

2021 -- H 5837

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- BILITERACY SEAL

Introduced By: Representatives Morales, Amore, Alzate, Ranglin-Vassell, Giraldo,  
Caldwell, and Felix

Date Introduced: February 24, 2021

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 16-22.2-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-22.2 entitled "Biliteracy  
2 Seal" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **16-22.2-2. State seal of biliteracy.**

4           (a) A state seal of biliteracy is established to recognize high school graduates who have  
5 attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more  
6 languages, in addition to English. The state seal of biliteracy shall be awarded by the commissioner.  
7 School district participation in this program shall be voluntary.

8           (b) The purposes of the state seal of biliteracy are as follows:

9           (1) To encourage pupils to study languages;

10          (2) To certify attainment of biliteracy;

11          (3) To provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy  
12 skills;

13          (4) To provide universities with an additional method to recognize applicants seeking  
14 admission;

15          (5) To prepare pupils with twenty-first century skills;

16          (6) To recognize the value of foreign language and native language instruction in public  
17 schools. For the purpose of this section "foreign language" means any language other than English,  
18 including all modern languages, Latin, American sign language, native American languages, and  
19 native languages; and

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

3 (c)(1) The state seal of biliteracy certifies attainment of a high level of proficiency by a  
4 graduating high school pupil in one or more languages, in addition to English.

5 (2) The Seal of Biliteracy can be achieved at two (2) levels:

6 (i) The Rhode Island Gold Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who have  
7 demonstrated their ability to narrate and describe in past, present, and future in a world language.  
8 Their language functions allow them to deal effectively with unanticipated complications. The gold  
9 level is aligned with the ACTFL "Advanced Low" Proficiency Guidelines (2012).

10 Students will earn a Gold Seal of "Biliteracy if they meet the performance standard on a  
11 world language assessment from the Rhode Island department of education (RIDE)-approved  
12 assessment list.

13 (ii) The Rhode Island Silver Seal of Biliteracy will be awarded to students who have  
14 demonstrated ability to create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to a close a simple  
15 conversation by asking and responding to simple questions in a world language. The silver level is  
16 aligned with the ACFL "Intermediate Mid" Proficiency guidelines (2012).

17 Students will earn a Silver Seal of Biliteracy if they meet the performance standard on an  
18 English assessment and the silver-level performance standard on a world language assessment from  
19 the RIDE-approved assessment list.

20 (d) The council on elementary and secondary education shall promulgate such regulations  
21 of the commissioner as may be necessary to establish the criteria that students must achieve to earn  
22 a state seal of biliteracy, which may include, but shall not be limited to, attainment of units of credit  
23 in English language arts and languages other than English; passage of state assessments in English  
24 language arts and languages other than English; and passage of such additional assessments of  
25 foreign language proficiency as may be approved by the commissioner for this purpose.

26 (e) The commissioner shall do both of the following:

27 (1) Prepare and deliver, to participating school districts, an appropriate insignia to be  
28 affixed to the diploma and transcript of the pupil indicating that the pupil has been awarded a state  
29 seal of biliteracy by the commissioner.

30 (2) Provide other information they deem necessary for school districts to successfully  
31 participate in the program.

32 (f) A school district that participates in the program under this section shall do both of the  
33 following:

34 (1) Maintain appropriate records in order to identify pupils who have earned a state seal of

1 biliteracy.

2 (2) Affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma and transcript of each pupil who earns a  
3 state seal of biliteracy.

4 (g) No fee shall be charged to a pupil pursuant to this section.

5 SECTION 2. Chapter 16-22.2 of the General Laws entitled "Biliteracy Seal" is hereby  
6 amended by adding thereto the following section:

7 **16-22.2-3. Earning college credit for the Seal of Biliteracy.**

8 (a) For admissions purposes, each public university and public community college in this  
9 state shall accept the state Silver Seal of Biliteracy as equivalent to the third and fourth semester of  
10 world language coursework (two (2) semesters of credit) and the Gold Seal of Biliteracy as  
11 equivalent to the third through sixth semesters of world language coursework (four (4) semesters  
12 of credit) if taken during high school and if a student's high school transcript indicates that he or  
13 she will be receiving or has received the state Seal of Biliteracy.

14 (b) Each public community college and public university in this state shall establish criteria  
15 to translate a state Silver and Gold Seal of Biliteracy into course credit based on world language  
16 course equivalencies identified by the community college's or university's faculty and staff and,  
17 upon, request from an enrolled student, the community college or university shall award world  
18 language course credit toward a minor or major in the language to a student who has received a  
19 state Seal of Biliteracy. Students enrolled in a public community college or public university who  
20 have received a state Seal of Biliteracy must request course credit for their Seal within three (3)  
21 academic years after graduating from high school.

22 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- BILITERACY SEAL

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1           This act would allow high school students who receive the state Silver or Gold Seal of  
2   Biliteracy to earn two (2) to four (4) semesters of world language coursework credit toward a minor  
3   or major in the language at each state public university and public community college if requested  
4   within three (3) academic years after graduating high school.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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