



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: H.B. 487 of the 131st G.A.

Date: May 25, 2016

Status: As Reported by House Education

Sponsor: Reps. LaTourette and Roegner

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Establishes the State Seal of Biliteracy that may be attached to the high school transcripts of qualifying students

State Fiscal Highlights

- The bill requires the State Board of Education to establish the State Seal of Biliteracy and the requirements for earning the seal while the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is required to prepare and deliver certain information to participating schools. These requirements will increase ODE's administrative responsibilities.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- School districts and schools may experience a minimal increase in administrative responsibilities to maintain records of students who have completed the requirements for earning a State Seal of Biliteracy and, for districts and schools that opt to participate, to make the appropriate designation on the transcript of a qualifying student.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill allows school districts, community schools, STEM schools, college-preparatory boarding schools, or chartered nonpublic schools to adopt a policy for attaching or affixing a State Seal of Bilingualism to the transcript of a student enrolled in the school who demonstrates a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. The bill also permits a diploma for a home-instructed student to include the seal in the same manner prescribed for transcripts issued by school districts and chartered nonpublic schools. Currently, 19 states and the District of Columbia have enacted similar legislation according to <http://sealofbilingualism.org/>, a website promoting bilingualism seal legislation across the country.

Ohio Department of Education

The bill requires the State Board of Education to establish the State Seal of Bilingualism and to establish the requirements and criteria for earning the seal. The bill also requires the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to prepare and deliver to participating schools an appropriate mechanism for assigning the seal on a student's transcript and to provide school districts and schools with any other information the State Board considers necessary for participation in the program. These new requirements will add to ODE's administrative responsibilities.

School districts and schools

While adoption of a State Seal of Bilingualism policy is permissive, it appears that the bill requires school districts and schools to maintain records to identify students who have completed the requirements for earning the seal, regardless of whether such a policy is adopted. Thus, school districts and schools may experience a minimal increase in administrative responsibilities to maintain the records and, for districts and schools that opt to participate, to make the appropriate designation on the transcript of a qualifying student. Record-keeping duties are likely to be assigned to a guidance counselor.

The bill prohibits a district or school from charging a fee for assigning the seal on a student's transcript. However, students may be required to pay a fee to demonstrate proficiency in a language, including the cost of a standardized test to determine proficiency in that language.