



2023 DUAL LANGUAGE REPORT

**How Washington Can Become
a Quality Dual Language State**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by Radu Smintina and Elizabeth Schuster. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this report, either by giving your time to be interviewed or providing specific content knowledge based off area of expertise. We want to thank the following people for participating in interviews:

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We also want to thank Patty Finnegan and Kristin Percy-Calaff for providing insight on dual language programming and how OSPI works with districts to access funding.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are currently over 146,000 designated English language learning students (ELLs)¹ attending public schools in Washington state. These students represent hundreds of cultures and languages but Washington is their home. They deserve an education system that is accessible and serves them; one that celebrates multiculturalism and multilingualism.

Dual language (DL) programs are long-term investments in students to be bilingual and biliterate. It has been proven to be the most effective English Language Development model. It is not a language enrichment program. Starting in kindergarten, students are taught in two languages simultaneously - English and a partner language. Oftentimes dual language programs consist of a mix of English and non-English speaking students. Pedagogically, all students in dual language classrooms are seen as Emerging Multilinguals and thus, language development scaffolds and strategies are incorporated in every subject lesson throughout the day.

DL has proven to be the most effective way to educate designated English Language Learning students, which is why OneAmerica has worked to advocate for more investment in these programs, at the state and local level. Currently, there are 154 dual language programs throughout Washington.¹ Expanding and improving dual language learning was our top education issue when we invited State Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Chris Reykdal, to our 2020 community meeting. In front of hundreds of community members, he committed to a dual language vision for all Washington students.



1. "Washington State Report Card," OSPI, <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/103300>

In a press conference on August 24th, 2022 State Superintendent Reykdal shared OSPI's vision to expand dual language learning throughout the state, naming that "the evidence is clear, when young people become bilingual during the early grades, they have more cognitive flexibility and they perform better in school." By 2030 OSPI expects dual language learning to expand to 83 more school districts. By 2040, the goal is for all Washington students to have access to dual language learning.²We support this goal and are working to help realize it.

The following report provides an analysis of dual language learning in Washington state and lays out a roadmap of investments that need to be made throughout our education systems to make Washington a quality dual language state.



²OSPI. "Washington State Innovates: Expanded Access to Dual Language." OSPI News Release. August, 24, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWKYQVCygHs>. _

ABOUT DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Dual language (DL) programs teach students in two languages - English and a partner language - so that they become bilingual and biliterate. These programs are long-term investments that typically begin in kindergarten and should extend through middle and high school. Conclusive research demonstrates that immigrant students who are designated English Language Learners experience greater academic achievement and cultural competence from participating in these programs.³ Dual Language is not a language enrichment program, rather it has shown to be the most effective English Language Development program that public schools can offer.

Different models of dual language programs operate in Washington state. Some schools offer two-way programs with even numbers of students who primarily speak English and students who primarily speak another language. Other schools offer one-way programs where students primarily speak only one language at the time of enrollment.

Additionally, dual language programs vary in the ways they alternate language use throughout the school day or week. For example, teachers in schools using 50:50 models spend half the time teaching in the partner language and the other half teaching in English. In 90:10 models, teachers teach in the partner language for 90% of classroom time and English for 10%. 90:10 models start in kindergarten and incorporate progressively more English instruction each school year until instruction reaches a 50:50 model.⁴

In most dual language classrooms students experience some subjects (e.g., writing and reading) in English and other subjects (e.g., science and math) in a partner language. As a result, students may initially underperform on standardized tests compared to their peers in English-only classrooms. On average, students gain competency in both languages by the fifth or sixth year of being in the program.

3. Stephen May and Lincoln I. Dam. 2014. "Bilingual Education and Bilingualism." Oxford Bibliographies Online Datasets, August. <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199756810-0109>.

4. "Dual Language Education: What Families Should Know". OSPI. <https://tinyurl.com/2tmc7djp>.

Dual Language is not a language enrichment program, rather it has shown to be the most effective English Language Development program that public schools can offer.

BENEFITS OF DUAL LANGUAGE

We know that multilingualism benefits students, cognitively, especially at younger ages. Research has demonstrated that high quality dual language programs benefit students of all language backgrounds, both immigrant/refugee students and American-born, English-speaking students.

