



Preserving Washington's Dual and Tribal Language Education

2027-29 Biennium Operating Budget Decision Package

Agency: 350 Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Budget period: 2027-29

Budget level: PL

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Dual and tribal language education means at least half of classroom instruction is delivered in a specified language other than English, a method that strengthens literacy, cognitive flexibility, attention, memory, problem-solving, cross-cultural awareness, and information integration. Dual language instruction prevents and closes opportunity gaps for multilingual/English language learners. Tribal language education protects and preserves tribal languages, passing them forward to Native children as an act of restorative justice and generational healing. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests \$4.2 million in the 2027-29 biennium to maintain current dual and tribal language instruction.

FISCAL DETAIL

Operating Expenditures	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Fund 001-1 (Program 05X)	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000
Total Expenditures	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000
Biennial Totals	\$4,200,000		\$4,200,000	
Staffing	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
FTEs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Average Annual	0.0		0.0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Obj. N	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000	\$2,100,000
Revenue	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Total Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Biennial Totals	\$0.00		\$0.00	



PACKAGE DESCRIPTION

Research shows young learners who receive educational instruction in more than one language demonstrate increased literacy development, cognitive flexibility, attention control, memory, problem-solving skills, cross cultural awareness, and information integration. In addition, decades of research demonstrates that dual language education is the only program model that prevents and closes opportunity gaps for multilingual learners, as well as for other historically underserved student groups.

Dual Language Education

Dual language education is K–12 instruction across all subjects given in two languages for the purposes of becoming bilingual and biliterate, achieving at high levels in all content areas, and developing sociocultural competence. At least half of the content is taught in the program language, a language other than English. It is also a state-approved English language development program model for eligible multilingual learners. Dual language education programs can stem from a specific linguistic culture, or heritage local to a district, or be developed in a district where the majority of homes are English-speaking, with the goal of introducing and establishing multilingual and multiliterate skills within that community.

With state support, dual language programs have been steadily increasing. While the state has a goal of providing all Washington students, regardless of linguistic or cultural background, with access to dual language education and its many benefits by 2040, as the program grows and resources are limited, priority is given to districts serving higher populations of students from multilingual and English-language learner families. Recognizing the particular instructional needs of these students, Washington’s dual language programs, outlined in [RCW 28A.300.577](#), are designed for and prioritize those students by designating at least half of the seats in each dual language classroom for them. Students who speak English at home are invited into the program as an enrichment opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate while learning K–12 general education curriculum.

Tribal Language Education

Codified in 2024 with the passage of [House Bill 1228](#) and defined in [RCW 28A.300.577\(5\)\(b\)](#), Tribal language education recognizes Washington’s “special duty to honor tribal sovereignty and [...] serve American Indian and Alaska Native students.” Addressing “centuries of colonial educational practices aimed at destruction of tribal communities and cultures [that] has resulted in intergenerational trauma that continues to negatively impact American Indian and Alaska Native learners,” Tribal language education “move[s] all Washingtonians forward together in addressing and healing those wounds.” Centering tribal sovereignty, this instructional program incorporates the special cultural and legal dimensions that govern Tribal languages, empowering Tribes to determine who is qualified to instruct, approved instructional approaches, and assessment of tribal language proficiency. These programs are designed to build student identity and revitalize Tribal language and culture in response to the harm caused by intergenerational trauma.



Heritage Language Programs

Heritage language programs are included within the definition of dual language education, a distinct subset of program that provide multilingual learners and heritage speakers with the opportunity to develop the language and culture of their families and communities through a dual language instructional model. Because they are seeded by local heritage speaker populations that may vary by community and language, these programs aren't always able to develop as uniformly as traditional dual language instruction and adapt their model as needed, offering instruction during and/or outside of the school day.

School Year	Number of Districts with Dual Language Programs	Total Number of Dual Language Programs
2020-2021	37	134
2021-2022	40	142
2022-2023	40	152
2023-2024	41	166
2024-2025	46	179
2025-2026	51	197

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

Dual and heritage language programs are designed to begin with a Kindergarten cohort with the intention that those children and those that follow them will receive dual language instruction throughout their time with the district. This means that when a program is developed, resources are focused on the elementary grades. Tribal language education program implementation can vary depending on the availability of local native speakers and instructors, which are often extremely limited. Tribal language education programs often begin at the secondary level during their initial years with the goal of training students who can themselves become tribal language instructors in the future, driving program expansion into the lower grade bands.

In both cases, where current dual and tribal language programs exist, students who began dual language education in elementary grades are now reaching middle and high school, and tribal language programs continue to rely on state resources to build up a sufficient population of native speakers through these programs to better establish this instructional model in participating districts. In both cases, these programs require continued and consistent state investment to support this expansion and ensure that these students and programs do not lose the progress they have made.



