



Mapping Languages Taught in Washington High Schools — 2009

Background

Since 2004, the Mapping and Enhancing Language Learning (MELL) project has surveyed schools online and by phone on whether or not they offer world languages and if so, which languages are offered and for how many years they are offered. In 2007, the MELL project created county maps based on the survey results to help illustrate the distribution of world languages offered across the state. In keeping with the theme and to identify any recognizable patterns in the increase and decrease of languages offered over time, we have created the following county maps for 2009.

In 2009, we received surveys from high schools in all 39 of Washington's counties. There is great variation in the number of high schools per county, ranging from 1 high school in Garfield County in Southeastern Washington to 76 in King County, where the Seattle metropolitan area is located. In addition, while Spanish is offered by high schools in all 39 counties, French in 29 counties, and German in 21 counties, Russian, Chinese, Latin, Native American Languages, and Arabic are offered in only a few counties.

For languages like Russian, which are offered in a relatively few counties, a loss of a language program is significant. For example, in 2007, Russian was offered in 8 counties, while in 2009, it was reported to be offered in only 5 counties.

In 2009, 5 counties offered Chinese as compared to 6 counties that reported offering it in 2007. While this number is small, the surveys do indicate some geographic shift: in 2007, Kittitas, Pierce, and Thurston Counties (counties relatively close to King County) reported offering Chinese; in 2009, they did not, while 2 counties in the outskirts of our state, Clark and Whitman, did report offering Chinese. This suggests that there is growing interest in offering Chinese across the state, but it may be difficult for districts to sustain programs.

County and Number of High Schools in the County Submitting MELL Survey in 2009

Adams	3	Lewis	10
Asotin	3	Lincoln	7
Benton	9	Mason	3
Chelan	8	Okanogan	9
Clallam	7	Pacific	5
Clark	19	Pend Oreille	3
Columbia	1	Pierce	32
Cowlitz	8	San Juan	3
Douglas	3	Skagit	9
Ferry	2	Skamania	1
Franklin	3	Snohomish	31
Garfield	1	Spokane	23
Grant	12	Stevens	6
Grays Harbor	9	Thurston	14
Island	4	Wahkiakum	1
Jefferson	4	Walla Walla	6
King	76	Whatcom	12
Kitsap	14	Whitman	7
Kittitas	3	Yakima	21
Klickitat	4	Total	396

At least 2 years

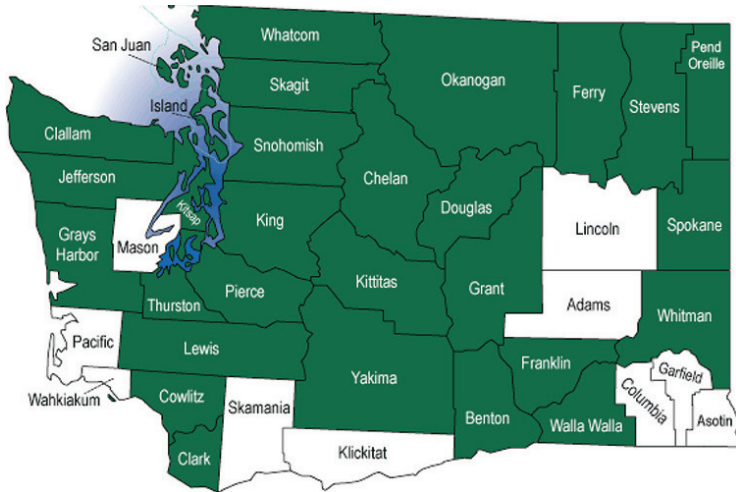
In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 39 out of 39 counties reported offering at least 2 years of a world language.





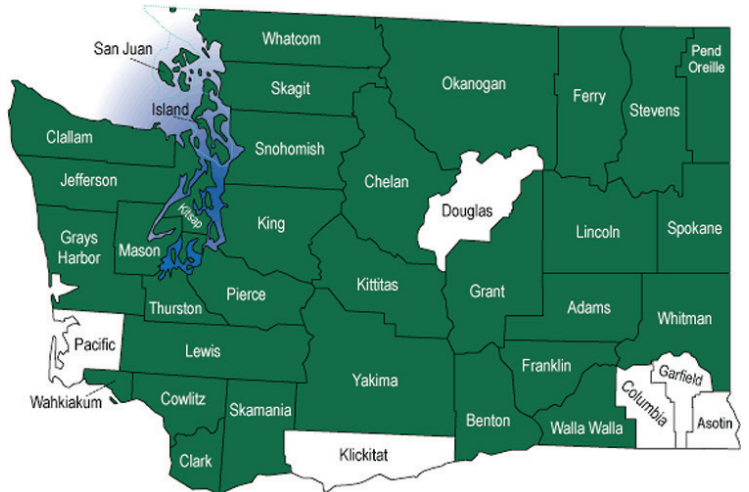
4 or more years

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 29 out of 39 counties reported offering 4 or more years of the same world language (for example, students may have begun language study in middle school and continued through the AP level in high school).



