



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

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**Colt Gill**

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction

**Senate Bill 226 & -3 Amendment**  
**Senate Education Committee**  
**April 7, 2021**

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen and members of the Senate Education Committee, I am Jessica Ventura, Government Relations Director for ODE. Please accept this written testimony as additional information for your consideration of SB 226 -3, specifically the Biliteracy Seal.

**Background:**

In the 2014-2015 school year, ODE staff partnered with eight districts to plan the Biliteracy Seal work. Those districts were:

- Corvallis SD
- Four Rivers Community School
- Medford SD
- North Clackamas SD
- Portland Public Schools
- Salem SD
- West Linn/Wilsonville
- Woodburn SD



This work allowed ODE to define award criteria and how the Biliteracy Seal would be administered in Oregon schools. The [State Seal of Biliteracy](#) was then established in 2016 by the Oregon State Board of Education. (You can find the current [rule here](#).) The seal was established to recognize high school students who have attained a high level of proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in one or more World Language in addition to English.

There are three Biliteracy Seal Criteria:

1. Meet all high school graduation requirements.
2. Meet Essential Skills in English through any existing pathways.
3. Receive the required score, testing all four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing on a selection of patent language assessments or portfolios of evidence.

Currently, all 50 states and Washington DC are either in the early stages or have fully adopted a statewide Seal of Biliteracy. The Oregon Department of Education approved the Oregon State Seal of Biliteracy (OSSB) in April of 2016, after a successful pilot year.

The intent of the Seal of Biliteracy is to recognize and value the native language/s students speak and bring to their English academic studies, to value language programs in schools, to encourage students in the study of languages, and to create generations of citizens, ready for a multilingual society.

The Oregon State Seal of Biliteracy recognized 22 different languages in 2020, including Chinuk Wawa, Nez Perce, and Umatilla, three of the languages spoken by several of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon. In addition, students from the Oregon School of the Deaf earned the Seal in American Sign Language (ASL).

The Oregon State Seal of Biliteracy is the first in the nation to collaborate with post-secondary institutions to offer the Seal. Currently, two state universities and one community college offer the Biliteracy Seal to their students. We have also submitted for the record a 2020 report to provide the full impact of the OSSB.

### **SB 226 & -3 Amendment**

The -3 amendment will put the rule into statute allowing the department to fund a .5 FTE to continue the work of the Biliteracy Seal. The seal has grown in popularity over time. It has allowed us to partner with the Ministry of Education in Mexico via the Visiting Mexican Teachers Program, in which qualified teachers from Mexico come to Oregon and teach in high-need, dual-language programs in Oregon. Our nine Confederated Tribes have also been partnering with us to acknowledge and provide the seal to Native students who have learned their native language. We are also partnering with countries such as Guatemala for students to retain their various native languages spoken.

We appreciate the addition to SB 226 and look forward to working with the Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education to continue funding this important work.

Thank you,  
Jessica Ventura  
Government Relations Director