Dual/Tribal Language/Early Learning

Budget Language

a) $1,500,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2026 is provided solely for dual language grants to grow capacity for high quality dual language learning. Grant funding may be used for new and existing dual language programs, heritage language programs for immigrant and refugee students, and indigenous language programs for native students. Of the amounts provided in this subsection, $300,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2026 is provided solely for tribal language grants.

b) Each grant recipient must convene an advisory board to guide the development and continuous improvement of its dual language program, including but not limited to: Determining which schools and languages will be prioritized; conducting outreach to the community; and addressing enrollment considerations and the hiring of staff. At least half the members of the board must be parents of English learner students or current or former English learner students. The other members of the board must represent teachers, students, school leaders, governing board members, youth, and community-based organizations that support English learners.

Proviso Purpose

The K-12 Dual Language Grant Program was created to grow capacity for high quality dual language education. Grants were awarded through a non-competitive process to school districts, charter schools or tribal compact schools proposing to 1) establish a two-way or one-way dual or tribal language program or 2) expand a recently established two-way or one-way dual or tribal language program in a school with a significant percentage of multilingual learners and/or American Indian/Alaska Native students. A portion of these funds were used to support grants to heritage language programs as they can serve as on-ramps to dual language education.

Services Provided

Grants funds were used for key start-up costs for dual language programs such as consulting and support for program development, travel to dual language site visits, instructional coaching, travel and registration for dual language professional learning, release time for staff to build instructional plans and curricula in the program languages. Funds were also used for administrative staffing, recruiting bilingual educators and paraeducators for the program, and stipends for Tribal Elders to help preserve and grow the Tribal language. A portion of funds were used for OSPI staffing to support grant management, statewide professional learning, and technical assistance to districts.

Criteria for Receiving Services/Grants

To be considered for grant funding, districts must show readiness to benefit by convening a dual language advisory board that includes at least 50% students and family members of the multilingual learners and/or AI/AN students the program currently serves or will serve. Funds are prioritized for schools that are designed to serve at least 50% or more students of color and those in the opportunity gap. Schools must add dual or Tribal language classes each year with a preferred K-12 pathway. They are also required to conduct an annual self-assessment or evaluation of the program and participate in the statewide dual, heritage, or Tribal language professional learning communities.

Beneficiaries in the 2025-26 School Year

Number of School Districts: 81

Number of Schools: 256

Number of Students: Undetermined

Number of Educators: Undetermined

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No

State Funding History

BD1

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2026	$1,200,000	$1,145,076
2025	$3,725,000	$3,639,311
2024	$1,425,000	$1,334,887
2023	$1,425,000	$1,338,593
2022	$1,425,000	$1,422,387

PW1

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2026	$300,000	$293,000
2025	$1,000,000	$940,000

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

BD1

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2026	81 districts
2025	80 districts
2024	67 districts

PW1

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2026	Undetermined
2025	25 School Districts/Tribal education entities, 53 educators, 16 Tribal Nations, 10 Tribal languages

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

In 2017, OSPI created the PK-12 Dual Language Steering Committee to guide the design and implementation of statewide supports for dual, heritage, and Tribal language programs. In 2025-26, the decision was made to combine the Dual Language Steering Committee with the Multilingual Education Advisory Committee for greater efficiency beginning in the 2026-27 school year.

Beginning in 2021-22, dual language grantees were required to establish a Dual Language Advisory Board. This board has been beneficial for engaging the community, providing a strong feedback loop between the district and families, and maintaining the prioritization of multilingual learners for dual language programs. This requirement became law under RCW 28A.300.577 in 2024.

OSPI expanded staffing in 2022-23 to 3 full-time Program Supervisors and added 1 additional position in 2024-25 to meet increasing demands for dual, heritage, and Tribal language program support. These multilingual staff members provide grant management, technical assistance, and professional learning for developing and implementing programs.

Beginning in 2024-25, 8-10 districts are selected each year to host statewide dual language school visits. These districts receive extra grant funds to cover the costs of hosting these visits. 30-40 participants attend each of these full-day events to learn from experienced district and school leaders, observe in classrooms, and collaborate with colleagues to address challenges and improve implementation of programs. OSPI also hosts an annual Tribal Language Convening so that Tribal educators can collaborate and support the unique needs of Tribal language programs.

In 2025, OSPI's Dual Language Team established 3 regional collaboration networks to support dual language leaders. These networks meet 3-5 times each year in person and virtually to address challenges and share promising practices.

Program(s) Evaluation or Major Findings

The K-12 Dual Language Grant Program has elevated the status of dual, heritage, and Tribal language education in Washington and has contributed to the growing interest in these programs across the state:

- In 2015-16, there were 51 schools with dual language programs. **In 2025-26, there were 175 dual language schools, 103 heritage language schools, and 51 Tribal language schools.**
- Programs included 6 dual languages, 15 heritage languages, and 20 Tribal languages with a total of 36 languages taught across Washington state.
- Another 8-10 districts are in the planning stages to begin dual, heritage, or Tribal language programs within the next 2-3 years.

Grantees reported the following successes:

- Expansion and strengthening of dual and heritage language programs, including new program launches, grade-level expansion, and development of secondary pathways.
- Positive student outcomes related to bilingualism, biliteracy, language proficiency, Seal of Biliteracy attainment, and academic achievement.
- Increased district capacity through professional learning, family and community engagement, advisory structures, curriculum development, and collaboration with OSPI and other districts.

Grantees reported the following challenges:

- Ongoing recruitment and retention of qualified bilingual educators, particularly for secondary dual language programs.
- Challenges expanding and sustaining middle and high school dual language pathways due to staffing, scheduling, and resource constraints.
- Concerns related to funding sustainability, leadership transitions, access to specialized resources, and implementation capacity.

Grantees requested the following supports:

- Continued OSPI technical assistance, coaching, professional learning, office hours, and funding support.
- Additional guidance, tools, exemplars, and resources for secondary dual language and heritage language program implementation.
- Expanded opportunities for networking, school visits, professional learning communities, and cross-district collaboration.

Overall, districts continue to value OSPI's coaching, professional learning, school visits, regional networks, and individualized technical assistance. Many expressed interest in continued support

for secondary program development, sustainable funding, and opportunities to learn from other districts across the state.

Major Challenges Faced by Program(s)

With a significant reduction in funding for these grants in 2025-26 due to state budget shortfalls and a continued increase in programs and needs, districts and schools received reduced funding amounts of about $10,000-$15,000 for the 2025-26 school year. This made it challenging for districts to cover costs of curriculum and professional development for expanding programs.

Also, there was continued turnover in staffing in OSPI's Office of Native Education (ONE) for the Tribal Language Program Supervisor. While the position was filled during the 2025-26 school year, the staff member was out periodically and has since left the agency requiring other ONE and multilingual team members to fill these gaps to distribute funding and provide support.

Future Opportunities

As dual, heritage, and Tribal language programs continue to grow, additional grant funding would greatly support the increasing number of programs each year.

OSPI is continuing to develop additional resources to support these programs with a goal for the 2026-27 school year to develop:

- A Dual Language Program Framework template that districts can use to plan and document their dual language programs.
- A Dual Language Data Dashboard to examine student results on academic and language assessments.

Other Relevant Information

OSPI continues to use the Dual Language Program Guide to support districts in developing programs and a new Dual Language Program Evaluation Rubric that was published in the 2025-26 school year to support continuous improvement.

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

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

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