

CELEBRATING THE POWER OF BILINGUALISM

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY
FOR ENGLISH LEARNER AND MULTILINGUAL STUDENT SUCCESS
IN SOUTH KING COUNTY AND WASHINGTON STATE:
DEMOGRAPHICS, WINS, AND FUTURE POLICY SOLUTIONS



SPEAK
YOUR LANGUAGE

Celebrating the Power
of Bilingualism

This report is produced by OneAmerica and the Road Map Project English Language Learner Work Group and advances the goals of the SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE campaign.

SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE is a multi-year campaign founded by OneAmerica and the ELL Work Group. The campaign works hand-in-hand with community leaders, educators, and policymakers to honor the importance of bilingualism in our communities. **Together, we are actively closing the education opportunity gap by promoting access and recognition for bilingual English learner (EL) students in Washington State and beyond.** As part of the campaign, we have worked with school boards across South King County to put policies in place that honor bilingualism as an asset of EL students. We have also developed extensive toolkits and online resources to support educators, families, students, and community members in furthering a formal appreciation and acknowledgment of bilingualism as an asset in our EL students. Policies and funding at the local, state, and federal level that support and encourage bilingualism are crucial to our work.

Get involved and access resources: www.speakyourlanguage.org

Learn more about OneAmerica: www.weareoneamerica.org

Learn more about the ELL Work Group: www.roadmapproject.org/ellworkgroup

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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 @weareoneamerica

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FOREWORD

by **Roxana Norouzi**

OneAmerica Deputy Director

At OneAmerica, we believe in the power of our communities to lead on the issues that most impact their lives.

Working in the immigrant rights movement, each day I am reminded what's possible when we come together to define solutions and organize to make those solutions a reality.

When OneAmerica launched the ELL Work Group, a coalition with the charge of improving schools for English learner students, the group was clear: the best solution to improve outcomes for EL students was to invest in their home language, ensuring that schools saw their bilingual strengths and identity as an asset and benefit. This meant something big: it was time to move away from English-only models of education.

I remember in 2012 when we had our first victory by establishing the World Language Credit Program in all seven South King County school districts. It was not easy, but with a group of committed, innovative, and forward-thinking education and community leaders, together we were able to turn an idea generated in a small meeting room into a reality enjoyed by thousands of students. To this day, the World Language Credit Program remains one of its kind across the nation.

Our victories have not stopped there.

We have successfully organized to bring the Seal of Biliteracy to Washington State, increased the number of dual language classrooms statewide, gained funding for programs to create future bilingual educators, founded the SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE campaign to promote positive messages about bilingualism, and more.

Together, we are on our way to building a bilingual Washington State.

While the movement we've built around bilingualism is a point of pride professionally, it is also deeply personal. As the daughter of Iranian immigrants **I understand all too well the experience of grappling with identity and home language.** As a young child I was encouraged by both my mother and grandmother to speak my home language (Persian) to stay connected to my roots, family and a home country we had lost after the Iranian revolution. My mom sent me off to kindergarten with this message: "You're special because you speak more than one language. And when your teachers and friends ask you about that, you tell them 'I'm bilingual.'"

Unfortunately, that feeling of pride faded fast. Although I was proficient in English, my elementary school teacher attempted to transfer me to an ESL school and told my parents I had a learning delay because we did not speak English at home. I remember feeling sad, embarrassed, and ashamed about my language, sensing that my family and I were not accepted or valued. In the years to follow, I learned that I would have to segment my identity in order to fit into a school system that did not allow me to be my full self. I was constantly faced with the decision to either continue to embrace my identity and feel like an outsider in school or to leave who I was behind when I walked through the classroom doors, in order to be academically successful.



I was blessed to have a mother who disagreed and continued to remind me that I was in fact even more special because I was bilingual. Some of my friends were not so lucky. Many of them received the same message that, in order to fit in, they'd have to drop their home language and be English-only. Now, as they raise children of their own, they realize what they left behind.

When you open the doors of any Washington school, you chance passing a student whose family speaks one of 157 languages. For too long, we have let this fact slide by, not only not taking advantage of it, but effectively punishing students who are English learners. For too long, we have treated ELs as if they don't speak a language at all, rather than recognizing a powerful asset already within their hold. I want for kids in school today to have a completely different experience than the one I had growing up. Like me, millions of students every day are negotiating their own identities in our schools. Many receive the message of assimilation; that they will need to leave their language and culture behind to "fit in" and do well.

Yet I've seen that **change is possible**; the movement that we have built together is shifting how students like my young self are treated; we are now being creative about how we understand and embrace diversity and its benefits. This is evidenced in the thousands of children who now enter kindergarten learning their home language in dual language immersion programs, in the number of high school students who have earned the Seal of Biliteracy and see their home language as an academic advantage giving them the edge, and in how our educators are starting to understand and view bilingualism as a positive asset to be retained. The change we've built demonstrates why we at OneAmerica believe that **those most impacted by an issue must be at the center of defining solutions**, and why we invest so deeply in building the leadership of our communities.

While our accomplishments to date are extraordinary, there is much more to be done if we want to serve our students well. As Washington State becomes ever more diverse and a tone of exclusionism looms over our nation, **the time is now to take action**.

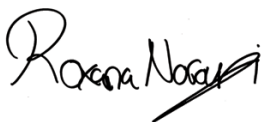
The report begins by reminding us of the many reasons this work is so important. Whether you are motivated by the deep research around the brain benefits of bilingualism and the valuable outcomes of nurturing home language, the social justice aspect of creating an even playing field for all students, the need to adjust our education systems to accurately reflect the sharply changed reality of our student makeup, or a desire to support the economic growth of our state, the reasons to do so are many.

Then, we provide **a clear plan for how we can continue to move forward**, identifying the next steps we must take together if we want Washington to maintain its role as a national leader that recognizes diversity, respects it, empowers it, builds on it – and, ultimately, benefits from it.

Together, let's cultivate a new generation of confident students who not only take pride in their cultural roots, their families, and their inherent linguistic abilities, but who then perform better in school, emerging bilingual and ready to take on the world.

Today's students are the Washington of tomorrow. When we build them up, everyone wins.

Onward!



Roxana Norouzi

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

English Learner (EL): A student whose primary or home language is not a standard English dialect, and whose English skills are in development. In Washington State’s K-12 schools, an EL student is defined by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) as a student who qualifies for English instructional services under the state’s Transitional Bilingual Education Program (TBIP) and federal Title III funding. This funding is designated to support language proficiency of these students.

***EL,** which is used by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is now replacing the term English Language Learner (ELL), which was previously in use.

Emerging Bilingual Student: A term that acknowledges EL students as developing, dynamic bilinguals.

Bilingual or Multilingual: A student who is proficient in two or more languages, respectively. In this report, these terms refer to students who speak English and one or more other languages.

Dual Language Immersion: A model of academic instruction that provides content-based instruction in two languages—English and another language. Students in these programs often spend half the day learning academic content in another language, and half the day in English.

Heritage/Community Language: A language other than English spoken by an individual, a family, or a community. A community or heritage language program is designed to support home language development or indigenous language revitalization.

Home Language: The language a student speaks at home with their family, often the first language the student ever spoke.

Road Map Project Region: The Road Map Project Region of Washington State encompasses South King County and South Seattle and the Road Map Project is a collective impact initiative to close the opportunity gap in the area for students of color. Districts in the region include Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Kent, Renton, (South) Seattle, and Tukwila.

NOTE: English learners are a constantly changing population. When an English learner gains English proficiency, they are “reclassified” as a former English learner and no longer designated as an English learner student. This report uses the following terms to describe the status of English learners:

Current English Learners: All students currently classified as English learners and eligible to receive English learner services

Former English Learners: Students who were classified as English learners but “reclassified” as English proficient. Former EL students are often referred to as “exited” ELs, because they have exited out of the EL program.

Long-Term English Learners: A subgroup of current English learners who have been classified as English learners for five or more years.

Never-English Learners: Students who have never been classified as English learners. This includes monolingual English speakers and multilingual students who enter school as English proficient.

WHO WE ARE

Our Work Together: Since 2011, OneAmerica and the English Language Learner Work Group¹ have been united in identifying high payoff strategies to close the glaring opportunity gap for EL students. As the lead staffing and backbone support of the ELL Work Group, OneAmerica brings policy and advocacy expertise to help advance changes identified by the community and stakeholder members of the ELL Work Group. This report showcases our work together over the past years and outlines future policy priorities for building a bilingual education system.

ONEAMERICA

OneAmerica is the largest immigrant and refugee advocacy organization in Washington State. OneAmerica (formerly Hate-Free Zone) was founded in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, to address the backlash, hate crimes, and discrimination against immigrant communities of color—primarily Muslims, Arab Americans, East Africans, and South Asians. Today, OneAmerica advances the fundamental principles of democracy and justice at the local, state, and national levels by building power within immigrant communities across Washington State in collaboration with key allies. OneAmerica’s core belief is that those most impacted by injustices are best suited to drive solutions and that building broad-based movements led by people of color and allies—grounded in grassroots community organizing—will create a more just, democratic, healthful, and compassionate society. Our theory of change centers on community organizing and leadership development in immigrant and refugee communities of color to create civic and political space for our grassroots leaders to shape and reform critical policies, practices, institutions, and movements that impact their lives.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER WORK GROUP

The English Language Learner Work Group was formed in 2011, as part of the broader Road Map Project effort to close opportunity gaps for students of color in South King County and South Seattle. The Road Map Project is a collective impact initiative to boost student success from early learning to college and career in seven South King County school districts: Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Kent, Renton, (South) Seattle, and Tukwila. The initiative is a multisector partnership comprised of hundreds of individuals and organizations. Several work groups exist as part of the Road Map Project, aimed at identifying and aligning strategies for gap-closing changes. The ELL Work Group is led by OneAmerica and is comprised of those from school districts, community-based organizations, parents, youth, research institutions, early learning, higher education and state education departments. The group’s work is rooted in the relationships between various stakeholders and between institutions and the community, particularly multilingual parents and youth. At the heart of the group’s work is a mission to advocate for change in how our schools educate EL students, emphasizing the need to shift from a deficit-based framework to an asset-based framework.



¹ The term “EL” is now replacing “ELL.” However, throughout the report, the work group is referred to as the “ELL Work Group.” It has been commonly known this way for many years. The terms “EL” and “ELL” still refer to the same student population.

INTRODUCTION

AN URGENT CALL TO ACTION

For a long time, immigrant and refugee students have been negatively impacted by inequities in our education system. And now, under the current political climate, the basic human rights of many immigrant and refugee communities are under attack.

With the rise in detrimental federal policies—such as the Muslim travel ban, a surge in deportations, the rescission of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, attempts to restrict public benefits for immigrants, and family separation at the U.S. border—**now, more than ever, it is vital that schools are a place where diverse communities feel welcomed and valued.** It is imperative that all educators, district leaders, and policymakers work together to support EL student success.

This report by OneAmerica and the English Language Learner Work Group aims to:

- Provide an overview of current multilingual student demographics in the South King County and South Seattle region
- Showcase achievements of our efforts to advance change for EL students
- Present policy solutions to support bilingual education in our region and state

Washington State has the opportunity to advance meaningful changes for our students and families. We can serve as a leader in the nation by making our state a place where immigrant and refugee communities are safe, welcomed, celebrated, and are able to thrive economically.

