Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

INVESTING IN TARGETED SUPPORT FOR ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS TEACHING AND LEARNING

2026 Supplemental Operating Budget Decision Package

Agency: 3500 Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Budget period: 2026 Supplemental Budget
Budget level: PL

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Washington students have continued to statistically outperform the national average in math. However, the state's advantage has been slipping in recent years, especially between elementary and middle school. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests funding to support math instruction. OSPI recommends a twofold investment targeted at school districts where these funds can make a significant difference, with professional development grants for elementary math teachers and access to digital tools for students to practice and apply foundational math concepts.

FISCAL DETAIL

Operating Expenditures	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Fund 001-1	$0	$10,000,000	$10,000,000	$10,000,000
Total Expenditures	$0	$10,000,000	$10,000,000	$10,000,000
Biennial Totals	**$10,000,000**		**$20,000,000**	
Staffing	**FY 2026**	**FY 2027**	**FY 2028**	**FY 2029**
FTEs	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Average Annual	**0.5**		**1.0**	
Object of Expenditure	**FY 2026**	**FY 2027**	**FY 2028**	**FY 2029**
Obj. A	$0	$79,000	$79,000	$79,000
Obj. B	$0	$45,000	$45,000	$45,000
Obj. C	$0	$500,000	$500,000	$500,000
Obj. E	$0	$2,357,000	$2,369,000	$2,369,000
Obj. G	$0	$7,000	$7,000	$7,000
Obj. J	$0	$12,000	$0	$0
Obj. N	$0	$7,000,000	$7,000,000	$7,000,000

Revenue	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Fund 0	$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

Student performance in mathematics is declining across the U.S. and the globe. While Washington students perform above the national average in math, the gap between our students and their peers across the country is narrowing. A targeted investment in high-quality professional learning for math educators alongside the use of new tools and technologies for students can help Washington recover its competitive edge.

This proposal includes $8 million in grants to school districts to support local planning, implementation, and educator professional learning. An additional $2 million will fund licensing and statewide infrastructure for digital tools to support student learning. These grants will prioritize schools with the greatest academic need.

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

Across the globe, student performance on math assessments has been trending downward for more than a decade. On the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which assesses 15-year-olds in the 37 countries that make up the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), math scores globally have been declining for 16 years. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the only statistically reliable assessment of student progress in the U.S. where comparisons between states can be drawn, math scores have been trending downward for 12 years.

As the world becomes more technologically advanced, the labor market needs an increasing number of highly skilled mathematical thinkers. Washington state is home to the second-highest share of high-tech industries and the second-highest share of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) professionals. Students today must develop both the foundational math skills and tools that have been taught for generations, as well as a basic comprehension of artificial intelligence (AI) and data science.

For Washington's economy to remain competitive with a skilled workforce, our students must excel in math. According to 2024 NAEP data, only 4 states statistically outperform Washington's 4th graders in mathematics. But by 8th grade, 14 states statistically outperform Washington students in math.

Washington students are losing ground in math in late elementary school, and without a strategic approach to improving student outcomes and confidence in mathematics, Washington

risks falling further behind other states and global competitors and putting our students at a disadvantage in many economic sectors.

What is your proposal?

Elementary math is foundational. Students' ability to thrive in higher-level math and math-heavy subjects is built on strong comprehension and application of elementary math skills. OSPI proposes focusing on elementary learners in grades 3–5 in a targeted group of school districts with the greatest academic need. Student test scores show that somewhere between late elementary and early middle school, Washington students lose their competitive edge over students in other states. To improve math scores and students' grasp of mathematical concepts, both the educators who teach math and the students who are learning it need targeted development and strategic support.

OSPI proposes a small but powerful investment in both educator professional learning as well as learning technology and tools for students. Participating school districts will receive grant funding for professional development for teachers in grades K–8, and a menu of approved professional learning providers that specialize in math instruction. Districts will be able to craft a professional learning program that works for their educators and ensures that all educators, regardless of current assignment, will have the opportunity to develop new skills in teaching math. OSPI proposes additional grant funds for the regional educational service districts (ESDs) in which the participating districts reside to convene professional learning communities and bring together elementary educators to discuss, share, and practice new skills.

As new instructional insights and practices change the way students are taught, OSPI proposes purchasing access to online learning tools for students in grades 3–8 in the school districts that are receiving the professional learning grant. These digital tools are designed to support students in real time as they learn and apply mathematical concepts and skills and can be used in the classroom and at home. By investing in both math instruction and learning tools specifically designed to engage young students in math, a small investment can make a real difference in math outcomes for students in these high-need districts.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?

Please describe in detail how this proposal is likely to benefit communities and populations who have historically been excluded by governmental decisions. Include both demographic and geographic information about communities.

