

JAN 23 2015

S.B. NO. 900

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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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



1 government level ensures fair and equal access to state services  
2 for all, as mandated by federal and state law.

3 The legislature further finds that recognizing students'  
4 linguistic proficiency upon graduation from high school with a  
5 state seal of biliteracy will encourage students to develop and  
6 maintain language skills. Since 2011, eight states have  
7 approved state seals of biliteracy and thirteen others are  
8 considering them. The seal would be awarded in recognition of a  
9 demonstrated level of proficiency in speaking, listening,  
10 reading, and writing in English and one or more world languages  
11 including olelo Hawaii, other indigenous languages, and American  
12 sign language. The seal would motivate students to strive for  
13 language proficiency and demonstrate the department of  
14 education's commitment to language proficiency among students.  
15 The seal would also provide a uniform credential for all public  
16 high school graduates, enabling them to market their language  
17 skills.

18 The purpose of this Act is to establish a state seal of  
19 biliteracy to be affixed to certificates of recognition awarded  
20 to graduating students who attain proficiency in English and at  
21 least one other language.



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

**"§302A- State seal of biliteracy.** (a) There shall be established a Hawaii state seal of biliteracy program to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English and one or more other languages.

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

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

(1) Encourage students to study languages;

(2) Certify attainment of a designated level of biliteracy;

(3) Provide employers with a method for identifying people with biliteracy skills;

(4) Provide universities with a method for recognizing and awarding academic credit to applicants seeking admission;

(5) Prepare students with twenty-first century skills;



1       (6) Recognize and promote world language instruction in  
2       public schools;

3       (7) Protect and support the revitalization of olelo  
4       Hawaii, the indigenous language of Hawaii; and

5       (8) Strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value  
6       of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and  
7       languages of a community.

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

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

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

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

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

20       (C) Earning a passing score on a nationally  
21       recognized foreign language assessment comparable



1           to the foreign language advanced placement or  
2           international baccalaureate examinations which  
3           includes assessment of speaking, listening,  
4           reading, and writing; or

5        (D) Demonstrating foreign language proficiency in  
6           speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as  
7           certified by the student's high school to the  
8           superintendent.

9        (e) The superintendent shall:

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

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

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

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

20       (1) Maintain records necessary to identify students  
21           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.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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**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.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

