

Date of Hearing: March 22, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
AB 1142 (Medina) – As Introduced February 17, 2017

**SUBJECT:** High school diplomas: State Seal of Biliteracy: English learners

**SUMMARY:** Updates the criteria used to determine eligibility for the State Seal of Biliteracy (SSB) to reflect new state assessments in English language development (ELD) and English language arts (ELA). Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Replaces passage of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade California Standards Test in ELA at the level of proficient or above with passage of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress for ELA at the “standard met” level.
- 2) Requires that, for students in grades 9-12 whose primary language is not English, in addition to attaining the early advanced proficiency level on the ELD assessment, these students must, as of January 1, 2018, attain the level demonstrating proficiency on the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) or any successor proficiency assessment.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the SSB, which provides recognition to high school students who have demonstrated proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. Requires each school district, county office of education, or direct-funded charter school that confers the SSB to maintain appropriate records in order to identify students who have met the established criteria for the award and to affix the SSB insignia to the diploma or transcript of each qualifying student.
- 2) Requires high school graduates to meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for the SSB:
  - a) complete all English language arts requirements for graduation with an overall grade point average of 2.0 or above in those classes
  - b) pass the California Standards Test in English language arts administered in grade 11 at the proficient level or above
  - c) demonstrate proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English, through one of the following methods:
    - i) pass a foreign language AP examination with a score of 3 or higher, or an IB examination with a score of 4 or higher
    - ii) successfully complete a four-year high school course of study in a world language, and attain an overall grade point average of 3.0 or above in that course of study
    - iii) pass a school district language examination that, at a minimum, assesses speaking, reading, and writing in a language other than English at the proficient level or higher. If no AP examination or off-the-shelf language test exists, and the school district can certify to the SPI that the test meets the rigor of a four-year high school course of

study in that foreign language. If a school district offers an examination in a language for which the AP examination or off-the-shelf language does not exist, the school district language examination must be approved by the SPI.

d) pass the SAT II foreign language examination with a score of 600 or higher

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:**

***Need for the bill.*** According to the author's office, AB 1142 is intended to update state law authorizing the SSB to reflect the current assessments of English language arts and English Language Development.

***State Seal of Biliteracy a popular option for students.*** SSB was established in 2011 with the goal of encouraging students to acquire other languages, which in turn would grant students a competitive edge in postsecondary education and employment. In its first year, more than 10,000 graduating high school students across California earned recognition for achieving proficiency in multiple languages. According to the CDE, between 2012 and 2016 nearly 60,000 SSBs were awarded to graduating seniors.

***Status of the ELPAC.*** Current law requires the development and administration of a new assessment of ELD, called the ELPAC. According to CDE, ELPAC field testing will begin in the fall of 2017, the first summative ELPAC administration will be in the spring of 2018, and the first full year of ELPAC administration will be in the 2018-19 school year.

According to CDE, the ELPAC will differ from the CELDT in a number of ways, including:

- The CELDT has five proficiency levels; the ELPAC has three.
- The CELDT is aligned to the 1999 ELD standards; the ELPAC is aligned to the 2012 ELA/ELD standards.
- The CELDT was one test used for both the initial and annual assessment; the ELPAC has two distinct tests for initial identification and the annual summative assessment. The initial ELPAC assessment will be brief and locally scored.
- The CELDT is paper and pencil test; the ELPAC will eventually transition to a computer-based test.
- The CELDT has five grade spans; the ELPAC will have seven.
- The CELDT has five performance levels; the ELPAC will have four.

***Recommended amendments:*** Staff recommends the following amendments:

- 1) Amend the new ELA criterion to state identify the proficiency level as "at the 'standard met' level **or above.**"
- 2) In the subsection establishing criteria for students whose primary language is not English, amend as follows:

(b)(1) **Until January 1, 2018, attain** ~~Attain~~ the early advanced proficiency level on the English language development test. For purposes of this paragraph, a participating school district may administer the English language development test an additional time as necessary.

(2) Commencing January 1, 2018, attain the level demonstrating English language proficiency on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California, or any successor English language proficiency assessment.

***Related and prior legislation.*** AB 24 (Eggman) of this Session would establish the State Seal of Civic Engagement, to be affixed to the diploma of qualifying high school graduates, based on a demonstration of excellence in civics education and participation. This bill is pending in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2072 (Chang) would have established the State Seal of STEM, to be affixed to high school diplomas of qualified students, which recognizes students who have attained a high level of proficiency in the subjects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 815 (Brownley), Chapter 618, Statutes of 2011 established the State Seal of Biliteracy to recognize high school graduates who what attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English.

#### **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

##### **Support**

California Association for Bilingual Education (sponsor)  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson (sponsor)  
California Language Teachers Association  
Californians Together  
Public Advocates, Inc.

##### **Opposition**

None on file

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