This proposal is aimed at supporting school districts that underperform in math when compared to the state average. These students are those most in need of targeted math supports and will benefit most from the opportunities made available to them.

Describe how your agency engaged with communities and populations, particularly those who have been historically excluded and marginalized by governmental decisions?

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 students who are migratory, students in foster care, and students 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.

What input did your agency receive and how was it incorporated into your proposal?

See above.

Explain why and how these equity impacts will be addressed, i.e., consider communities or populations excluded or disproportionately impacted by the proposal.

See above.

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

This request aims to improve math comprehension in elementary and middle school students by investing in professional learning for educators and a digital math learning tool for students.

Professional Learning for Educators

Of this $10 million request, $8 million would fund targeted professional development for teachers at the selected school districts in grades K–8. OSPI will contract with professional learning providers to provide districts with access to a menu of professional learning options. Funding will also be used to convene professional learning communities through the regional educational service districts (ESDs). This ensures educators across subject areas, whether they are generalists or specialists, have access to consistent, high-quality training in math instruction. By equipping teachers with stronger tools, strategies, and confidence in teaching math, students will gain a more solid foundation in key mathematical concepts in the early grades.

Digital Math Learning Tool for Students

With the remaining $2 million in this request, OSPI will purchase licenses for adaptive online math tools for students in grades 3–8 in the participating school districts. These tools provide real-time feedback, targeted practice, and engaging opportunities to strengthen math skills both in class and at home. The tool will supplement direct instruction by meeting students where they are, reinforcing comprehension, and supporting learning recovery. A small amount of funding would also support staffing at OSPI to oversee the program, support district implementation, and gather data to assess progress.

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

OSPI considered a full statewide investment to support student learning in math. However, given the current budget context, the agency is proposing a targeted approach. Even for a targeted number of school districts, OSPI balanced the number of professional learning days needed to make real progress in math instruction with the cost of paying for that time, and landed on six days as the minimum. OSPI has prioritized district flexibility, supporting them in designing their individual approach to this professional learning to accommodate their specific needs and logistical concerns.

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

OSPI does not receive any funding, state or otherwise, to support educator professional learning around math instruction. Without state funding, OSPI cannot carry out this proposal.

ASSUMPTIONS AND CALCULATIONS

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

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

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

OSPI is requesting funding for the following:

- Grant funding to support math-focused professional development for teachers in grades K–8 in selected school districts. The cost is $7 million annually.
- Contracts with professional learning providers for a menu of learning options for the selected school districts. The estimated cost is $500,000 annually.
- A contract with regional educational service districts in Washington to convene professional learning communities with the selected school districts. The estimated cost is $500,000 annually.
- Licenses for adaptive online math tools for students in grades 3–8 in selected districts. The estimated cost is $1,852,000 in fiscal year 2027 and $1,864,000 annually thereafter.

Workforce assumptions:

OSPI is requesting a 1.0 FTE Program Specialist to administer grants to school districts, manage contracts, and collect data. The cost for this position is $148,000 in fiscal year 2027 and $136,000 annually thereafter.

Historical funding:

There is no historical funding associated with this request.

STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Strategic framework:

Foundational elementary math skills are an essential component of OSPI's Strategic Goal #1: Ensuring Equitable Access to Strong Foundations, and supports the agency's mission to prepare every student for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement. These skills are also critical to supporting the agency's second Strategic Goal: Rigorous, Learner-Centered Options in Every Community.

Math competency is the foundation of a world-class education, a concept under threat by Washington students' lessening advantage over their peers across the nation when it comes to math performance. This proposal operates in the spirit of Results Washington, using an innovative, community-based approach and employing immediate, direct, and concrete solutions for a persistent equity gap that delivers the best results to Washington children and families.

Performance outcomes:

As a result of this investment, elementary students in multiple school districts across the state will have access to higher-quality math instruction and new, intentionally designed tools and technologies aimed at supporting their math learning and development and application of mathematical concepts and skills. These students will experience increased confidence and competency in math, which will be reflected in their assessment scores in elementary and beyond, and will positively impact their postsecondary options, economic mobility, and the state economy overall.

OTHER COLLATERAL CONNECTIONS

Intergovernmental:

This proposal involves collaboration through a contract with one or more ESDs.

Stakeholder impacts:

This proposal will impact educators, students, and parents/guardians in several communities across the state.

Legal or administrative mandates:

This request supports the goals and strategies set forth in RCW 43.216.200.

Changes from current law:

None

State workforce impacts:

None

State facilities impacts:

None

Puget Sound recovery:
N/A

Governor's salmon strategy:
N/A

OTHER SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Information technology (IT):
N/A