Draft Meeting Summary
AHECC: Apprenticeships and Higher Education Coordinating Committee
March 5, 2026 | 10:00am-2:30pm
Zoom

Attendees: *See Appendix A*

William D. Ruckelshaus Facilitation Team: Chris Page, Director of Projects; Melissa Girbach, Associate Facilitator; Gaby Diamond, Project Specialist

Welcome & Introductions
Chris welcomed members and reminded them of Tasks 4 and 5 as directed by Senate Bill 5764, the focus of their work. He asked members to introduce themselves with their name, affiliation, and an opening question, "What percentage of you is fully present today?".

Review Agenda and Meeting Summary
Melissa recapped the January 22, 2026, meeting and asked if members had any changes to the meeting summary. There were no changes.

DECISION: The Committee approved the January 22, 2026, meeting summary.

Updates from Committee Members
- The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) shared two decision package proposals that the agency submitted to the legislature:
    - Requested relief for registered nursing programs that have a third-party or national accreditation requirement (this includes the review process through the nursing board).
    - Requested funding for mandatory cost-of-living increase for staff salaries, support for running start and student services, and increasing costs to supplies and utilities.
- Workforce Pell HR1: Goes into effect July 1, 2026. SBCTC—in coordination with the Governor's office, WSAC, the Department of Commerce, and representatives of the Workforce Board—will administer it. Registered apprenticeships are approved, but eligibility depends on the time frame, completion rate, number of credits, and more.
    - The webinar to find out more information will be on March 20th, 2026 at 11:30am. Register here.
- Workforce Training Board (WTB): Eleni Papadakis stepped down as Executive Director; Maddy Thompson is the interim director.
- WSAC **Passport to Careers students (SB 5963)**: WSAC's Agency Requested Legislation provides WA Grant eligibility to Passport students.
- A bill adding behavioral health programs in RSI courses for building and construction trades (signed on 3/9/2026).

Workgroup 2 Report out
Chris shared the cost categories spreadsheet from the Workgroup 2 meeting and explained the color coding. C= college, A= apprenticeship program, and S=shared. Melissa will add a color key to the document. Members agreed that this is a helpful document and asked the Workgroup to expand the details and discuss funding sources at its next meeting.

Summarized discussion on potential funding sources: Committee members discussed how the state's current financial environment is different than when SB 5764 passed. No programs currently tap into federal funds; though limited that might be an area to explore. It is important to note that even though there are federal funds, they do not tend to support existing programs but rather focus on funding new programs in specific industries.

The CTCs use general fund allocations to administer *all* their programs; there is no specific proviso or earmark for registered apprenticeship. Private funds, grants, and state funding are braided together to fund apprenticeship programs, and typically off campus facilities rely more on private funding. Thus far, these funding sources have not been sufficient. New registered apprenticeship programs also need demonstrate to Labor & Industries (L&I) that the program will be sustainable without grants. Other funding sources are employers and union dues.

What is an ideal world? Is a separate funding stream wanted or needed?
Committee members expressed that there needs to be additional funding for both current programs and establishing new programs. Federal grants like the Apprenticeship Building America Grant and State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Grants were mentioned as potential options, but these have restrictions on sector and program type. Generally, grants from the state are more flexible.

Any solution that involves reforming the funding model needs to reflect the symbiotic relationship between college enrollment and apprenticeship participation. During recessions, apprenticeship registration numbers tend to decrease, while college enrollments tend to increase. The reverse occurs with a growing economy. This means that **any funding solution will need to be flexible.**

From the SBCTC perspective, a future funding model should involve three things:
- Removal of the 50% tuition waiver
- Removal or reworking of the remuneration from CTCs to apprenticeship programs
- Ensuring that any future funding source comes with maximum flexibility to account for needs on both sides (CTCs and apprentice programs) during enrollment changes

50% Tuition Waiver and Survey
Melissa shared a link to an anonymous survey and showed its results screen while members responded to the question: *Do you support keeping the 50% waiver as it is implemented today? If you do not, what changes would you implement?* Results were mixed. Chris asked members why they responded the way they did. Responses are summarized here:
- The waiver brought up discussion around the interpretation of WAC 131-28-026, which allows the SBCTC to "designate ungraded courses" that are "intended to potential for initial or continued employment." The statue states that these courses "may be offered at tuition rates that differ from the standard rates" by CTCs. The statute could be interpreted as applying differently to different programs or industry types.
    - There needs to be a way to address new and non-traditional programs.

