

# Multilingual Educator Report

*Aligning Bilingual Education and English Language Learner endorsement standards*

*Determining language assessment requirements for multilingual teachers and paraeducators*

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# AGENCY OVERVIEW

## Who we are and what we do

### **The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB)**

Created in 2000, PESB ensures that Washington’s educator workforce is composed of highly effective, professional educators who meet the diverse needs of schools and districts. PESB works towards this vision by creating innovative policies that improve and support educator quality, workforce development, and diversity.

### **The Paraeducator Board**

Created in 2017, the Paraeducator Board establishes requirements and policies for paraeducator professional development certificates, and makes policy recommendations that will increase opportunities for paraeducator advancement through education, professional learning, and increased instructional responsibility.

### **A collaborative approach**

PESB and the Paraeducator Board recognize that high standards for all educators are essential to student success and achievement. To support our students, we must support our educators.



## Current context

In April 2023, the Legislature passed [ESSB 5187](#), which charged the Professional Educator Standards Board and the Paraeducator Board to collaborate with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to report on a plan to align Bilingual Education and English Language Learner endorsement standards and to determine language assessment requirements for multilingual teachers and paraeducators. This report addresses ESSB 5187 and provides background and recommendations for next steps.

## Multilingual English learners in Washington

### Who are multilingual English learners in Washington?

Multilingual English learners (MLs) are students whose primary language is not English and who are eligible for English language development services through the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP). Eligible multilingual English learners receive TBIP services until they become proficient in English.

During the 2022-23 school year, 141,434 students were identified as multilingual English learners. Enrollment was highest in urban areas in the western part of the state and in the Yakima Valley.

Home Language	Students served by TBIP (%)
Spanish	60.7
Russian	3.9
Ukrainian	2.9
Vietnamese	2.4
Arabic	1.6
Somali	1.5
Marshallese	1.5
Dari	1.3
Chinese-Mandarin	1.2
Punjabi	0.9

Students served by the state's Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) in 2022-23 spoke 260 different home languages. The most identified language was Spanish, spoken by 61 percent of students. While Spanish continues to be the top language other than English, districts serve students who speak a diverse range of languages including Russian, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Arabic, Somali, Marshallese, Dari, Chinese Mandarin, and Punjabi. Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of top languages in the state during the 2022-23 school year.

## How are multilingual English learners supported in Washington?

Multilingual English learners are eligible for English language development services through the federal Title III, Part A funds and the state-funded Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP).

Federal Title III, Part A funds provide additional support for American Indian/Alaskan Native students, as well as for multilingual English learners in both public and private schools. In 2022, there were 3,443 Title III-eligible American Indian/Alaskan Native students in Washington.

Districts also receive state TBIP funds to provide supplemental instruction to support language development for multilingual English learners (MLs). Under the state-funded TBIP, eligible MLs receive TBIP services until they become proficient in English. Once exited, they continue to receive a subsidized portion of funding. Currently, American Indian/Alaskan Native students are not included in the state's definition of an English learner and do not qualify for TBIP services.

The state TBIP allocation provides an additional \$1,600 per eligible student and \$800 per exited student for continued supports. Exited students continue to receive services for two school years after meeting the English proficient level.

### Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program models

Under [WAC 392-160-005](#), Transitional Bilingual instruction is defined as a system of instruction which:

- (a) Uses two languages, one of which is English, as a means of instruction to build upon and expand language skills to enable a student to achieve competency in English;
- (b) Introduces concepts and information in the primary language of a student and reinforces them in the English language.

The Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) [legislation](#) recognizes that classes taught only in English are inadequate to meet the needs of multilingual English learners. This legislation also aligns with federal civil rights and English language development legislation in Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Through TBIP legislation, all eligible multilingual English learners in Washington shall receive bilingual instruction, or an approved alternative program of English language development instruction, until the student is proficient in English.

Below are the different TBIP models in Washington:

### ***Dual language programs***

Dual language programs provide instruction in English and another language for at least 50% or more of the instructional time. Programs begin in kindergarten and continue through middle or high school to fully develop bilingual and biliterate proficiency.

### ***Transitional bilingual programs***

Transitional bilingual programs use the student's primary language as a foundation to support English language development with 90% of initial instruction in the primary language, increasing English instruction systematically until all instruction is provided in English.