Studies show that students in dual-language programs have more refined language use and enjoy greater cognitive flexibility and memory.⁵ On average, students speaking the partner language ultimately outperform their peers in English assessments and experience schooling that validates their diverse cultures, languages, and identities.⁶ They also develop more positive attitudes towards those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.⁷ Such findings show that learning in a dual language setting can help combat harmful perspectives such as xenophobia and ethnocentrism. Finally, students in dual language programs are less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to attend college.⁸

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5. Thomas & Collier. 2002. "A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement." Santa Cruz, CA, and Washington, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.

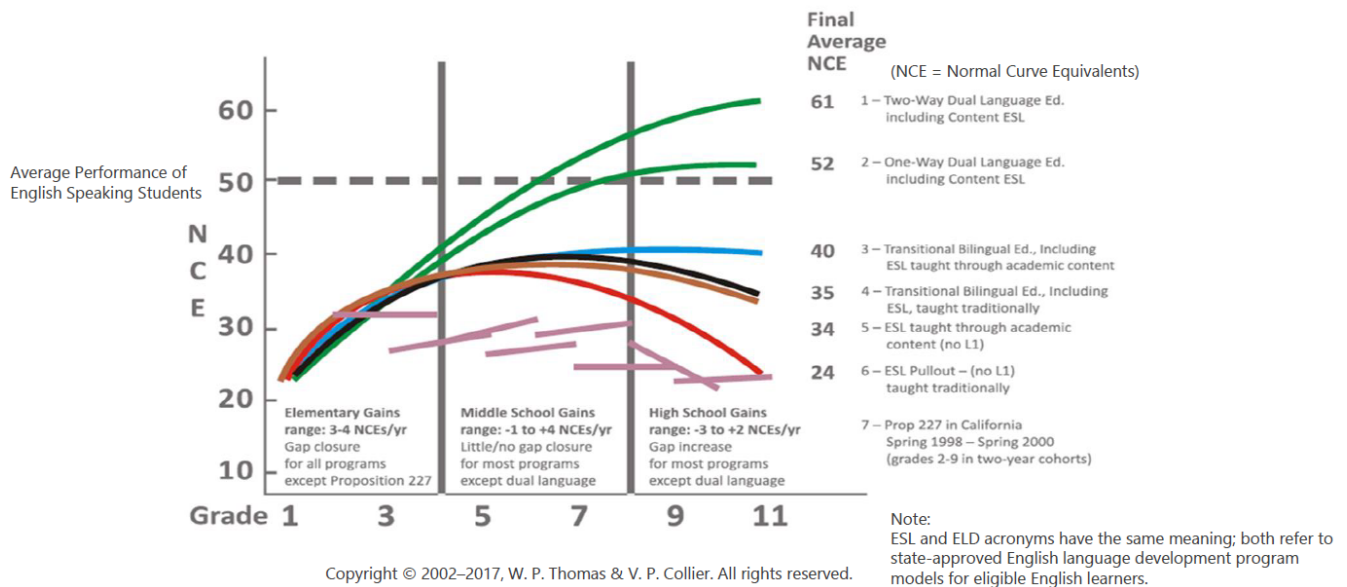
6. Lindholm-Leary. 2005. "Review of Research and Best Practices on Effective Features of Dual Language Education Programs." San José: San José State University.

7. Cazabon., Lambert, & Heise-Baigorria (2002). "Field-initiated bilingual education research project." (Award number R306F960155-98). U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

8. Lindholm-Leary. (2005). "Dual language achievement, proficiency, and attitudes among current high school graduates of two-way bilingual programs." NABE News.



English Learners' Long-Term Achievement on Standardized Tests in English Reading Compared Across Seven ELD Program Models



The graph above reflects years of data collected by leading researchers, Thomas and Collier, from school districts across the United States in studies that are generalizable to different regions and contexts. The green lines represent one-way and two-way dual language programs while the other lines represent various other English Language Development (ELD) instructional models. Over the course of their K-12 education journey, designated English Language Learning students (ELLs) in dual language classrooms tend to significantly outpace their peers in English-only classrooms and other ELD programs. Furthermore, around the 6th grade, students participating in DL programs tend to reach proficiency on the English - Language Arts portion of standardized tests. They then go on to continue improving on this portion of standardized testing as they go through middle and high school. Thomas and Collier's research has been ground-breaking and it has been replicated in other geographical locations, by independent studies, yielding similar results.