Current and future resources protect prior state investment and the unique opportunities this instructional model affords to both participating students and the state as a whole.

What is your proposal?

To expand dual, heritage, and tribal language programs in Washington state, this proposal outlines an expansion model driven by the needs of districts with currently operating programs in the immediate future. Through a combination of ongoing seed grants and supports for tribal language development in Washington's State-Tribal Education Compact Schools (STECs), these dollars will maintain the presence of dual and tribal language education where it currently exists and supported limited expansion by steadily increasing service over the coming biennia, in line with Washington's goal of statewide dual language education for K-8 students by 2040 (HB 1228, 2024).

Phase-in Plan for Statewide Dual Language Expansion through 20240

Phase of Dual Language Expansion	Number of Districts with New Programs	Total Number Districts with Dual Language Programs	Total Number of Dual Language Programs
Current Continuing or Expanding Programs	N/A	51	197
Districts Beginning Program(s) by 2030–31	30	81	250
Statewide Access to Dual Language Education by 2040	69	150	500

Number of Dual Language Grantees by Fiscal Year, Past and Projected

Fiscal Year	Number of School District Grantees
2028	95
2027	90
2026	82
2025	80
2024	67
2023	53
2022	39
2021	18



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

Multilingual learners (approximately 166,000 in Washington), American Indian/Alaska Native students (approximately 47,000 in Washington), and other historically underserved student groups have experienced long-standing, persistent opportunity gaps in their K–12 educational careers, but those gaps close when they are provided with dual language education. This proposal expands access to dual language across the state to multilingual learners and students who want to become bilingual and biliterate in one or more languages.

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

OSPI engages formally with impacted communities through the [Multilingual Education Advisory Committee](#), [Migrant Education Parent Advisory Council](#), [Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee \(WSNAEAC\)](#), and the [Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee \(EOGOAC\)](#) as well as other informal and 1:1 engagements. It is a consensus amongst these groups that dual language education is the program model that is best positioned to prevent and closes opportunity gaps for multilingual/English learners, as well as for other historically underserved student groups.

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

OSPI engages with formally with impacted communities through the Multilingual Education Advisory Committee, Migrant Education Parent Advisory Council, WSNAEAC, and the EOGOAC as well as other informal and 1:1 engagements. It is a consensus amongst these groups that dual language education is the program model that is best positioned to prevent and closes opportunity gaps for multilingual/English learners, as well as for other historically underserved student groups.

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

This proposal is designed to expand access rather than concentrate it, so the equity impacts are addressed primarily through where and how new dual language capacity is built out.

Funding priority will go to districts and schools with high concentrations of multilingual learners, American Indian/Alaska Native students, and other historically underserved groups, including rural and small districts that currently lack the capacity to launch or sustain dual language programs due to limited access to certified bilingual/dual-language endorsed staff.

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

In order to protect prior state investment in dual and tribal language education, and not lose ground in the



pursuit of Washington's 2040 goal, OSPI requests the following investments from the Legislature over the coming two biennial budget cycles:

Dual language seed grants

This proposal requests \$1.6 million per year to continue grants to school districts and STECs for building and expanding dual language programs. Grant funds support professional learning for teachers and staff members, contract work with consultants on program development, instructional materials in the non-English language, and support for family and community engagement meetings and activities. These dollars will expand the number of state-funded grantees from 55 to 60.

Expansion support for tribal language program development.

This proposal requests \$500,000 to continue support to districts and STECs with tribal language program start-up costs, including professional learning and curricula in the tribal language.

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

OSPI explored continuing to expand dual language programs at the current funding amounts. This option was not selected due to the inequity of some multilingual learners across the state not having access to these life-changing programs and supports.

The state's basic education allocation is the primary source of funding for dual language education. Some federal funds (Title IA, Title IIA, and a portion of Title III) can supplement funding for professional learning, bilingual specialists, and curricula in the partner language. The seed grants support districts and STECs with the two-to-three-year planning process and key start-up costs to begin a program or expand to additional schools. Without the seed grants and staff support to provide guidance with program planning and growth, districts may not have the funding capacity or content knowledge to launch dual language education.

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

During the 2025-27 biennium, the agency dedicated the following resources to the dual language/tribal language program:

Fiscal Year 2026

\$1.5 million was provided from the general fund for both dual language seed grants and tribal language grants. This amount provided a total of 82 grants.

Fiscal Year 2027

\$2.1 million was provided from the general fund for both dual language seed grants and tribal language grants. This amount will provide a total of 90 grants.

