

Chapter 232

**(Senate Bill 781)**

AN ACT concerning

**Education – Maryland Seal of Biliteracy Act – Establishment**

FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Seal of Biliteracy Program; providing for the purpose of the Program; providing that participation in the Program by a local school system is voluntary; providing that, beginning with a certain graduating class, certain students shall receive a certain seal under certain circumstances; requiring the State Board of Education to establish certain criteria and requirements by a certain date; requiring the State Board to provide certain information regarding the Program to certain local school systems by a certain date; requiring certain local school systems to maintain certain records; requiring certain local school systems to affix a certain seal to certain academic documents under certain circumstances; requiring the State Board to adopt certain regulations; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the Maryland Seal of Biliteracy Program.

BY adding to  
Article – Education  
Section 7–208  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2014 Replacement Volume and 2015 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – Education**

**7–208.**

**(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.**

**(2) “ELIGIBLE STUDENT” MEANS A STUDENT WHO ATTENDS A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL THAT PARTICIPATES IN THE MARYLAND SEAL OF BILITERACY PROGRAM.**

**(3) (I) “FOREIGN LANGUAGE” MEANS A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH.**

**(II) “FOREIGN LANGUAGE” INCLUDES AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE AND ANY NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE.**

**(4) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE MARYLAND SEAL OF BILITERACY PROGRAM.**

**(B) THERE IS A MARYLAND SEAL OF BILITERACY PROGRAM THAT RECOGNIZES PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN THE STATE WHO HAVE ATTAINED PROFICIENCY IN SPEAKING, READING, AND WRITING IN ONE OR MORE LANGUAGES IN ADDITION TO ENGLISH.**

**(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROMOTE LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY AND CULTURAL LITERACY IN ONE OR MORE LANGUAGES IN ADDITION TO ENGLISH AND TO PROVIDE RECOGNITION OF THE ATTAINMENT OF THOSE SKILLS BY AFFIXING A SEAL OF BILITERACY TO THE STUDENT'S DIPLOMA OR TRANSCRIPT AT GRADUATION, AT NO COST TO THE STUDENT.**

**(D) (1) PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM BY A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IS VOLUNTARY.**

**(2) IF A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM CHOOSES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM, AN INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL MAY NOT OPT OUT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.**

**(E) (1) BEGINNING WITH THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2017, EACH ELIGIBLE STUDENT WHO MEETS THE CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE STATE BOARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (F)(1) OF THIS SECTION SHALL RECEIVE A SEAL OF BILITERACY.**

**(2) A SEAL OF BILITERACY SHALL BE AFFIXED TO THE STUDENT'S DIPLOMA OR TRANSCRIPT AT GRADUATION.**

**(F) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2016, THE STATE BOARD SHALL:**

**(1) ESTABLISH CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS A STUDENT MUST MEET TO RECEIVE A SEAL OF BILITERACY; AND**

**(2) PROVIDE INFORMATION TO EACH LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM REGARDING HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN AND HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM.**

**(G) A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM SHALL:**

**(1) MAINTAIN RECORDS NECESSARY FOR DETERMINING A STUDENT'S ELIGIBILITY FOR A SEAL OF BILITERACY; AND**

**(2) AFFIX A SEAL OF BILITERACY TO THE DIPLOMA OR TRANSCRIPT OF EVERY ELIGIBLE STUDENT MEETING THE CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE STATE BOARD IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (F)(1) OF THIS SECTION.**

**(H) THE STATE BOARD SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SECTION.**

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2016.

**Approved by the Governor, April 26, 2016.**