WASHINGTON STATE
CAN BE A LEADER
FOR THE COUNTRY
AS A PLACE WHERE
IMMIGRANTS ARE
WELCOMED AND
CELEBRATED.



ORGANIZING FOR A JUST EDUCATION SYSTEM

As a statewide immigrant and refugee advocacy organization in Washington, OneAmerica builds power in communities that are impacted by inequities, through investing in the development of grassroots leaders to collectively drive policy campaigns at the local, state, and federal levels. We identify policy change priorities from our communities, then create the space and coalitions—unifying grassroots leaders, parents and youth, and education system leaders, elected officials, education administrators, and community based organizations—to collectively define solutions and achieve them.

One priority we have identified is the need for our education systems to better serve English learner (EL) students.

Our ongoing work of catalyzing leadership development in immigrant and refugee communities of color aims to move toward a paradigm that celebrates diversity, honors the uniqueness of each individual, and ensures all students build positive identities to feel proud of their language and culture in our education systems.

The oppression that immigrants and refugees face today is rooted in the history of racism in the U.S., namely against African American and Native communities. Because of this, we know that we can only achieve justice if we work in solidarity with other communities of color to undo all forms of racial injustice.

To address educational inequities within communities of color, we advocate for key issues, including:

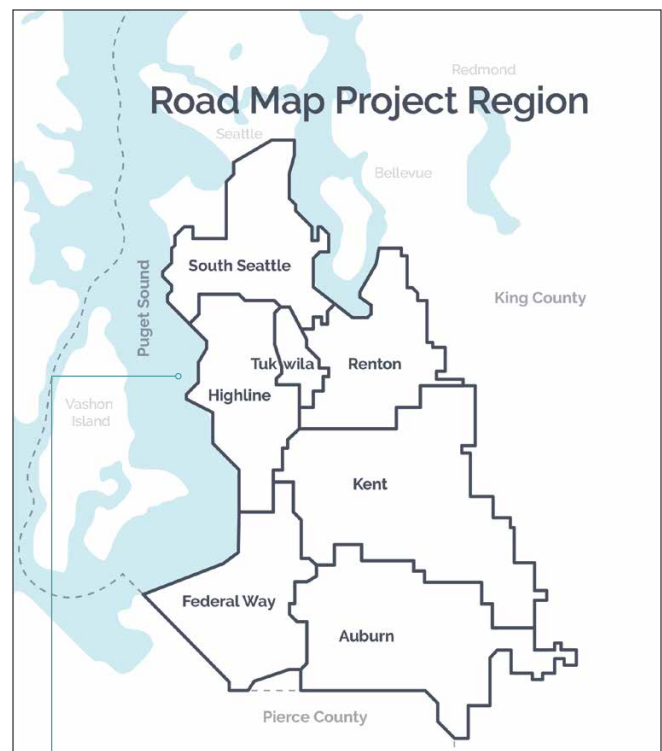
- Racial disproportionality in school discipline practices
- The need for culturally responsive educators
- Stronger pathways for communities of color to access the teaching profession, as well as to advance within the early education workforce
- Retention efforts for educators of color
- Indigenous language revitalization efforts
- Dual language programs that benefit immigrants and refugee students
- **Recognition of bilingualism as a student asset**

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER WORK GROUP

As a core strategy of our education work, OneAmerica has staffed the English Language Learner Work Group since 2011. The ELL Work Group has been a regional and statewide leader in advocating for changes to close opportunity gaps for EL students, and has served as a space for grassroots community leaders and systems leaders to join together and collectively push for change.

OneAmerica's capacity to advocate for state legislative changes, local policy changes, and organize directly with both community leaders and systems administrators has led to powerful policy victories for EL students across the state.

Through this advocacy, the work group has secured multiple wins in urging local and state leaders to build a more comprehensive education infrastructure rooted in equitable and asset-based practices to support EL students.



The Road Map Project region is the area of South King County and South Seattle that lines the I-5 corridor. It includes the school districts of (South) Seattle, Tukwila, Renton, Highline, Kent, Federal Way, and Auburn.

REPORT OVERVIEW

This report begins with an exploration of student demographics and language diversity in South King County school districts, where some of the most diverse and largest populations of EL students are. Then, we outline the reasons why education systems must shift to embrace the assets of our diverse students through bilingual education. Bilingual education has been at the core of our advocacy for years, and the benefits of bilingualism are thoroughly outlined in this report.

We summarize our policy victories to date and share our future advocacy priorities for building a bilingual education system to close opportunity gaps for EL students. Public will-building campaigns and community organizing efforts are highlighted as well, outlining methods for how we can work together to advance the recommendations we put forward.

Finally, the report concludes with clear recommendations for moving forward. An appendix is also included for further demographic data that may be informative.

LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN THE SOUTH KING COUNTY REGION

DEMOGRAPHICS

ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS COMPRISE 22% OF THE STUDENT POPULATION IN SOUTH KING COUNTY AND SOUTH SEATTLE

This section includes baseline demographic data to foster greater understanding of the EL students in South King County and across the state. A close look at the demographic data helps to inform the types of policies and practices needed to best serve our growing, multilingual student population.

The South King County region (the primary focus of the ELL Work Group) includes some of the highest concentrations of EL students impacted by the opportunity gap.

UNDERSTANDING EL DEMOGRAPHICS

Our region's diversity is reflected in the local student population:

- Since 2010, the number of multilingual students (including English-proficient) has grown by a total of 26%, compared to 9% of the total student population.
- A total of 39% of our region's students are multilingual—and this number is growing.
- 67% of EL students are U.S. born—while many EL students are immigrants or refugees, the majority of EL students are born in the United States.

THE ENGLISH LEARNER (EL) STUDENT POPULATION IS GROWING RAPIDLY

In South King County and South Seattle:

- Between 2010 and 2017, the never-EL (students who were never eligible for EL services) student population grew by 2%, while the total EL population grew by a total of 41%.
- Today, 22% of the K-12 student body are EL.
- There are now more than 27,000 English learners in K-12 public schools.

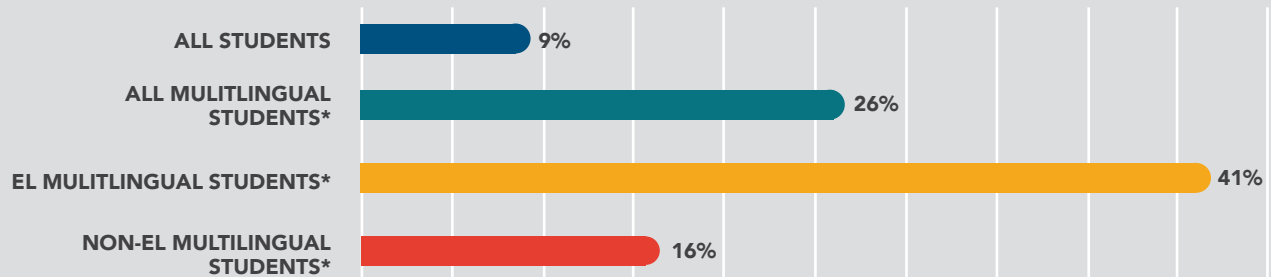
In Washington State:

- In 2016, 11% of the K-12 student body were current ELs (students who are actively receiving EL services) (21).

In the United States:

- English Learners are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population (5).
- By 2025, it is projected that 1 in every 4 students enrolled in public schools across the nation will be ELs (16).

INCREASE IN EL AND MULTILINGUAL STUDENT POPULATION IN SOUTH KING COUNTY AND SOUTH SEATTLE FROM 2010-2017



Source: OSPI Report Card Data Files & OSPI CEDARS student-level data via ERDC, prepared by CCER Data and Research Team

ABOUT THE DATA:

English learner (EL) is defined as a student who qualifies for services under Washington State’s Transitional Bilingual Education Program (TBIP) as identified by their test results on the Washington State English Language Proficiency (ELPA21) assessment. Students take this assessment if they indicate a language other than English on the Home Language Survey when they initially enter a school district.

*“All Multilingual Students” in this graphic includes both EL students and also students who are not ELs but speak a language other than English. Data is determined by those that have a primary language other than English on the Home Language Survey, but do not test into EL services.

*Please see important contextual information about the Home Language Survey in upcoming pages.

STUDENTS	2010	2017	GROWTH
ALL STUDENTS	116,920	127,290	9%
ALL MULTILINGUAL	39,719	50,074	26%
EL MULTILINGUAL	19,388	27,383	41%
NON-EL MULTILINGUAL	20,709	23,920	16%

LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN OUR SCHOOLS

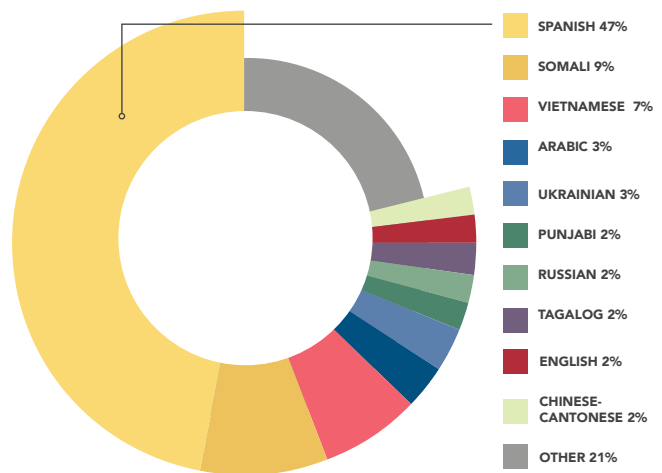
Our region is booming with incredible racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity. In South King County and South Seattle, EL students speak 157 languages and are from 148 different birth countries.

The region’s demographics underscore the crucial nature of the priorities outlined in this report, including:

- An education system that honors students’ diverse linguistic and cultural strengths;
- A more diverse education workforce that reflects the reality of linguistic, racial, and cultural diversity in today’s student population; and
- Bilingual education programs and policies that build an asset-based system—one that recognizes and builds on the inherent, untapped strengths of its students.

*See Appendix A for data on growth of top regional languages since 2010.

PRIMARY LANGUAGES OF EL STUDENTS IN SOUTH KING COUNTY



Source: OSPI CEDARS student-level data via ERDC, Prepared by CCER Data and Research Team

ABOUT THE DATA: A NOTE ABOUT THE HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY

The data collected about primary language in this report is nuanced and requires important context setting prior to interpretation. It is taken from the Home Language Survey (explained below) and is self-reported by families. As such, it may contain inaccuracies for reasons outlined below. Additionally, some of the complexities about the data (for example, the fact that many EL families have listed “English” as a primary language) emphasize the issues that exist surrounding district/family relationships, the stigma that can be associated with being an EL student, and the complex issues that can arise in receiving EL services.

All families in Washington State complete the Home Language Survey upon entering a school district. The survey asks about the student’s home language (the language currently spoken in the home) and the primary language (the first language the student ever spoke). If the family lists a language other than English for either of these questions, the district is required by the state to then test the student for EL service eligibility.