WHAT A QUALITY INVESTMENT IN DUAL LANGUAGE LOOKS LIKE

Dual language learning is the most effective English Language Development program in the long term. This instruction model aligns with federal, Title III, requirements as one of the outcomes of a successful dual language education is that immigrant students “attain English proficiency and develop high levels of academic achievement in English.”⁹ However, many continue to view DL as a language enrichment program rather than a form of basic education. This misconception has led to underinvestment in DL learning, in turn, making it hard for families to access these programs and harming designated ELLs. This is an equity issue that must be addressed. A quality investment in DLL includes the following elements:



A Permanent Funding Model

School districts rely on grant funding to start, improve and expand their DL programs. The amount of grant funding is decided on a biennium basis by the Legislature. OSPI is responsible for administering this grant funding to school districts that are interested in facilitating these programs. This funding model needs to change for two reasons:

1. **Stable funding is needed to build out dual language programs**, from kindergarten through 12th grade. Maintaining DL grant programs are not written into law. Currently, organizations like OneAmerica must advocate for the inclusion of DL funding every odd year when the Legislature makes the next biennium budget to ensure these programs continue to operate.
2. **Dual language is considered “basic education”**¹⁰ as it is a Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP). House Bill 2261, passed in 2010, reiterates what is already written in our state’s constitution - the Legislature is responsible for funding basic education. While TBIP funds are often used to sustain large chunks of ongoing DL programs, grant funds are essential for starting new programs and investing in professional development. Budget provisos are not guaranteed funding sources and they can reinforce the false narrative that dual language programs are enrichment programs.

9. Title III Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students. Office of Elementary & Secondary Education. <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-legislation-table-contents/title-iii-part-a/#TITLE-III-PART-A>

10. HB 2261 - 2009-10. Washington State Legislature. <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=2261&Year=2009&Initiative=false>



District Leadership aligned with DL Vision and Goals

While dual language programs have shown themselves to be the most effective instructional program for designated ELLs, implementing them is not an easy lift. Starting and growing a dual language program requires investments in teacher capital and curricula, district-wide supports, restructuring school schedules, and more transportation options, among other things. Thus, it is crucial for school district leadership, namely the superintendent and school board, to have a comprehensive understanding of DL and support the program's development. This includes hiring full-time employees at the district level to oversee DL expansion and support schools.



Qualified Educators and Curricula in the Partner Language

A majority of the seed funding among new dual language programs typically go to securing curricula in the partner language and professional development for teachers.¹¹ The latter is just as crucial as the former because qualified teachers are the lifeblood of dual language classrooms. Professional development may include aligning curriculum with the guiding principles for dual language instruction, ensuring pedagogy is culturally competent and securing a bilingual education certificate.



Accessible & Effective Teacher Preparation Programs

In order to realize our vision of becoming a dual language for all state, we need to ensure our up-and-coming teachers are prepared to facilitate dual language learning. Relatively few active teachers in Washington hold a bilingual education certificate. Furthermore, the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) names that we have a shortage of teachers capable of providing effective ELD and bilingual instruction throughout Washington state.¹²

We need more teacher preparation pathways at postsecondary institutions that center multilingual instruction and dual language learning. A few programs currently exist, such as the University of Washington's Bilingual Educator Capacity Project (BECA). In line with PESB recommendations, some programs work in partnership¹² with school districts to grow the Dual Language teacher workforce. For example, through the "Grow your Own" initiative, Highline Public Schools provides professional development and financial assistance to budding teachers and paraeducators within the district to complete course work at Western Washington's Woodring College of Education.



11. Personal Interview. Conducted by Radu Smintina, 5 Aug. 2022

12." Addressing Washington's Educator Shortage." The Professional Educator Standards Board. May 2021

Candidates who participate in this process are called Future Bilingual Teacher Fellows (FBTF) and become prepared to teach in dual language classrooms.¹³ Upon completion of the program, fellows are strongly encouraged to become dual language teachers within Highline, thereby building out the DL capable workforce in the district.

