

Expand Dual Language Programs and Bilingual Instruction to Improve Student Achievement and Close the Opportunity Gap



Dual Language programs teach students in English and another language and the most effective programs, called two-way immersion, are comprised of 50% native English speakers and 50% ELLs. **Research shows that dual language program are the best way to increase student achievement for ELLs, while also improving education outcomes for native English speaking students.**

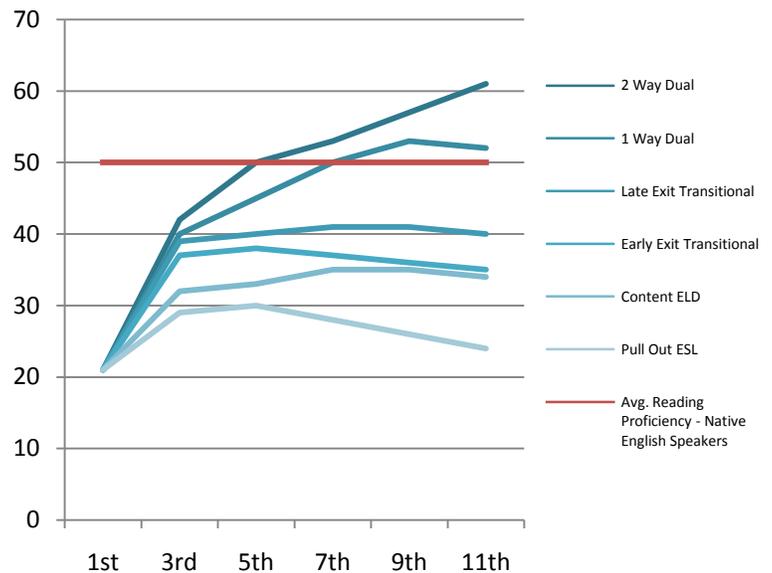
ELL and native English speaking students in dual language programs outperform their peers

Investing in dual language programming and infrastructure is a key strategy for closing the opportunity gap. Research shows that **ELL students who begin dual language programs in preschool have higher academic achievement by the end of 3rd grade and beyond**, with two-way dual language programs having the greatest impact. Moreover, **ELLs who begin dual language programs in kindergarten are meeting academic standards begin surpassing their peers by sixth grade.** However, in Washington only 3.29% of ELLs are enrolled in dual language programs, while 85.97% do not have access to bilingual instruction.

The positive impact of dual language programs is not limited to ELLs, since two-way dual language programs are composed evenly of ELLs and native English speakers. Research by the University of Washington Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences (iLABS)

found that children who learn more than one language at an early age develop more widely-dispersed and evenly-distributed neural pathways across both brain hemispheres. This exposure to a second language positively impacts cognitive and linguistic learning mechanisms. These dual language students outperform monolingual children on tasks that require attention, working memory and mental flexibility.

ELLs Long-Term Achievement by Program Model
(Thomas and Collier, 2004)



Dual language programs meet the needs of the changing demographics in Washington's classrooms

By 2025, 1 in 4 students enrolled in Washington State public schools will be ELLs. With the demographics of Washington State rapidly changing, it is essential that we meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student body with evidence-based strategies that improve student achievement. It is incredibly important that we begin to implement these proven strategies to close the opportunity gap and that we begin those investments now.

Dual language programs increase student and parent engagement

Children who don't have the opportunity to develop their home language may experience an inability to intimately communicate with their families. This can negatively impact a child's self-concept and may hinder a child's thinking and reasoning skills. **However, research indicates that students who know more than one language have better social, personal, and cognitive outcomes throughout their lives. Research also shows that dual language programs positively impact parent engagement.** Parents become more active in school activities within a culture where they feel welcomed and respected.

By 2025, 1 in 4 students in Washington public schools will be an English language learner

Dual language programs prepare Washington students to compete in the global economy

Beyond increases in student achievement and education outcomes, creating a bilingual and biliterate workforce will provide Washington with the competitive advantage it needs to thrive in a global economy. Currently, a bilingual workforce is needed in government, engineering, communications, education, scientific research, and several other service sectors.

How We Do It

We propose a **cradle-to-career approach** to expand the number of dual language programs to increase student achievement, close the opportunity gap and create statewide infrastructure to support programs and ensure their sustainability (**\$1.5 million annually**):

1. **Early learning grants, technical assistance and coaching (\$500,000).** In order to close the opportunity gap and improve student achievement among ELLs, we must begin early. SBXXXX/HBXXXX would provide financial support and technical assistance in early learning settings to increase dual language programs and bilingual instruction and support ELLs. It also creates statewide infrastructure for starting bilingual education in early childhood built into the Early Achievers coaching framework.
2. **Grants to partnering school districts (\$500,000).** In order to successfully expand dual language programming and bilingual instruction, we must begin with what we already know works. SBXXXX/HBXXXX would build and expand well-implemented, sustainable, two-way immersion dual language programs through grants to partnering school districts (one school district with an existing program and one looking to create a new program) and create state-level infrastructure dedicated to supporting dual language instruction.
3. **Scholarships to grow the bilingual workforce (\$500,000).** Washington currently has a shortage of teachers with the necessary training and certification to meet the need for dual language programming. SBXXXX/HBXXXX would create capacity for bilingual and dual language programming through the development of a pipeline for dual language teachers to work in early learning and K-12 settings, with a focus on supporting immigrants with a foreign degrees or training. The scholarships would be administered through the Professional Educators Standards Board Alternative Routes program.