

How Public Schools Can Support Heritage Languages and Language Learners

Ema Shirk, Multilingual Education

Heritage Language Symposium, February 4, 2023



Washington Office of Superintendent of
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Tribal Land Acknowledgement



We would like to acknowledge the indigenous people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial and who still inhabit these areas today.

I am presenting from the lands of the Swinomish and Samish Tribes, and I honor with gratitude the land and waters themselves and these tribes.



Vision

Mission

Values

All students prepared for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

Transform K–12 education to a system that is centered on closing opportunity gaps and is characterized by high expectations for all students and educators. We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities.

- **Ensuring Equity**
- Collaboration and Service
- Achieving Excellence through Continuous Improvement
- **Focus on the Whole Child**



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Equity Statement

Each student, family, and community possesses strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools.

Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.
- **Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.**



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How many languages do we have access to in this community?

What languages do you or could you use in your daily life?



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School-based Heritage Language Programs



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What are heritage languages?

“**Heritage Languages** are minority languages learned in a bilingual or multilingual environment. They include languages in diaspora [used] by immigrants and their children, aboriginal or indigenous languages, and historical minority languages that coexist with other standard languages... Heritage languages are precious linguistic, cultural, and personal resources for individuals and for society...” (Montrul and Polinsky, 2022)

Heritage Languages are learned in a
multilingual environment.



Languages in Schools

Languages of School

Used in...

- Assemblies
- Parent meetings
- Common spaces by a *critical mass* of educators
- Student discipline and restorative justice conversations

Translation and interpretation provide access to these languages.

Languages of Instruction

- Content Classes
 - Languages used in Content Instruction for *all* students
- Multiliteracy Development
 - Language Arts (ELA, SLA, etc.)
 - English Language Development (ELD)
 - Heritage Languages
 - World Languages

Student/ Community Languages

- Student home languages
- Languages used by students in previous schools and communities
- Community languages used outside the home environment



Acholi	Berber	Chungki/Chunkese	French	Ibo	Kirundi	Malay	Nyanja	Russian	Stoney	Turkmen
Afar	Bikol	Chuuk	Fula	Icelandic (Old)	Kishinau	Malayalam	Odia	Rwanda	Sudanese-Arabic	Twi
Afrikaans	Bisaya	Chuvash	Fulfulde	Igbo	Klallam	Mam	Oromo	Sahaptian	Swahili	Uigur
Aguacateco	Bosnian	Creole	Fur	Ilokano	Kmhmu	Manchu	Osmanli	Salish	Swedish	Ukrainian
Akan	Bulgarian	Croatian	Ga	Indonesian	Konkani	Mandingo	Palau	Samoan	Tagalog	Unknown*
Akateko	Burmese	Czech	Georgian	Italian	Korean	Mandinka	Pampangan	Sango	Taishan	Urdu
Albanian	Byelorussian	Danish	German	Jamaican	Kosraean	Maori	Pashai	Sao	Tajiki	Uzbek
American Sign Language	Cakchiquel	Dari	Greek, Modern	Jamaican Creole	Krio	Marathi	Pashto	Saraiki	Tamazight	Vietnamese
Amharic	Cambodian	Dinka	Gua	English	Kunama	Marshallese	Persian	Saurashtra	Tamil	Visayan
Arabic	Catalan	Dire	Guarani	Japanese	Kurdish	Maya-Quiche	Pilipino/Filipino	Serbian	Tarasco	Wolof
Armenian	Cebuano	Dutch	Gujarati	Javanese	Lai	Mende	Pingelapese	Serbo-Croatian	Tedim	Yakima
Assamese	Chalchiteco	Egyptian-Arabic	Haida	Jola-Fonyi	Lakota	Mien	Pohnpeian	Serer-Sine	Telugu	Yap
Azerbaijani	Cham	English	Haitian Creole	Kanjobal	Lao	Min Nan	Polish	Shona	Thai	Yoruba
Balinese	Chamorro	Eritai	Hausa	Kannada	Latin	Mixteco	Portuguese	Sindhi	Tibetan	Zapoteco
Balochi	Chechen	Estonian	Hawaiian	Karen	Latvian	Moldavian	Pulau-Guai	Sinhalese	Tigrinya	Zigula
Bambara	Chewa	Ethiopic	Hebrew, Modern	Karenni	Liberian	Mongolian	Punjabi	Slovak	Toishanese	
Bangala	Chin	Ewe	Herero	Kazakh	Lingala	Mortlockese	Pushtu	Slovenian	Tongan	
Bantu	Chinese-Cantonese	Fallani	Hiligaynon	Khmer	Lithuanian	Navajo	Q'anjob'al	Somali	Triqui	
Bassa	Chinese-Fukienese	Fanti	Hindi	Kikuya	Luganda	Nepali	Q'eqchi'	Soninke	Trukese	
Bemba	Chinese-Mandarin	Farsi	Hmong	Kikuyu	Maay	Nigerian	Quileute	Sotho	Tswana	
Bengali	Chinese-Taiwanese	Fijian	Hokkien	Kinyarwanda	Macedonian	Norwegian	Romanian	Spanish	Turkic	
	Chinese-Unspecified	Finnish	Hungarian	Kirgiz	Malagasy	Nuer	Romansch	Squaxine	Turkish	

