



Lifting Up American Indian and Alaska Native Students Through a State Match of Federal Title VI Grant Funds

2025–27 Operating Budget Decision Package

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Washington has an obligation to educate American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) students under both the state constitution and treaties with federally recognized tribes. However, public education was historically used as a tool of colonization, aimed at breaking down Indigenous communities and culture. Despite recent state policy advances, this dark history of intergenerational trauma and a deep mistrust of the system continues to drive persistent inequitable educational outcomes for AI/AN students. As another step toward righting a longstanding historical wrong, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests funding to match the federal investment in AI/AN students through Title VI.

FISCAL DETAIL

Operating Expenditures	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Fund 001-1 (Program 05X)	\$6,066,000	\$6,055,000	\$6,055,000	\$6,055,000
Total Expenditures	\$6,066,000	\$6,055,000	\$6,055,000	\$6,055,000
Biennial Totals	\$12,121,000		\$12,110,000	
Staffing	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
FTEs	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Average Annual	1.0		1.0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Obj. A	\$131,000	\$131,000	\$131,000	\$131,000
Obj. B	\$57,000	\$57,000	\$57,000	\$57,000
Obj. E	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
Obj. G	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Obj. J	\$11,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. N	\$5,854,000	\$5,854,000	\$5,854,000	\$5,854,000
Revenue	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Biennial Totals	\$0.00		\$0.00	

PACKAGE DESCRIPTION

In House Bill 1228 (2024), the Legislature affirmed the state’s “special duty to honor tribal sovereignty and a duty to serve Native American and Alaska Native students¹.” State investments in AI/AN education have focused on important advances at the state policy level, creating both the Office of Native Education (ONE) within OSPI and the Washington Native American Education Advisory Committee (WSNAEAC) ([RCW 28A.300.105](#)), directing OSPI to collaborate with AI/AN education leaders to create the John McCoy (lulilâs) *Since Time Immemorial* Curriculum and codifying the requirement that this curriculum is taught in all public schools ([RCW 28A.320.170](#)), establishing and investing in tribal language education (Chapter 202, Laws of 2024), and aligning and supporting school district tribal consultation with federal requirements under the Title VI program ([RCW 28A.345.070](#)). While essential conversations continue around policies that recognize, celebrate, and fund tribal history, language, and culture, Washington can also make important progress toward equitable educational opportunities for AI/AN students by following the federal Title VI example and investing in additional funding for schools directly serving these students.

What is the problem, opportunity, or priority you are addressing with the request?

House Bill 1228 (2024) recognizes the fact that “centuries of colonial educational practices aimed at destruction of tribal communities and cultures has resulted in intergenerational trauma that continues to negatively impact American Indian and Alaska Native learners².” Students who identify as AI/AN experience long-standing, persistent opportunity gaps in Washington public schools, evidence by a quarter of students meeting the college readiness proficiency standard in English language arts (ELA), 16% in math, and 23% in science in the 2022–23 school year. In addition, AI/AN students experience the lowest four-year graduation rate in the state among the different racial/ethnic categories, at 72%, and the highest dropout rate, at 18%³. Addressing and closing such starkly inequitable student outcomes requires a multi-faceted approach involving both policy changes and sustained funding to support those changes and to support AI/AN students directly.

What is your proposal?

OSPI proposes a state match of the Title VI Local Education Agency (LEA) grant model to provide much-needed additional funding directly to schools serving AI/AN students. Under Title VI, federal dollars “support the efforts of local educational agencies, Indian tribes and organizations, and other entities in developing elementary school and secondary school programs for Indian students⁴.” These grant dollars are tied to specific AI/AN student outcomes

¹ House Bill 1228: Building a multilingual, multiliterate Washington through dual and tribal language education. 68th Legislature. Washington, 2024. (Enacted 6 June, 2024). <https://lawfilesexext.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/PDF/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1228-S3.SL.pdf?q=20240826133003>.

² House Bill 1228.

³ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Washington State Report Card. (2024, August 13). OSPI. <https://washingtonstaterreportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/reportcard/viewschoolordistrict/103300>

⁴Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education. United States Department of Education. <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula->

focused around both the “unique cultural, language, and educational needs” of AI/AN students and “[ensuring] that all students meet the challenging State academic standards.”⁵ OSPI proposes a similar approach at the state level, with OSPI and ONE working with WSNAEAC to determine the appropriate outcomes-driven requirements for the state match.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?

1. This proposal is directly connected to equitable access to educational opportunities for Washington students. See above for more details.
2. At the forefront of every program, policy, and decision, OSPI actively focuses on ensuring all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools. This proposal is focused on the needs of our most vulnerable students, particularly students of color, American Indian/Alaska Native students, and highly mobile students including migrant students, those in foster care, and those experiencing homelessness. These student groups face unique systemic barriers to completing their K–12 education, barriers which perpetuate larger systemic inequities that persist along racial and socioeconomic lines.
3. See above.
4. See above.

What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?