The state offers this testing in an attempt to ensure/regulate that EL-eligible students receive services. However, complexities arise because some families may not want their child tested for EL services for fear that they will be separated from their peers and miss out on core content classes, and thus fall behind. Consequently, some families respond to the survey with English as their “primary language,” but a different language as the “home language.” Some families might also put English as their home or primary language because they may not have received an explanation about the intention of the survey. An additional layer of nuance to understanding the responses is that a small number of ELs speak various English dialects at home, rather than the standard dialect referred to by the survey questions.

Our systems must improve to ensure that families are not afraid to put a language other than English as a response to such questions.

THE NEED TO SHIFT TO AN ASSET-BASED MINDSET

As the EL population continues to grow, our educational systems must adjust to better embrace the multitude of assets they bring to our schools.

For too long, **English learner students have been underserved—negatively impacted by the opportunity gap due to linguistic differences and a systemic dismissal of bilingualism as an intellectual and community asset.** When students' cultural identities and linguistic strengths are honored and embraced by our schools, they are more likely to succeed.

Especially given the continued projected growth that 25% of the nation's K-12 public school students will be ELs by 2025, Washington State's education system must shift in order to meet the needs of this growing student population.

Doing so will make a tremendous difference in the lives of EL students and communities and improve the quality of our educational systems overall.

A CALL FOR EDUCATION SYSTEMS TO EMBRACE OUR STUDENT POPULATIONS

It is critical that the education system move away from English-centric and white dominant structures. When EL students see themselves reflected in the language, curriculum and culture of schools, their investment in education and academics increase.

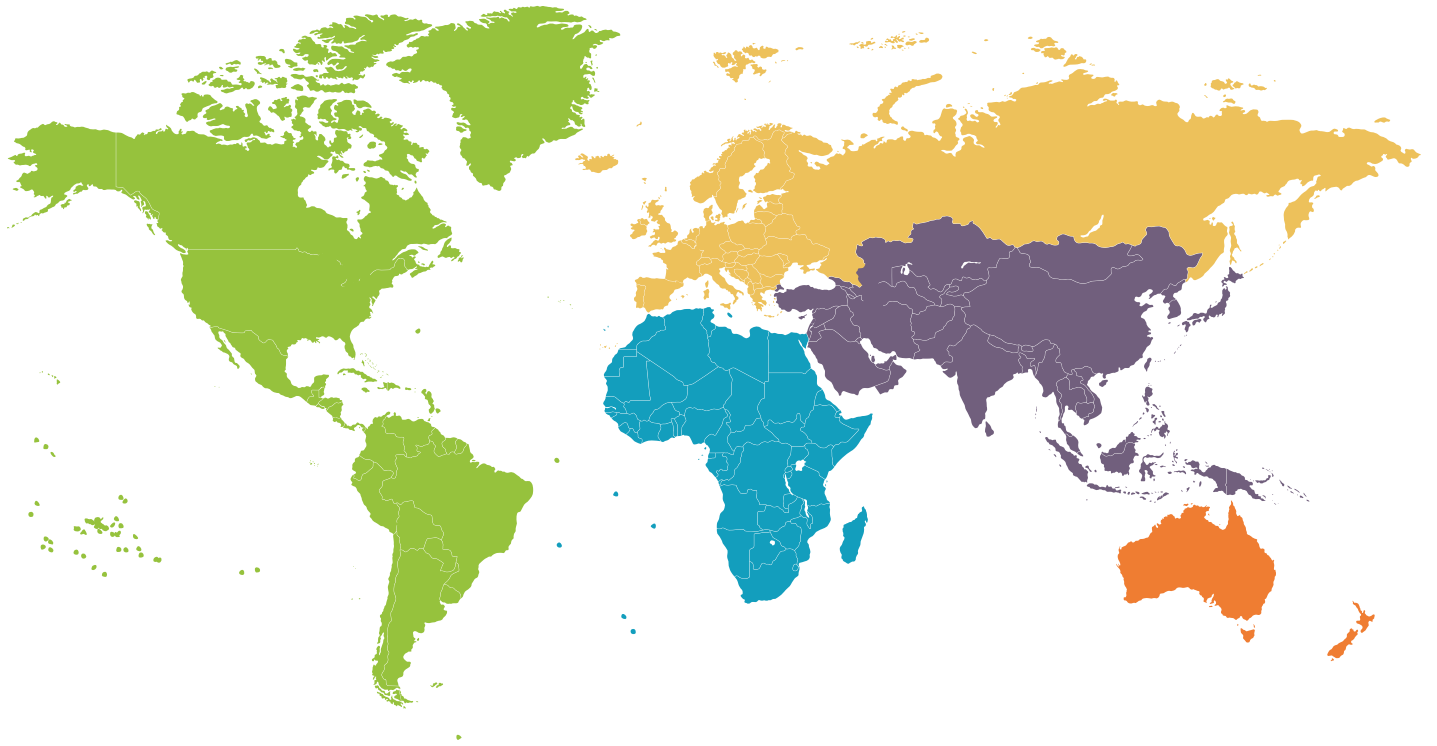
The advocacy priorities highlighted in this report aim to change our education systems in ways that will help close opportunity gaps for ELs. **Our efforts support a shift to an asset-based framework with policies, practices, and programs that honor EL student diversity, identities and skills.**

This asset-based education system embraces ELs as *emerging bilingual* students, focusing the fact that they are developing an important additional language skill (standard English), rather than simply discounting their existing language skills. Such a system cultivates opportunities to celebrate and leverage student home language and multilingualism.

As a foundation of this system, we will best serve ELs by honoring bilingualism, proactively assuring that students, their families and educators **are encouraged to recognize bilingualism as a distinct asset.**

"AT THE CORE OF OUR WORK IS THE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR SCHOOLS TO BECOME ANTI-RACIST INSTITUTIONS THAT DECENTER WHITENESS BY ENSURING THE SPACE IS NOT DOMINATED BY ENGLISH, BUT RATHER FULL OF ALL OUR COMMUNITIES' LANGUAGES. IN DOING SO WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IDENTIFYING EL STUDENTS' SKILLS AND ENSURE WE FULLY DEVELOP THEM TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AS EMERGENT BILINGUALS. FOR ALL STUDENTS, WE ENSURE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES THAT DEVELOP STUDENTS TO BE WELL PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN A PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY."

- BERNARD KOONTZ,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
TEACHING LEARNING AND
LEADERSHIP AT HIGHLINE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND
FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE
ELL WORK GROUP



BY 2025, IT IS PROJECTED THAT 25% OF K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL BE ELS NATIONWIDE (16).

"I SPEAK SWAHILI BECAUSE IT CONNECTS ME TO MY CULTURAL ROOTS, MY FAMILY AND MY IDENTITY."

- YVETTE MAGANYA,
ONEAMERICA LEADER AND
COMMUNITY LANGUAGE
ORGANIZER

"[WE WANT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM TO] MOVE FROM TEACHING ABOUT ASSIMILATION TO BEING PROUD OF CULTURE AND WHERE YOU COME FROM."

- ONEAMERICA
YOUTH LEADERS

THE BENEFITS OF BILINGUALISM

WHY BILINGUAL EDUCATION?

Looking forward, our advocacy priorities for a bilingual education system continue to be driven by the need to shift to an asset-based system. The benefits of bilingualism in student populations are vast. Rigorous research points to the cognitive advantages, academic improvements, and workforce development opportunities afforded by fostering bilingualism among our students.

The benefits of an asset-based bilingual system include:

- Fostering positive identity development in students;
- Building a competitive global workforce;
- Encouraging students to benefit from the proven cognitive advantages of the bilingual brain;
- Promoting cross-cultural understanding between students, families, and communities; and
- Closing the opportunity gap by investing in research-based models of education.



WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

BILINGUALISM IS A COGNITIVE ADVANTAGE

Bilingualism's many cognitive advantages are widely recognized. Research shows that bilingual students:

- may be more creative and better at planning and complex problem solving when compared to monolinguals,
- are better able to ignore distraction and focus their attention,



- may be more compassionate and empathetic,
- are in high demand in the job market; there is evidence that bilingual individuals may earn more money as a result of this additional skill (1, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13).

Research also indicates that children with a strong foundation in their home language ("mother tongue") will more easily learn a second language.

Given that 32% of young children ages zero to eight in Washington State are learners of two or more languages (18), the argument for nurturing development of an EL student's primary/home language at a young age is even more compelling.

It is crucial that educators actively encourage families of EL students to speak their home language with their children, explaining that it will actually *strengthen* the student's ability to learn English as well.

For more information about the current research around bilingualism, please visit <https://speakyourlanguage.org/the-facts/>

BENEFITS

LET'S GIVE WASHINGTON A COMPETITIVE GLOBAL WORKFORCE

The U.S. population has changed dramatically in the past three decades, with nearly 30 million immigrants settling in the states. In 2016, Washington State had the 8th largest population of EL students of all U.S. states (15). New labor market data points to the growing workforce demand for bilingual skills—in fact, **over the past five years demand for bilingual skills in the U.S. has more than doubled.**² Washington State stands to benefit greatly from recognizing the inherent strengths that emerging bilingual students bring with them.

By building a world-class education system, we can power an economically competitive state. Our future workforce begins in the classroom; by equipping students with global skills, we will allow Washingtonians and the nation to remain competitive in the global economy.

BILINGUALISM IS A BRAIN ADVANTAGE. CHILDREN WITH A STRONG FOUNDATION IN THEIR HOME LANGUAGE MORE EASILY LEARN A SECOND LANGUAGE – SUCH AS ENGLISH.

COMING SOON! FUTURE 2019 REPORT

In this report, we focus exclusively on the ELL Work Group priorities of building bilingual education systems to better serve EL students.

However, the ELL Work Group's work is broader than the subject of this report. We also:

- examine policies and practices to support older EL students to access college and career opportunities;
- research and implement stronger instructional practices;
- promote meaningful family and community engagement strategies; and
- facilitate stronger partnerships within and between districts, state administration, and the community.

In 2019, OneAmerica and the ELL Work Group will release a second report exploring in detail EL student outcomes as they relate to the above, as well as reporting on a comprehensive set of systems-level indicators that measure progress made by the system to support EL students.

Highlights of the 2019 report will include:

- outcomes of students who exit the EL program, reclassification rates, and "long-term" ELs;
- post-secondary enrollment and persistence;
- credit completion and growth measures;
- greater exploration of programs and wrap-around supports designed for EL students; and
- an exploration of native student eligibility for TBIP services under Title III and support of Indigenous language development.

² See 2017 *New American Economy* report, *Not Lost in Translation: The Growing Importance of Foreign Language Skills in the U.S. Job Market*.

WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION: PAST POLICY WINS

Since 2011, we have been a regional and statewide leader in advocating to close gaps for EL students, driving a movement with community leaders and educators to collectively push for change. **This has led to multiple powerful policy victories for EL students across the state.**

As the staffer and facilitator of the ELL Work Group, OneAmerica has supported organizing with both community leaders and systems-level administrators, advocating for the state legislative changes and local policy changes necessary to achieve these victories.

Together, we have urged local and state leaders to build a more comprehensive education system, rooted in equitable and asset-based practices that support EL students.