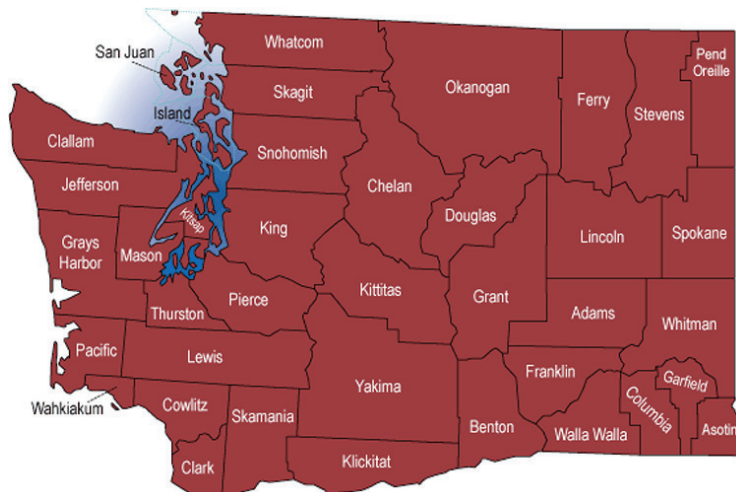
2 or more languages

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 33 out of 39 counties reported offering 2 or more world languages at their schools.



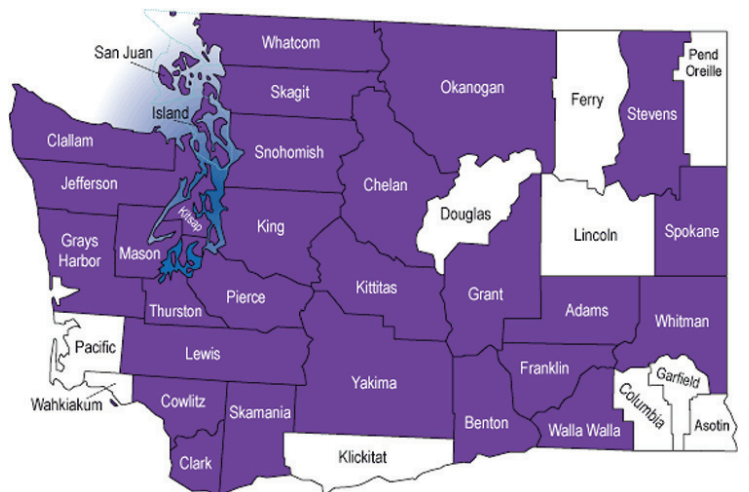
Spanish

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 39 out of 39 counties reported offering Spanish.



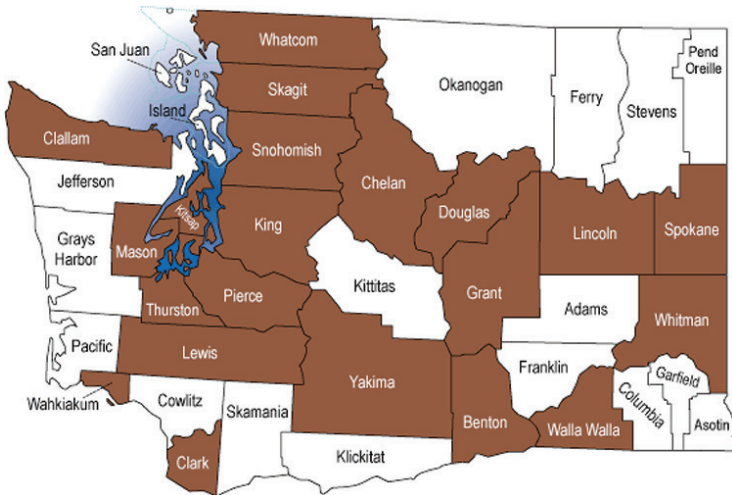
French

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 29 out of 39 counties reported offering French.



German

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 21 out of 39 counties reported offering German.



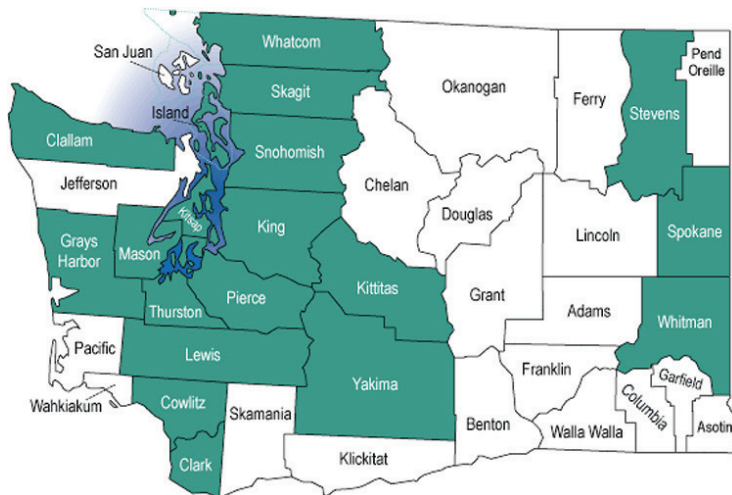
ASL American Sign Language

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 17 out of 39 counties reported offering ASL.