235 Home Languages for WA Students Grades 6-12, SY22-23

Heritage Languages are learned in a *multilingual environment.*

"Dual language education" includes heritage language education, which provides opportunities for students to learn the language and culture of their families and communities.

What are heritage language programs?

School-based heritage language programs **are**:

- a path to multiliteracy for Washington's *students*; AND
- one of the paths to dual language for Washington's *schools*; AND
- based in identity-affirming, equity-based instruction; AND
- different from other forms of language teaching; AND
- support the academic and linguistic development of multilingual learners.

School-based heritage language programs **are not**:

- one-size fits all
- only available to a certain age student
- instead of English language development for ML/English learners

Types of K-12 Language Programs in Washington State

World Language Programs

Provide instruction in a language that is new to the enrolled students.

Dual Language Programs

Teach subject matter in both English and a partner language that is used by students in the local community. Programs are long-term and designed for multilingual learners.

Heritage Language Programs

Students develop the language and culture of their families and communities. Enrolled students have a connection to the language prior to participation in the program.

Tribal Language Programs

All aspects of the Tribal Language Program are determined by and in consultation with the Tribe(s) on whose land the school district resides. For more information, see the [Honoring Our Ancestors Act](#) or contact the OSPI Office of Native Education.



In 2021-2022, Washington public school students took classes in 17 Tribal Languages.

They also studied 1 indigenous language from Oaxaca and 21 non-tribal languages, 1 of which is signed and 3 of which are considered classical languages, within or beyond the school day.



HL Programs are **designed for people, not textbooks.**

- **Heritage Speakers/ Signers** have acquired their heritage language skills in their home or community. They have always been in a multilingual environment but have most likely experienced subtractive bilingualism.
- **Heritage Language Learners** are trying to regain or improve their understanding and use of a heritage language through formal study or in the classroom.
- Those who are **heritage motivated** have a cultural heritage connection to the language but have not had the opportunity to acquire the language in the home. In the classroom, heritage motivated students may have extensive knowledge of the social expectations and cultural dimension of the language but begin learning the language in a classroom setting. Heritage motivation is an essential aspect of language revitalization.

What are the benefits of including heritage language programs in public schools?

For students:

- Visibility and voice
- Connections to family, community and personal heritages
- Increased sense of belonging
- Increased academic achievement across languages
- Development of academic identity
- Stronger literacy and oracy in all languages
- Opportunities for advanced and dual credit
- Seal(s) of Biliteracy
- College and career opportunities in *all* their languages

For districts:

- Stronger connections to families and community organizations
- Ability to increase the number of ML educators in a school or the district as a whole
- Additional tier one supports for school improvement plan goals
- Primary language development and support for students who do not have access to dual language (*yet*)
- Primary language development and support for students who speak languages *in addition* to the languages of instruction



Public schools can support heritage languages and language learners by:

- Recognizing that heritage language users/signers and learners are multilingual.
- Making visible the full range of languages in the school community.
- Breaking down systemic barriers for ML/heritage learners by designing programs for them rather than finding ways they can fit in monolingual or additional language acquisition settings.

Padlet: Barriers and Benefits

Barriers

- What is the most common barrier you have witnessed or experienced as a heritage language speaker/signer in public schools?
- What is the barrier you wish you could remove for the heritage language speakers/ signers you teach?