Based on the 2023–24 school year Washington state Title VI allocation of \$5,853,758, OSPI requests \$5,853,758 per fiscal year to pilot grants to school districts serving AI/AN students to match the \$322.82 per student allocation under Title VI. Schools eligible under Title VI serve a minimum of 10 AI/AN students, and must submit as part of their application for these federal dollars a comprehensive plan for meeting the specific needs of these students. Plans must include:

- Student performance goals;
- Professional development activities;
- How the district will assess students’ progress toward meeting the plan’s goals; and
- Assurance that the district will provide the results of this assessment to the parent committee, Native community, and tribes.

While the grants proposed by OSPI will be non-competitive, with districts receiving Title VI funds automatically eligible for the state match, OSPI proposes a similar process for applying to receive the state grant and will consult with WSNAEAC to determine the key goals, measures, outcomes, and data that recipient districts will be required to include in their plans and reports back to OSPI.

OSPI also requests \$212,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$201,000 in fiscal year 2027 ongoing in administrative funds to administer these grants.

[grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-legislation-table-of-contents/title-vi-indian-native-hawaiian-and-alaska-native-education/](#)

⁵ Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education.

What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?

OSPI considered developing a grant model from scratch, but ultimately believes that aligning with the Title IV model provides a solid foundation on which to pilot a state funding match. We believe the additional \$322.82 per student will make a positive impact on schools' ability to better serve AI/AN students while representing a modest investment from the state while the program is in its pilot phase.

What resources does the agency already have that are dedicated to this purpose?

OSPI has no existing resources dedicated to this purpose, as this would be an entirely new grant program.

ASSUMPTIONS AND CALCULATIONS

Expansion, reduction, elimination or alteration of a current program or service:

This is not an expansion, reduction, elimination, or alteration of a current program or service.

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

OSPI Administrative Costs:

OSPI requests \$212,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$201,000 in fiscal year 2027 ongoing to support a 1.0 FTE Director. Fiscal year 2026 includes \$11,000 in one-time costs to prepare for the creation of the 1.0 FTE. This position would serve as the division lead overseeing the implementation of a pilot grant program that would provide additional funding directly to schools serving AI/AN students, identify criteria for awarding grants, review/approve grant applications, and provide technical support for grant applications and recipients. The Director will also attend meetings between OSPI, WSNAEAC, and school administrators at the district and building level with Title VI expertise and support with program development, instructional strategies, and best practices.

Grants:

OSPI requests \$5,853,758 annually to establish a pilot grant program for districts serving AI/AN students mirroring the \$322.82 per student federal allocation under Title VI. Grant funds will be used to support services and activities that are designed to carry out comprehensive programs of the local educational agency for AI/AN students, enrich the unique educational needs of Native students, be responsive to the language and cultural needs of the Native students, and supplement the regular school program of such agency.

Workforce assumptions:

Fiscal Year 2026 (Total = \$212,000)

Director: 1.0 FTE

- Salary: \$130,604
- Benefits: \$56,910
- Goods/Services: \$6,678

- Travel: \$6,678
- Equipment: \$11,130 (one time)

Fiscal Year 2027 (Total = \$201,000 Annually)

Director: 1.0 FTE

- Salary: \$130,604
- Benefits: \$57,040
- Goods/Services: \$6,678
- Travel: \$6,678

Historical funding:

There is no funding in the carry-forward budget to continue this project into 2025–27.

Fiscal Year 2026

- FTE = 0.00
- Total Funds = \$0.00
- Near General Fund = \$0.00
- Other Funds = \$0.00

Fiscal Year 2027

- FTE = 0.00
- Total Funds = \$0.00
- Near General Fund = \$0.00
- Other Funds = \$0.00

STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Strategic framework:

This proposal helps drive the first two of Superintendent Reykdal’s Strategic Goals, which are: Strategic Goal #1, to ensure all students have equitable access to strong foundations; and Strategic Goal #2, providing every student with rigorous, learner-centered academic options in their community. This request supports the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs’ mission to “[promote] the government to government relationship between the State of Washington and Indian Tribes, advocates for the social and economic betterment of all American Indians and Alaska Natives living within Washington State and educates for a greater cultural understanding of the State’s first citizens⁶.” By investing in better educational outcomes for these first citizens, OSPI’s request supports the Governor’s Results Washington goals to provide all Washington students with a world-class education.

Performance outcomes:

Through funding this proposal, all public-school districts serving five or more AI/AN students, thereby qualifying for federal grant funding under Title VI, will also receive \$322.82 per AI/AN

⁶ Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs. (Viewed 26 August, 2024). *About Us: Mission*. <https://goia.wa.gov/about-us>.

student in state grant funds each year. Districts will be required to use these dollars to improve the educational outcomes of AI/AN students by meeting specific requirements to be determined by OSPI in consultation with WSNAEAC. This collaboration with WSNAEAC will ensure these measures are representative of and responsive to the educational needs and vision of Native tribes, communities, and families.

OTHER COLLATERAL CONNECTIONS

Intergovernmental:

OSPI anticipates support from WSNAEAC, Washington's federally recognized tribes, and school districts that serve AI/AN students.

Stakeholder impacts:

This proposal impacts all AI/AN students, families, and communities. OSPI anticipates support from organizations and groups representing and lifting the voices of federally recognized tribal citizens.

Legal or administrative mandates:

None.

Changes from current law:

None.

State workforce impacts:

None.

State facilities impacts:

None.

Puget Sound recovery:

N/A

Governor's salmon strategy:

N/A