The Texas Seal of Biliteracy is a Strategy for College and Career Success

IDRA Testimony for HB 1579, Submitted to the Texas House Subcommittee on Advanced and Career-Oriented Education by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., April 3, 2025

Dear Chair Ashby and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes, and I am deputy director of policy at IDRA, an independent, non-partisan non-profit committed to achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

We are in favor of House Bill 1579. For over a decade, Texas schools have been able to recognize high school students graduating with advanced achievement in more than one language through a performance acknowledgement. But Texas never associated any data reporting, college credit or other markers with this achievement. This means that students have potentially lost out on being recognized for their bilingual achievements – a critical skill to Texas' and the country's workforce needs in education, healthcare, technology, business and other industries.

Texas serves over 1.3 million students who speak over 120 languages other than English at home. By establishing a more robust, inclusive and effective framework for the Texas Seal of Biliteracy, HB 1579 provides a stronger mechanism for school districts to recognize their graduates' achievements in other languages and to leverage those skills for college credit and workforce needs.

The attached brief further details the Texas performance acknowledgement in bilingualism and biliteracy and how it falls short of best practices in other states' seals of biliteracy.

IDRA is available for any questions or further resources that we can provide. Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., IDRA deputy director of policy, at chloe.sikes@idra.org.

Resources

Latham Sikes, C., & Piñón, L. (October 2024). The Path to a Stronger State Seal of Biliteracy – Advancing Texas Student Success through Bilingualism and Biliteracy – IDRA Policy Brief. IDRA. https://idra.news/BiliteracySealBrief

TEA. (January 2023). SB 560 Emergent Bilingual Strategic Plan. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/sb-560-emergent%20bilingual-strategic-plan.pdf

IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization led by Celina Moreno, J.D. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.