



STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY FOR PROFICIENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

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The Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) at SEDL was asked by a partnering regional comprehensive center to provide information concerning the following questions:

1. What are states doing regarding awarding a seal of biliteracy on high school diplomas?
2. Have any of the SECC states enacted or attempted to enact legislation to establish such a seal?

A discussion follows of the procedures for resource review and selection, limitations of this report, and information that pertains to the topic.

PROCEDURE

Due to the nature of this request, SECC staff did not employ the conventional search processes of using research databases and search engines, such as EBSCO, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), Bing, Google, and Google Scholar to locate literature on the topic. Instead, they conducted searches using only the above online search engines with the terms “seal of biliteracy” and “state seal of biliteracy.” They also contacted individuals within the SDEs served by SECC—Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina—to obtain state-specific information.

SECC staff selected material for use in developing this report based on the following criteria: (a) publication or effective date within the past 10 years; (b) information can be scaled up to a statewide approach to establishing a state seal of biliteracy; and/or (c) content is relevant to the client’s request.

GENERAL LIMITATIONS

SECC staff found that state legislation to establish recognition for high school graduates who demonstrate high proficiency in English and another language is fairly new (LegiScan, n.d.; StateScape Policy Tracking and Analysis, 2013). In addition, the education field currently lacks a strong research base around the use of a state seal of biliteracy on high school diplomas to recognize achievement. Consequently, resources used for this report were obtained from web pages and through personal communication with personnel in the state departments of education that are served by SECC.

SECC staff provide the above comments to assist stakeholders in making informed decisions with respect to the information presented. SECC does not endorse any policies or guidance in this report.

A summary of the information obtained for the states served by SECC as well as for a number of states that are served by other regional comprehensive centers is provided in Table 1., Use of a State Seal of Biliteracy for Proficient High School Graduates.

REFERENCES

- California Department of Education. (2013). *State seal of biliteracy*. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/sealofbiliteracy.asp>
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (2013). *The 188th General Court of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Bill H.533 an act to promote global trade and economic development through dual language and biliteracy*. Retrieved from <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/188/House/H533>
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- Governor's Press Office, Albany, New York. (2012, 31 July). *Governor Cuomo signs bill to recognize high school graduates who demonstrate proficiency in multiple languages* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://www.governor.ny.gov/press/07312012-multiple-language-proficiency-bill>
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- New Mexico Legislature. (n.d.). *2013 regular session, HB 541: Teacher language proficiency & council*. Retrieved from <http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/legislation.aspx?chamber=H&legtype=B&legno=%20541&year=13>
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- Texas Legislature Online, History. (2013). *Legislation, Bill: HB 921, legislative session: 83(R), council document 83R 6124 JSL-D*. Retrieved from <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/history.aspx?LegSess=83R&Bill=HB921>

Information Requests are customized reports that are prepared to fulfill requests for information by the departments of education of the states served by the Southeast Comprehensive Center at SEDL. The requests address topics on current education issues related to the requirements and implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). For additional information, visit the SECC website at secc.sedl.org.

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APPENDIX

**Table 1. USE OF A STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY
FOR PROFICIENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

TABLE 1. USE OF A STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY FOR PROFICIENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES		
STATES SERVED BY THE SOUTHEAST COMPREHENSIVE CENTER		
State	Seal	Supplemental Information
Alabama	No	C. Brown, Director, Curriculum, Alabama State Department of Education (personal communication, June 17, 2013)
Georgia	No	H. Hendley, Director, Policy Division, Georgia Department of Education (personal communication, June 17, 2013)
Mississippi	No	T. Funches, English Language Learner Coordinator, Mississippi Department of Education (personal communication, June 17, 2013)
North Carolina	No	R. Garland, Chief Academic Officer, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (personal communication, June 17, 2013)
South Carolina	No	D. Prevatt, Team Leader, Office of Federal and State Accountability, South Carolina Department of Education (personal communication, June 19, 2013)
STATES SERVED BY OTHER REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS		
State	Seal	Supplemental Information
California	Yes	California was the first state to enact legislation to establish a state seal of biliteracy (Assembly Bill 815), which became effective January 2, 2012 (California Department of Education, 2013). Hyperlink: http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/sealofbiliteracy.asp
Florida	No	As of May 3, 2013, SB 1676 died in the Education Committee (The Florida State Senate, 2013). Hyperlink: http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/1676
Illinois	Yes	SB 1221 establishes a “State Seal of Biliteracy to be awarded by the State Board of Education beginning in the 2014–2015 school year” as well as describes the requirements for participation in the program (Illinois General Assembly, n.d.). Hyperlink: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=1221&GAID=12&DocTypeID=SB&SessionID=85&GA=98
Massachusetts	No	Bill H.533 was proposed “to promote global trade and economic development through dual language biliteracy” (The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2013). As of May 13, 2013, this legislation was referred to the Joint Committee on Education. Hyperlink: https://malegislature.gov/Bills/188/House/H533
New Mexico	No	HB 541 was proposed to establish a state seal of biliteracy but was vetoed, as of March 2013 (New Mexico Legislature, n.d.). Hyperlink: http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/legislation.aspx?Chamber=H&LegType=B&LegNo=541&year=13

TABLE 1. USE OF A STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY FOR PROFICIENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES		
New York	Yes	<p>Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a bill into law that established a state seal of biliteracy on July 31, 2012, which took effect on September 1, 2012 (Governor’s Press Office, Albany, New York, 2012).</p> <p>Hyperlink: http://www.governor.ny.gov/press/07312012-multiple-language-proficiency-bill</p>
Texas	No	<p>HB 921 was proposed to establish the “Texas State Seal of Bilingualism and Biliteracy for recognition of high school graduates who attain a high level of proficiency in both English and another language” (Texas Legislature Online, History, 2013). As of April 9, 2013, this bill was pending in committee (see History tab).</p> <p>Hyperlink: http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=83R&Bill=HB921</p>