

Dual Language Education

The Vision: Dual Language for All

Dual language education is the most effective state-approved English language development program model for multilingual/English learners. Decades of research demonstrate that dual language education is the only program model that prevents and closes opportunity gaps for multilingual/English learners, as well as for other historically underserved student groups (Collier & Thomas, 2004, 2017; Lindholm-Leary, 2017; and Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2010). State Superintendent Reykdal's vision and [strategic goals](#) for K-12 education focuses on educational equity and he wants all students in Washington to have access to dual language education and the opportunity to become proficient in two or more languages by 2030.

Washington's dual language programs are designed for and prioritize multilingual/English learners for at least half of the seats in each classroom. The goals of the programs are for students to attain:

- bilingualism and biliteracy proficiency,
- high academic achievement in all subject areas, and
- sociocultural competence (Howard et al., 2018).

Dual language programs begin in preschool/transitional kindergarten or kindergarten and extend through high school to fully develop multilingual and biliteracy proficiency. Students in dual language education learn literacy and core content in two languages.

School districts determine the language of instruction other than English and the dual language program model based on the community's demographics. There are two dual language program models: one-way and two-way dual language education.

- One-way dual language programs are comprised solely of multilingual/English learners.
- Two-way dual language programs prioritize at least half of the seats for multilingual/English learners and English dominant students are invited into the program as an opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate while learning the general education curricula.

The Foundation for Success

Designing dual language programs for success and sustainability requires at least two years of cross-departmental district planning, board support, and extensive collaborations with families, community members, and educators. Districts with dual language grants are also required to establish a [Dual Language Advisory Board](#) to guide program development.



Given the complexities and importance of developing a foundation for success, OSPI recommends that districts planning for a dual language program collaborate with the OSPI Dual Language Education staff and complete the [Dual Language Program Framework Template](#) a year prior to beginning the program. Districts with dual language programs are also encouraged to develop a Dual Language Program Framework to serve as the district's guide for effective, sustainable program development including:

- Program mission, vision, and goals
- P-12 pathways
- Enrollment policies and family outreach
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Professional learning for DL educators

Washington State's Framework for Dual Language Education

The Washington State Legislature has been a key supporter of dual language education with legislation that prioritizes bilingual/dual language program models and continuous, seed grants to support P-12 program planning, implementation, and expansion.

In 2017–18, OSPI convened dual language task forces comprised of dual language leaders, educators, American Indian/Alaska Native language educators and Elders, students, families, community members, and representatives from the Professional Educator Standards Board and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. The task forces determined the [Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education, 3rd edition \(2018\)](#) published by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), would be the framework for dual language education in Washington. The P-12 Dual Language Steering Committee, a smaller group of partners from the task forces, continues to guide and build statewide scaffolds of support for dual language education.

The [Dual Language Education and Resources](#) webpage has information and resources for leaders and educators including:

- Recently adopted biliteracy standards and professional learning to support
- Spanish/English dual language programs,
- OSPI-hosted virtual professional learning communities to support P-12 dual language program planning, implementation, and expansion,
- OSPI-hosted in-person and virtual workshops to support program development, and
- Tools and resources for effective, sustainable dual language programs.
- Contact information for our OSPI Dual Language team.

The [Dual Language Education in Washington: What Families Should Know](#) webpage has information about program basics, how to support your child as they learn general education in two languages, and a step-by-step guide to the listing of programs in the state.