

**ACT No. 99**

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE BILL NO. 1016

BY REPRESENTATIVE PIERRE AND SENATOR THOMPSON

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:273.4, relative to high school diplomas; to provide for a State Seal of  
3 Bilingualism to be affixed to the diplomas or transcripts of students who meet certain  
4 academic eligibility criteria relative to language proficiency; to provide relative to  
5 purpose and legislative intent; to require the state superintendent of education to  
6 prepare the seal; to provide for the voluntary participation of public school governing  
7 authorities; to provide relative to rules and regulations; and to provide for related  
8 matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 17:273.4 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 §273.4. State Seal of Bilingualism

12 A. The legislature finds and declares all of the following:

13 (1) It is the intent of the legislature to encourage excellence for all students,  
14 and the legislature wishes to publicly recognize students for exemplary achievements  
15 in academic studies.

16 (2) The study of world languages in public elementary and secondary  
17 schools should be encouraged because it contributes to a student's cognitive  
18 development, the national economy, and national security.

19 (3) Proficiency in multiple languages is critical in enabling Louisiana  
20 residents to participate effectively in a global political, social, and economic context  
21 and in expanding trade with other countries.

22 (4) The demand for employees to be fluent in more than one language is  
23 increasing both in Louisiana and throughout the world.

1           (5) The benefits to employers in having staff fluent in more than one  
 2           language are clear and include access to an expanded market, allowing business  
 3           owners to better serve their customers' needs, and the sparking of new marketing  
 4           ideas that better target a particular audience and open a channel of communication  
 5           with customers.

6           (6) The maintenance and promotion of Louisiana's heritage languages among  
 7           its youth contributes to the vibrancy of the state's culture and supports its unique  
 8           place in the United States and the world.

9           (7) It is the intent of the legislature to promote linguistic proficiency and  
 10          cultural literacy in one or more languages in addition to English and to provide  
 11          recognition of the attainment of these skills through the establishment of the State  
 12          Seal of Biliteracy.

13           B. The purposes of the State Seal of Biliteracy are as follows:

14           (1) To encourage students to study languages.

15           (2) To certify attainment of biliteracy.

16           (3) To provide employers with a method of identifying people with language  
 17          and biliteracy skills.

18           (4) To provide universities with a method to recognize and give academic  
 19          credit to applicants seeking admission.

20           (5) To prepare students with twenty-first century skills.

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

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

24           (8) To continue and renew Louisiana's historical tradition of bilingualism.

25           C.(1) The state superintendent of education shall be responsible for the  
 26          following:

27           (a) Preparing and delivering to participating public school governing  
 28          authorities an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of a  
 29          student who has earned the State Seal of Biliteracy.

1                    (b) Providing other information he deems necessary for school governing  
 2                    authorities to successfully participate in the State Seal of Biliteracy program.

3                    (2) Public school governing authorities are encouraged but not required to  
 4                    participate in the State Seal of Biliteracy program. A participating school governing  
 5                    authority shall maintain appropriate records in order to identify students who have  
 6                    earned the seal and affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript of each  
 7                    student who earns the seal.

8                    D.(1) The State Seal of Biliteracy certifies that a student meets all of the  
 9                    following criteria:

10                   (a) Completion of all English language arts requirements for graduation.

11                   (b) Passing the Reading and English parts of the ACT series with a score of  
 12                   nineteen or above.

13                   (c) Proficiency in one or more languages other than English, demonstrated  
 14                   through one of the following methods:

15                   (i) Passing a world language Advanced Placement examination with a score  
 16                   of three or higher or a world language International Baccalaureate examination with  
 17                   a score of four or higher. For languages in which an Advanced Placement test is not  
 18                   available, school systems may use an equivalent summative test as approved by the  
 19                   state superintendent of education.

20                   (ii) Successful completion of a four-year high school course of study in a  
 21                   world language or successful completion of seven Carnegie units or more in  
 22                   language or content courses in a world language immersion setting.

23                   (iii) Passing a foreign government's approved language examination and  
 24                   receiving a receipt of a certificate of competency from the authorizing government  
 25                   agency at the European B2 level, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign  
 26                   Languages Advanced Low level, or equivalent measures.

27                   (2) If the primary language of a student in grades nine through twelve is  
 28                   other than English, he shall do both of the following in order to qualify for the State  
 29                   Seal of Biliteracy:

1                   (a) Attain the Early Advanced proficiency level on the English Language  
2                   Development Assessment.

3                   (b) Meet the requirements of Paragraph (1) of this Subsection.

4                   E.(1) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall  
5                   promulgate rules in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to implement  
6                   the provisions of this Section.

7                   (2) For purposes of this Section, "world language" means a language other  
8                   than English and includes American Sign Language.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_