

Biliteracy Seal

Statutory and/or Budget Language

\$457,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$260,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for chapter 102, Laws of 2014 (biliteracy seal). Of the amounts provided in this subsection:

- (i) \$197,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 is provided solely for the office to develop and establish criteria for school districts to award the seal of biliteracy to graduating high school students.
- (ii) \$250,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and \$250,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for the office to provide students with access to methods for students to demonstrate proficiency in less commonly taught or assessed languages.

Purpose

MR1 – Biliteracy Seal

Implement [RCW 28A.300.575](#) by providing technical assistance to support districts to help students earn the Seal of Biliteracy (Seal). The Washington State Seal of Biliteracy was established to recognize public high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more world languages in addition to English. [WAC 392-415-070](#) (mandatory high school transcript contents) and [WAC 392-410-350](#) (Seal of Biliteracy) pertain to the Seal of Biliteracy

KE1 – Graduating Student Biliteracy Seal Standards

Implement support for the ongoing Washington State Seal of Biliteracy Rules Revision ([RCW 28A.300.575](#); [WAC 392-410-350](#)), World Language Standards Review and Revision ([RCW 28A.655.070](#); [RCW 28A.150.210](#)), and provide proficiency-based instructional resources for World and Dual Language educators around Washington.

KF1 – Less Common Biliteracy Seal Access

Providing financial assistance to support districts to help students earn Competency-based Credits (credits) and the Seal of Biliteracy (Seal) ([RCW 28A.300.575](#)) with the creation of and access to “Custom Tests” (CTs) or language proficiency assessments for less commonly tested languages (LCTLs). This proviso allows OSPI to offer tests for languages with one or fewer available assessments at no cost to districts.



Description of Services Provided

MR1 – Biliteracy Seal

This proviso enables OSPI to dedicate staff time to aid districts interested in helping students earn the Seal of Biliteracy. During the 2023–24 school year, 5,663 students in 136 school districts earned the Seal in 82 languages.

KE1 – Graduating Student Biliteracy Seal Standards

This proviso enabled OSPI to begin reviewing and revising the criteria for awarding the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy through internal and ten external feedback groups filled with interest-holders.

Statewide Proficiency Initiative for Languages and Leadership (SPILL):

This proviso also enabled OSPI to create the Statewide Proficiency Initiative for Languages and Leadership (SPILL), which trained a combined 30 K–12 and postsecondary language educators in research-based language acquisition standards and curriculum planning. Alignment across elementary, secondary, and higher education aims to set up support for all World and Dual language educators in preparation for updated Seal rules and World Language State Standards.

KF1 – Less Common Biliteracy Seal Access

This proviso enables OSPI to contract with Avant Assessment to pay for students to assess in less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) to earn credits and the Seal. During the 2023–24 school year, 263 students in 43 school districts were assessed in 70 languages.

Criteria for Receiving Services and/or Grants

MR1 – Biliteracy Seal

Technical assistance is available to all districts with a school board policy and procedure for World Language Mastery-based credit ([2409/2409P](#)).

KE1 – Graduating Student Biliteracy Seal Standards

Technical assistance is available to all districts with a school board policy and procedure for World Language Mastery-based credit ([2409/2409P](#)). Admittance to SPILL included an application and recommendation-based process.

KF1 – Less Common Biliteracy Seal Access

Financial assistance is available to all public districts, public charters, and State Tribal Education Compact schools that request and test students.

Beneficiaries in the 2023-24 School Year

Number of School Districts	167
Number of Schools	N/A

Number of Students	6,569
Number of Educators	30
Other:	N/A

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No

State Funding History

MR – Biliteracy Seal

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	\$10,000	\$4,558
2023	\$10,000	\$5,000
2022	\$10,000	\$5,000
2021	\$10,000	\$8,418
2020	\$10,000	\$10,000

KE – Graduating Student Biliteracy Seal Standards

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	\$197,000	\$49,489

KF – Less Common Biliteracy Seal Access

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	\$250,000	\$77,765

Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

MR – Biliteracy Seal

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	6,306 students
2023	4,536 students
2022	4,689 students
2021	3,634 students
2020	3,370 students

KE – Graduating Student Biliteracy Seal Standards

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	30 educators

KF – Less Common Biliteracy Seal Access

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	263 students

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

Program Evaluation or Evaluation of Major Findings

MR1 – Biliteracy Seal

For the 2023–24 school year, the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy (Seal) program has continued to be successful. This is the highest number of districts reporting students earning at least one Seal. For the first time, OSPI also requested data on students earning two or more Seals in a language other than English, and that number is 64. Pursuant to the revision of the current Seal rules, OSPI hopes to encourage more students to continue deeper learning in languages.

