

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R8386 AND-D

S.B. 1414
By: Zaffirini; Menéndez
Education K-16
3/6/2025
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas does not currently have a seal of biliteracy, and the existing performance acknowledgment for bilingualism and biliteracy primarily benefits native English speakers who learn a second language. This approach excludes many emergent bilingual students who first learn a language other than English but later become fluent in English. Without formal recognition, these students miss out on college admissions opportunities and career advancement, despite their language skills being in high demand.

Current administrative rules allow districts to grant performance acknowledgments for biliteracy, but implementation is inconsistent, and the process relies heavily on GPA and standardized tests, which may disadvantage emergent bilingual students. What's more, there is no statewide requirement to visibly recognize biliteracy on diplomas or transcripts, limiting students' ability to showcase their skills to colleges and employers.

S.B. 1414 would establish the Texas Seal of Biliteracy, creating a statewide credential to ensure uniform recognition of students fluent in two languages. Unlike current acknowledgments, this seal would allow alternative methods to demonstrate biliteracy, such as portfolios or projects, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable system. This bill would also require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to set statewide standards for consistency across all districts and mandate that the seal be affixed to diplomas and transcripts.

By expanding access to biliteracy recognition, S.B. 1414 would promote fairness for bilingual students, strengthen workforce readiness, and align Texas with more than 40 other states that have already implemented a seal of biliteracy.

As proposed, S.B. 1414 amends current law relating to establishing the Texas State Seal of Bilingualism and Biliteracy for public high school students.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Section 28.028, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 28, Education Code, by adding Section 28.028, as follows:

Sec. 28.028. TEXAS STATE SEAL OF BILINGUALISM AND BILITERACY. (a)
Defines "seal."

(b) Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish a seal 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.

(c) Requires TEA, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, to:

(1) determine minimum requirements for earning the seal, which:

(A) are required to be sufficiently rigorous to indicate to an employer or postsecondary institution that a student who has earned the seal is biliterate;

(B) are authorized to include completion of a project, activity, or portfolio; and

(C) are prohibited from conditioning receipt of the seal on an examination created for that purpose; and

(2) prepare and deliver to each 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 requirements for earning the seal.

(d) Requires each school 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, to affix the seal's insignia to the student's diploma and to include in the student's transcript that the student earned the seal.

(e) Requires the commissioner of education to adopt rules as necessary to administer this section.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2025–2026 school year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.