An expansion of dual language teacher preparation programs throughout Washington universities and technical colleges, especially those partnering with school districts, is urgently needed. More information on this investment can be found in the Grow your Own Report.¹³



Fair compensation for DL Teachers

Instructing in a DL classroom requires teachers to develop auxiliary skills. Many DL teachers are bilingual and biliterate and even those instructing in just one language need to consistently provide scaffolds and supports for students. Some teachers hold additional certifications and most all DL teachers attend supplemental professional development workshops and conferences. Teachers should be compensated for the additional time, effort, and skills needed to facilitate dual language learning.



Patience

Investment in quality dual language programs is not only about money and pedagogy. Schools must exercise patience as most of their learners will start with no language development in one or both of the partner languages. Additionally, students are instructed in a multilingual environment, with some subjects being taught exclusively in a language other than English. However standardized tests are consistently given in English-only mediums. Thus, standardized test scores among early grade dual language classrooms (typically Kindergarten through 4th grade) tend to be lower relative to students in English only classrooms. Once students begin to be comfortable in both language modalities, those test scores tend to rise and dual language students outperform their peers in English-only classrooms.



13. Adams, Manuel, et. al. "Grow Your Own Teachers." The Professional Educator Standards Board. 2016.

This typically happens in the 5th or 6th year of participating in the program as is shown in the graph on page 8. As one educator puts it: “many people think, well, the more time that you spend in English, the better you're going to learn English. And what we know from research and what we know about language is actually the opposite of that is true, that the more time a child spends in their native language in that academic setting, the better that they actually acquire that second language.”¹⁴

Exercising this patience can be difficult as schools may not have the best understanding of how their learners are performing on standardized tests during their early elementary school years. However, it is important to remember that ‘pull-out’ and ‘push-in’ ELD supports have been shown to be less effective than a dual language approach. Oftentimes designated ELLs in these programs begin their educational careers underperforming and continue falling behind their English speaking peers, leading to long term inequities in their education career. So while dual language learning takes time to bear fruit, it is worth following through.

14. Personal Interview. Conducted by Radu Smintina & Elizabeth Schuster. 8 May, 2022.

It is important to remember that ‘pull-out’ and ‘push-in’ ELD supports have been shown to be less effective than a dual language approach.

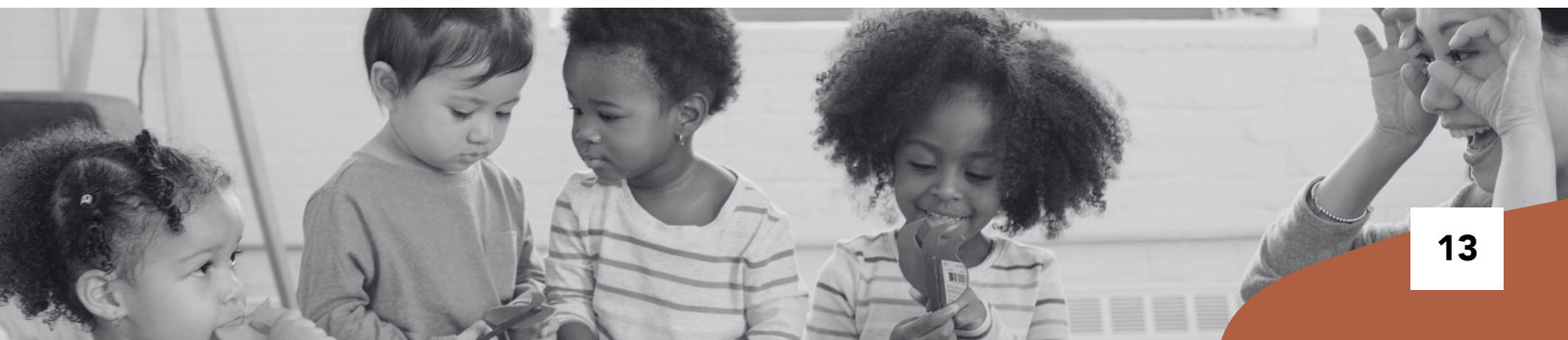
DUAL LANGUAGE IN EARLY LEARNING

In Early Learning, dual language looks quite different from the K-12 education system. 'Basic Education' in Washington state is legally defined as starting in Kindergarten and thus the K-12 public education system sits under the purview of OSPI. Meanwhile, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) oversees most publicly funded Early Learning programs including the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Head Start, and Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (FFN).

