The Bilingual Teacher Pathway (BTP) Program, based at Portland State University, works to fill Oregon's critical need for bilingual and bicultural teachers who can work well with culturally and linguistically diverse students and families. BTP supports adult teacher candidates in obtaining a bachelor's or master's degree and initial licensure in elementary education, as well as Dual Language specialization or English as a Second Language endorsement.

BTP is built upon the premise that bilingualism and biliteracy are an asset in today's educational system and culturally diverse society. Its mission is to prepare aspiring bilingual elementary teachers and to support partnering school districts through a culturally responsive teacher education program that promotes equity, social justice, and advocacy for marginalized students and their families.

BTP recruits:
- Adult community members
- Paraprofessionals

BTP focuses on preparing teachers who are:
- Bilingual/multilingual
- BIPOC
- Male

BTP partners with the following school districts:
- Beaverton
- Canby
- David Douglas
- Forest Grove
- Gresham-Barlow
- Hillsboro
- Hood River
- North Clackamas
- Portland Public Schools
- Reynolds
- Salem-Keizer
- Tigard-Tualatin
- West Linn/Wilsonville
- Woodburn

BTP is funded by:
- State funds

Program Spotlight

Bilingual Teacher Pathway Program

1998 Year Established
409 Program Graduates to Date
21 Months to Complete Program
~368 Graduates Teaching in the State
What are the greatest strengths of the Bilingual Teacher Pathway Program?
The longevity of the program has created a strong reputation for preparing bilingual teachers, which, in turn, is passed on to others through word of mouth. The culturally responsive relationships permeate all our interactions in the program—always taking into consideration the cultural and linguistic assets of our teacher candidates and building upon their strengths.

What are some of the greatest challenges that your program faces?
The way that our teacher candidates are being hired—before they finish their teacher preparation program—is problematic. Districts say they will support the new teachers, but it is not the same as having a cooperating teacher (i.e., a certified mentor teacher) day in and day out. The university doesn’t have the infrastructure to support employed teachers while they are completing their field experience and learning to be first-year teachers while still going to university.

What are some things candidates have said about their experiences in your programs?
“A mí me encantó cuando pudimos sentirnos cómodos en bueno como se... sentir en como familia. [I loved how we were able to feel comfortable—to be able to feel like family.]”

“En BTP siempre me sentí como en casa, me sentí querida, me sentí apoyada por mis compañeros. [In BTP I always felt like I was at home, I felt loved, I felt supported by my colleagues/peers].”

“BTP really showed me the importance of relationships, because if kids don’t like you, they aren’t going to want to learn from you. I didn’t realize this until I got into the program and had these strong relationships.”

What advice would you give to others looking to start GYO programs?
Establishing and nurturing relationships with key liaisons in [partner] districts takes time and constant communication and connection. Changes happen in school districts where people move on to other positions. This means that we have to do the work to keep reaching out and investing in the relationships so the partnership remains viable, personal, strong, and mutually beneficial.