

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 6424

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**As Reported by House Committee 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:** Senators Roach, McAuliffe, Litzow, Fain, Bailey, Mullet, Hasegawa and Tom.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 2/24/14, 2/26/14 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Bill**  
**(As Amended by Committee)**

- 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 (OSPI) 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.
- Requires the OSPI to submit to the Legislature a report related to the Seal.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Stonier, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Fey, Haigh, Hawkins, S. Hunt, Lytton, Muri, Orwall, Pollet and Seaquist.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Dahlquist, Ranking Minority Member; Magendanz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Hayes, Klippert, Parker and Warnick.

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*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.*

**Staff:** Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

**Background:**

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 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.

The Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) is a system of instruction, which uses English and another language as a means of instruction to build upon and expand language skills to enable a student to achieve competency in English. It teaches concepts and knowledge in the primary language of a student, while the student also acquires English language skills, then tests students in the subject matter in English.

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**Summary of Amended 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 OSPI 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.

The OSPI must submit a report to the Legislature by December 1, 2017, comparing the number of students awarded the Seal in the previous two school years and the languages spoken by those students, to the number of students enrolled or previously enrolled in the TBIP and the languages spoken by those students. The OSPI must also report the methods used by students to demonstrate proficiency for the Seal, and describe how the OSPI plans to increase the number of possible methods for students to demonstrate proficiency, particularly in world languages that are not widely spoken.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The amended bill adds a requirement that the OSPI submit a report to the Legislature comparing the number of students awarded the Seal in the previous two school years and the languages spoken by those students, to the number of students enrolled or previously enrolled in the TBIP and the languages spoken by those students. It also requires the OSPI to report the methods used by students to demonstrate proficiency for the Seal, and describe how the OSPI plans to increase the number of possible methods for students to demonstrate proficiency, particularly in world languages that are not widely spoken.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill is a step in the right direction toward helping young people. It gives recognition to students that are fluent in a world language. Some people are looking forward to the days when multiple languages are taught in schools. Currently, there is often someone in the home teaching a child a different language so the child can attain fluency in any language. To be eligible for the Seal, the child also has to be fluent in English. It is important to know other languages; it helps in the job market. Many employers, including the military, will pay higher salaries to people who know a language other than English. Some students want to be bilingual professionals. Earning the Seal will allow these children to spend more time on classes they need for their profession, because they will get credit for languages spoken in addition to English.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Roach, prime sponsor; and Emily Murphy, One America.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.