### ***Alternative programs (content-based instruction)***

Content-based instruction or "sheltered" instruction is used in classes comprised predominantly of multilingual English learners. Explicit English language development and grade-level academic content is delivered by specifically trained teachers and other educators.

### ***Alternative programs (supportive mainstream)***

Students in the supportive mainstream model access grade-level academic content and English language development through participation in their mainstream classrooms with support provided either individually or in small groups by specifically trained teachers and other educators.

### ***Newcomer programs***

Newcomer programs provide specialized instruction to beginning level multilingual English learners who have newly immigrated to the United States and may have limited or interrupted formal education or low literacy in their primary language. Typical program length ranges from one semester to one year for most students. After the newcomer program, students typically transition to another TBIP model.

### ***Other special programs (alternative schools, Open Doors, juvenile detention, etc.)***

Other special programs provide English language development and access to grade-level content through individualized programming, based on the student's needs.

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Over 90% of multilingual English learners receive support through an English Language Development (ELD) program taught entirely in English. The state average time to exit all TBIP programs is just under 5 years.

## Dual language programs

[Dual language education](#) is a form of instruction in which students learn literacy and content in English and another language. Dual language is also sometimes called two-way or one-way dual language, or dual language immersion. Programs begin in preschool or Kindergarten and extend through high school.

Most dual language programs in Washington are taught in Spanish and English. There are also programs that use Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Russian or a Tribal language as the “partner” language. Teachers of the partner language have high levels of proficiency in that language. In elementary programs, students may have one bilingual teacher who teaches in both languages at different times of the day, or two teachers who each teach exclusively in one of the languages.

The goals of dual language education are to help students:

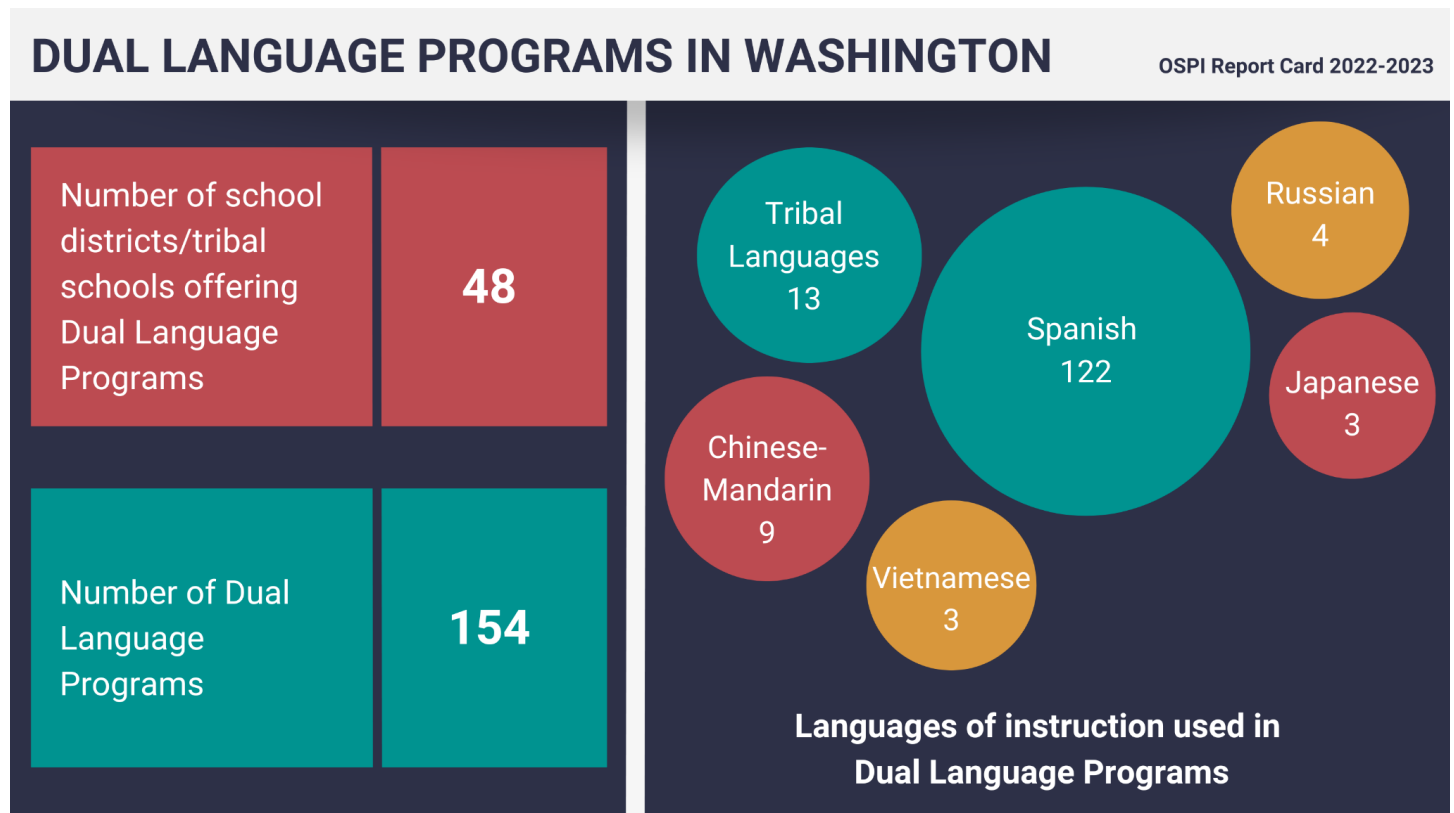
- Become bilingual and biliterate with high levels of proficiency in both languages
- Perform at or above grade level in academic areas in both languages
- Develop positive cross-cultural attitudes and global understanding

