

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2395

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Title: An act relating to establishing a state seal of biliteracy for high school students.

Brief Description: Establishing a state seal of biliteracy for high school students.

Sponsors: Representatives Moscoso, Walsh, Ryu, Stonier, Reykdal, Gregerson and Freeman.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/27/14.

Appropriations Subcommittee on Education: 2/7/14 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the State of Washington Seal of Biliteracy (Seal) to recognize public high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more world languages in addition to English.
- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt rules to establish criteria for awarding the Seal.
- Allows the standardized high school transcript to include a notation of whether the student has earned the Seal.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Carlyle, Lytton, Pettigrew, Seaquist and Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Fagan, Ranking Minority Member; Dahlquist, Haler and Wilcox.

Staff: Jessica Harrell (786-7349) and Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with four-year institutions, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board develops a standard high school transcript that must include a notation of whether a student has earned a certificate of individual achievement or a certificate of academic achievement.

States, including California and New York, have passed legislation authorizing schools or school districts to award a Seal of Biliteracy to recognize students who have studied and attained a proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. This award is usually a notation that appears on the high school graduate's transcript or diploma, or both.

Summary of Bill:

The State of Washington Seal of Biliteracy (Seal) is established to recognize public high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more world languages in addition to English.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction must adopt rules to establish criteria for awarding the Seal, including requiring a student to demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting the state high school graduation requirements in English, and proficiency in other world languages through multiple methods.

School districts are encouraged to award the Seal to qualifying students, and participating districts must place a notation on the student's diploma and transcript indicating the student has earned the Seal.

The standardized high school transcript may include a notation of whether the student has earned the Seal.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

A null and void clause was added, making the bill null and void unless funded in the budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education):

(In support) Assimilation used to be the rule and children were not encouraged to speak their native language or learn about their native history. This bill will encourage people to maintain their native language while earning school credit. The Seal will be a tool that will encourage schools to foster multilingual skill sets. It is also a great way for students to have their efforts recognized on their high school diplomas and transcripts. This bill will encourage young people and families to maintain languages that are important to them so that they do not have to research their history later. This bill validates student identities and languages. Students in the opportunity gap and English Language Learners will be affected by the bill. The Seal is an opportunity for all Washington students and creates a way to honor students bringing languages from their native home. It is important to close the world gap, in addition to the opportunity gap, and make Washington students competitive in the global market. There are still some issues to work through.

If current testing systems are used to evaluate proficiency, then this bill has little to no cost to implement. This bill is about reinforcing the value of retaining one's native language. Some young people are excited about this bill because they want to be bilingual professionals. This bill allows students to use the preexisting ladder to get credit for their native language, obtain the Seal, and use extra class time to take other classes they are interested in. There are many world languages not offered in the Advanced Placement Program, so the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is developing additional language tests.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education):

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Education): Representative Moscoso, prime sponsor; Elizabeth Richer, League of Education Voters; and Emily Murphy, One America.

Persons Testifying (Appropriations Subcommittee on Education): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.