

1 HB46  
2 215774-1  
3 By Representatives Collins and Meadows  
4 RFD: Education Policy  
5 First Read: 11-JAN-22  
6 PFD: 12/07/2021

SYNOPSIS:            This bill would establish the State Seal of Biliteracy program to recognize graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English, and would provide for the seal to be awarded to the graduate by the State Department of Education.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to education; to establish the State Seal of Biliteracy; to recognize graduates who have demonstrated an indicated level of proficiency in English and at least one other world language, including American Sign Language.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. (a) The State Department of Education shall develop and award a State Seal of Biliteracy to those high school students who have demonstrated an indicated level

1 of proficiency in English and at least one other world  
2 language, including American Sign Language. School district  
3 participation in the program is voluntary.

4 (b) The purposes of the State Seal of Biliteracy are  
5 as follows:

6 (1) To encourage students to study languages.

7 (2) To certify attainment of biliteracy.

8 (3) To provide employers with a method of  
9 identifying people proficient in language and biliteracy  
10 skills.

11 (4) To provide institutions of higher education with  
12 a method to recognize and give academic credit to applicants  
13 seeking admission.

14 (5) To prepare students with 21st Century skills.

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

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

20 Section 2. The State Seal of Biliteracy certifies  
21 attainment of an intermediate level of proficiency by a  
22 graduating student in English and at least one other world  
23 language, and certifies that the graduate meets all of the  
24 following criteria:

25 (1) Completion of the graduation requirements of the  
26 high school.

1           (2) English language proficiency: The student shall  
2 demonstrate proficiency in the English language, through one  
3 of the following approaches, or as provided by any future  
4 equivalent national normed benchmark approved as part of the  
5 program:

6           a. ACT English: A score of 18 or higher.

7           b. ACT reading: A score of 20 or higher.

8           c. Advanced Placement Language Examination: A score  
9 of three or higher.

10          d. International Baccalaureate Examination: A score  
11 of five or higher.

12          e. WIDA ACCESS 2.0: For non-native English speakers,  
13 the student shall meet and maintain Alabama exit criteria in  
14 English proficiency.

15          f. American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language  
16 Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages: For  
17 non-native English speakers, an intermediate Mid-3 or higher  
18 score in English.

19           (3) World language proficiency: The student shall  
20 demonstrate proficiency in one or more languages other than  
21 English through one of the following approaches:

22           a. If the language other than English may be  
23 assessed by a standardized examination, students shall attain  
24 the minimum score on one of the following assessments:

25           1. The Advanced Placement Language Examination: A  
26 score of three or higher.

1                   2. American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language  
2 Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages: An  
3 Intermediate Mid-3 or higher score in all four components.

4                   3. International Baccalaureate Examination with a  
5 score of four or higher.

6                   4. Common European Framework of Reference: A score  
7 of level B1 or higher.

8                   5. Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency: A  
9 score of intermediate-mid level or higher.

10                  6. American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language  
11 Oral Proficiency Interview Writing Proficiency Test: A score  
12 of intermediate-mid level.

13                  7. American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language  
14 Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment: A score of  
15 intermediate-mid level three or higher.

16                  8. Sign Language: Sign Language Proficiency  
17 Interview, American Sign Language Proficiency Interview, or  
18 Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages: A  
19 score of intermediate plus on the Sign Language Proficiency  
20 Interview, level three on the American Sign Language  
21 Proficiency Interview, or score of intermediate Mid-3.

22                  b. If the language other than English is not able to  
23 be assessed by a standardized examination, one of the  
24 following criteria shall be met:

25                   1. The school district shall certify to the State  
26 Superintendent of Education that a school district language  
27 examination meets the rigor at the intermediate-mid level of

1 language proficiency according to the guidelines of the  
2 American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages. To that  
3 end, the assessment of a language other than English shall  
4 assess listening, speaking, reading, and writing at a level of  
5 intermediate-mid proficiency or higher. The assessment should  
6 be similar to the American Council of Teachers of Foreign  
7 Languages Oral Proficiency Interview Writing Proficiency Test  
8 and should require collaboration with community members who  
9 are native speakers or near native speakers in that language.  
10 This assessment should be similar to the process used in other  
11 states for assessing proficiency in tribal languages.

12 2. Notwithstanding subparagraph 1., a student who  
13 seeks to qualify for the State Seal of Biliteracy through a  
14 language that is not characterized by listening, speaking,  
15 reading, and writing, or for which there is no written system,  
16 shall pass an assessment on the modalities that characterize  
17 communication in that language at the corresponding  
18 intermediate proficient level or higher.

19 c. If neither paragraph a. nor paragraph b. are able  
20 to be implemented, or if new language assessments become  
21 available, one of the following approaches may be followed:

22 1. The State Superintendent of Education may provide  
23 a listing of equivalent language assessments that school  
24 districts may use.

25 2. A school district may provide the State  
26 Superintendent of Education with a list of equivalent language  
27 assessments that the school district proposes to use in place

1 of those listed in this section. The State Superintendent of  
2 Education may use lists received from school districts in  
3 developing a state list of equivalent language assessments.

4 Section 3. The State Department of Education shall  
5 do both of the following:

6 (1) Prepare and deliver to participating school  
7 districts an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the diploma  
8 or transcript of the student indicating that the student has  
9 been awarded a State Seal of Biliteracy by the State  
10 Department of Education.

11 (2) Provide other information the department deems  
12 necessary for school districts to successfully participate in  
13 the program.

14 Section 4. A school district that participates in  
15 the program under this act shall do both of the following:

16 (1) Maintain appropriate records in order to  
17 identify students who have earned a State Seal of Biliteracy.

18 (2) Affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma  
19 and transcript of each student who earns a State Seal of  
20 Biliteracy.

21 Section 5. It is the intent of the Legislature that  
22 no fee be charged to a student to participate in the State  
23 Seal of Biliteracy pursuant to this act.

24 Section 6. This act shall become effective on the  
25 first day of the third month following its passage and  
26 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.