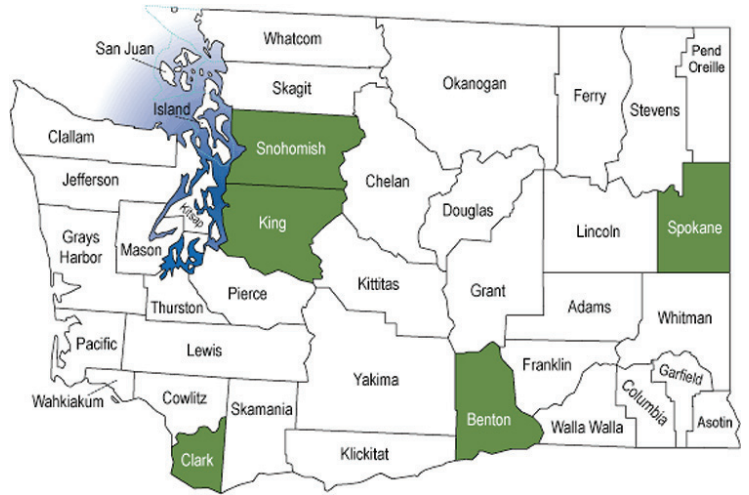
Japanese

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 19 out of 39 counties reported offering Japanese.



Russian

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 5 out of 39 counties reported offering Russian.



Chinese

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 5 out of 39 counties reported offering Chinese.



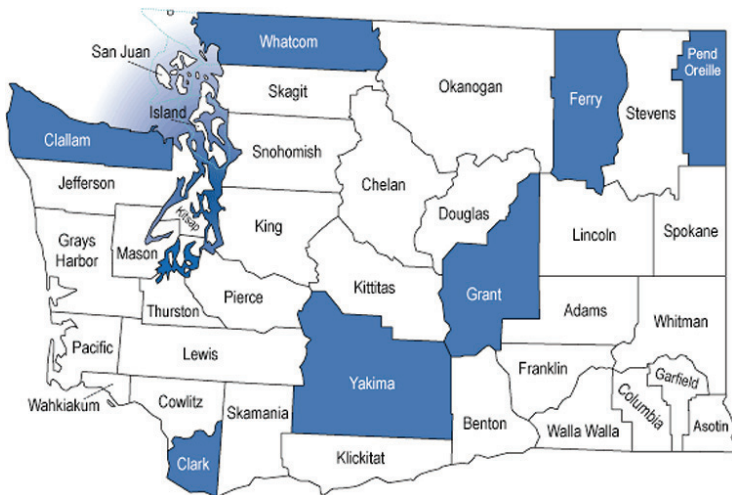
Latin

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 4 out of 39 counties reported offering Latin.



Native American Languages

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 7 out of 39 counties reported offering Native American Languages.



Arabic

In the 2009 MELL survey, high schools in 1 out of 39 counties reported offering Arabic.



Looking Ahead

We received data from every county this year, and in doing so, our picture of the languages taught across our state is growing more accurate. While 370 high schools submitted surveys in 2007, 396 submitted them in 2009. What may be more telling in the future is the impact of a 2009 legislative change to move online learning and virtual schools under the purview of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in the new Digital Learning Department (DLD) <http://www.digitallearning.k12.wa.us/>. If every high school now has access to online language courses through the DLD, will high schools report in future surveys that they “offer” those languages at their schools?

The Mapping and Enhancing Language Learning (MELL) project was initiated in 2006 by four National Resource Centers at the University of Washington’s Jackson School of International Studies, which received funding through the U.S. Department of Education’s Title VI program to launch a four-year project to collect data on world language learning and teaching in Washington K-12 schools. The Center for Global Studies (CGS), Center for West European Studies (CWES), East Asia Center (EAC), and the Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies (REECAS) are working with the UW Language Learning Center, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Washington State Coalition for International Education, and Washington Association for Language Teaching (WAFLT) to establish an understanding of world language teaching trends in Washington state. With funding from the Title VI program grants and a State Innovations grant from Longview Foundation, the MELL project is creating a series of policy briefs based on the data collected through the MELL surveys of schools. For further information, call the Language Learning Center at 206.543.0563 or email mellwa@u.washington.edu. Web: depts.washington.edu/mellwa.