The Fair Start for Kids Act directed DCYF to establish a Dual Language Designation for licensed or certified providers who participate in Early Achievers, ECEAP, and/or Early ECEAP.¹⁵ DCYF collaborated with several agencies and organizations to increase their understanding of dual language learning and best practices, especially among 3-5 year-olds. Collaborators included the Indian Policy Early Learning (IPEL) committee, Head Start, ECEAP, Early Learning providers across Washington, and community based organizations such as OneAmerica and Child Care Aware. Additionally, DCYF collaborated with OSPI to help ensure what is built at the early learning level aligns with DL at the K-12 level.¹⁶

Ten program standards were developed to create a framework of best practices for dual language learning in early care and education. These standards address curriculum and assessment, program structure, cultural inclusivity and family engagement plus community partnerships.

15. Dual Language Learning. WA State Department of Children Youth & Families. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/early-achievers/dual-language-learning>
16. Personal Interview. Conducted by Radu Smintina & Elizabeth Schuster. 6 Jun. 2022.



Out of this work, DCYF organized the Dual Language Advisory Group - a coalition of Early Learning providers, community based organizations, and agency representatives. Through this work, ten program standards were developed to create a framework of best practices for dual language learning in early care and education. These standards address curriculum and assessment, program structure, cultural inclusivity, and family engagement plus community partnerships.¹⁷ For Early Learning programs operating throughout Washington's Tribes and native communities, an additional three standards were developed in coordination with the Indian Policy for Early Learning (IPEL), and a tribal roundtable.¹⁷ More information about all 13 standards can be found on DCYF's website where they have published the "Dual Language Program Standards: For Early Care and Education in English, Spanish and Somali."

DCYF launched its Dual Language Designation in April of 2023. During this early adopter launch, providers qualified for grant funding if they attested to providing care and instruction in two languages, had a bilingual staff member, and had at least one child enrolled who spoke the partner language at home. The amount of funding per classroom was modest - \$2,700 for most providers. Tribal providers, which were conducting Indigenous language revitalization programs, received \$4,100 per early learning classroom. Within the first two months 1,834 classrooms applied, representing 50 different languages. 62 of these applications came from Tribal Early Learning providers. DCYF had \$2.8 million to allocate to dual language designations. To meet the demand of all eligible designation requests, DCYF would have needed \$5 million. This is just for the initial 1,834 provider classrooms that applied; demonstrating that, while dual language at the Early Learning level is in its infancy, significant more funding is needed for this designation.



17. "Dual Language Program Standards for Early Care and Education." WA State Department of Children Youth & Families. DCYF Publication EL_0065 (01-2023)

WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE NEED TO GO

In 2017 the Legislature created the K-12 dual language grant program to grow capacity for high quality dual language learning in public schools and in state-tribal compact schools with the passing of HB 1445. While this program designation expired on July 1st, 2020,¹⁸ the Legislature has funded statewide DL programs at \$1.425 million, annually, through budget provisos. In the 2023 legislative session, more funding for statewide DL programs was won, with \$4.725 million allocated in the 2024 and 2025 state budgets. This increase in resource allocation is encouraging and is the product of sustained organizing and advocacy by community members, educators, and community based organizations such as OneAmerica.