There are three main types of dual language programs in Washington, which mainly differ in the student groups they serve:

- **Two-way dual language programs.** These programs enroll a balance of multilingual English learners, including native speakers of the partner language, and native English-speaking students.
- **One-way dual language programs.** These programs enroll mostly multilingual English learners, including native speakers of the partner language.
- **World language immersion programs.** These programs enroll mostly native English-speaking students. Some multilingual English learners may participate, but they typically make up less than a third of the class.

Research shows young learners who receive dual language education demonstrate increased literacy development, cognitive flexibility, attention control, memory, problem-solving skills, cross cultural awareness, and information integration. In addition, research supports the notion that dual language education is a program model that can prevent and close opportunity gaps for multilingual English learners, as well as for other historically underserved student groups. However, less than 10% of TBIP students receive instruction through a dual language or bilingual education program model.

Table 2. Dual language programs in Washington



### Heritage language models

[Heritage language programs](#) provide multilingual English learners and English dominant students with the opportunity to learn the language and culture of their families and/or communities. These programs can be offered during or outside of the school day.

Heritage language programs do not fall under TBIP.

### Tribal language models

[Tribal language programs](#) center tribal sovereignty. There are cultural and legal dimensions that govern tribal language programs. The tribe determines who is qualified to instruct, which instructional approaches to utilize, and how to assess proficiency. These programs are designed to build student identity and revitalize tribal language and culture in response to the harm caused by intergenerational trauma.

Tribal language models do not fall under TBIP.

### Washington State Seal of Biliteracy

The Washington State Seal of Biliteracy ([RCW 28A.300.575](#), [WAC 392-410-350](#)) was established in 2014 with the intent to recognize public high school graduates who have attained an Intermediate-Mid proficiency in

English and one or more world languages, including American Sign Language and tribal languages. In 2022, Washington graduates earned the Seal of Biliteracy in more than 83 languages.

## Multilingual educators in Washington

### Who works with multilingual students?

In the 2021-22 school year, 3,334 individual staff members (funded through TBIP) provided instruction and support through the program. Instructional paraeducators represented approximately 22.7 percent of the total full-time equivalencies.

[RCW 28A.180.040](#) requires all classroom teachers funded through TBIP to hold an English Language Learner or Bilingual endorsement. In 2021-22, 95.8 percent of certificated staff funded by TBIP held one of the required endorsements. Districts that were out of compliance with this requirement were contacted by OSPI to develop a plan for ensuring all TBIP staff hold the necessary endorsement.