KE1 – Graduating Student Biliteracy Seal Standards

Less Common Biliteracy Seal Access Washington State Seal of Biliteracy (Seal):

Beginning in January 2024, OSPI sent out an open application for interested parties to give feedback on the proposed new Seal of Biliteracy rules. This proviso also enabled OSPI to begin reviewing and revising the criteria to award the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy through internal and ten external interest-holder feedback groups. These groups focused on K–12 World Language Educators, K–12 Dual Language Educators, Administrators, Testing Coordinators, American Sign Language Users, Less Commonly Taught/Tested Language Users, University Professors, Tribal Language Educators, and Alternative Learning Environment Educators. Proposed changes include:

- Addition of a second, higher tier for student recognition
 - Original level is the “Intermediate Award”
 - New level is the “Advanced Level”
 - This change will bring Washington into alignment with almost all states that already have multiple tiers of the Seal available. Adding a higher level of proficiency recognition might also encourage students to continue language education past the Intermediate level.
- Addition of two new language proficiency scales
 - Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR)
 - Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR)
 - These scales are international (CEFR) and federal (ILR) and will reduce the number of students who might have to re-test after already having taken another assessment corresponding to those proficiency scales.
- Addition of reporting date
 - The last Friday of August will be the yearly deadline for reporting all Earned Seals to OSPI.

Statewide Proficiency Initiative for Languages and Leadership (SPILL):

SPILL has two purposes: 1) to onboard language education leaders around the state for the proposed new proficiency-based World Language standards and 2) to create and distribute example instructional materials and professional learning centered around proficiency. To fulfill these goals, SPILL is a “train the trainer” model. Members spent the summer of 2024 learning about language acquisition proficiency levels through Avant ADVANCE, an online learning platform that increases educators' ability to internalize and understand proficiency ratings. This was accompanied by online support from Avant MORE Learning. The second part of the summer learning was a virtual training with Dr. Jennifer Eddy, author of “Designing World Language Curriculum for Intercultural Communicative Competence”. If Avant ADVANCE was the “what” of proficiency levels, Dr. Eddy’s training was the “how”. SPILL members learned ways to incorporate communication and task-centered proficiency assessment into lessons and units they currently teach. Finally, SPILL members also engaged with a Canvas course, which incorporated 8 modules that explored different aspects of language learning: Open Educational Resources, Disability and Inclusion in Language Classrooms, Leadership, Proficiency Assessment, and Translation and Interpretation.

SPILL members attended a two-day Language Summit hosted at ESD 105 in Yakima in early June 2024. This in-person meeting served multiple purposes. It allowed our SPILL members to meet each other and learn more about the language landscape in Washington and the country with presentations from the United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence and Paschal Sherman Indian School.

KF1 – Less Common Biliteracy Seal Access

The Custom Testing (CT) program has been successful and well-received in districts that have chosen to participate. Due to the rarity of many of these languages, the agreed-upon cost per test is \$250. This amount pays for finding, training, and paying the raters for each requested language. 70 languages were tested, representing all six of the world’s regions as defined by the [United States Department of Homeland Security](#). The language with the most tests was Romanian (20), followed by Mandinka (17), Kosraean (14), Q’anjob’al, and Dari (both with 10). For Arabic, a language with over twenty-five spoken dialects, OSPI offered eight varieties, accounting for 30 tests. Native and tribal language assessments are not administered through CT as the languages are subject to Tribal Language Sovereignty. When requests for a Tribal language were received by CT, these were forwarded to the Office of Native Education.

The original goal was to administer at least 100 assessments, and the goal was more than doubled at a rate of more than 2.5 times (263). This gives OSPI more accurate data on how many assessments to anticipate in SY 2024–25. 263 students earned a total of 704 credits, averaging 2.7 credits per student. Washington requires students to earn at least two credits in World Language for graduation, meaning CT students averaged more than the requirement. Additionally, 104 students qualified as “Proficient” for the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy.

This requires the student to earn four Competency-based credits. These students will earn the Seal upon graduation and completion of English Language Arts requirements.

