Competency-Based Education (C278L25)

Budget Language

$194,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2026 and $156,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2027 are provided solely for implementation of Senate Bill No. 5189 (competency-based education).

Proviso Purpose

The purpose of the proviso is to direct the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to adopt rules authorizing full-time equivalent enrollment funding for students in competency-based education programs designated by the State Board of Education. The proviso also requires OSPI to consult with named partners to identify and recommend a format for competency-based education transcripts and to update the standardized high school transcript to define the terms "credits" and "hours." In addition, OSPI and the State Board of Education were directed to recommend a process for creating competencies aligned with state learning standards and to identify the costs associated with that process.

Services Provided

Funding was used to support OSPI staffing and coordination to complete the requirements of the bill.

Criteria for Receiving Services/Grants

N/A

Beneficiaries in the 2025-26 School Year

Number of School Districts:	0
Number of Schools:	0
Number of Students:	0
Number of Educators:	0

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No.

State Funding History

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2026	$194,000	$66,668

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

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2026	N/A

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

This was the first year of funding to support the bill for Competency Based Education.

Program(s) Evaluation or Major Findings

This appropriation supported the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in implementing the requirements of SB 5189 related to competency-based education. OSPI completed rules authorizing full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment funding for competency-based education programs by the September 1, 2025, legislative deadline. OSPI and the State Board of Education (SBE) also developed recommendations for a process to create competencies aligned with state learning standards and submitted the recommendations and associated cost estimates by the December 1, 2025, deadline. Consultation with the partners named in the legislation has begun to identify and recommend a format for competency-based education transcripts and remains underway. Funding also supported required partner coordination, consideration of Washington State Report Card development and implementation needs, engagement with districts and practitioners experienced in competency-based education, and development of related guidance and communications. This work established foundational state-level processes to support continued implementation of competency-based education in Washington.

Major Challenges Faced by Program(s)

OSPI staff vacancies required adjustments to the planned approach for stakeholder engagement. OSPI revised the approach to conserve limited state resources while continuing to advance the required work. The funding supported OSPI in establishing foundational processes, completing required rulemaking and recommendations, and beginning the required consultation; however, it was not intended to support the full statewide development, validation, implementation, and ongoing maintenance of competencies across all learning standards. Additional resources would be necessary if the Legislature directs OSPI to move from recommending a competency-development process to creating and implementing competencies statewide.

Future Opportunities

A future opportunity is to move from recommending a competency-development process to developing competencies aligned with state learning standards. If directed by the Legislature, OSPI would need sufficient resources to build and sustain a coherent statewide system and provide implementation supports for educators.

Other Relevant Information

Statewide competency development would require a multiyear approach coordinated with the ongoing review and revision of state learning standards. Competencies would need to be developed or updated after each set of standards is finalized, with educator work groups providing practitioner expertise throughout the process.

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2026 Fiscal Year.

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