Our victories to date include:

1. **Pioneering the expansion of Dual Language programs**³ in Washington State to a total of over 70 programs statewide including Indigenous language preservation efforts⁴ (see Appendix G for more details)
2. **Securing funding for the Bilingual Educator Initiative**, which encourages bilingual high school students to become future educators⁵
3. **Securing funding to support best practices for young dual language learners** as part of an emerging high-quality early childhood system, and ensuring state outreach to parents to understand the asset of bilingualism in the early years
4. **Establishing the World Language Credit Program**, which allows high school students to earn competency-based credit for knowledge of their home language⁶
5. **Bringing the Seal of Biliteracy to WA**⁷, a prestigious academic acknowledgment on a student's high school transcript or diploma indicating they are bilingual and biliterate⁸
6. **Securing an additional \$18 million dollars for EL students** to support successful transition out of the EL program
7. **Founding and leading the Speak Your Language Campaign**, a public campaign to promote the importance of bilingualism, recognize bilingualism as an asset, and developing parent and youth leadership to advance the campaign's messages⁹

"TOGETHER WE'VE FOUGHT FOR A WASHINGTON STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT WELCOMES IMMIGRANT FAMILIES AND EMBRACES EL STUDENTS' LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AS STRENGTHS. I PERSONALLY HAVE OBSERVED EL STUDENTS THRIVING IN DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, AND I'M SO PROUD OF THE IMPACT WE'VE HAD TOGETHER. WE WILL CONTINUE THE CRITICAL WORK OF BUILDING AN ASSET-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT EMBRACES BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND IN DOING SO, PREVENT EL STUDENTS FROM FALLING INTO THE OPPORTUNITY GAP."

- WASHINGTON STATE REPRESENTATIVE LILLIAN ORTIZ-SELF





Building from past policy victories, we seek even bigger, bolder solutions for 2019: **The only way to build an education system that best serves students is through investments around bilingualism and biliteracy.**

HOW DO WE DO IT?

Where some successful outcomes have already been achieved, this report recommends new promising strategies. By following the outlined advocacy priorities, Washington State can build a more effective education infrastructure that will not only close gaps for ELs, but improve outcomes for all students.

While Washington's State's Transitional Bilingual Education Program (TBIP) aims to promote a two-way system of instruction whereby students learn their primary language at the same time they receive English instruction, in actuality our English-centric education system generally fails to provide this type of bilingual education.

A better system will take new steps to actively encourage student home language maintenance. This not only fosters pride in identity and culture (which is closely tied to self-confidence and feelings of efficacy about school and home), but results in better student outcomes with regard to English learning and more.

³ See Washington State House Bill 1445 (2017-2018)

⁴ See <http://www.k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/DualLanguages.aspx>

⁵ See <https://www.pesb.wa.gov/innovation-policy/grants-pilots/bilingual-educators-initiative/>

⁶ See <http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/CompetencyBasedCredits.aspx>

⁷ See <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28a.300.575>

⁸ See <http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/SealofBiliteracy.aspx>

⁹ See <https://speakyourlanguage.org/>

2019 PRIORITIES FOR CLOSING THE OPPORTUNITY GAP FOR EL STUDENTS

2019 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

The following advocacy priorities will allow Washington State to build an education system that closes gaps for EL students:

- 1. Expand dual language programs early learning through K-12 with grants funds for development of new programs** in top regional languages, such as Vietnamese, Arabic, and Spanish. This includes K-12 district grants and in the early learning system to support bilingual development at an early age (1). Early learning system grants should build capacity for dual language education through our state preschool program and quality improvement efforts for childcare providers.
- 2. Increase community language-learning programs by providing grant funds for a competitive grant process** to support home language development as a complement to students' regular academic curriculum. This includes:
 - a. District partnerships with community language learning programs, with a focus on less commonly spoken languages (see Appendix A)
 - b. Out-of-school time opportunities for programs that support home language development
 - c. Classroom-integrated opportunities for home language development
- 3. Increase Indigenous language revitalization efforts for Native student success through grant funds** in tribal compact schools and school districts, in partnership with Tribal leadership.
- 4. Build a bilingual workforce.** This includes:
 - a. "Grow your own" programs that create pathways for community members to become teachers in their own communities
 - b. Strengthen the capacity of existing teacher education programs to recruit and train bilingual educators of color
 - c. Invest in alternative routes to teaching programs to support career-embedded programs for instructional assistants and career-changers to become teachers
 - d. High school student future teacher recruitment programs, such as the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) Recruiting Washington Teachers Bilingual Educator Initiative
 - e. Regional efforts to create stronger access to the teaching profession through individualized support and centralized information
- 5. Support educators and community leaders to promote the SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE campaign messages with families** to affirm the importance of early home language development and encourage the regular use of home language with students.
- 6. Expand and fully fund the World Language Credit Program and the Seal of Biliteracy** to ensure that ALL high school students—including EL students—have access these programs and are recognized for their bilingual skills.

PRIORITIES

Advocacy priorities will close gaps for EL students

**EXPAND DUAL
LANGUAGE PROGRAMS
EARLY LEARNING
THROUGH K-12**

1

2

**INCREASE COMMUNITY
LANGUAGE LEARNING
PROGRAMS**

**INCREASE LANGUAGE
REVITALIZATION
EFFORTS**

3

4

**BUILD A BILINGUAL
WORKFORCE**

**SUPPORT EDUCATORS
AND COMMUNITY
LEADERS TO PROMOTE
"SPEAK" MESSAGES**

5

6

**EXPAND THE WORLD
LANGUAGE CREDIT
PROGRAM AND THE
SEAL OF BILITERACY**



STEP #1: EXPAND DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS EARLY LEARNING THROUGH K-12

DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS: THE BEST WAY TO RAISE ACHIEVEMENT FOR EL STUDENTS

"I'VE SEEN STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE BLOOM IN OUR DUAL LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS. IN CLASSROOMS WHERE LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IS CELEBRATED, FAMILIES FEEL MORE WELCOME AND STUDENTS MORE CONFIDENT TO SUCCEED."

- WILL WILLIAMS,
KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION
DIRECTOR AND FOUNDING
ELL WORK GROUP MEMBER

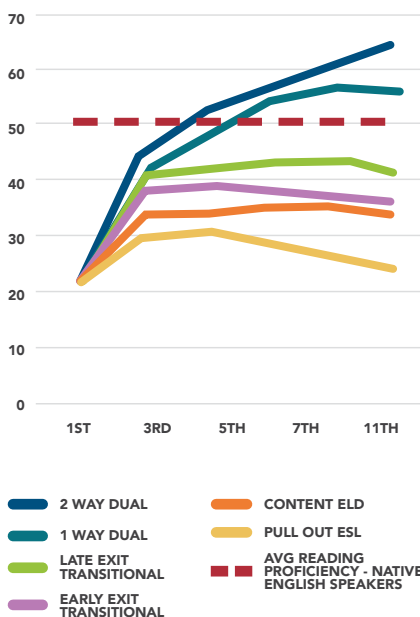
A dual language immersion classroom is a model of academic instruction that provides content-based instruction in two languages, English and another language. Students in these programs often spend half the day learning content knowledge in another language, and half the day in English.

Investing in dual language programs should be a top priority for closing the opportunity gap for EL students. Numerous research studies point to the positive effects of dual language programs for ELs.

EL students in dual language programs have been found to:

- academically outperform their EL peers in non-dual language programs,
- have higher rates of attaining English language proficiency,
- have better academic outcomes by the end of middle school,
- display greater cognitive development in mental flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving,
- have positive cross-cultural attitudes,
- becoming fully biliterate,
- have enhanced career opportunities (19, 20, 22, 23, 25).

ELs LONG-TERM ACHIEVEMENT BY PROGRAM MODEL



Dual language programs are the best way to support ELs and generate return on investment (20). **Research shows that positive effects of dual language programs extend beyond just ELs to other students, including native English speakers** (19). Given the propensity of young children to learn multiple languages at once and the fact that the majority of EL students enter in Kindergarten (see Appendix C), investing in programs pre-K and elementary levels are prime opportunities to prevent the opportunity gap for ELs from the start.

Families and educators share that one reason this happens is that English becomes decentralized as the main language, and all students become language learners. This evens the playing field, addressing power dynamics in education and inherently honoring the identity and cultural background of all students.

Source: Thomas and Collier, 2004

A CALL FOR MORE DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Road Map Project districts should all offer dual language programs and the state should invest in further expansion of dual language schools statewide.

Since 2011, we have advocated for the growth of dual language programs to more than 70 schools. Thousands of children across Washington State now have access to the research-backed models of dual language education, thanks in large part to our advocacy (see Appendix G for more details on state investments in DLL 2015-2018).

This is good, but not enough. We lag behind other states such as California, New York, Utah, and Colorado that are doubling and even tripling their efforts to scale up dual language programs in light of their proven effectiveness.

DESPITE THE LARGE EL POPULATION, ONLY 9% OF SCHOOLS IN SOUTH KING COUNTY ARE DUAL LANGUAGE SCHOOLS, POINTING TO A HUGE OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH.

EXPAND DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN THE ROAD MAP REGION

Though dual language schools have grown in our Road Map Region over the past several years, only 9% of schools in the region currently offer dual language programs (OSPI, 2018).

The school districts of Federal Way, Kent, Highline, and Seattle have established dual language programs. However, given the rapidly growing number of EL students in the region, all school districts in the region should open dual language programs. Numerous area school districts have high EL populations, yet completely lack dual language programs.

More will be necessary to successfully accomplish our goals. Families already want these programs and, as awareness of the importance of bilingualism grows, so will students and educators.

UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH ABOUT DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION

One of the perceived obstacles that prevents school districts from engaging in dual language programs

RIGOROUS RESEARCH STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT EL STUDENTS IN DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS ACADEMICALLY OUTPERFORM THEIR EL PEERS IN NON-DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS (19, 20, 22).

is the number of languages their students speak. The concern: with so many languages spoken by the students, how do you choose the program language? For example, does a Spanish-English dual language program benefit an EL student whose home language is not Spanish, but rather Somali, Punjabi, or something else?

It is important to know these facts about DLL programs:

- **Dual language programs promote language acquisition.**
- **The language of the program may not matter.**
 - Non-Spanish speaking ELs in dual language programs that are Spanish-English still have better rates of English proficiency than their peers (19).
 - Young children have the vast propensity to learn multiple languages at once (3, 6).
- **Bilingual students in an EL program that is not their home language will simply develop additional language skills.**
 - Students may actually achieve trilingualism, as has already been shown in dual language schools in Washington State (See the spotlight on Vietnamese-English dual language program in this report).
- **Dual language programs create a new paradigm in which all students are language learners and all students are acquiring important associated bilingual brain skills.**
- **Dual language programs encourage an excitement about multiculturalism and global learning.** While a program may be about one language, the lessons to develop inquisitiveness and open-mindedness about language, culture, traditions, and personal difference are powerful and universal.

SPOTLIGHT: HIGHLINE'S VIETNAMESE-ENGLISH DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

In the spring of 2012, Highline Public Schools took the bold step of establishing a Vietnamese-English Dual Language Immersion program—the first of its kind on the West Coast. When Highline's first Spanish-English programs opened in 2008, a strong community movement began, positively encouraging school leaders to consider establishing a Vietnamese-English program as well. In the 2012-2013 school year, intensive planning began, engaging the local Vietnamese community and a broad range of other community supporters.



The first cohort began in Fall 2013. At White Center Heights Elementary School, students now spend approximately half their day in Vietnamese language instruction and half the day in English language instruction in mixed groups that include students from the school's Spanish-English program and all-day English program. Recruiting and supporting teachers with strong materials has proved very challenging, and required ongoing commitment from the school system and the community.

