

Driving Higher Student Performance in Math by Equipping School Districts to Implement Updated Math Learning Standards

2027-29 Biennium Operating Budget Decision Package

Agency: 350 Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Budget period: 2027-29

Budget level: PL

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Washington recently updated state mathematics learning standards. Investment is needed to make these new standards make a difference in the classroom. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests \$6,042,000 in the 2027-29 biennium to develop and deploy statewide professional learning and high-quality instructional resources, helping to ensure every student has access to strong math instruction, regardless of where they live.

FISCAL DETAIL

Operating Expenditures	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
General Fund-State (program 055)	\$3,042,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$3,042,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$6,042,000		\$0	
Staffing	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
FTEs (program 055)	3.5	3.5	0.0	0.0
Average Annual	3.5		0.0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Obj. A	\$328,000	328,000	\$0	\$0
Obj. B	\$170,000	169,000	\$0	\$0
Obj. C	\$2,455,000	\$2,455,000	\$0	\$0
Obj. E	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$0	\$0
Obj. G	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$0	\$0
Obj. J	\$41,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenue	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$0		\$0	

PACKAGE DESCRIPTION

Under [RCW 28A.655.070](#), OSPI is responsible for developing and periodically revising Washington's K–12 learning standards. OSPI has just completed a multi-year revision of the state's math learning standards, formally adopted in 2026, and districts are expected to use the revised standards in the classroom beginning in the 2027–28 school year. Adopting standards at the state level and requiring district alignment do not themselves account for the implementation and actual alignment of new standards to instructional practice. Implementation of new learning standards at the district level involves selecting new instructional materials and preparing educators to teach to the new standards which, in this case, represent a substantive shift in math instructional practice.

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

Washington last adopted math learning standards 15 years ago and has been teaching to those standards ever since. Over the past several years, OSPI has conducted a comprehensive review and revision of those standards to bring them up to date with current research and understanding of math concepts and student learning. This process tapped into experience and expertise across the system, engaging educators, higher education faculty, industry partners, and community members across the state, and the revised standards were formally adopted earlier this year.

Math learning among Washington students faces some challenging trends across both time and grade level, and Washington has a limited, time-bound opportunity following investment in revision of learning standards to effectively implement these standards as both innovation and intervention. Whether adoption of new learning standards is successful and improves outcomes for students depends on whether and how the state chooses to invest in statewide implementation of those standards at the district level during the two-year period between adoption and required classroom use. Without additional state-level support, 295 school districts will independently interpret the new standards, evaluate instructional materials, and build professional learning, thereby duplicating effort and stretching already limited local capacity. Districts that are not already connected to their ESDs or other regional and state supports, particularly smaller and those with more limited local capacity, will have the fewest resources to navigate the transition and are likely to fall furthest behind.

Implementation of New Math Learning Standards

The revised standards involve meaningful shifts in instructional practice, emphasizing flexible, efficient, and accurate problem-solving strategies. These critical math and critical thinking skills are essential in preparing our students for the ever-changing world in which they exist. To implement these changes so that they drive a lasting and effective shift in instructional practice and student learning, educators must not only align teaching materials to the new standards but must also undertake targeted professional learning on the revised standards and the new, high-quality instructional techniques and practice that meet the state's new expectations.

Math Proficiency in Elementary Students

Even as the state adopts new standards and prepares to shift instructional practice and expectations, data show that student performance in math has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. While there have been small gains each year after COVID, math scores have not rebounded as fast as those in other subjects. According to state Report Card Data, in the 2024-25 school year, 57.2% of 8th graders met foundational grade-level knowledge compared to 67.6% in the 2018-19 school year. Disparities by income, race and ethnicity, disability status, and English language learner status remain substantial, but the gap persists across student groups.

Student math performance in recent years also highlights erosion of a competitive advantage held by Washington elementary students when compared to students in other states that does not translate to student learning in middle school. According to the most recent [National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#) data available, which is from 2024, only four states statistically outperform Washington 4th graders in math, but 14 states statistically outperform Washington eighth graders. This data shows that Washington students are losing ground in math learning between the elementary and middle school years, a trend worth investigating and addressing through targeted interventions. For this reason, and because they establish the foundational mathematical understanding for all students, OSPI has identified investment in elementary teachers and elementary math instruction is particularly high impact.

What is your proposal?