In some districts, paraeducators provide the majority of TBIP services due to a lack of qualified teachers with these endorsements, particularly in smaller districts and more rural areas. Effective supervision of paraeducators and TBIP service coordination by certificated staff with expertise in serving multilingual English learners is essential to achieving positive student outcomes.

### What are future staffing needs for multilingual students?

In 2022-23, Washington state had 141 schools in 48 districts and state-tribal compact schools operating dual language programs. Within the next few years, OSPI estimates that the state will need at least 150 to 200 bilingual teachers annually to meet the demand for staffing of dual language programs. It is anticipated this annual staffing need will triple within the next eight years as another 40 to 50 districts are aiming to begin or expand dual language programs (Gallardo, 2023).

There are currently 11 state-approved educator preparation programs for the Bilingual endorsement and 23 state-approved educator preparation programs for the English Language Learner endorsement. Some of the state's largest four-year public institutions are approved to offer both endorsements, including Eastern Washington University, Central Washington University, Western Washington University, University of Washington - Seattle, and Washington State University.

## Current endorsement system

An endorsement is the specific subject matter or content area listed on a teaching certificate in Washington state. All certificates must have at least one endorsement, and some endorsement areas cannot stand alone.



The most common methods to add endorsements to existing certificates are:

### **Test-only**

Educators demonstrate content knowledge by passing the NES or WEST-E assessment aligned with the endorsement.

### **Program + test**

Educators must complete an approved program *and* demonstrate content knowledge by passing the NES or WEST-E assessment aligned with the endorsement.

Both the Bilingual Education endorsement and the English Language Learner endorsement fall into the Program + test category for educators.

### **Endorsement competencies**

Endorsement competencies outline the knowledge and skills that educators are expected to master in each endorsement area they are pursuing. These standards are for teacher preparation programs and teacher candidates; they are not student learning standards.

Programs use the endorsement competency standards for pre-service or in-service teachers seeking to obtain their endorsements. Washington state uses the endorsement competency standards to develop the content assessment which educators must take to earn a specific endorsement.

The [English Language Learner endorsement competencies](#) were last approved by PESB in 2015. The changes made at this time shifted the competencies from discrete skills toward a deeper and more coherent grouping of standards that focused on the interrelationships between language domains and modalities. The changes adopted also supported the endorsement's alignment with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

The [Bilingual Education endorsement competencies](#) were last approved in 2021, and they are aligned with the [National Dual Language Education Teacher Preparation Standards \(NDLETPS\)](#). The changes made to this endorsement was part of a broader movement toward adoption of national standards for all educator competencies. These national standards were publicly vetted with various stakeholders and content area experts.

### **Paraeducator ELL subject matter certificate**

[Subject matter certificates](#) are for paraeducators who wish to further their skills in English Language Learner (ELL) or special education instruction. These certificates are optional and are not requirements.

To earn an ELL subject matter certificate, a paraeducator must complete 20 hours of professional development in the subject area of English Language Learners. The certificate is valid for five years, but it is not a prerequisite to work in any program. A paraeducator can only earn the subject matter certificate if they have completed their Fundamental Course of Study (FCS) training.

The ELL subject matter certificate has specific standards, learning objectives, and course outlines that must be met to receive the certificate.

Topics covered in the ELL subject matter certificate courses include:

- How federal and state laws apply to ELL students and classrooms
- The history and rights of ELL students
- Cultural competence, including specific ways to build authentic relationships with students
- Culturally responsive strategies to support effective communication and instruction for ELL students and their families
- Foundations for language acquisition
- ELL instruction and strategies

Since the inception of the Paraeducator Certificate Program in 2019, there have been 578 ELL subject matter certificates issued.

## Recommendations for next steps

With over 140,000 multilingual English learners in K-12 schools in Washington, educators in our state need to be well prepared to support multilingual English learners. The following proposed action steps may increase the number of teachers with these skills by aligning the Bilingual and ELL endorsement standards, increasing the number of educator preparation programs that offer both endorsements, removing current barriers to the Bilingual endorsement for well-qualified candidates (including heritage speakers of languages other than English), and ensuring that educators have the skills to support multilingual English learners in both dual language and English-based programs.