Together, the school and community has demonstrated that is possible to start innovative language programs.

EXPANDING PROGRAMS IN TOP REGIONAL LANGUAGES

Most dual language immersion programs in Washington State are currently Spanish-English, reflecting the high number of Spanish-speaking ELs. However, as has been discussed, the language diversity of students in South King County is large and rapidly growing. This indicates a wonderful opportunity to begin dual language programs in languages other than Spanish, such as Somali and Vietnamese. Some districts are pioneering such programs. For instance, the Vietnamese-English dual language program of Highline Public Schools is not only the first of its kind in Washington State, but across the entire Pacific Northwest.

A CALL TO ACTION

If there was ever a time to capitalize on the momentum for expanding DL programs, it is now: the new state superintendent has introduced a new vision that supports K-12 dual language programs, a new goal heavily informed by our successful demonstrations of the effectiveness of dual language programs.¹⁰

We all need to work together to create the structures that will allow this to happen. Creating new, innovative programs—namely quality DLL programs—will best support home language development and English proficiency for all multilingual students, while achieving valuable bilingualism for countless students—of any background—across the state.

BOLD DISTRICT POLICIES ADVANCE BILINGUALISM: "IT IS THE GOAL OF HIGHLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT ALL STUDENTS IN THE CLASS OF 2026 AND BEYOND WILL GRADUATE TO EARN THE SEAL OF BILITERACY, BECOMING BILINGUAL AND BILITERATE AND ABLE TO SPEAK, READ AND WRITE IN ENGLISH AND AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE."

*HIGHLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD POLICY 0515 -
BILINGUALISM & BILITERACY,
ADOPTED MAY 2014*

¹⁰ See http://www.k12.wa.us/AboutUs/Priorities/SuptReykdaVision_Narrative.pdf

STEP #2: INCREASE COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAMS

Our school systems must find ways to build support for students' primary languages and English development, rather than defaulting to English-only models. Anywhere a dual language program is not feasible, bilingualism can be fostered through community-language programs.

Community language programs are another effective way to support our EL students.

A community language (also sometimes called a "heritage language") is a language other than English spoken by an individual, a family, or a community.

A community or heritage language program is designed to support first language development. For Native students, the goal is Indigenous language revitalization. These programs can include before or after school, weekends or summer programs, programs hosted by community based organizations (CBOs), or classes during the school day.

We now understand that supporting students' first language skills is critical for their success in school. Developing first language:

- Contributes to a student's positive identity and feelings about academic efficacy in school, which leads to improved academic outcomes (10, 22),
- Improves English language acquisition (19, 22),
- Increases a student's ability to earn the Seal of Biliteracy and benefit from the World Language Credit Program, increasing access to credit-generating opportunities in high school that contribute to improved graduation rates (11).

While there may be challenges to supporting the vast array of languages found in our school systems at first, finding innovative ways of doing so promises great benefits for our students, while also presenting important opportunities to cement stronger school-community partnerships.

Districts should leverage opportunities to partner with families, community-based organizations, and cultural groups. The community can be engaged to identify strong resources for teaching languages and implementing language-learning programs. **When school districts and educators work hand-in-hand with the community to support student success, it is a truly collective approach to student achievement, and the one most likely to see positive, sustainable results.** Once these much-needed improvements have been made to the educational system regionally, best practices can then be shared and scaled across the state.

"BEFORE MY SON LEARNED HIS HOME LANGUAGE OF CHINESE, HE ONLY SPOKE ENGLISH. HE STARTED LEARNING CHINESE IN 1ST GRADE, AND NOW HIM AND HIS GRANDPARENTS HAVE A REALLY GOOD RELATIONSHIP. **SOMETHING CHANGED IN MY FAMILY. THE HOME LANGUAGE HAS BEEN SO POWERFUL AND IT'S REALLY BUILT THEIR RELATIONSHIP. NOW MY SON KNOWS BOTH SIDES OF THE CULTURE AND HE SPEAKS MORE CONFIDENTLY IN BOTH LANGUAGES.**

I WANT MY KIDS TO KEEP THE HOME LANGUAGE AND CULTURE. IF THEY SPEAK THE LANGUAGE AT HOME IT HELPS TO BUILD UP THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP. WHEN MY SON'S GRANDPARENTS READ A CARD HE WROTE FOR THEM IN CHINESE THEY ARE SO PROUD OF HIM. MY ENTIRE FAMILY IS VERY PROUD OF MY SON."

- ELISA,
ONEAMERICA COMMUNITY
LANGUAGE (CLO) PARENT
LEADER

"WHEN I CAME TO THE U.S., I STARTED COLLEGE ESL CLASSES. BEING BILINGUAL HELPED ME TO BUILD CONFIDENCE IN MY COMMUNICATION AND OPENED MY BRAIN TO LEARNING QUICKLY. IT WAS A CONVERSATION STARTER AND A QUICK WAY TO CONNECT WITH NEW PEOPLE WHEN I CAME TO SEATTLE.

I BELIEVE IN BILINGUALISM AND HAVE LAUNCHED AN ONLINE CAMPAIGN [BARO AFKAADA HOOYO/ LEARN YOUR HOME LANGUAGE IN SOMALI] TO RAISE AWARENESS IN MY COMMUNITY AND HOPE TO TEACH CRASH COURSES ON THE WEEKEND TO SOMALI KIDS SO THEY CAN EXPERIENCE WHAT I HAVE."

- OMAR,
ONEAMERICA COMMUNITY
LEADER



STEP #3: INCREASE LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION EFFORTS FOR NATIVE STUDENT SUCCESS

LANGUAGE LEARNING SUPPORTS NATIVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

THERE IS NO TIME TO WAIT. AS WE SPEAK, THE NUMBER OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE SPEAKERS IS ON A RAPID DECLINE, AND SOME INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ARE BEGINNING TO COMPLETELY DISAPPEAR.

“SCHOOLS NEED ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO DEVELOP THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS. WE HAVE MADE MORE PROGRESS IN REVITALIZING THE QUILEUTE LANGUAGE AS A RESULT OF THIS TWO YEAR GRANT THAN HAS OCCURRED OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS.”

*- MARK JACOBSON,
SUPERINTENDENT, QUILEUTE
TRIBAL SCHOOL, 2017-2018
DUAL LANGUAGE GRANTEE*

Because of a history of colonization and forced assimilation, our school systems often fail our Native students. This is driven by national erasure of Native languages and cultures. **Indigenous language revitalization programs help address the opportunity gap for Native students.**

Through cross-racial organizing, we have been working in partnership with Native communities to advocate for language revitalization efforts. As a result of our advocacy, four Washington State tribal-compact schools (public schools operated according to terms of a state-tribal education compact) have received grant funds for Indigenous language learning programs—Quileute Tribal School, Wa He Lut Indian School, Muckleshoot Tribal School and Chief Kitsap Academy. These grants must continue into 2019 and grow even more.

Revitalization and preservation of Indigenous languages has numerous positive effects for Native students. Research shows that doing so:

- Improves self-esteem,
- Promotes academic success to close the opportunity gap for this student group,
- Strengthens the connection to identity and culture (14, 17, 26).

The loss and endangerment of Indigenous languages is an immediate and time-sensitive threat that can be best slowed by language revitalization. With these efforts, we stand not only to preserve languages on the brink of extinction, but also strengthen resilient cultures and communities.

CROSS-RACIAL MOVEMENT BUILDING IN ACTION: IMMIGRANTS AND NATIVE COMMUNITIES ACT IN SOLIDARITY

AS A RESULT OF OUR UNITED COMMUNITY ADVOCACY TO RECEIVE THIS GRANT, FOUR TRIBAL COMPACT SCHOOLS WERE FUNDED TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS.

STEP #4: BUILD A BILINGUAL WORKFORCE



The need to address educator shortages is perhaps the most important piece of the puzzle to close the education gap for EL students and students of color. We need more educators who reflect the racial and linguistic diversity of our students and who are well-prepared to provide bilingual education, including teaching in dual language programs.

We are in dire need of well-prepared educators who reflect and understand our students. An improved education workforce would rectify:

- In the Road Map Project Region in 2017, 21.3% of students were ELs, but only 8.2% of teachers had EL endorsements and—even worse—0.6% of teachers had bilingual endorsements¹¹.
- In Washington, only 5.1% have EL endorsements, and a slim 0.7% of teachers have bilingual endorsements (See Appendix E for more details on endorsements in the region and state).
- The shortfall of teachers trained to teach in dual language programs, particularly where the number of such programs is now growing.
- The fact that educators do not reflect the student body. **Statewide, while nearly 50% of students are students of color (many of them ELs), 89% of the workforce is white** (Professional Educator Standards Board, 2018). See Appendix F for regional data.
- The lack of educators of color. Research shows the impact that educators of color can have on closing opportunity gaps for students of color (2).

Going forward, it is paramount that emerging bilingual students be led by teachers using their own bilingual skills. The access of EL students to such educators is staggeringly low.

There is a major shortfall of educators with bilingual and EL endorsements that must be fixed.

Our ability to develop a more qualified, bilingual teaching workforce that advances students will best be accomplished by investing at the state level and in initiatives by school districts or teacher preparation programs.

The following programs to strengthen efforts to recruit and retain bilingual educators and educators of color require further state support and investment:

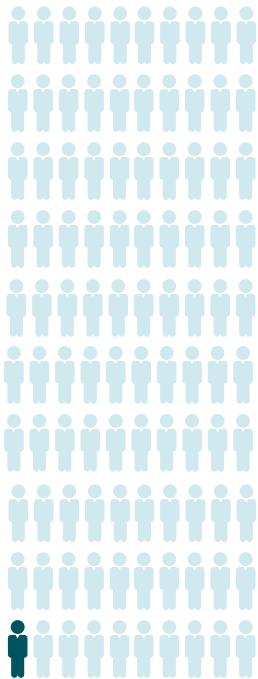
IN 2017, ONLY 0.6% OF TEACHERS HAD BILINGUAL ENDORSEMENTS IN THE SOUTH KING COUNTY AREA.

¹¹ The Road Map Project Region does not include North Seattle schools. However, this fact includes data from North Seattle schools due to the inability to disaggregate the teachers with Bilingual endorsements or EL endorsements for Seattle Public Schools by North and South Seattle.

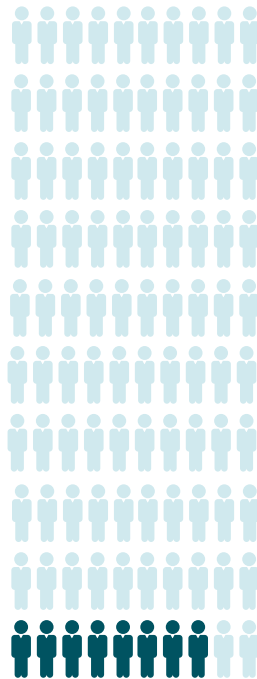
- **“Grow Your Own” programs**, which are district and community driven programs that create pathways for community members to teach in their own communities
- **Alternative Routes to teaching programs**, career-embedded teaching programs which focus on developing instructional assistants and career changers with pre-existing skills to offer into educators while allowing them to work while simultaneously earn their certification
- Forward-looking **high school student recruitment programs** such as the Recruiting Washington Teachers Bilingual Educator Initiative, which expose bilingual high school students to the teaching profession and support college-readiness
- Regional efforts to create stronger access to the teaching profession through **individualized support and centralized information**

PERCENT OF TEACHERS WITH BILINGUAL ENDORSEMENTS OR EL ENDORSEMENTS (INCLUDING NORTH SEATTLE)

1%
OF TEACHERS
HAVE A BILINGUAL
ENDORSEMENT



8%
OF TEACHERS
HAVE AN EL
ENDORSEMENT



ABOUT THE DATA:

The Road Map Project Region does not include North Seattle schools. However, this graphic includes data from North Seattle schools due to the inability to disaggregate the teachers with Bilingual endorsements or EL endorsements for Seattle Public Schools by North and South Seattle.