As shown below, state funding for dual and tribal language grants increased in the 2024 and 2025 Fiscal Years, allocated for dual language expansion and implementation of [2024 House Bill 1228](#). The sharp



reduction of funding in the 2026 and 2027 Fiscal Years threatens the ability of the state to reach its stated 2040 goal.

Fiscal Year	Statue Funding
2027	\$1,250,000
2026	\$1,500,000
2025	\$4,725,000
2024	\$1,425,000*
2023	\$1,425,000
2022	\$1,425,000
2021	\$1,425,000

*While state funding for FY 2024 matches investment in prior years, operating budget appropriations for FY 2024 include an additional \$6,184,000 from the elementary and secondary school emergency relief III account (ESSER) federal dollars, a significant increase in total funding appropriated ([SB 5187, Sec. 522\(6\)\(g\)](#)).

ASSUMPTIONS AND CALCULATIONS

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

This proposal requests continuation of the current program into the next biennium. Current program funding is expected to end after fiscal year 2027.

2023-25 Operating Budget

In FY 2024, OSPI received \$1,425,000. The funds supported 2.10 full-time equivalent (FTE) OSPI staff to provide technical assistance, professional learning, and to manage the \$1,090,000 grant program. Of the \$1,090,000, \$200,000 was used for Dual/Heritage Language grants (8 grants of \$25,000 each) and \$890,000 was used for Tribal Language grants (29 grants of \$25,000-\$75,000 each).

In FY 2025, OSPI received \$4,725,000. The funds supported 3.10 full-time equivalent (FTE) OSPI staff to provide technical assistance, professional learning, and to manage the \$3,420,000 grant program. Of the \$3,420,000, \$2,480,000 was used for Dual/Heritage Language grants (51 grants of \$10,000-\$80,000 each) and \$940,000 was used for Tribal Language grants (25 grants of \$20,000-\$60,000 each).

2025-27 Operating Budget

In FY 2026, OSPI received \$1,500,000. The funds supported 2.15 full-time equivalent (FTE) OSPI staff to provide technical assistance, professional learning, and to manage the \$1,104,000 grant program. Of the \$1,104,000, \$804,000 was used for Dual/Heritage Language grants (56 grants of \$5,000-\$25,000) and \$300,000 was used for Tribal Language grants (26 grants of \$9,500-\$14,250).

In FY 2027, OSPI allocated \$2,600,000. The funds support 3.10 full-time equivalent (FTE) OSPI staff to provide technical assistance, professional learning, and to manage the \$2,100,000 grant program. Of the \$2,100,000, \$1,600,000 was used for Dual/Heritage Language grants (55-60 grants of \$10,000-



\$50,000) and \$500,000 was used for Tribal Language grants (30-32 grants of \$10,000-\$20,000).

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

This proposal requests that the state continue to provide \$2.1 million each year to support grant funding to school districts and state-tribal education compact schools (STECs).

In order to achieve the goal for all Washington students to have access to dual language education in grades K–8 by 2040, the following investments are needed:

Increase professional learning and seed grants to districts and state-tribal education compact schools (STECs)

\$1.6 million per year to continue grants for building and expanding dual language and heritage language programs. The current number of state-funded grantees is 55, with a potential increase to 60 state-funded grantees.

Expansion support for tribal language program development.

\$500,000 for seed grants to support districts and STECs with language program start-up costs (i.e., professional learning and curricula in the tribal language). The number of grants (40) was based on the following factors: each of the state's 29 federally recognized tribes are working on tribal language revitalization, 39 school districts participate in ESSA-required tribal consultation, the 7 STECs have tribal language programs, and the number of tribal language grant applicants in recent years.

Workforce assumptions:

This proposal does not request funding for FTE.

Historical funding:

There is no funding in the carry-forward budget to continue this project into 2027-29.

Fiscal Year 2028

- FTE = 0.00 FTE
- Total Funds = \$0.0 million
- Near General Fund = \$0.0 million
- Other Funds = \$0.0 million

Fiscal Year 2029

- FTE = 0.00 FTE
- Total Funds = \$0.0 million
- Near General Fund = \$0.0 million
- Other Funds = \$0.0 million



STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Strategic framework:

Governor Ferguson's Priorities

This request supports one of Governor Ferguson's strategic goals.

Goal 1 – Education

Strengthening K-12 education in the state of Washington, which includes plans to invest a higher percentage of the total budget in K-12 education to ensure a strong start for Washington's younger residents. This priority references the Washington State Constitution, which declares that "It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, colors, caste, or sex."