OSPI proposes the state provide high-quality, professional learning to elementary teachers at no cost to educators. Specifically, OSPI requests \$6,042,000 in funding for two coordinated elements that move the revised standards from adoption into classroom practice. First, OSPI requests funding for statewide curriculum review and guidance; and second, OSPI requests investment in statewide professional learning for educators and school leaders, especially those at the elementary level.

These two components go hand in hand and must happen in sequence. Districts need access to high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials and guidance for evaluation of those materials before they undertake adoption of new math curriculum. Educators and school leaders will then need professional learning to understand the revised standards, translate them into instruction, and effectively implement current or newly adopted materials. State investment in both components will allow OSPI to establish a common statewide infrastructure for standards implementation while preserving local district authority over curriculum adoption and instructional decisions.

Curriculum Review and Guidance

The effectiveness of revised learning standards depends significantly on whether districts adopt curriculum and instructional materials that are well aligned to new standards. Districts often lack staffing, expertise, and funding to independently conduct comprehensive curriculum reviews. Leading implementation at the state level reduces duplicative efforts undertaken by individual districts at significant cost, mitigates the risk of districts using different criteria to evaluate

content and practice for alignment to standards, and individual district adoption materials that vary widely in their levels of alignment to the state's learning expectations. Funds requested will support OSPI in establishing a statewide advisory review and guidance function, informed on the former Curriculum Advisory and Review Committee (CARC) to provide districts with resources and expertise that are difficult to develop independently at the local level.

The CARC will:

- Compile and publish free, openly licensed instructional resources aligned to the revised standards;
- Develop statewide guidance and evaluation tools that districts can use when reviewing instructional materials for alignment with the revised standards, reducing duplication and providing districts with a common framework for evaluating materials; and
- Explore opportunities for coordinated or bulk purchasing of high-quality curriculum materials where doing so could reduce costs for districts and improve equitable access to high-quality materials.

Statewide Professional Development

State-level adoption of revised standards alone does not change classroom practice. Teachers, principals, and district administrators need professional learning to identify changes from existing standards, understand revised instructional expectations, adapt their own teaching methodologies, and effectively use aligned instructional materials. OSPI's proposed investment provides no-cost, high-quality professional learning to elementary classroom teachers statewide as they implement the revised math standards. Professional learning will also be available to principals, instructional coaches, curriculum leaders, and district administrators who support elementary teachers and will provide foundational resources accessible to educators across grade levels.

Targeted Investment in Elementary Math Instruction

Funding will allow OSPI to develop and deliver intensive professional learning for elementary teachers delivered by statewide and regional partners, while providing complementary training and implementation resources for school and district leaders.

This professional learning will be free to participating teachers and districts and would include in-person training through a regional or state network, allowing professional learning to be adapted to regional needs while maintaining consistent statewide expectations; statewide webinars and virtual learning opportunities that provide all districts with access to common foundational training.

Examples:

- Synchronous and/or asynchronous, no-cost learning modules that educators can complete on their own schedules, and that districts can incorporate into existing professional learning plans.

- Train-the-trainer models that develop local and regional expertise so that districts can continue providing professional learning after the initial state investment.
- Role-specific learning for teachers, principals, instructional coaches, curriculum directors, and district administrators, recognizing that successful standards implementation requires changes at both the classroom and system levels.
- Implementation resources and exemplars that help educators translate the revised standards into curriculum planning, instructional practice, and assessment.
- Ongoing technical assistance and communities of practice to help educators address implementation challenges and share effective approaches as the standards move from adoption into practice.

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 designed to promote more equitable access to high-quality instruction by ensuring that educators and districts across Washington have access to standards-aligned instructional resources and professional learning, regardless of district size, geographic location, or local capacity.

Students in communities that have historically experienced inequitable educational outcomes, including students from low-income households, students of color, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students in rural and geographically isolated communities, may face greater barriers to accessing high-quality instructional materials and effective professional learning. These barriers can be particularly significant in small and rural districts, which may have fewer curriculum specialists, instructional coaches, professional learning staff, and other resources available to support implementation of revised standards.

The proposal addresses these disparities by creating statewide resources that are available to every district at no cost, including standards-aligned instructional resources, curriculum evaluation guidance, online professional learning, and implementation tools. This approach reduces the extent to which access to high-quality standards implementation depends on a district's ability to independently fund and staff these functions.

Providing professional learning at no cost is particularly important for elementary teachers in small and rural districts, where districts may have limited capacity to independently provide specialized mathematics professional development or release teachers to attend training.