In this graphic, 1% is rounded from 0.6%, and 8% is rounded from 8.2%.

Source: OSPI Report Card Data Files and OSPI Educator Growth and Development (EGAD), Prepared by CCER Data and Research Team



Many teacher preparation programs are now actively seeking funding and building programs to develop future bilingual educators. The University of Washington's recently launched its "Bilingual Educator Capacity" (BECA) program in response to the local district-identified need for more bilingual educators in the region. The program is developing bilingual endorsed Spanish and Vietnamese teachers.

Additionally, **current education programs must shift to create programs that are more inclusive of communities of color. Teacher Prep Programs are also responsible for actively recruiting and retaining bilingual teacher candidates** through pro-active partnerships with local school districts and community-based organizations. This will require forward-thinking initiatives that center equity as well as capacity-building funding.

"AFTER BECOMING A ONEAMERICA LEADER, I BECAME MOTIVATED TO USE MY OWN EXPERIENCE AS AN EL TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF OTHERS, AND I ENROLLED IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAM AT HIGHLINE COLLEGE TO BE AN EARLY LEARNING TEACHER. I BELIEVE OUR YOUTH NEED TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE WORTH SO MUCH. THAT THEIR CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND BEING ARE THINGS TO EMBRACE AND BE PROUD OF. I WANT TO USE MY JOB AS A TEACHER TO INSPIRE OUR YOUTH TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE FOR US AND FOR THEMSELVES."

- DANIA,
ONEAMERICA COMMUNITY
LEADER

PREPARING COMMUNITY TEACHERS: THE VALUE OF DISTRICT AND TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS

The Kent School District and Antioch University—both represented in the ELL Work Group—have launched a new teacher preparation program designed to grow community educators already working in the Kent School District.

The program, called the Alternative Route to Teacher Certification (ARTC) Program is an innovative "Grow Your Own" teacher education collaboration. **This partnership is a model for strong partnerships between a school district and teacher preparation program**, supporting Kent School District instructional assistants to earn their teaching certificate, EL endorsement, and master's degree in one year—all while continuing to work in Kent schools.

The ARTC Program is committed to preparing teachers who are deeply rooted in and reflect the powerful diversity of the Kent community. Many of the ARTC Program students are themselves multilingual, immigrants, people of color, and career-changers. They contribute to a rich learning context for one another. The ARTC Program encourages participants to draw on their life experiences, community connections, language skills, and cultural and community knowledge to support KSD schools, students, and families. Many ARTC students would not be able to participate in a traditional teacher preparation program, so ARTC also provides scholarships to mediate the program cost and allows students to continue working while in the program. **The benefits of this program is only possible because of state investments in Alternative Route Grants.**

The ARTC Program includes a rigorous course load that focuses on responsive, social justice-oriented teaching as well as year-long student teaching and mentorship. With course instruction on advocacy, teacher leadership from experienced Antioch faculty and KSD leaders, and community engagement guidance from local organizations, the program is developing powerful teachers and school leaders of the future. **Continued investments from the state in Alternative Route Grants and Grow Your Own Programs are needed to sustain and grow these types of programs.**

STEP #5: SUPPORT EDUCATORS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO PROMOTE SPEAK MESSAGES



What an educator (teacher, classroom assistant, early learning provider or a front office administrator) says to a student or family (knowingly or unknowingly) sends messages and impacts students in significant and far-reaching ways. Because the overwhelming majority of WA teachers are white (89%), we must recognize the ways in which white-dominant culture is perpetuated in our racially and linguistically diverse classrooms.

No one disputes that it is necessary for students to learn English; doing so contributes to their success in school and future life in the U.S. But **acquiring English need not be at the sacrifice of home language.** When educators send the message—direct or implied—that a student’s home language is not important, the damage is severe.

Teachers must reflect on their perspectives and values to understand how those affect and shape the students in their classrooms. They should receive training on how to create culturally responsive instruction and classrooms.

The SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE public awareness campaign can be a significant tool in helping teachers provide culturally responsive instruction. The campaign explores all the reasons why bilingualism is an asset. Its website (www.SpeakYourLanguage.org) offers resources to help schools, families, and communities actively encourage bilingualism in our students while encouraging educational achievement.

SPEAK centers on the fact that home language maintenance is crucial to the success of our student population. The campaign debunks the common myth that home language maintenance and English language acquisition are at odds. In fact, research shows that home language development in fact helps other language acquisition, while offering a number of other significant bilingual brain benefits. SPEAK shares persuasive research about the benefits of bilingualism and home language maintenance, as well as information, toolkits, videos, and other resources for educators, policymakers, parents, and students.

In 2017-18, OneAmerica led a rebranding of the Campaign, with a new logo, tagline, mobile-friendly website, translated videos and tools and in-depth toolkits. Going forward, a key advocacy priority will be building public will for the SPEAK campaign.



"OUR TEACHER CAME UP AND SAID 'YOU GUYS CANNOT TALK IN SPANISH IN HERE.' I SAID THAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE WORK IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE, BUT IT MADE ME FEEL BAD."

- STUDENT INTERVIEW
BY EDUCATION NORTHWEST,
2014 WORLD LANGUAGE
CREDIT PROGRAM REPORT (10)

The advocacy priorities listed in this report are all deeply connected with the work of the SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE Campaign. **The Campaign allows us to operate education with a shared understanding of the facts and current research around bilingualism and the talents of our EL students.** With better-informed teachers and families, the passing of recommended policies around bilingualism will be more effective.

Educators must be trained in the key information and messages explained in the SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE campaign, so they can correctly convey the same to the parents and students who rely on their guidance. Parents are often the gatekeepers of their children's bilingualism, so if teachers are informed about the importance of home language maintenance, they can connect with families in new ways. **Teachers have the potential to have an extraordinary impact on how we value ELs in our education system and how we grow bilingualism across our state.**



STEP #6: EXPAND THE WORLD LANGUAGE CREDIT PROGRAM AND THE SEAL OF BILITERACY

THE WORLD LANGUAGE CREDIT PROGRAM

The World Language Credit Program is a high school program that allows students to receive up to four high school credits for fluency in a language other than English. These credits can be used toward graduation and are required by four-year colleges in Washington.

In 2011, we advocated for the launch and expansion of the World Language Credit Program throughout South King County. Since then, the program has been offered by all seven Road Map Project school districts and scaled statewide. Given core-24 and the rise in credit requirements for graduation, this is a wonderful opportunity for students to use their skills in another language in order to earn high school credit. **This program is unique to the entire nation, a prime example of the way the ELL Work Group has led through innovation.** Investments in the infrastructure of the program statewide are still needed, including support for all districts to offer the program and successfully administer testing for students to earn the credits in a variety of languages.

While we know that these educational programs are succeeding, the state's failure to carefully track Seal of Biliteracy and WLCP data leaves a void in our understanding of just how impactful they are. Better data collection at OSPI is needed to report on exact numbers of students who have earned World Language Credits. Only through regional data collection efforts, we know that **in 2017, world language credits were earned in 51 different languages.**

In 2014-2015, Education Northwest, a nonprofit education research organization, conducted studies evaluating the impact of the the World Language Credit Program on student attitudes and high school graduation credits (10,11).

The studies offered several major findings about the World Language Credit Program, including:

- Students recognized the personal, cultural, and social value of bilingualism and felt proud of being bilingual.
- **World Language Credits gave students choices and the important opportunity to graduate on time.** Students felt that receiving World Language Credits without having to attend class gave them space to focus on achieving what they needed to graduate. Due to this flexibility, some were able to retake failed courses and graduate on time, while others used the opportunity to enroll in advanced-level courses that improved their college eligibility.
- **Receiving credits made many students feel proud and confident about being bilingual, making them feel like “the language is really useful.”** The program motivated students to improve their language skills or to learn a new one. For many students, it created a stronger sense of connection to parents, family members, and their own life experiences.



- **World Language credits helped many students graduate on time and become college eligible.** One in five (21%) students who participated in the program needed their competency-based World Language credits to graduate, and one in ten (10%) students who participated in the program needed the competency-based credits to be eligible to attend a four-year college.
- **More Spanish-speaking students needed World Language credits to graduate than did speakers of other languages.** A third (34%) of Spanish-speaking participants needed the world language credits to graduate compared to speakers of other languages (12%).
- Road Map Project district administrators planned to sustain the World Language Credit Program for the foreseeable future and will pay for student assessments using basic education funds. However, **districts struggle to pay for less commonly assessed languages, and they are concerned that OSPI and Washington Association for Language Teachers (WAFLT) may not continue to provide support.**

FULL REPORTS BY
EDUCATION NORTHWEST:
[HTTPS://EDUCATIONNORTHWEST.ORG/RESOURCES/CREDIT-PROFICIENCY](https://educationnorthwest.org/resources/credit-proficiency)



SEAL OF BILITERACY

The Seal of Biliteracy is closely tied to the World Language Credit Program; it is a graduation diploma feature for students who have demonstrated proficiency and literacy in a language other than English. They can show this through Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) testing, or by qualifying for/achieving the full four World Language Competency-Based Credits.

The Seal of Biliteracy honors an important asset held by many EL students in our school systems: their home language. In 2014, we advocated for this program as a way to promote positive recognition of bilingual students statewide. We are proud to report that all seven Road Map districts now offer the Seal of Biliteracy!

However, we want to see the Seal available statewide, in every school district. To accomplish this, the state will need to provide support to school districts for capacity-building to offer the Seal. Additionally, while we celebrate that every Road Map district offers the Seal of Biliteracy, the reach within each school district is not expanding to every eligible student. **Every student and family should know about the Seal of Biliteracy and have clear opportunities to attain it, no matter what school district they are in.**



2017 NUMBER OF SEALS AWARDED IN THE ROAD MAP DISTRICTS

COUNT OF STUDENTS WHO EARNED SEAL OF BILITERACY IN 2017

AUBURN SCHOOL DISTRICT	42
FEDERAL WAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	91
HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT	167
KENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	86
RENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	50
SOUTH SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	142
TUKWILA SCHOOL DISTRICT	26
RMP REGION TOTAL	604

IN 2017, THERE WERE 2,585 MULTILINGUAL GRADUATES IN THE REGION AND 604 STUDENTS EARNED THE SEAL OF BILITERACY. THIS POINTS TO OPPORTUNITY FOR MANY MORE MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS TO BE ACCESSING THE SEAL OF BILITERACY¹²

¹² Source: Number of multilingual students (OSPI CEDARS student level data via ERDC). Seal of Biliteracy earned in the Road Map Region: (OSPI CEDARS student level data via ERDC and Road Map School Districts).