Benefits

- What benefits do school-based heritage language bring to:
 - Communities
 - Heritage Language Learners
 - Schools and School Systems



<https://padlet.com/BilingualEducationProgram/heritage-language-barriers-and-benefits-67c58116084j76js>

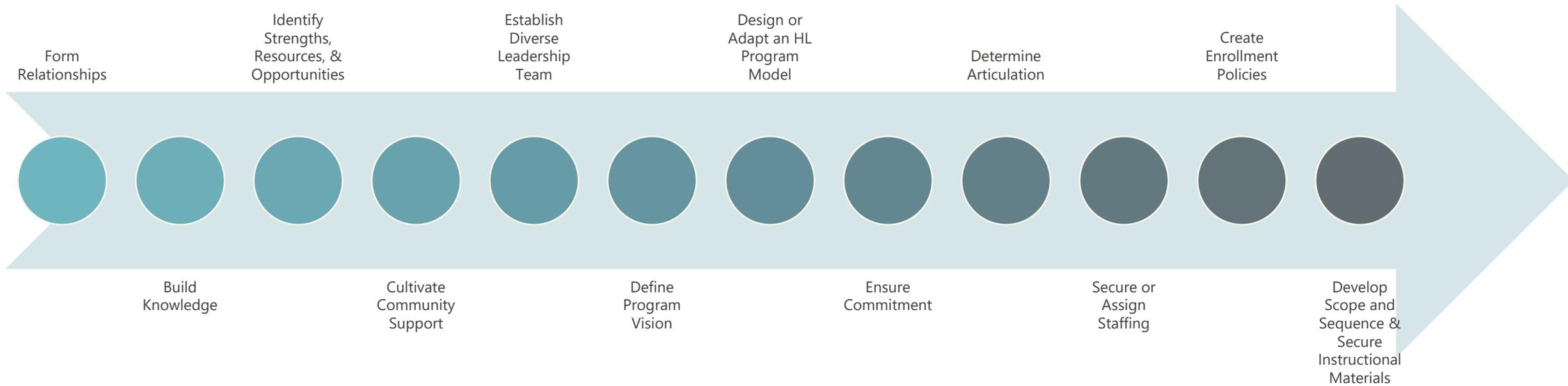


Supporting HL Educators, Schools, and Districts



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Starting a Heritage Language Program



Organize by Phase

Connect

- Form relationships with students, their families, and the community.
- Build knowledge of heritage languages and multilingualism for district and school leaders, teachers, staff, and families.
- Identify student strengths, available resources and opportunities.
- Cultivate and engage community support.

Commit

- Establish a diverse heritage language program leadership team.
- Collaboratively define program mission and vision including an aspirational profile of heritage language program graduates.
- Design or adapt a heritage language program model that best supports student academic and linguistic development and the needs of the community.
- Ensure commitment from students and families and secure long-term commitment and support from educators, building leaders, and district administrators.

Prepare

- Determine how the heritage language program will support and be supported by other district programs, including clear articulation of pathways to multiliteracy for long-term sustainability.
- Secure or assign staffing and align district resources to offer ongoing professional development and support.
- Create clear program enrollment policies that identify students with prior connections to the program language and prioritize eligible ML/English learners that are effectively communicated to families and the school community.
- Develop scope and sequence and secure instructional materials.

Begin

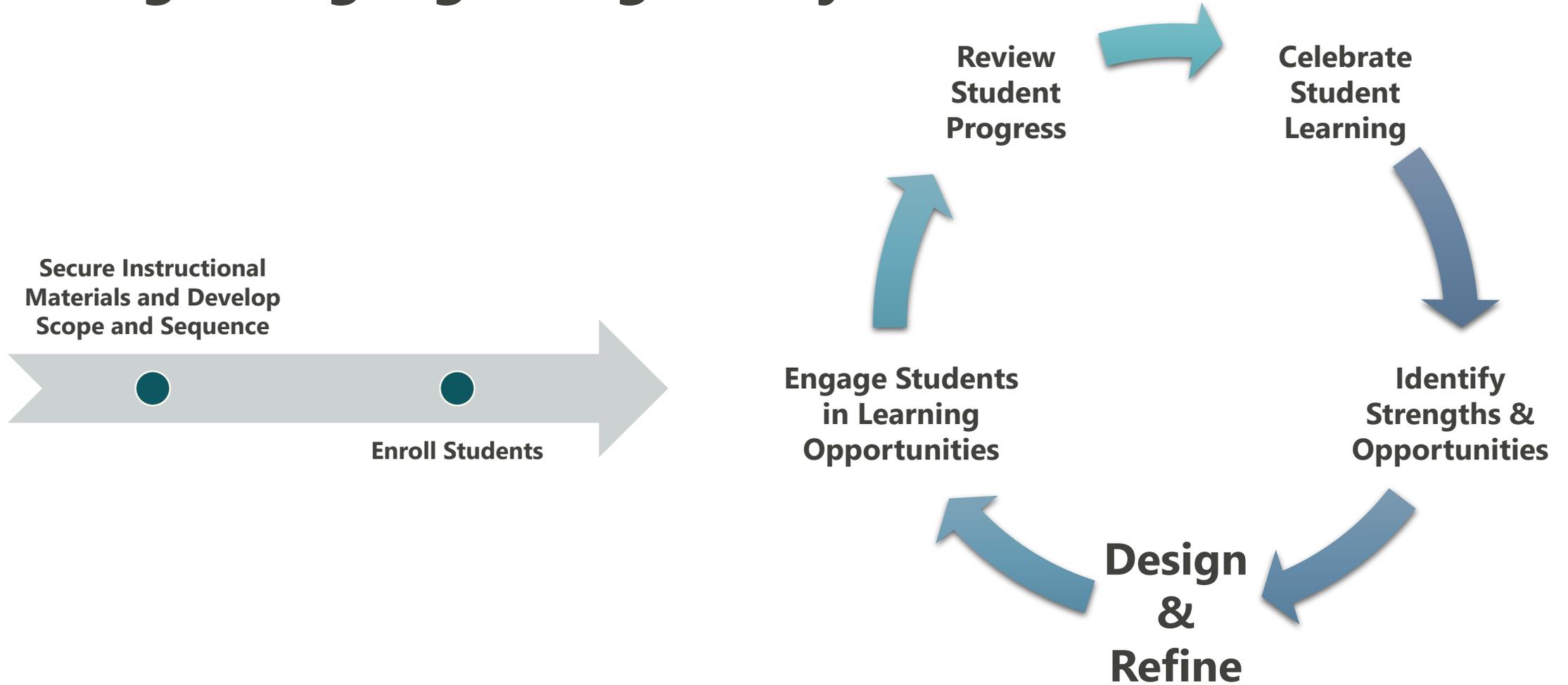
- **Enroll students and begin the first heritage language program cycle.**



Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Program Development

<p>Connect</p> 	<p>How does your school or district value and make visible all heritage languages used by students and within the local community?</p>
<p>Commit</p> 	<p>How does your school or district demonstrate commitment to additive multilingualism for heritage language learners?</p>
<p>Prepare</p> 	<p>How does your school or district celebrate the individual strengths and support the unique needs of heritage language learners?</p>

Heritage Language Program Cycle



From Research to Evidence Based Practice

- What standards do I use in heritage language courses?
- Is there a placement test I can use?
- What textbook should we buy?
- Do you have a list of books that would be good for a classroom or school library?
- If heritage language programs are under the umbrella of dual language programs, should I use the three (or four) pillars?
- What content or context should I use in my heritage language class or program?
- We are a small district that cannot have specific classes, but we want to serve our ML/heritage learners. How can we do that?

Who is doing this well? Is there somewhere I can visit?



Moving past the first HL cycle with data.

Critical data points include:

- Number of participating students
- Number of family and community members who attend events and celebrations
- Gained written fluency and language proficiency
- Student reported belonging and academic identity
- Credits and Seals of Biliteracy earned
- Graduation rates for ML learners who participate in the program
- Exit rates for ML students who receive TBIP services and participate in the program
- Number of ML educators in total and who speak the heritage language
- Teacher satisfaction and engagement with teacher-leadership opportunities



Materials

- **Authentic:** Resources draw on the breadth of human experience and ways of knowing. Representations of cultures are authentic. Images/descriptions of individuals or groups put people first and are appropriate for when and where they take place. Different dialects and ways of communicating the same message are explored and valued. Form and style are authentic to the language, audience, and purpose.
- **Rigorous:** Texts support complex language use connected to age appropriate, and when possible, grade-level content.
- **Multiple Representations:** Content, concepts and skills are represented in more than one way. Images, graphic organizers, media, and/or text are purposefully included.



<https://www.oercommons.org/hubs/washington>

Inclusionary Practices & UDL

Engage all Learners

- Ensure accommodations are available on any placement testing/ interviews
- Explicitly place equal value on all forms of communication in all dialects/ varieties
- Communicate directly with Special Education case managers about the vision and value of the HL program
- Include HL educators in IEP, 504, or other student support teams

Leverage UDL to Accelerate Learning

- Teach typing to teach letter/sound correspondence to older or secondary students
- Provide speech-to-text to all learners and help them decide when they will use it
- Utilize two modalities of a text to increase input (ie. audiobook/printed text)
- Create opportunities for choice with project-based and thematic learning
- Help students of all ages to create their own goals and monitor their own progress

Support for School-based HL Programs through Seed Grants

- Grants allow us to support programs that are ready to benefit
- Less Commonly Taught Languages
- HB 1228