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

OSPI developed this proposal through its ongoing engagement with school districts, educators, Educational Service Districts, education leaders, and communities across Washington. This

engagement has reinforced the importance of providing statewide implementation support when learning standards are revised, particularly for districts that do not have the staffing or resources to independently develop curriculum guidance and professional learning.

OSPI's standards development and implementation processes also include engagement with educators and stakeholders who bring perspectives on the needs of diverse student populations, including multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students from historically underserved communities.

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

Stakeholders of the standards revision project consistently identify the need for practical implementation support when standards change. Stakeholders have emphasized that publishing revised standards is not sufficient to change classroom practice; educators and school leaders need access to high-quality instructional materials, clear guidance about standards alignment, and professional learning that helps translate standards into instruction.

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

The proposal addresses equity by ensuring that all districts, particularly small, rural, and historically underserved communities with fewer local resources, have equitable access to high-quality curriculum guidance and professional learning at no cost.

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

OSPI requests \$6,042,000 over the 2027–29 biennium to provide the implementation supports, curriculum guidance, no-cost statewide professional learning, with a primary focus on elementary classroom teachers, to connect the state's revised standards to classroom practice.

Curriculum Review and Guidance - \$502,000

Funding will support OSPI staff time, stipends or contracts for subject-matter experts and educators, committee convening costs, review of instructional resources, and development and publication of district-facing guidance.

Activities include convening a statewide instructional materials advisory committee, identifying and reviewing openly licensed resources aligned to the revised standards, developing tools and criteria districts can use to evaluate instructional materials, and publishing guidance for district curriculum leaders.

This addresses the problem that districts currently must conduct much of this work independently, resulting in duplicated effort and inconsistent capacity to evaluate whether instructional materials are aligned to revised standards. A relatively small state investment allows OSPI to develop resources and expertise once and make them available statewide at no cost to districts.

Statewide Professional Development - \$5,540,000

OSPI will contract for the development and delivery of no-cost professional learning primarily for elementary classroom teachers implementing the revised math standards. Funding will support expert content development, regional facilitation, statewide webinars, asynchronous learning modules, implementation resources, and/or a train-the-trainer model.

This investment addresses the gap between adopting revised standards and having educators prepared to teach them. Revised standards may require changes in instructional practices, curriculum use, and expectations for student learning. Without dedicated professional learning, districts must develop this training independently or absorb the cost within existing professional learning budgets.

A statewide approach allows OSPI to develop high-quality training and deliver it across Washington through a variety of methods that work for the different school districts and regions. This creates economies of scale, reduces the burden on individual districts, and builds sustained local capacity to implement the revised standards.

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

The alternative to funding this request is not providing statewide support for learning standards roll-out and implementation at the district level, leaving districts to independently develop curriculum guidance and professional learning, resulting in duplicated work and uneven access to resources. OSPI selected the statewide approach because it provides the greatest opportunity to achieve economies of scale, ensure equitable access to high-quality resources, and build sustainable implementation capacity across all 295 districts while preserving local control over curriculum decisions.

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

OSPI does not have dedicated staffing for professional development or learning standards roll out.

ASSUMPTIONS AND CALCULATIONS

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

This request does not involve expansion, reduction, elimination, or alteration of any current program or service.

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

Curriculum Review and Guidance - \$502,000

See workforce Assumptions for calculation.

Statewide Professional Development - \$5,540,000

The estimated cost to contract for the development and delivery of professional learning, primarily for elementary classroom teachers, is \$2,455,000 in both fiscal year 2028 and fiscal year 2029, for a total of \$4,910,000, including indirect costs at the federally-approved rate of 15% applied against personal service contracts. See also Workforce Assumptions for additional calculations.

Workforce assumptions:

Curriculum Review and Guidance

0.5 FTE Director will provide oversight and approval for Curriculum Guidance Committee implementation and to be a liaison with OSPI's Teaching, Learning and School Improvement (TLSI) assistant superintendent, and OSPI's executive sponsor.

The cost of this FTE is \$108,000 in FY28 and \$102,000 in FY29.

0.5 FTE Program Supervisor will support the director in leading and implementing the advisory committee in the following ways:

- Providing technical support for the statewide curriculum review and guidance strategy aligned to the revised math standards;
- Supporting development of statewide instructional materials evaluation criteria, tools, and district guidance; and
- Coordinating OSPI, educator, educational service district, and subject-matter expert participation in resource review and guidance development.

