

Date

The Honorable Richard Bloom
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2179
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 2303-State Recognition and Awards Program in Linguistic Biliteracy, Introduced February 21, 2014
Position: Support

Dear Assembly Member Bloom,

I am writing this letter in full support of your bill, AB 2303, Introduced February 21, 2014.

AB 2303 bill builds upon the success we are seeing with the California Seal of Biliteracy established by AB 815 (Ch. 618, Statutes of 2011). The California Seal of Biliteracy is an award granted by the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction to eligible students who have met the criteria for demonstrating proficiency in English and in one or more other world languages by high school graduation.

According to the California Department of Education over 165 school districts (555 local educational agencies/schools) offer their students a pathway to obtain a California Seal of Biliteracy. Languages offered by the local educational agencies are diverse and include but not limited to Mandarin, Cantonese, Russian, Latin and Spanish. Over 21,600 students were given the State Seal in 2013.

AB 2303 serves several purposes: 1) to establish a state recognition and award program for school districts that have multiple paths to multilingualism, from preschool to high school, 2) to identify multiple pathways to biliteracy that districts may use to develop a comprehensive biliteracy program and 3) to create an incentive and encourage school districts to establish multiple paths to biliteracy. To guide districts in this effort AB 2303 also provides program models that districts may choose in pursuing this effort.

Data from the U.S. Department of Education shows students in the United States will compete with other students around the world, many of whom are receiving formal instruction in languages from a young age. While 200 million Chinese students are studying English, only 24,000 American children study Chinese. To be a leader in the globalized world, the United States need persons who are proficient in English and other languages. Knowing multiple languages opens additional career paths to employment and social opportunities. Additionally, the significant benefits in becoming bilingual or multilingual are well documented ranging from long-term cognitive benefits to academic achievement benefits.

AB 2303 will give our children the literacy skills necessary to engage in our very diverse state, nation and world by encouraging and supporting the study of languages through the establishment of multiple paths to biliteracy. It is for these reasons I wholeheartedly support AB 2303. Thank you very much for introducing this very important and timely bill.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

