

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE BILL NO. 1016

BY REPRESENTATIVE PIERRE AND SENATOR THOMPSON

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:273.4, relative to high school diplomas; to provide for a State Seal of
3 Bilingualism 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. 17:273.4 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 §273.4. State Seal of Bilingualism

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, the national economy, and national security.

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 (1) To encourage students to study languages.

15 (2) To certify attainment of biliteracy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 **(a) Completion of all English language arts requirements for graduation.**

11 **(b) Passing the Reading and English parts of the ACT series with a score of**
12 **nineteen or above.**

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

15 **(i) Passing a world language Advanced Placement examination with a score**
16 **of three or higher or a world language International Baccalaureate examination with**
17 **a score of four or higher. For languages in which an Advanced Placement test is not**
18 **available, school systems may use an equivalent summative test as approved by the**
19 **state superintendent of education.**

20 **(ii) Successful completion of a four-year high school course of study in a**
21 **world language or successful completion of seven Carnegie units or more in**
22 **language or content courses in a world language immersion setting.**

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

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

1 (a) Attain the Early Advanced proficiency level on the English Language
2 Development Assessment.

3 (b) Meet the requirements of Paragraph (1) of this Subsection.

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

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____