

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 26-0257.01 Owen Hatch x2698

HOUSE BILL 26-1028

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Garcia and Velasco,

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Cutter,

House Committees

Education

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A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING SECOND LANGUAGE DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENTS FOR**
102 **GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill creates a diploma endorsement for bilingualism for graduating high school students.

The bill changes educational requirements for the biliteracy endorsement program. The bill allows students in school districts that do not offer the biliteracy or the bilingualism program to access the program through department-certified entities. The department of education is

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

required to set educational requirements to certify entities.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly
3 finds and declares that:

4 (a) The purpose of updating Colorado's seal of biliteracy is to
5 modernize, clarify, and expand equitable access to Colorado's seal of
6 biliteracy for high school graduates while maintaining rigorous standards;

7 (b) Colorado's seal of biliteracy was established to recognize high
8 school graduates who demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one
9 additional world language. The seal signals readiness for college, careers,
10 and participation in a global economy.

11 (c) The implementation of the seal of biliteracy has varied widely
12 across school districts: Out of the 179 school districts in Colorado, only
13 55 of them offer the seal of biliteracy for high school diplomas. Many
14 students, particularly those in rural districts, small schools, or districts
15 without formal biliteracy programs, face barriers when accessing the seal
16 of biliteracy, despite demonstrating strong language skills.

17 (d) Biliteracy is defined as the proficiency in actively listening to,
18 speaking, understanding, reading, and writing in English and another
19 world language, while bilingualism is defined as the speaking, listening,
20 and understanding of another world language and English;

21 (e) In order to earn a seal of biliteracy, high school students
22 should be able to demonstrate speaking, listening, reading, and writing
23 proficiency in a world language in numerous ways, including in
24 coursework, assessments, or approved bodies of evidence;

25 (f) Colorado's public schools educate 114,482 multilingual

1 learners. Expanding access to the seal of biliteracy and creating access to
2 a seal of bilingualism for high school graduates will demonstrate
3 Colorado's commitment to supporting all students.

4 (g) Multilingualism is a proven asset in business, health care,
5 education, government services, and national security. Local and global
6 industries in Colorado have unique demands for language skills, creating
7 distinct career opportunities for multilingual professionals. The seal of
8 biliteracy will allow high school graduates to prove their language skills
9 to potential employers and will ease their transition into the workforce
10 and higher education.

11 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 22-7-1009.5, **amend**
12 (2)(a)(I), (2)(a)(II)(B), (2)(b)(II), and (2)(b)(III); **repeal** (3)(b)(III); and
13 **add** (1)(a.3), (1)(a.5), (1)(a.7), (2)(a)(II)(C), (2)(a)(II)(D), (2.5), and (5)
14 as follows:

15 **22-7-1009.5. Diploma endorsement - biliteracy - bilingualism**
16 **- definitions.**

17 (1) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:
18 (a.3) "APPROVED ENTITY" MEANS AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER
19 LEARNING OR EDUCATIONAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION APPROVED BY THE
20 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (5)(c) OF THIS
21 SECTION.

22 (a.5) "BILINGUALISM" MEANS THE ABILITY TO SPEAK, ACTIVELY
23 LISTEN TO, AND UNDERSTAND ENGLISH AND ANOTHER WORLD LANGUAGE.

24 (a.7) "BILITERACY" MEANS THE ABILITY TO ACTIVELY LISTEN TO,
25 SPEAK, UNDERSTAND, READ, AND WRITE ENGLISH AND ANOTHER WORLD
26 LANGUAGE.

27 (2) A local education provider may grant a diploma endorsement

1 in biliteracy to a graduating high school student who attains proficiency
2 or higher in one or more world languages in addition to attaining
3 proficiency or higher in English. To obtain an endorsement in biliteracy,
4 a graduating student must:

5 (a) Demonstrate proficiency or higher in English by:

6 (I) Completing all of the English language arts course
7 requirements for graduation from high school with an overall grade point
8 average of at least 3.0 in the required English language arts courses; **and**
9 OR

10 (II) (B) Passing the English language arts advanced placement test
11 with a score of three or higher or passing the English language arts
12 portion of an international baccalaureate test with a score of four or
13 higher; **and** OR

14 (C) MEETING ONE OF THE OPTIONS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER
15 READINESS BY USING ANY OF THE READING, WRITING, AND
16 COMMUNICATING METHODS AND LEVELS INDICATED ON THE
17 DEPARTMENT'S MENU OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READY DEMONSTRATIONS,
18 AS ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD, OR A SUCCESSOR FRAMEWORK AND
19 GUIDELINES; OR

20 (D) COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL REQUIREMENTS, WHICH IS
21 CONSIDERED SATISFACTORY FOR THE STATE GUIDELINES FOR
22 REDESIGNATION OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS; AND

23 (b) Demonstrate proficiency or higher in one or more world
24 languages by:

25 (II) Successfully ~~completing a four-year high school course of~~
26 ~~study in the world language and attaining an overall grade point average~~
27 ~~of at least 3.0 in the course of study; PASSING A WORLD LANGUAGE~~