OSPI Strategic Goals

This proposal directly supports two of [OSPI's four strategic goals](#), with primary alignment to the agency's commitment to "eliminating opportunity gaps and supporting students furthest from educational justice." This proposal expands dual language education for all students who want to become bilingual and biliterate in two or more languages, and foster efforts to preserve, restore, and grow tribal language programs throughout the state.

Goal 1: Equitable Access to Strong Foundations

This proposal supports student access to and participation in high-quality, asset-based tribal, heritage, and dual language programs.

Goal 2: Rigorous Learner-Centered Options in Every Community

This proposal prioritizes access to dual language education for multilingual/English Language learners, American Indian/Alaska Native students, and other historically underserved groups.

Prior Legislative Commitments

2024 House Bill 1228, RCW 28A.300.577

This proposal supports dual and tribal language education as codified under [2024 HB 1228](#).

Performance outcomes:

By 2030, increase the number of districts implementing or planning for dual language education from 51 to 81.

OTHER COLLATERAL CONNECTIONS

Intergovernmental:

During the 2019 OSPI-Tribal Consultation meeting, each of the federally recognized tribes in the state were supportive of OSPI support for preservation, restoration, and growth of their tribal languages, cultures, and life ways. This work is also supported by WSNAEAC.



OSPI also has strong support from the First Peoples' Language and Culture Committee who led the legislation for the First Peoples' Language, Culture, and Oral Traditions certification.

Stakeholder impacts:

The organization is not directly impacted by this proposal; however, OneAmerica has been a strong supporter of the items proposed as they dovetail with their legislative priorities to support multilingual learners and families.

Legal or administrative mandates:

In 2024, the Legislature passed [House Bill 1228](#) — Building a multilingual, multiliterate Washington through dual and tribal language education. This bill establishes the state's intention to "support and expand dual language education and tribal language education in Washington...so that all school districts that want to may offer a program by 2040" ([HB 1228, 2024](#)).

In 2023, the Legislature commissioned five studies via the state operating budget ([Senate Bill 5187](#)) on the status of closing the opportunity gap for students of color, from the ethnic commissions and the [Governor's Office of Indian Affairs \(GOIA\)](#). The reports from GOIA, the [Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs \(CAPAA\)](#), and the [Commission on Hispanic American Affairs \(CHA\)](#), specifically address supports for multilingual students, including recommending: adoption of a statewide framework for bilingual education; increasing the number of bilingual and First Peoples' Language certified educators; continued and enhanced state-funded Tribal Language grants; expanding high-quality bilingual early childhood education and dual-language immersion programs; and expand culturally linguistically responsive supports for multilingual learner students by increasing access to culturally responsive language programming (such as dual language) and invest in culturally linguistic teacher training (Higheagle Strong, 2025), (Le et al., 2025), (Nguyễn et al., 2025).

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

1. ESSB 5187 - 2023-24. Making 2023-2025 fiscal biennium operating appropriations and 2021-2023 fiscal biennium second supplemental operating appropriations.
<https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Pdf/Bills/Senate%20Passed%20Legislature/5187-S.PL.pdf?q=20230518135102>
2. HB 1228 - 2023-24. Building a multilingual, multiliterate Washington through dual and tribal language education.
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/BillSummary/?BillNumber=1228&Year=2023&Initiative=false>
3. Higheagle Strong, Z. & Equally Contributing Colleagues (2025). Relationships, relationships, relationships: Native American education opportunity gap study in Washington State. Governor's Office of Indian Affairs. <https://native.wsu.edu/native-american-education-study-2/>
4. Le, L., Rueda, R. A. A., Chen, R. H., Johnson, J., & Arreguin, A. I. A. (2025). Hispanic and Latinx students educational opportunity gaps study. Commission on Hispanic Affairs. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5915f65ed482e94b3f60b25f/t/68e04eb0396f5f1ef1487e00/1759530673016/HGAP24_Hispanic_Latinx_Opportunity_Gaps_Final_Report.pdf
5. Nguyễn, J., Halvorson, M. A., Ledesma, A., Lee, J. J., Tian, Z., Camacho, S. G., Beck, K. L., Seto-Myers, D. K., Diaz, T. P., Sun, M., & Spencer, M. S. (2025). Centering Asian diasporic voices & shaping policy: The educational experiences and wellbeing of Asian and Asian American youth in Washington schools. Committee for Asian Pacific American Affairs. https://issuu.com/socialwork.uw.edu/docs/centering_asian_diasporic_voices_shaping_policy
6. RCW 28A.410.045: First peoples' language, culture, and oral tribal traditions teacher certification program—Established—Rules. (2007).
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.410.045>

Information technology (IT):

N/A