The cost of this FTE is \$88,000 in FY28 and \$82,000 in FY29.

0.5 FTE Administrative Assistant 3 will:

- Manage contracts and procurement for subject-matter experts, educators, resource reviewers, and related services;
- Monitor contract deliverables, timelines, invoices, and expenditures;
- Coordinate administrative logistics for the statewide advisory/review function; and
- Maintain project, contract, and fiscal tracking systems and documentation.

The cost of this FTE is \$64,000 in FY28 and \$58,000 in FY29.

Statewide Professional Development

1.5 FTE Program Supervisor (Elementary and Secondary) will work with the TLSI assistant superintendent to coordinate a statewide professional learning strategy and implementation plan to support high-quality math instruction. This includes:

- Direction of development and delivery expectations for statewide, regional, virtual, asynchronous, and train-the-trainer learning;
- Oversight of professional learning partnerships to ensure quality, consistency, and alignment with the revised standards;
- Coordination of implementation resources, technical assistance, and communities of practice to build sustained district and regional capacity; and
- Monitoring of participation, implementation progress, and outcomes, as well as the adjustment of strategies based on evidence and feedback.

The cost of these FTEs is \$263,000 in FY28 and \$245,000 in FY29.

0.5 FTE Administrative Assistant 3 will:

- Manage contracts and procurement for professional learning developers, facilitators, regional partners and vendors;
- Monitor contract deliverables, timelines, invoices, and expenditures across the professional learning portfolio;
- Coordinate project schedules, approvals, communications, and administrative requirements for statewide and regional delivery; and
- Maintain fiscal, contract, and project documentation, as well as support reporting and contract closeout.

The cost of this FTE is \$64,000 in FY28 and \$58,000 in FY29.

Historical funding:

Fiscal Year 2028

- FTE = 0.0
- Total Funds = \$0
- Near General Fund = \$0
- Other Funds = \$0

Fiscal Year 2029

- FTE = 0.0
- Total Funds = \$0
- Near General Fund = \$0
- Other Funds = \$0

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 all four of [OSPI's strategic goals](#), with primary alignment to the agency's commitment to "eliminating opportunity gaps and supporting students furthest from educational justice."

Goal 1: Equitable Access to Strong Foundations

Statewide professional learning focused on math instruction, particularly at the elementary level, builds strong educational foundations for all students.

Goal 2: Rigorous Learner-Centered Options in Every Community

Guided, informed, and resourced implementation of Washington's new math learning standards ensures alignment of curriculum and instructional practice with cutting edge research and understanding of student learning.

Goal 3: A Diverse, Inclusive, and Highly Skilled Workforce

Professional learning around implementation of new math learning standards cultivates and maintains a highly skilled cohort of educators, school leaders, and staff.

Goal 4: A Committed, Unified, and Customer-Focused OSPI

Resourcing OSPI to provide materials and guidance to every district in the state to support implementation of new math learning standards strengthens and enriches the agency's traditional role in the roll-out of new learning standards.

Workforce and Economic Priorities

This proposal supports Washington's workforce and economic priorities. Strong math skills are foundational to STEM education, high-demand careers, data literacy, and emerging fields such as artificial intelligence. Improving math instruction therefore supports both student success and development of a workforce prepared for Washington's economy.

Performance outcomes:

Increased Access to Standards-aligned Resources

Funding this request will make high-quality, standards-aligned instructional resources and curriculum guidance available at no cost to all 295 school districts.

Increased Educator Participation in Professional Learning

Funding this request will provide statewide and regional professional learning opportunities to educators and school leaders implementing the revised standards.

Build Local Implementation Capacity

Funding this request will help train district and regional educators to provide ongoing standards implementation support through a train-the-trainer model.

Improved implementation consistency

Funding this proposal will increase district access to common guidance, resources, and professional learning to support consistent implementation of the revised standards statewide.

OTHER COLLATERAL CONNECTIONS

Intergovernmental:

None.

Stakeholder impacts:

None.

Legal or administrative mandates:

None beyond the legal mandate that OSPI revise learning standards under RCW 28A.655.070.

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. [NAEP Mathematics: Mathematics Results](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reports/mathematics/2024/g4_8/)
(https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reports/mathematics/2024/g4_8/)

Information technology (IT):
N/A