1 COURSE OF STUDY THAT IS EQUIVALENT IN RIGOR TO A WORLD LANGUAGE
2 ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSE WITH AN OVERALL GRADE POINT
3 AVERAGE OF AT LEAST 3.0 IN THE COURSE OF STUDY, PASSING THE
4 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AT THE COMPLETION OF A FOUR-YEAR HIGH
5 SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY IN THE WORLD LANGUAGE, OR PROVIDING A
6 BODY OF EVIDENCE THAT MEASURES SPEAKING, ACTIVELY LISTENING TO,
7 UNDERSTANDING, READING, AND WRITING THE LANGUAGE. IF PROVIDING
8 A BODY OF EVIDENCE, THE EVIDENCE MUST BE OF EQUAL RIGOR TO THE
9 ADVANCED PLACEMENT TEST; or

10 (III) Achieving a passing score on the world language portion of
11 a nationally recognized test that ASSESSES THE STUDENT'S ABILITY TO
12 SPEAK, ACTIVELY LISTEN TO, UNDERSTAND, READ, AND WRITE AND is
13 relied upon by institutions of higher education.

14 (2.5) A LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER MAY GRANT A DIPLOMA
15 ENDORSEMENT IN BILINGUALISM TO A GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL
16 STUDENT WHO ATTAINS PROFICIENCY OR HIGHER IN ONE OR MORE WORLD
17 LANGUAGES IN ADDITION TO ATTAINING PROFICIENCY OR HIGHER IN
18 ENGLISH. TO OBTAIN AN ENDORSEMENT IN BILINGUALISM, A GRADUATING
19 STUDENT MUST:

20 (a) DEMONSTRATE ORAL PROFICIENCY OR HIGHER IN ENGLISH BY:
21 (I) MEETING ONE OF THE OPTIONS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER
22 READINESS BY USING ANY OF THE READING, WRITING, AND
23 COMMUNICATING METHODS AND LEVELS INDICATED ON THE
24 DEPARTMENT'S MENU OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READY DEMONSTRATIONS,
25 AS ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD, OR A SUCCESSOR FRAMEWORK AND
26 GUIDELINES; OR

27 (II) ACHIEVING HIGH-SCHOOL-LEVEL REQUIREMENTS, WHICH IS

1 CONSIDERED SATISFACTORY FOR THE STATE GUIDELINES FOR
2 REDESIGNATION OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS; AND

3 (b) DEMONSTRATE ORAL PROFICIENCY OR HIGHER IN ONE OR MORE
4 WORLD LANGUAGES BY ACHIEVING A PASSING SCORE ON THE WORLD
5 LANGUAGE ORAL PORTION OF A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED TEST THAT
6 ASSESSES THE STUDENT'S ABILITY TO LISTEN, SPEAK, AND UNDERSTAND
7 AND IS RELIED UPON BY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; OR

8 (c) PROVIDE A BODY OF EVIDENCE THAT MEASURES SPEAKING,
9 ACTIVELY LISTENING TO, AND UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE. IF
10 PROVIDING A BODY OF EVIDENCE, THE EVIDENCE MUST BE OF EQUAL RIGOR
11 TO THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT TEST.

12 (3) (b) Notwithstanding any provision of subsection (2)(b)(I) of
13 this section to the contrary:

14 (III) ~~If an advanced placement test exists or the department has~~
15 ~~identified a comparable test for a world language, and the local education~~
16 ~~provider creates and uses an alternative test for that world language, the~~
17 ~~department must approve the local education provider's test before the~~
18 ~~local education provider may use the test to determine a student's level of~~
19 ~~proficiency in the world language in place of an advanced placement test~~
20 ~~for purposes of subsection (2)(b)(I) of this section.~~

21 (5) (a) A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WHO ATTENDS A LOCAL
22 EDUCATION PROVIDER THAT DOES NOT OFFER A DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENT
23 OF BILITERACY, OR BILINGUALISM, PURSUANT TO SUBSECTIONS (2) AND
24 (2.5) OF THIS SECTION MAY SEEK AN ENDORSEMENT OF BILITERACY OR
25 BILINGUALISM FROM AN APPROVED ENTITY.

26 (b) THE STUDENT MUST MEET THE APPROVED ENTITY'S
27 EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND SUBMIT THE REQUIRED

1 DOCUMENTATION TO THE APPROVED ENTITY.

2 (c) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CERTIFY AN APPROVED ENTITY
3 AUTHORIZED TO OFFER THE ENDORSEMENT. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL SET
4 UNIFORM EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ENDORSEMENTS OFFERED BY
5 AN APPROVED ENTITY.

6 (d) AFTER A STUDENT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES THE
7 ENDORSEMENT, THE APPROVED ENTITY SHALL SEND VERIFICATION OF THE
8 COMPLETED ENDORSEMENT TO THE STUDENT AND THE STUDENT'S LOCAL
9 EDUCATION PROVIDER.

10 (e) AN APPROVED ENTITY MAY CHARGE A FEE TO PROVIDE THE
11 ENDORSEMENT. THE FEE MUST REFLECT THE ACTUAL AND INDIRECT COSTS
12 TO THE APPROVED ENTITY OF PROVIDING THE BILITERACY ENDORSEMENT
13 PROGRAM. ANY FEE ASSESSED MUST BE PAID BY THE STUDENT'S LOCAL
14 EDUCATION PROVIDER.

15 **SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
16 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
17 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August
18 12, 2026, if adjournment sine die is on May 13, 2026); except that, if a
19 referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the
20 state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act
21 within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect
22 unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
23 November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
24 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.