

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1579
By: Guerra
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that, because postsecondary institutions and employers often look for students and employees who are bilingual and biliterate, Texas needs a standardized method by which an individual can indicate to those entities that the individual is bilingual and biliterate. According to a 2019 report published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, nine out of 10 U.S. employers rely on employees with language skills other than English, and 56 percent report that their foreign language demand will increase in the next five years. The bill author has informed the committee that, while a performance acknowledgment currently may be placed on a student's transcript to indicate that the student has taken second language courses, this is not a clear indicator of a student's bilingualism and biliteracy and the state should establish an official seal that indicates a student's biliteracy to ensure Texas students are competitive in higher education institutions and in the workforce. H.B. 1579 seeks to resolve this issue by requiring the Texas Education Agency to establish the Texas State Seal of Bilingualism and Biliteracy.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1579 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish the Texas State Seal of Bilingualism and Biliteracy to recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in comprehending, speaking, reading, and writing in both English and a language other than English. The bill requires TEA, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, to do the following:

- determine minimum requirements for earning the seal, which:
 - must be sufficiently rigorous to indicate to an employer or postsecondary institution that a student who has earned the seal is biliterate;
 - may include completion of a project, activity, or portfolio; and
 - may not condition receipt of the seal on an examination created for that purpose; and
- prepare and deliver to each public school district an insignia that can be affixed or stamped on the diploma of and adopt a designation to be included on the transcript of a student who has satisfied the applicable requirements.

H.B. 1579 requires each district to maintain appropriate records to identify students who have earned the seal and, for each student who has satisfied requirements for earning the seal, affix the seal's insignia to the student's diploma and include in the student's transcript that the student earned the seal.

H.B. 1579 requires the commissioner of education to adopt rules as necessary to administer the bill's provisions. The bill applies beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.