Lighthouse Program: Statewide Virtual Heritage Language Program

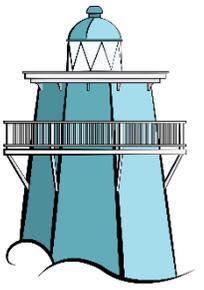


Image by [polyhaven](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Project Highlights:

- Exemplar of community organization/ public school partnership
- Systemic supports for ML/heritage learners that can respond to district and community identified strengths and opportunities.
- Integrated opportunities for student leadership and club activities across language groups.
- Seal of Biliteracy Testing

Lighthouse Program: Bellevue School District's Heritage Language Project

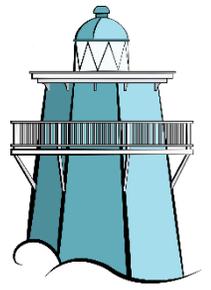


Image by [polyhaven](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Project Highlights:

- Support for the project is housed within the multilingual learners' structures, including a district level coordinator.
- Systemic supports for ML/heritage learners that can respond to district and community identified strengths and opportunities.
- Demonstrated commitment to students, community, and languages by placing instruction in the school day, even at the elementary level.

Arabic Language Program:

- Community was intentionally and meaningfully asked for input on program vision and design.
- Regular community meetings and continuing opportunities for family involvement as program moves forward.
- Leadership team from across departments, including highly capable services and educational technology.
- 126 Kindergarteners have been accepted to start Arabic next year, 90 of whom are from the Bellevue community with the rest requesting to participate from within the larger metropolitan area.



Talent Pipeline: Title IIA Funds to Recruit DL/ HL Teachers

Recruitment Activities

- Advertising to recruit effective educators
- In-state and out-of-state recruiting
- Job fairs

[Allowable Uses of Title IIA Funds](#)

[Title IIA Supplement Not Supplant Guidance](#)

Teacher Preparation

- Tuition reimbursement and test fees for a teacher in a state-approved add-on endorsement program (including degree attainment)
- Tuition reimbursement and test fees for paraprofessionals in a state-approved teacher preparation program (includes degree attainment); may be traditional, alternative route or “grow your own” models
- Cost of state tests to fulfill teaching certificate endorsement requirements for “test only” endorsements.



Teaching Strategies

Connection: Students are asked to make connections to other lessons/units, across content areas, to prior knowledge, to their community, and with their own experience.

Collaboration: Activities in which students work together to co-create and communicate meaning that are purposely designed are included.

Stories and Storytelling: Oral traditions are explicitly valued. Story-centered activities are included and authentic. Opportunities to tell and re-tell stories recognize students as experts in the language, culture, and of their own experience.

Critical Dialogue: Opportunities to analyze, reflect on, and discuss issues of power and privilege associated with the content are present. Protocols are suggested or provided.

Action: Students are asked to engage with real problems and/or with current issues that students identify as important to them and/or their communities.

Stories and Storytelling

Story-centered instruction is one way to engage in humanizing heritage language instruction.

- Telling their own stories provides opportunities for students to be seen as and recognize themselves as experts of their own experience.
- Fiction and folktales contain complex vocabulary, sentence structures, and discourse patterns.
- Heritage learners have cultural knowledge that can unlock deeper themes and prompt discussion.
- Storytelling provides opportunities for older students to work with younger students without limiting their own progress.
- Oral traditions can be explicitly valued.
- Retelling and pastiche are language tasks that can jump start students to higher levels of proficiency.



Learning Supports

- **Cross-Linguistic Connections:** Similarities, differences, and transfer between the language used, the students' language(s), and English are identified. Different dialects and ways of communicating the same message are explored and valued. Historical context that led to change is addressed.
- **Spiral Instruction:** Specific key concepts, standards, or skills that provide the foundation for grade level instruction are identified. Increasing capacity and skills are valued.
- **Expert Learning:** Students develop learning strategies, engage in deliberate practice, and monitor their own progress towards objectives and personal goals.

Public schools can support heritage languages and language learners by:

- Consistently and meaningfully engaging with students, families, and the community throughout planning and program development.
- Asking questions to identify the ways of knowing, being, and learning that will form the roots of successful and sustainable programs while protecting the language and any community leaders or elders who contribute to the program.
- Including support for educators in program planning.
- Committing to cycles that engage students and seek ways to develop untapped student and educator capacity.



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Connect with us!



Ema Shirk, Dual Language Program Supervisor

Supporting Heritage and Dual Language Programs

ema.shirk@k12.wa.us

Visit us online on the [Dual Language Education and Resources](#) webpage!

