

Starting a Heritage Language Program

Starting a successful and sustainable heritage language program has three phases that support culturally and linguistically sustaining program development.

Phase 1: Connect

- Form relationships across the school and local communities.
- Build knowledge of heritage languages and multilingualism for district and school leaders, teachers, staff, and families.
- Identify student strengths, available resources, and opportunities.
- Cultivate and engage community support.



How does your school or district value and make visible all heritage languages used by students and within the local community?

Phase 2: Commit

- Establish a heritage language program leadership team.
- Collaboratively define program mission and vision including an aspirational profile of heritage language program graduates.
- Design or adapt a heritage language program model that best supports student academic and linguistic development and the needs of the community.
- Ensure commitment from students and families and secure long-term commitment and support from educators, building leaders, and district administrators.



How does your school or district demonstrate commitment to additive multilingualism for heritage language learners?

Phase 3: Prepare

- Determine how the heritage language program will support and be supported by other district programs, including clear articulation of pathways to multiliteracy for long-term sustainability.
- Secure or assign staffing and align district resources to offer ongoing professional development and support.
- Create clear program enrollment policies that identify students with prior connections to the program language and prioritize eligible ML/English learners that are effectively communicated to families and the school community.
- Develop scope and sequence and secure instructional materials



How does your school or district celebrate the individual strengths and support the unique needs of heritage language learners?



Enroll students and begin the first heritage language program cycle.