ADVANCING CHANGE TOGETHER:

THE COMMUNITY LANGUAGE ORGANIZERS (CLO) PROGRAM



OneAmerica community leaders are eager for change and are actively organizing to promote the positive benefits of bilingualism.

The Community Language Organizers (CLO) Program is a one-year training program for diverse parents and youth to learn to advocate for the SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE campaign to a variety of audiences, including teachers, principals, school district personnel, school board members, and state policymakers, and spreading the message of bilingualism as an asset and strength to others in their communities.

The program is part of OneAmerica and the SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE campaign's work advancing positive messages about bilingualism and dual language learning. The program grows the leadership and influence of these parents, giving them a significant collective voice, with the goal of closing the opportunity gap in our region's birth to third grade system and beyond. CLOs are committed to advocating for bilingualism as an asset with a focus on dual generation, cross-cultural and racial organizing for education justice, and to organizing others in their communities to build leadership.

In the program, Community Language Organizer (CLO) Program participants:

- Become powerful advocates for their children and community
- Gain organizing and advocacy skills
- Develop valuable leadership skills
- Mobilize, train and educate families in their communities
- Learn how to communicate core messages about the importance of home language development to other parents, educators, and state policymakers

This leadership development program is essential to building power in our communities and supporting community members to share their priorities for bilingual education with their representatives. In this way, we can make changes together and advance the recommendations in this report. These parents will also be part of the ELL Work Group in 2019, a concrete example of how those most impacted must be leading change.

There is no doubt that, together, we can affect the necessary changes.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preceding quantitative and qualitative data, and the advocacy priorities detailed, the following steps are now recommended to support bilingualism in our region and Washington State:

Legislative & State-Level Recommendations:

- **Support expansion of Dual Language Programs Early Learning—K-12.** Successfully doing so will include systems-building infrastructure starting in the early years and attention to providing start-up costs and support to allow these programs to thrive as those preceding them have done.
- **Invest in Grow Your Own, Alternate Route to Teacher Certification, and High School Recruiting Washington Bilingual Educator programs.** Support these pathways to training that result in bilingual-endorsed teachers, so they can join our classrooms and teach our students.
- **Support initiatives that support teacher retention for bilingual educators and educators of color.** Retention rates for teachers of color are lower in Washington State than for white teachers. Specific programs and supports are needed to keep great teachers in our classrooms.
- **Invest in pilots for Community Language Programs for less dominant languages.** In order to encourage primary language in those who speak less commonly-spoken languages, there is a need for community programs in those languages. Pilots are needed that can be replicated and scaled in order to start building infrastructure.
- **Jumpstart Indigenous Language Revitalization Programs.** Numerous Indigenous languages are vulnerable to linguistic extinction. Support for Indigenous language preservation is needed for increased Native student success.
- **Improve state tracking of data** and funding for the World Language Credit Program and the Seal of Biliteracy. With accurate data to build from, we can create the most effective pathways forward.
- **Provide support to get all districts to offer the Seal of Biliteracy and World Language Credit Program to students.** Every student deserves this opportunity. Inequities are perpetuated when only some students access high school opportunities that honor their bilingual skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

District-Level Recommendations:

- **Start a Dual Language Education program** if you do not already have one.
- **Partner with community-based organizations to provide community language programs** in the top home languages of the district.
- **Work with teacher education program providers** to institute Grow Your Own programs to develop classified instructional assistants and community members to become teachers.
- **Support the SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE campaign**, sharing positive messaging about the power of bilingualism and the importance of home language retention to shared educational goals with educators and, through them, families.
- **Broaden availability of WLC testing** to a wider variety of languages, assist students with affording and accessing the testing.

Recommendations for Educators:

- **Actively encourage your students to take pride in and practice their primary languages;** host ceremonies for students who have earned a Seal of Biliteracy.
- **Guide students to partake in Seal of Biliteracy and World Language Credit Program options;** ensure your school district offers these programs and advocate for clear pathways for students to attain these honors.
- **Proactively debunk the commonly-held myth that home language retention will undo English learning efforts;** help parents and students understand how home language skills WILL improve English language acquisition.
- **Inform students of the proven value of emerging bilingual skills;** help them understand the importance of bilingualism to their education as well as their career futures .
- **Proactively encourage parents to nurture home language;** use hand-outs from SPEAK as resources.
- **Contact your legislators and ask them to advance dual language policies.**
- **Continue learning about bilingualism, via the SpeakYourLanguage.org site and its associated resources.**

Recommendations for Community Members

- Host a community event to talk about the importance of home language.
- Join OneAmerica’s Community Language Organizers (CLO) Program to advocate for SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE.
- Contact your legislators and ask them to join us in advancing dual language policy.

CONCLUSION

While we are proud of all that has been accomplished thus far, there is much work left to do to create access and opportunity for English learners (ELs) in our education system. This report has outlined our findings and successes to date, using them to inform a comprehensive plan going forward.

With the recommended actions, we can ensure schools are places where all are welcomed and where bilingualism and its many brain benefits are the norm instead of an exception, cultivating a competitive Washington workforce of tomorrow. **Bilingualism benefits all.**

Washington has already proven that, through collective action and informed legislation, we can create significant impact in the education sector in a relatively short amount of time. Education continues to be one of the most important places we can allocate funding and energy; what happens in our classrooms ripples out to families, communities, and workplaces. Taking the actions recommended in this report will not only benefit Washington, but will likely influence states across the nation to be more intentional with their inclusion of immigrant, refugee, Native, and communities of color. And there has never been a time we have needed this spirit more.

By taking concrete steps to acknowledge the power of bilingualism, we can embrace our communities of color and linguistic diversity. **If we act together, not only will we further unify our state, we will allow our greatest untapped resource and advantage—the inherent value of our diverse communities—to flourish, to the benefit of all.**



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APPENDIX A

GROWTH OF THE TOP 10 PRIMARY LANGUAGE STUDENT POPULATIONS IN THE ROAD MAP PROJECT REGION (2010-2017)

PRIMARY LANGUAGE	2010	2017	CHANGE
SPANISH	8,759	12,431	42%
SOMALI	1,770	2,474	40%
VIETNAMESE	1,664	1,804	8%
ARABIC	209	793	279%
UKRAINIAN	783	750	-4%
PUNJABI	495	596	20%
RUSSIAN	634	561	-12%
TAGALOG	506	527	4%
ENGLISH	51	518	916%
CHINESE-CANTONESE	332	485	46%
OTHER	3,858	5,733	49%

Source: OSPI CEDARS student-level data via ERDC, Prepared by CCER Data and Research Team

This chart shows the growth since 2010 of top 10 primary languages in the region, as well as the actual number of speakers of each of these languages. Spanish is by far the top language spoken, with 12,431 Spanish-speakers in 2017.

Further research is needed to understand the exact driving factors behind the significant 279% growth of Arabic EL students. There are limitations to what we can determine from the data, and there's more work to do to better understand driving factors from these trends.

English has also experienced notable growth, which could be attributed to factors related to the home language survey described earlier in the report, but again, more research and data is needed here to understand what is driving those numbers.

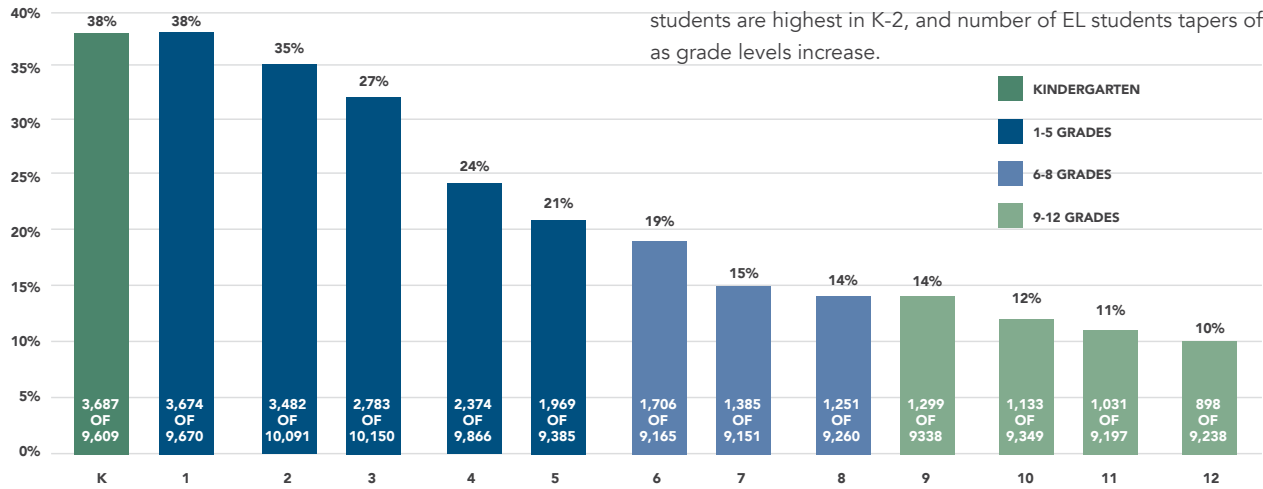


Leaders from OneAmerica and Open Doors for Multicultural Families pictured together with Federal Way Superintendent discussing Language Access Policies.

APPENDIX B

ENGLISH LEARNER (EL) GRADE COMPOSITION - ROAD MAP PROJECT REGION (2017)

The majority of "current" EL students (those actively receiving services under TBIP) are in Kindergarten. Concentrations of EL students are highest in K-2, and number of EL students tapers off as grade levels increase.

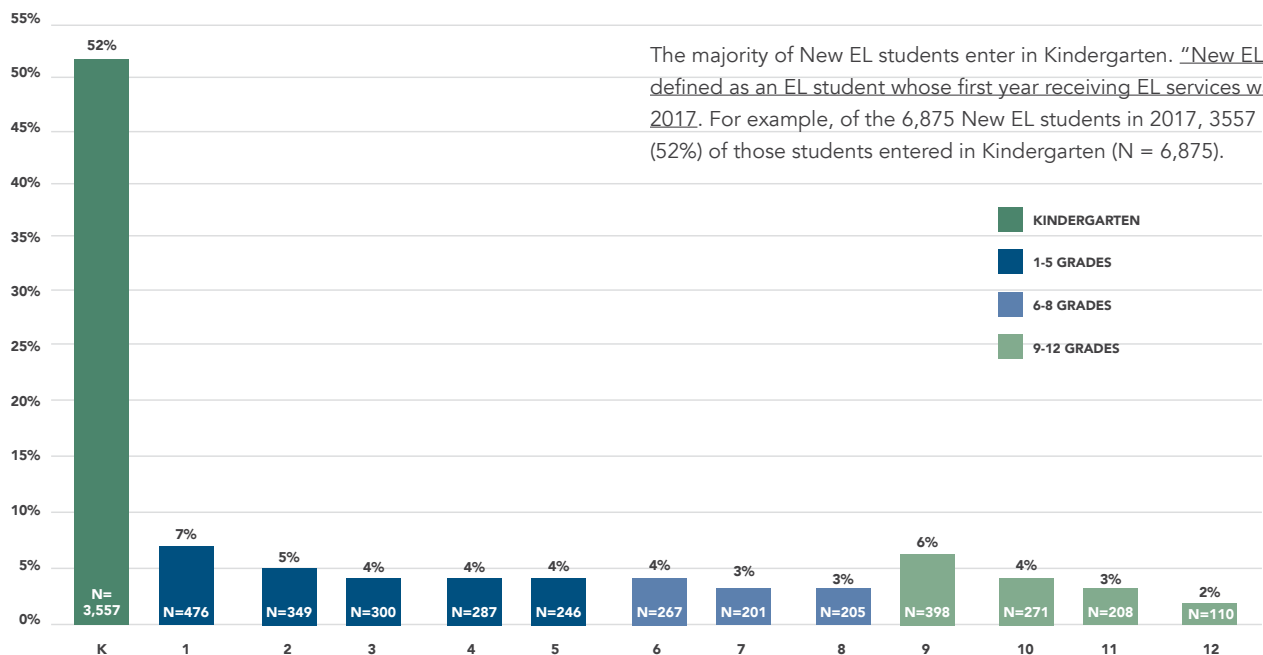


Source: OSPI CEDARS student-level data via ERDC, Prepared by CCER Data and Research Team

APPENDIX C

NEW ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL): ENTRANCE BY GRADE – ROAD MAP PROJECT REGION (2017)

The majority of New EL students enter in Kindergarten. "New EL" is defined as an EL student whose first year receiving EL services was 2017. For example, of the 6,875 New EL students in 2017, 3557 (52%) of those students entered in Kindergarten (N = 6,875).