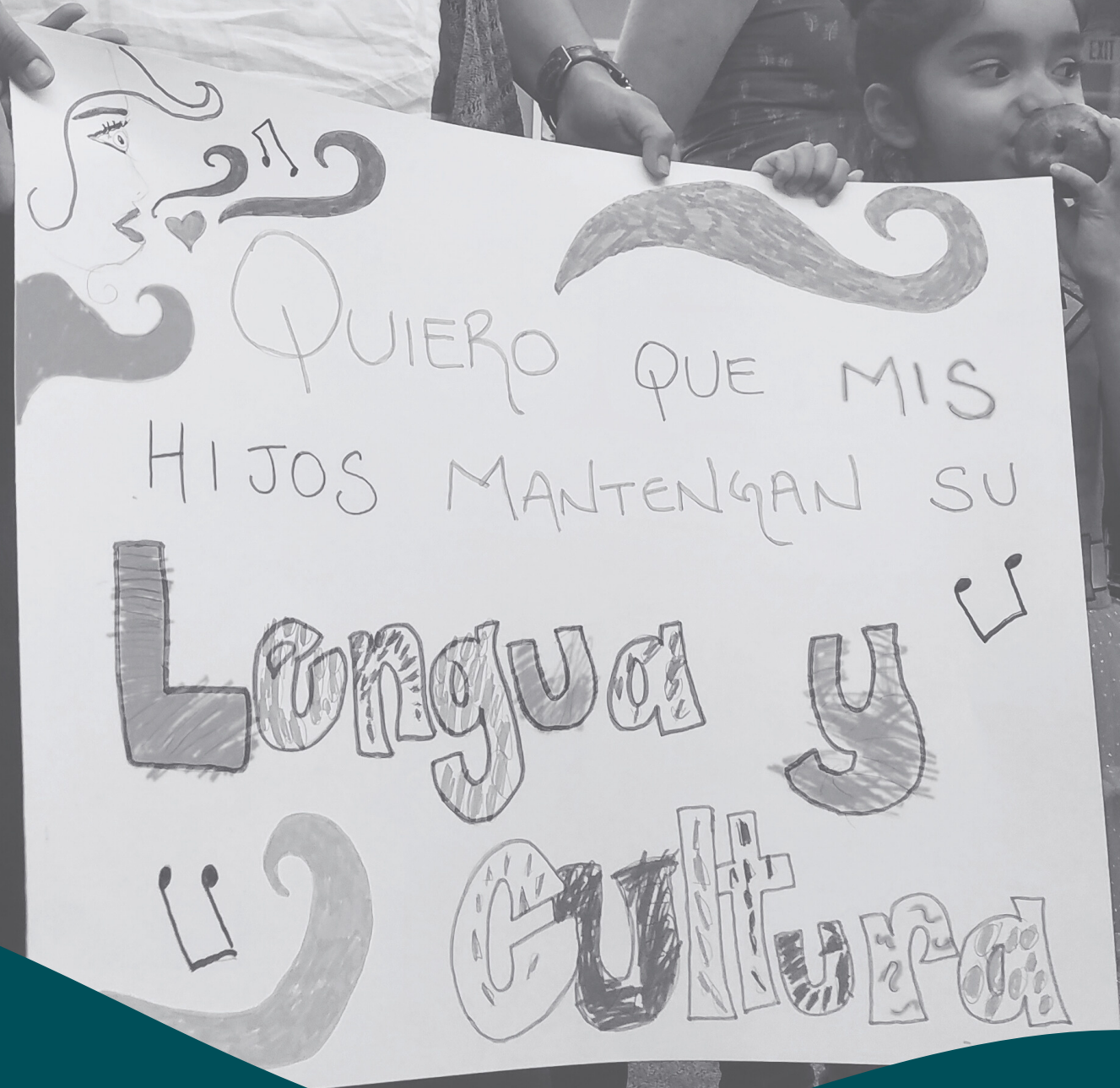
We have fought every legislative session since 2017 to continue funding these programs. However, this is not a sustainable way to grow quality dual language learning throughout Washington state. Although HB 1445 started a formal grant program for DL, it did not guarantee continued investment in these programs. In other words, the Legislature could stop funding DL programs any year now.

Furthermore, the amount of funding that has been secured for these programs is sparse. State funded grants have been given out to school districts in sums of \$25,000 - \$100,000. This covers just a portion of the costs new dual language programs require and is also insufficient for growing programs at higher elementary grade levels and beyond. School districts must currently fill the gaps using basic education funding which often means they must re-direct funding from other services.

Before passing into law, HB 1445 was substituted to name that the Legislature should revisit review and revise the K-12 educational program to take into consideration the needs of students as they evolve. It is time to fully invest in our designated English Language Learning students by passing a comprehensive dual language bill and creating a permanent funding mechanism for dual language learning. Not only must we ensure that funding continues, but we must also increase the amount we invest in these programs to grow our teacher pipeline, compensate educators appropriately, and create the ability to grow these programs throughout Washington. Now is the time to act.



18. HB 1445, 65th Washington State Legislature. 2017



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