

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE BILL NO. 1016

BY REPRESENTATIVE PIERRE

SCHOOLS/HIGH SCHOOL: Provides for State Seal of Biliteracy to recognize high school graduates who meet certain academic eligibility criteria relative to language proficiency

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:287, relative to high school diplomas; to provide for a State Seal of  
3 Biliteracy to be affixed to the diplomas or transcripts of students who meet certain  
4 academic eligibility criteria relative to language proficiency; to provide relative to  
5 purpose and legislative intent; to require the state superintendent of education to  
6 prepare the seal; to provide for the voluntary participation of public school governing  
7 authorities; to provide relative to rules and regulations; and to provide for related  
8 matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 17:287 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 §287. State Seal of Biliteracy

12 A. The legislature finds and declares all of the following:

13 (1) It is the intent of the legislature to encourage excellence for all students,  
14 and the legislature wishes to publicly recognize students for exemplary achievements  
15 in academic studies.

16 (2) The study of world languages in public elementary and secondary  
17 schools should be encouraged because it contributes to a student's cognitive  
18 development and to the national economy and to national security.

1           (3) Proficiency in multiple languages is critical in enabling Louisiana to  
2           participate effectively in a global political, social, and economic context and in  
3           expanding trade with other countries.

4           (4) The demand for employees to be fluent in more than one language is  
5           increasing both in Louisiana and throughout the world.

6           (5) The benefits to employers in having staff fluent in more than one  
7           language are clear and include access to an expanded market, allowing business  
8           owners to better serve their customers' needs, and the sparking of new marketing  
9           ideas that better target a particular audience and open a channel of communication  
10          with customers.

11          (6) The maintenance and promotion of Louisiana's heritage languages among  
12          its youth contributes to the vibrancy of the state's culture and supports its unique  
13          place in the United States and the world.

14          (7) It is the intent of the legislature to promote linguistic proficiency and  
15          cultural literacy in one or more languages in addition to English and to provide  
16          recognition of the attainment of these skills through the establishment of the State  
17          Seal of Biliteracy.

18          B. The purposes of the State Seal of Biliteracy are as follows:

19           (1) To encourage students to study languages.

20           (2) To certify attainment of biliteracy.

21           (3) To provide employers with a method of identifying people with language  
22           and biliteracy skills.

23           (4) To provide universities with a method to recognize and give academic  
24           credit to applicants seeking admission.

25           (5) To prepare students with twenty-first century skills.

26           (6) To recognize and promote world language instruction in public schools.

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

29           (8) To continue and renew Louisiana's historical tradition of bilingualism.

1           C.(1) The state superintendent of education shall be responsible for the  
2           following:

3           (a) Preparing and delivering to participating public school governing  
4           authorities an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of a  
5           student who has earned the State Seal of Biliteracy.

6           (b) Providing other information he deems necessary for school governing  
7           authorities to successfully participate in the State Seal of Biliteracy program.

8           (2) Public school governing authorities are encouraged but not required to  
9           participate in the State Seal of Biliteracy program. A participating school governing  
10          authority shall maintain appropriate records in order to identify students who have  
11          earned the seal and affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript of each  
12          student who earns the seal.

13          D.(1) The State Seal of Biliteracy certifies that a student meets all of the  
14          following criteria:

15          (a) Completion of all English language arts requirements for graduation with  
16          an overall grade point average of 2.50 or above in such classes.

17          (b) Passing the Reading and English parts of the American College Test  
18          series with a score of nineteen or above.

19          (c) Proficiency in one or more languages other than English, demonstrated  
20          through one of the following methods:

21          (i) Passing a world language Advanced Placement examination with a score  
22          of three or higher or a world language International Baccalaureate examination with  
23          a score of four or higher. For languages in which an Advanced Placement test is not  
24          available, school systems may use an equivalent summative test as approved by the  
25          state superintendent of education.

26          (ii) Successful completion of a four-year high school course of study in a  
27          world language and attaining an overall grade point average of 2.50 or above in that  
28          course of study or successful completion of seven Carnegie units or more in

1 language or content courses in a world language immersion setting and attaining an  
2 an overall grade point average of 2.50 or above in such courses.

3 (iii) Passing a foreign government's approved language examination and  
4 receiving a receipt of a certificate of competency from the authorizing government  
5 agency at the European B2 level, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign  
6 Languages Advanced Low level, or equivalent measures.

7 (2) If the primary language of a student in grades nine through twelve is  
8 other than English, he shall do both of the following in order to qualify for the State  
9 Seal of Biliteracy:

10 (a) Attain the early advanced proficiency level on the English Language  
11 Development Assessment.

12 (b) Meet the requirements of Paragraph (D)(1) of this Section.

13 E.(1) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall  
14 promulgate rules in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to implement  
15 the provisions of this Section.

16 (2) For purposes of this Section, "world language" means a language other  
17 than English and includes American Sign Language.

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#### DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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Pierre

HB No. 1016

**Abstract:** Provides for a State Seal of Biliteracy to be affixed on the diploma or transcript of a high school graduate who meets certain academic requirements relative to foreign language proficiency.

Proposed law provides for a State Seal of Biliteracy to be affixed on the high school diploma or transcript of a graduate who meets certain criteria and graduates from a school under the jurisdiction of a participating school governing authority. Proposed law encourages but does not require the participation of public school governing authorities.

Proposed law requires the state superintendent of education to prepare and deliver an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of eligible students to participating public school governing authorities, which are required to maintain records in order to identify students who have earned the seal and to affix it to their diplomas or transcripts.

Proposed law provides for specific academic eligibility requirements to earn the seal, including the attainment of proficiency in at least one language other than English, a minimum GPA in certain courses, and minimum scores on certain portions of the ACT.

Requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to promulgate rules for proposed law implementation.

(Adds R.S. 17:287)