Forty-three districts participated in CT. All local education agencies (LEAs), including public districts, public charters, and State Tribal Education Compact schools, were eligible. The top five districts to give assessments were Mukilteo (48), Evergreen (Clark) (35), Lake Washington (31), Vancouver (22), and Highline (17). One public charter, Rainier Prep, gave three tests, and one alternative learning institution, the Washington Youth ChalleNGe Academy, tested two students.

Major Challenges Faced by the Program

MR1 – Biliteracy Seal

One challenge the Seal of Biliteracy program faces is still the lack of infrastructure between districts to host language proficiency testing. Because of the coordination involved with proctoring proficiency testing, assessment might happen only once a year, and districts have not been able to accommodate students from other districts. While OSPI works to help districts find solutions to these coordination challenges, differences between district Seal procedure adoptions make it more difficult. Hopefully, with the requirement to offer the Seal coming in for the 2025–26 school year, there will be more opportunities for collaboration between districts and within educational service districts.

Another challenge faced by districts offering the Seal is the cost of proficiency testing. While a \$25 assessment for Spanish might not seem unreasonable, it can become a barrier when the cost is put back on the student or if the district does not have the budget to assess every student. While OSPI received multiple communications from districts about how helpful and cost-saving the Custom Testing payments were, not every district was able to take part, and many are still looking for guidance on how to best fund proficiency testing for common languages.

KE1 – Graduating Student Biliteracy Seal Standards

Understanding long-term costs and policies was the biggest challenge in the only year of this proviso. Planning and implementing multiple work groups requires numerous points of contact that must be supported, including many school districts, contractors, and vendors.

Communication regarding the work group's attendance did not always align with agency timelines, which presented a challenge for scheduling accommodations and meeting space.

Contracting for the training took much longer than anticipated, reducing the time before the fiscal year's end to provide professional learning.

Better planning and feedback from participants around scheduling will be implemented in the future to ensure a more responsive and effective use of time and resources.

KF1 – Less Common Biliteracy Seal Access

As the first year of statewide implementation, Custom Testing moved to a beta test stage in the state of Washington. Most of the issues faced were normal adjustments needed for any new program, from the education of district testing coordinators to the expansion of the testing platform to allow for the requesting of more languages. Surprisingly, one challenge Custom Testing did not face was the inability to find raters, which speaks to the preparedness of the contractor, Avant Assessment. Access to funding and outreach to all districts is an issue that OSPI intends to remedy through more focused efforts to reach small, rural, and K–8 districts. World Languages has already worked to connect with the Assessment department to find ways of collaborating and extending the statewide knowledge of the program.

Future Opportunities

MR1 – Biliteracy Seal

The Seal of Biliteracy is anticipated to grow more in the 2024–25 school year due to the new mandate that all districts offer it. Another reason for growth is the anticipated adoption of the new WAC rules, which expand students' access and opportunities to earn the Seal. OSPI is working on changes to the reporting process to enable recording proficiency levels and adding more languages.

KE1 – Graduating Student Biliteracy Seal Standards

The intention of this proviso work was to create new rules for the Seal of Biliteracy and a one-year “train the trainer” support process for new World Language Standards. The Seal work is ongoing, and OSPI is hopeful the updated rules will be adopted this school year. The standards work will continue for one more year, as will the contract with all members of the Statewide Proficiency Initiative for Languages and Leadership (SPILL) to create the curriculum and instructional resources to share as the professional learning process intensifies in the upcoming school year.

KF1 – Less Common Biliteracy Seal Access

Future opportunities for Custom Testing include providing access to a wider range of languages and increasing access to more districts. This testing also supports competency-based credits, which could benefit from a statewide funding structure like Advanced Placement or other dual credit testing. This would remove the burden of payment from students and districts while allowing students to earn both high school and potentially college credit and meet graduation needs.

Other Relevant Information

MR1 – Biliteracy Seal

The top five languages in which graduating seniors earned the Seal of Biliteracy are Spanish, Chinese Languages, Russian, French, and Japanese.

Top 5 Languages	Student Count
Spanish	4,315
Chinese Languages	342
Russian	314
French	217
Japanese	135

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

[Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2024 Fiscal Year.](#)

Program Contact Information

Name Veronica Trapani-Huebner
Title Associate Director – World Languages
Phone 360-819-0950
Email veronica.trapani@k12.wa.us