These recommendations were originally made by the OSPI P-12 Dual Language Steering Committee during the 2021-2022 school year. This committee included district and school leaders as well as higher education representatives from programs that prepare bilingual teachers. The committee recommended steps to promote and support the expansion of our bilingual workforce and support all teachers to be better prepared to serve multilingual English learners.

### Recommendation #1

#### **Workgroup on dual language: aligning the ELL and Bilingual endorsement standards**

Convene a workgroup to consider alignment of the National Dual Language Education Teacher Preparation Standards (NDLETPS) for both the Bilingual and English Language Learner endorsement.

The newly adopted National Dual Language Education Teacher Preparation Standards (NDLETPS) align with current asset-based approaches to teaching multilingual English learners. With an increasing number of multilingual English learners in Washington state, all classroom teachers would benefit from having an ELL or Bilingual endorsement. Aligning the ELL and Bilingual endorsement standards now would allow more teacher preparation programs to offer both endorsements and allow dual language teachers on both the English and partner language side of programs to develop similar knowledge and skills. Aligned standards would also

prepare for future integration of ELL/Bilingual standards into more teacher preparation programs, thus increasing the number of Washington teachers who are prepared to support multilingual English learners.

**Recommendation #2**

**Workgroup on language proficiency options: adjusting the language proficiency requirement**

Convene a workgroup to consider additional options for proof of language proficiency for Bilingual endorsement candidates.

This could include adjusting cut scores to align with the Designated World Language endorsement requirements on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Written Proficiency Test (WPT). The current language proficiency requirements for earning the Bilingual Education endorsement is Advanced-Mid on the ACTFL OPI and WPT. The current language requirements for the Designated World Language endorsement is Advanced-Low. Table 3 shows the pass rates for each of these assessments at each proficiency level.

The workgroup could also consider language proficiency requirements for paraeducators.

*Table 3: Comparing threshold impacts for ACTFL language assessment*

	ACTFL OPI Listening/ Speaking Test	ACTFL WPT Writing Test
<b>Number of Test Attempts</b>	2,005	1,934
<b>Advanced-Low</b> (current World Language endorsement requirement)	69% pass rate	65% pass rate
<b>Advanced-Mid</b> (current Bilingual endorsement requirement)	42% pass rate	36% pass rate
Testing data from OSPI Title II Office for years 2006-2021		

**Recommendation #3**

**Workgroup on language proficiency options: alternate testing options**

Convene a workgroup to consider adding alternate testing options. Currently, the only accepted language proficiency assessment for the Bilingual Education endorsement are the ACTFL OPI and WPT.

If additional tests were available, there could be an increase in the number of teachers obtaining the Bilingual Education endorsement. Additionally, bilingual teachers from other states may be encouraged to apply for the Bilingual Education endorsement in Washington. Increased testing options could lower barriers for all candidates, including candidates of color, by providing wider opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.

## Recommendation #4

### Endorsement name change

Consider a name change of the English Language Learner endorsement to align with current asset-based language.

### Recommended workgroup makeup, timeline, and topics

There would be a maximum of 6 workgroup meetings, held virtually via Zoom, with a duration of three hours per meeting. Table 5 details proposed workgroup participants and Table 6 details a proposed timeline and topics for the workgroup.

Table 5. Workgroup makeup	
<b>Participants</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● OSPI Multilingual and World Language department staff</li> <li>● Representatives from programs offering Bilingual and/or ELL endorsement</li> <li>● EPP faculty with expertise in multilingual program and English language development</li> <li>● LCTL (less commonly taught languages) representative</li> <li>● WABE (WA Association of Bilingual Educators) representative</li> <li>● World Language Association representative</li> <li>● PESB staff</li> <li>● PESB and Para board members</li> <li>● Community members</li> </ul>	

*Table 6. Workgroup timeline*



## References

[Transitional Bilingual Instruction Act \(1979\), Revised Code of Washington Chapter 28A.180](#)

[Update: Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program \(TBIP\). Gallardo, Veronica. OSPI \(2023\)](#)

[Washington Administrative Code, rules for the implementation of TBIP, Chapter 392-160 WAC](#)

[Washington State Multilingual English Learners: Policies and Practices Guide. Gallardo, Veronica. OSPI \(2022\)](#)

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