

Connecticut is Close to Passing the Seal of Biliteracy

By Lea Graner Kennedy



Connecticut has wonderful news with regards to the Seal of Biliteracy. Last week, the Education Committee heard and read testimony from 31 students and educators asking for their support of H.B. 7159, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Seal Of Biliteracy. This year it was introduced as a stand-alone bill, in order to allow it to move more quickly and not be pulled down but other sections that may cause controversy. This bill recognizes students who have reached higher levels of proficiency in English and another language. The Commissioner of Education, Dianna Wentzell, provided wonderful testimony and encouraged all Senators and Representatives to support this bill.

At the end of a long day of testimony, the Seal of Biliteracy was finally brought to the floor at 9:30 PM. The Education Committee members had many questions and lots of praise for the bill. Bryan Daleas of Hartford Public Schools and Lea Graner Kennedy of Stonington Public Schools spent the day in the Capitol to provide support for the bill and to thank the Commissioner for championing the cause. The Education Committee later voted unanimously in favor of moving the bill forward to the House and then the Senate. We are very hopeful that this bill will be passed and become law during this legislative session.

The Seal of Biliteracy work group, with CT COLT representation from Jessica Haxhi, Jimmy Wildman, Beth Lapman, Lisa Peterson, Bryan Daleas and Lea Graner Kennedy, continues to meet with the State Department of Education in order to revise the Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines for CT and determine how students will be awarded the Seal. This document should be finalized and presented to the State Board of Education by the end of the spring. The final guidelines establish criteria for how to award the Seal based on the proficiency level of intermediate mid or higher. When this work is published, the document will be shared with all members.

At this time, 25 states have passed legislation to award the Seal of Biliteracy to their students. CT COLT is hoping that Connecticut will be the 26th state in recognizing student commitment to languages.

For more information on the Seal of Biliteracy:

<http://sealofbiliteracy.org/>

For more information about Bill 175 and the testimony sent to CGA:

<http://tinyurl.com/CGA-Seal-of-Biliteracy>



Bryan Daleas, Commissioner Dianna Wentzell, Lea Graner Kennedy