the criteria established by the State Board
41 of Education pursuant to subsection a. of section 3 of this act.
42 School district participation in this program is voluntary.

43 The purposes of the State Seal of Biliteracy are as follows:

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AED committee amendments adopted June 4, 2015.

²Senate floor amendments adopted December 17, 2015.

- 1 a. To encourage students to study languages;
- 2 b. To certify attainment of biliteracy;
- 3 c. To provide employers with a method of identifying people
- 4 with language and biliteracy skills;
- 5 d. To provide universities with a method to recognize and
- 6 award academic credit to applicants seeking admission;
- 7 e. To prepare students with 21st century skills;
- 8 f. To recognize and promote foreign language instruction in
- 9 public schools; and
- 10 g. To strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of
- 11 diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages of a
- 12 community.

13
 14 3. a. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules
 15 pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410
 16 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), establishing criteria for the award of a State
 17 Seal of Biliteracy. The criteria shall require a student to
 18 demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting State high school
 19 graduation requirements in English, including through State
 20 assessments and credits, and proficiency in one or more ²【world】
 21 foreign² languages other than English. The criteria shall permit a
 22 student to demonstrate proficiency in a ²【world】 foreign² language
 23 other than English through multiple methods, including nationally
 24 or internationally recognized language proficiency tests.

25 For the purposes of this section, a ²【world】 foreign² language
 26 other than English shall also include American Sign Language ²,
 27 Latin,² and Native American languages.

28 b. The Commissioner of Education shall prepare and deliver to
 29 participating school districts ¹a certificate to be awarded to the
 30 student and¹ an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the ¹【diploma
 31 and】¹ transcript of ¹【a】 the¹ student indicating that the student has
 32 been awarded the State Seal of Biliteracy. The commissioner shall
 33 also provide any information the commissioner deems necessary for
 34 a school district to successfully participate in the program.

35 c. A school district that participates in the program under this
 36 section shall maintain appropriate records in order to identify
 37 students who have earned the State Seal of Biliteracy, and shall
 38 ¹award the certificate and¹ affix the appropriate insignia to a
 39 qualifying student’s ¹【diploma and】¹ transcript.

40 d. A school district that participates in the program ¹【shall not】
 41 may pay the costs of the program or may¹ charge a fee to ¹【a
 42 student】 students who participate to cover the costs¹.

43
 44 4. The commissioner shall submit a report to the Governor, and
 45 the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-
 46 19.1), by September 1 of each school year that includes the number
 47 of students awarded the State Seal of Biliteracy in the previous

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1 school year, the languages in which those students attained
2 proficiency, and the methods used by students to demonstrate
3 proficiency for the State Seal of Biliteracy.

4

5 5. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
6 the ²~~2015-2016~~ 2016-2017² school year.