

New York Becomes the Second State to Recognize Bi literacy

NYS TESOL members and friends: Thank you for responding to our call for advocacy for the New York State Seal of Bi literacy Bill (A10292). Your efforts paid off. On July 31st, Governor Cuomo signed legislation to award a special “seal of bi literacy” to high school graduates who demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one other language. In addition to meeting certain criteria for proficiency in English, students must demonstrate that they are proficient in listening, speaking, reading, and writing another language. The seal will be attached to diplomas and high school transcripts and will go into effect on September 1st. Many students and administrators hope the seal will increase graduates’ odds of finding employment.

In January, California became the first state to establish this special recognition for multilingual graduates and recently reported that more than 10,000 graduates in the class of 2012 had earned the distinction. Hopefully, California and New York will be the groundbreakers in setting this enlightened public policy that shows a commitment to developing bilingual citizens.

Follow this link to learn more about the Seal of Bi literacy:

EDUCATION: New status celebrates 'bi literate' students:

<http://www.pe.com/local-news/topics/topics-education-headlines/20120727-education-new-diploma-seal-recognizes-biliterate-students.ece>

Facts about the Seal of Bi literacy:

<http://sealofbiliteracy.org/seal-deatails>

Follow these links to learn more about this new state policy:

<http://latinoedbeat.org/tag/seal-of-biliteracy>

http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2012/08/high_school_grads_will_get_pro.html

The following is the text of the bill:

S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

10292--A

I N A S S E M B L Y

May 18, 2012

Introduced by M. of A. ARROYO, CASTRO, MAISEL, STEVENSON, PRETLOW, MARKEY, ESPINAL, BROOK-KRASNY, GALEF, CLARK, CRESPO, JACOBS, GIBSON, BARRON, CAMARA, J. RIVERA, RAMOS, SIMOTAS -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. BARRETT, HEASTIE, LATIMER, LENTOL, NOLAN, P. RIVERA -- read once and referred 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 bili-teracy

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 profi-
19 ciency 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 biliter-
22 acy. A state seal of biliteracy would be affixed on the high school

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

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1 diplomas and transcripts of graduating pupils attaining proficiency in
2 one or more languages in addition to English.

3 S 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 815 to read
4 as follows:

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

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

12 (1) TO ENCOURAGE PUPILS TO STUDY LANGUAGES.

13 (2) TO CERTIFY ATTAINMENT OF BILITERACY.

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

16 (4) TO PROVIDE UNIVERSITIES WITH AN ADDITIONAL METHOD TO RECOGNIZE
17 APPLICANTS SEEKING ADMISSION.

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

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

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

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

29 (B) THE BOARD OF REGENTS SHALL PROMULGATE SUCH REGULATIONS OF THE
30 COMMISSIONER AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THE CRITERIA THAT STUDENTS
31 MUST ACHIEVE TO EARN A STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY, WHICH MAY INCLUDE, BUT
32 IS NOT LIMITED TO ATTAINMENT OF UNITS OF CREDIT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

33 AND LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH, PASSAGE OF STATE ASSESSMENTS IN
34 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH, AND PASSAGE OF
35 SUCH ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AS MAY BE
36 APPROVED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR THIS PURPOSE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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