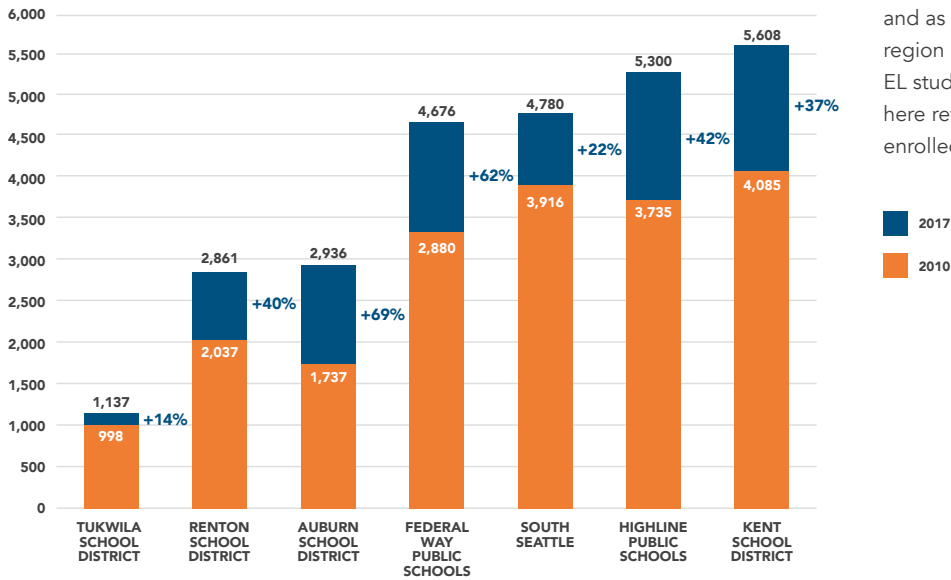


Source: OSPI CEDARS student-level data via ERDC, Prepared by CCER Data and Research Team

APPENDIX D

RISING POPULATION OF EL STUDENTS IN SOUTHERN DISTRICTS - ROAD MAP PROJECT REGION (2010 VS. 2017)

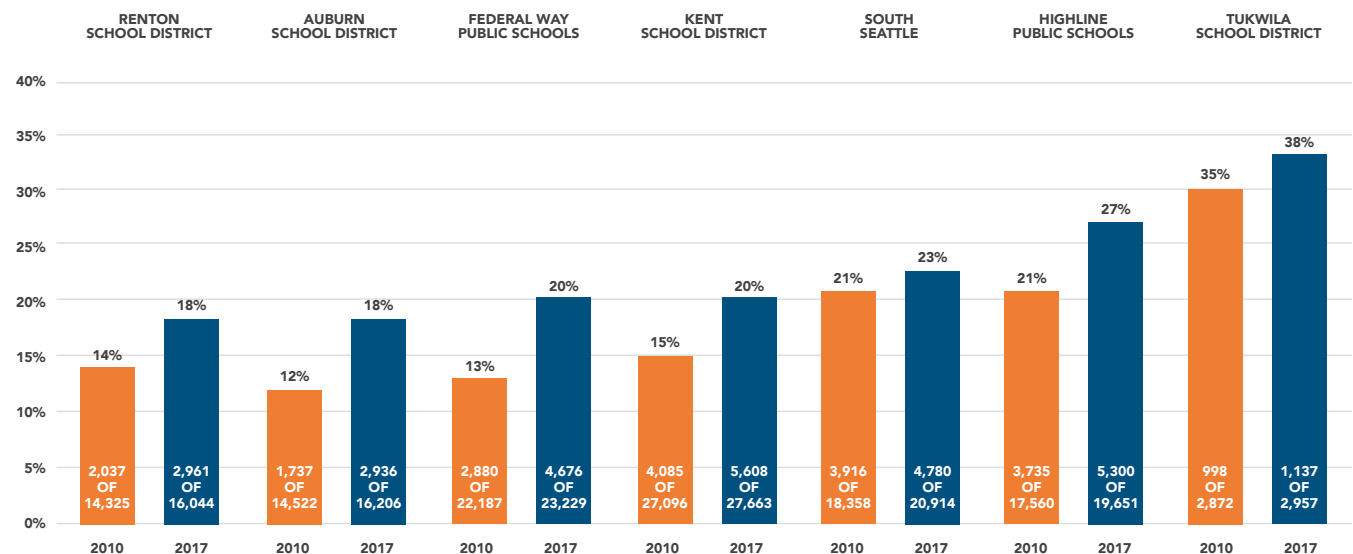
INCREASE IN CURRENT EL STUDENT POPULATION FROM 2010 TO 2017- BY SCHOOL DISTRICT



Since 2010, a larger percentage growth of EL students can be seen in the southern districts in our region. In our region, the cost of living is rising and income disparities are growing wider, and as a result, more low-income families in our region are being displaced and concentrations of EL students are moving south. The data shown here reflects current EL students (those actively enrolled in the EL program).

Source: OSPI Report Card Data Files, Prepared by CCER Data and Research Team

2010 VS 2017 CURRENT EL STUDENT POPULATION PERCENT BY DISTRICT



Source: OSPI Report Card Data Files, Prepared by CCER Data and Research Team

APPENDIX E

PERCENT OF TEACHERS WITH BILINGUAL AND EL ENDORSEMENTS - ROAD MAP REGION AND WASHINGTON STATE (2017)

REGION	% OF TEACHERS WITH BILINGUAL ENDORSEMENTS	% OF TEACHERS WITH EL ENDORSEMENTS	COUNT OF TEACHERS
ROAD MAP PROJECT REGION (WITHOUT SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS)*	0.3%	7.8%	5,991
ROAD MAP PROJECT REGION (INCLUDING ALL OF SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS)*	0.6%	8.2%	9,301
WASHINGTON STATE	0.7%	5.1%	63,541

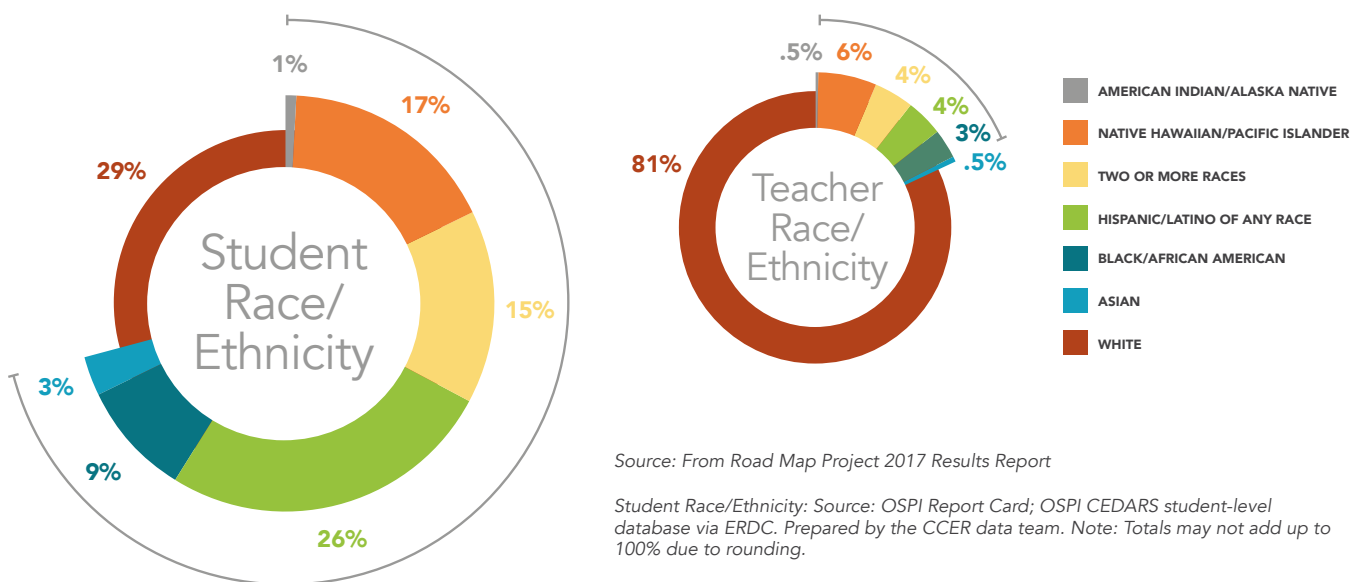
ABOUT THE DATA:

The Road Map Project Region does not include north Seattle. However, it is not possible to disaggregate South Seattle Schools from North Seattle Schools. For further comparison, numbers are shown in this chart that both include and disclude Seattle Public Schools.

APPENDIX F

DISPARITY IN THE CLASSROOM: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS OF COLOR VS. TEACHERS OF COLOR - ROAD MAP REGION (2017)

ROAD MAP PROJECT REGION STUDENTS & TEACHERS



Source: From Road Map Project 2017 Results Report

Student Race/Ethnicity: Source: OSPI Report Card; OSPI CEDARS student-level database via ERDC. Prepared by the CCER data team. Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Teacher Race/Ethnicity: Source: OSPI Personell Reporting File (S-275). Prepared by the CCER data team.

Note: Estimates of certified K - 12 teachers (based upon duty codes 31-34 with full-time employment designations greater than 0 in given year).

APPENDIX G

FURTHER DETAILS - HISTORY OF WASHINGTON STATE'S DUAL LANGUAGE GRANT EXPANSION PROGRAM

As a result of our advocacy, the Washington legislature has successfully supported the steady growth of dual language programs in the state since 2015:

In 2015, \$500,000 was secured through a budget proviso to provide grants to school districts to support start-up or expansion costs of two-way dual language immersion programs.

In 2017, through our advocacy on HB 1445, a total of \$900,000 was secured to further support growth of new dual language programs as well as programs to recruit local high school students to become bilingual teachers.

In 2018, the legislature allocated additional funding to support the further expansion of dual language programs and the Bilingual Educators Initiative.





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