

# Establish a State Seal of Biliteracy in Massachusetts

*H.285/S.311 An Act to promote global trade and economic development through Biliteracy*  
*Also included in H.3705/S.2070 An act for language opportunity for our kids (LOOK Bill)*

## What is the Seal of Biliteracy?

The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes graduates who speak, listen, read and write proficiently in another language in addition to English with a seal on the high school diploma. The Seal bill has the goal of promoting long term foreign, native, and heritage language study, documenting achievement in biliteracy, and producing a biliterate, multicultural workforce.



## Why is the Seal of Biliteracy Important for Massachusetts?

1

### Encourage language study

The Seal of Biliteracy encourages schools to develop language programs that focus on proficiency-oriented goals, and encourages students to pursue long-term language study and develop higher levels of proficiency. It also encourages school districts to develop language acquisition programs that support English Language Learners becoming fully biliterate in their native languages, and to reward these bilingual students for their language skills.

2

### Reward biliteracy

The Seal of Biliteracy places the focus on what students can do with languages and rewards the critical skill of biliteracy. For foreign language learners, the Seal rewards proficiency in a language rather than focusing on how many years they have studied it. For English Language Learners, the Seal rewards students who attain biliteracy in English and their native language.

3

### Provide evidence to employers

In 2015, there were nearly 15,000 online job postings for bilingual workers. Massachusetts-based employers posted 14,561 job openings online in 2015, representing a 159.5 percent increase in the number of online job postings for bilingual workers since 2010 (New American Economy).

The Seal of Biliteracy provides evidence to universities and businesses that our students have attained this important 21<sup>st</sup> century skill. This not only involves learning another language, but also learning how to effectively communicate with people from other cultures. It encourages students to pursue biliteracy and honors those who do, giving them the ability to highlight this skill in college and job applications.

## Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project

A pilot project is currently underway in Massachusetts on the local level, as we await approval by the state legislature.

Over 300 awards were made in nine districts in spring 2016, and that number is expected to double in 2017.



[www.LanguageOpportunity.org](http://www.LanguageOpportunity.org)

## 25 other states have already approved a state Seal of Biliteracy



