



Confederated Tribes and Bands
of the Yakama Nation

Post Office Box 151, Fort Road, • Toppenish, WA 98948 • (509) 865-5121

Established by the
Treaty of June 9, 1855

DATE: September 18, 2025

TO: Office of Native Education
Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

FROM: Gerald Lewis, Chairman
Yakama Nation Tribal Council

SUBJECT: OSPI 748 Tribal Language Program Grants 2025-26

The Yakama Nation has reviewed the 748 grant package and support the efforts to promote the Yakama language in our local school districts. We are happy to see this Tribal Language funding continue as a formula grant this year to ensure our school districts are able to support our tribal youth and Ichishkíin language across their buildings. Yakama Nation tribal leaders and members support applications for the 748 Tribal Language Grant from the following school districts:

- Ellensburg School District
- Goldendale School District
- Mt. Adams School District
- Toppenish School District
- Wapato School District
- Yakima School District

Their commitments to meaningful consultation and collaboration is documented in monthly reports, narrative email reports, and collaboration on projects unique to our students and homelands. The Yakama Nation has attended many meetings with them and their JOM parent committees and are firm on expanding language education services for students furthering the goals, objectives, and vision of both the Yakama Nation Tribal Council and General Council under T-31-16, T-32-18, and GCM-09-2018. Specifically, the directives address the following focuses:

T-31-16, *“Ichinshk’iin sinwit (Yakama Language Program) and the preservation, protection, and perpetuation of the languages existing within the 14 Tribes and Bands that represent the Yakama Nation shall be elevated to the highest policy/administrative priorities with the goal of 100% fluency.”*

T-32-18/GCM-09-2018, “Empowerment through education”

Kindergarten through 12th grades

FY21-23 focus: Ichishkíin & culture classes in ALL schools

T-32-18/GCM-09-2018, “Supporting our people on their road to success”

Training & Development

FY21-23 focus: Ichishkíin Teacher Certification

Cultural Capital: [Culture], language, and traditions

FY24-27 focus: Ichishkíin language standards integrated into
PreK-12 grade educational standards



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The programs and courses supported by this grant funding help create deeper learning opportunities for our community. We are still reconnecting with our Ichishkiin language and culture and see this partnership with the schools as a way to address the traumatic history with an education system that separated us from our families, homes, community, culture, and language. The impacts of this history are still felt today as we try to stay connected with the few remaining first language speakers of Ichishkiin.

We are glad to be working with our partner school districts to help certify and support Yakama language and culture teachers to ensure that the teachings are being shared in a good way with our tribal values and perspective at the heart of the instruction. Ongoing consultation and development of these language programs will include regular engagement with the tribal language and culture teachers through weekly online Ichishkiin Professional Learning Community meetings with the YN Language Program as well as quarterly off-site Professional Development workshops with Yakama Nation staff.

In this fifth year of Tribal Language grant funding, the Yakama Nation is looking to encourage our school district partners to continue innovating when it comes to their language classrooms and programs, creating more engaging and exciting learning activities and materials. We have felt more and more welcomed into these school communities with Yakama-specific opportunities available for families, community members, and tribal program staff. We look forward to continuing to support the expansion of these language programs for our tribal community to help them reconnect with our language and way of life.

Gerald Lewis, Chairman
Yakama Nation Tribal Council
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