

AMENDED IN SENATE SEPTEMBER 1, 2011

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 30, 2011

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 11, 2011

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 27, 2011

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 4, 2011

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 815**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Brownley**

**(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member John A. Pérez)**

**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Alejo, Ammiano, Carter,  
Dickinson, Eng, Furutani, Gatto, Roger Hernández, Lara, Ma,  
and Williams)**

**(~~Coauthor: Senator~~ Coauthors: Senators Correa, Hancock, Lowenthal,  
and Vargas)**

February 17, 2011

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An act to add Article 6 (commencing with Section 51460) to Chapter 3 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, relating to instructional programs, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 815, as amended, Brownley. Instructional programs: State Seal of Biliteracy.

Existing law sets forth various requirements for the issuance of diplomas conferred upon a pupil as evidence of graduation from high school. Statutory provisions establish the Golden State Seal Merit

Diploma for the purpose of recognizing pupils who have mastered the high school curriculum.

This bill would establish the State Seal of Biliteracy to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. The State Seal of Biliteracy would be awarded by the Superintendent of Public Instruction in accordance with specified criteria. The Superintendent would be required to prepare and deliver to participating school districts the seal insignia. Participating school districts would be required to maintain records in order to identify pupils who have earned a State Seal of Biliteracy and to affix an appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript of pupils who earn a State Seal of Biliteracy.

The bill would make an appropriation by authorizing the Superintendent to use money appropriated for purposes of the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma program to develop an Internet Web site for electronic delivery of the seals for both the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma and State Seal of Biliteracy programs to school districts.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage excellence for
- 4 all pupils, and the Legislature wishes to publicly recognize pupils
- 5 for exemplary achievements in academic studies.
- 6 (b) The study of world languages in elementary and secondary
- 7 schools should be encouraged because it contributes to a pupil's
- 8 cognitive development and to our national economy and security.
- 9 (c) Proficiency in multiple languages is critical in enabling
- 10 California to participate effectively in a global political, social,
- 11 and economic context, and in expanding trade with other countries.
- 12 (d) The demand for employees to be fluent in more than one
- 13 language is increasing both in California and throughout the world.
- 14 (e) The benefits to employers in having staff fluent in more than
- 15 one language are clear: access to an expanded market, allowing
- 16 business owners to better serve their customers' needs, and the

1 sparking of new marketing ideas that better target a particular  
2 audience and open a channel of communication with customers.

3 (f) It is the intent of the Legislature to promote linguistic  
4 proficiency and cultural literacy in one or more languages in  
5 addition to English and to provide recognition of the attainment  
6 of those needed and important skills through the establishment of  
7 the State Seal of Biliteracy. A State Seal of Biliteracy would be  
8 affixed on the high school diplomas or transcripts of graduating  
9 pupils attaining proficiency in one or more languages in addition  
10 to English.

11 SEC. 2. Article 6 (commencing with Section 51460) is added  
12 to Chapter 3 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education  
13 Code, to read:

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15 Article 6. State Seal of Biliteracy

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17 51460. (a) The State Seal of Biliteracy is established to  
18 recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of  
19 proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more  
20 languages in addition to English. The State Seal of Biliteracy shall  
21 be awarded by the Superintendent. School district participation in  
22 this program is voluntary.

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

24 (1) To encourage pupils to study languages.

25 (2) To certify attainment of biliteracy.

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

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

30 (5) To prepare pupils with 21st century skills.

31 (6) To recognize and promote foreign language instruction in  
32 public schools.

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

36 51461. (a) The State Seal of Biliteracy certifies attainment of  
37 a high level of proficiency by a graduating high school pupil in  
38 one or more languages, in addition to English, and certifies that  
39 the graduate meets all of the following criteria:

1 (1) Completion of all English language arts requirements for  
2 graduation with an overall grade point average of 2.0 or above in  
3 those classes.

4 (2) Passing the California Standards Test in English language  
5 arts administered in grade 11 at the proficient level or above.

6 (3) Proficiency in one or more languages other than English,  
7 demonstrated through one of the following methods:

8 (A) Passing a foreign language Advanced Placement  
9 examination with a score of 3 or higher or an International  
10 Baccalaureate examination with a score of 4 or higher.

11 (B) Successful completion of a four-year high school course of  
12 study in a foreign language, and attaining an overall grade point  
13 average of 3.0 or above in that course of study.

14 (C) If no Advanced Placement examination or off-the-shelf  
15 language test exists and the school district can certify to the  
16 Superintendent that the test meets the rigor of a four-year high  
17 school course of study in that foreign language, passing a school  
18 district language examination that, at a minimum, assesses  
19 speaking, reading, and writing in a language other than English at  
20 the proficient level or higher. If a school district offers a language  
21 examination in a language in which an Advanced Placement  
22 examination or off-the-shelf language test exists, the school district  
23 language examination shall be approved by the Superintendent for  
24 the purpose of determining proficiency in a language other than  
25 English.

26 (D) Passing the SAT II foreign language examination with a  
27 score of 600 or higher.

28 (b) If the primary language of a pupil in any of grades 9 to 12,  
29 inclusive, is other than English, he or she shall do both of the  
30 following in order to qualify for the State Seal of Biliteracy:

31 (1) Attain the early advanced proficiency level on the English  
32 language development test. For purposes of this paragraph, a  
33 participating school district may administer the English language  
34 development test an additional time as necessary.

35 (2) Meet the requirements of subdivision (a).

36 (c) For languages in which an Advanced Placement test is not  
37 available, the Superintendent may provide a listing of equivalent  
38 summative tests that school districts may use in place of an  
39 Advanced Placement test for purposes of subparagraph (A) of  
40 paragraph (3) of subdivision (a). A school district may provide the

1 Superintendent with a list of equivalent summative tests that ~~it~~ *the*  
2 *district* uses in place of an Advanced Placement test for purposes  
3 of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a). The  
4 Superintendent may use lists received from school districts in  
5 developing his or her list of equivalent summative tests.

6 (d) For purposes of this article, “foreign language” means a  
7 language other than English, and includes American Sign  
8 Language.

9 51462. The Superintendent shall do both of the following:

10 (a) Prepare and deliver to participating school districts an  
11 appropriate insignia to be affixed to the diploma or transcript of  
12 the pupil indicating that the pupil has been awarded a State Seal  
13 of Biliteracy by the Superintendent.

14 (b) Provide other information it deems necessary for school  
15 districts to successfully participate in the program.

16 51463. A school district that participates in the program under  
17 this article shall do both of the following:

18 (a) Maintain appropriate records in order to identify pupils who  
19 have earned a State Seal of Biliteracy.

20 (b) Affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma or transcript  
21 of each pupil who earns a State Seal of Biliteracy.

22 51464. It is the intent of the Legislature that no fee be charged  
23 to a pupil pursuant to this article.

24 SEC. 3. The Superintendent of Public Instruction may use  
25 money appropriated for purposes of the Golden State Seal Merit  
26 Diploma program pursuant to Section 47 of Chapter 204 of the  
27 Statutes of 1996 to develop an Internet Web site for electronic  
28 delivery of the seals for both the Golden State Seal Merit Diploma  
29 and State Seal of Biliteracy programs as set forth in Article 5  
30 (commencing with Section 51450), and Article 6 (commencing  
31 with Section 51460), of Chapter 3 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title  
32 2 of the Education Code. The Superintendent may use these funds  
33 on a one-time basis to develop an Internet Web site to make  
34 electronically available to school districts the seals for the Golden  
35 State Seal Merit Diploma and State Seal of Biliteracy programs.

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