



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Bill Analysis

William Schwartz

Sub. H.B. 487*

131st General Assembly
(As Reported by H. Education)

Reps. LaTourette and Roegner, Blessing, Bocchieri, Ginter, Perales, K. Smith

BILL SUMMARY

- Requires the State Board of Education to establish the State Seal of Biliteracy, which may be attached or affixed to the transcripts of qualifying public and nonpublic high school students and to the diplomas of homeschooled students, to demonstrate the attainment of a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English sufficient for meaningful use in college and a career.
- Requires each district and school to identify students who have completed the requirements to earn a State Seal of Biliteracy.
- Prohibits a district or school from charging a fee for assigning a State Seal of Biliteracy on a student's transcript, but permits a student to be required to pay a fee to demonstrate proficiency in a language.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

State Seal of Biliteracy

The bill requires the State Board of Education to establish the "State Seal of Biliteracy," which may be attached or affixed by participating public and chartered nonpublic high schools to the transcripts of students who meet specified requirements and criteria set by the State Board.

According to the bill, the Seal must demonstrate "the attainment of a high level of proficiency by a graduate of a public or chartered nonpublic high school in one or more

* This analysis was prepared before the report of the House Education Committee appeared in the House Journal. Note that the list of co-sponsors and the legislative history may be incomplete.

languages in addition to English, sufficient for meaningful use in college and a career." It adds that the purpose of the Seal is to (1) encourage students to study languages, (2) certify the attainment of biliteracy, (3) provide employers with a method of identifying individuals with language and biliteracy skills, (4) provide institutions of higher education with an additional method to recognize applicants for admission, (5) prepare students with 21st century skills, (6) recognize the value of foreign language and native language instruction in public schools, and (7) strengthen inter-group relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages of a community.¹

For its purposes, the bill defines "foreign language" as any language other than English, including modern languages, Latin, American Sign Language, Native American languages, and native languages.²

The bill expressly authorizes a public school district or school and chartered nonpublic school to participate in assigning the State Seal of Biliteracy to a qualifying student's transcript. However, it further specifies that a district or school may not be required to participate in assigning a Seal. If a district or school has a policy of participating in assigning the State Seal of Biliteracy, the district or school must make the designation on the transcript of a student who completes the specified requirements.³

Homeschooled students

The bill expressly authorizes the parent or guardian of a homeschooled student to assign the State Seal of Biliteracy to the student's diploma in the same manner as prescribed for districts and nonpublic schools under the bill. Current law permits the parent or guardian of a homeschooled student to grant a diploma to a homeschooled student who has completed their final year of home instruction and has successfully fulfilled the high school curriculum.⁴

Maintenance of records

The bill requires each district and school to identify students who have completed the requirements to earn a State Seal of Biliteracy. It appears that this

¹ R.C. 3313.6111(A) and (B). Conforming change in R.C. 3313.618(B).

² R.C. 3313.6111(E).

³ R.C. 3313.6111(B).

⁴ R.C. 3313.6110(F).

requirement applies to districts and schools regardless of whether the district or school has a policy participating in the assigning of a State Seal of Biliteracy.⁵

Fees related to the State Seal of Biliteracy

The bill prohibits a district or school from charging a fee for assigning a State Seal of Biliteracy on a student's transcript. However, the bill adds that a student 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.⁶

Duties of the State Board

The bill requires the State Board to do the following:

(1) Establish the requirements and criteria for earning a State Seal of Biliteracy, including assessments of foreign language and English proficiency;

(2) Direct the Department of Education to prepare and deliver to participating districts and schools an appropriate mechanism for assigning a State Seal of Biliteracy on a student's transcript;

(3) Direct the Department to provide any other information the State Board considers necessary for districts and schools to participate in the assigning of a State Seal of Biliteracy; and

(4) Adopt rules to implement the bill's provisions.⁷

HISTORY

| ACTION | DATE |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Introduced | 03-08-16 |
| Reported, H. Education | --- |

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⁵ R.C. 3313.6111(B)(2).

⁶ R.C. 3313.6111(D).

⁷ R.C. 3313.6111(C).