    - The waiver can make it hard for a college to afford to participate in apprenticeship since the 50% tuition waiver and remuneration make a negative cost flow to colleges when they are already underfunded.
- One Committee member described a misunderstanding about how funds paid to CTCs represent the tuition of the enrolled apprentice. The total cost of providing 50% tuition, student and activities fees, campus security, etc. can be more than the FTE allocation. It is important to note that the waiver applies only to tuition and Service and Activity (S&A) fees, not fees outside of S&A, and some apprenticeship programs are small and do not generate enough FTEs to cover the tuition from the negotiated contract rate. This means that many apprenticeship programs end up paying back the colleges; sometimes even programs that do not cover the apprentice's full tuition still owe the colleges.
    - Some programs are completely independent from the colleges; their apprentices never step foot on the college campus. These programs are still responsible for tuition not covered by the 50% waiver and all other student fees. However, these programs have a signed contract with the college, so apprentices receive college credit, meaning there is administrative work from colleges.
- The contracted financial arrangement/relationship depends on numerous factors like which entity is providing and paying for the instructors, where the RSI is taking place, and how many apprentices are in each program.

Return on Investment (ROI) in Apprenticeship Learning: David Polk (Executive Board President of the National Association of State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors) shared his story of being a former apprentice, college student, and dean. He is a proponent of granting credit for registered apprenticeship to help expand career opportunities. It is helpful when college deans have an apprentice background; from his perspective, they bring intrinsic value to CTC programs. Members' questions and responses are summarized here:
- **Q:** Have you seen any innovative ways to fund programs? **A:** In Wisconsin, the technical college system grants 39 credits to all former apprentices with 400 hours or more of RSI.
    - Washington offers something like this. An apprentice that has completed an apprenticeship of 6,000 hours (typically about three years) or more can earn a Multi of Occupational Trades (MOT) or Apprenticeship AAS once they complete their remaining general education courses identified by the college.
- **Q:** What specific funding models encourage employer engagement, which can be a challenge in healthcare? **A:** In Wisconsin, there is a WI fast forward state grant for training that ends in certificates/certifications that recently opened to registered apprenticeship programs. The other is a grant to help get the model off the ground.
- **Q:** When you talk to legislators, what strategies do you have to capture the ROI? **A:** We are working on a specific study for national data and Wisconsin specific data and once that is documented, we can pass it on to legislators.

Task 5: "Sustainable Funding Structure" for Related Supplemental Instruction (RSI) at CTCs
Chris shared that the Center has had one on one conversations with members of the Committee, and there is dissatisfaction on both sides at times. He asked members: what do you all *really*

want? What makes sense for all parties going forward? Members' discussion summarized here, with **<u>potential characteristics of a desired future funding model underlined in bold</u>**:

Current environment and <u>sustainability:</u> This bill was passed when the state had more resources available. Per [SB5600](), any new apprenticeship program must meet an L&I sustainability standard and support itself without public resources. If that is the case, why should the Committee spend time on a funding model that involves state funding outside of programs being self-sustaining? The Committee could look at ways to streamline costs for RSI only.

<u>Consistency and flexibility</u>: Each apprenticeship program has unique characteristics and needs. Thus, if any reform happens, it needs to be flexible. Large programs have more capacity to negotiate better a better rate/contractual obligations when compared to small programs.

One Committee member suggested looking at a **<u>potential tiered system</u>** or sliding scale approach for funding apprenticeship partnerships with CTCs. There is very little consistency in contracts across the system. Funding that can ebb and flow between apprenticeship programs and colleges when either is in more need could help take some burden off the economic swings.

The FTE model is also changing for the college system: instead of target enrollment, FTE dollars will be distributed by actual enrollment. The new model will focus on the demand, but colleges will likely prioritize increasing enrollment.

A Committee member cautioned people not to assume that all apprentices want a degree, when that is not the case. In some industries, certifications might make more sense to the apprentice than an AA or baccalaureate degree while in others, apprentices might need a degree to fall back on if they are injured or unable to continue performing all their duties.

The suggestion to focus on certifications rather than degrees for apprentices could lead to colleges and programs no longer partnering with each other. If apprentice programs decouple from CTCs, it would at least show the state what it takes to fully fund both sides. The Committee noted the added value for the state in apprenticeship and the college system partnering together.

Members agreed that **<u>fully funding the administration side on both/all sides</u>** will be important. One Committee member suggested **<u>the system needs dedicated funding for apprenticeships</u>** and asked the Committee how it could make that case to the Legislature. One idea is to recommend the Legislature establish a higher FTE rate for apprenticeship programs.

Summarize Conversation & Discuss Next Steps

Members noted that they were (finally) getting to the most important part of the conversations that need to occur. Workgroup 2 will look more at funding sources and costs for colleges for contracts.

The remaining meetings will be held from 9am-12:30pm instead of 10am-2:30pm. The Center will send out a poll for rescheduling the date of the June meeting.

Adjourn

Appendix A: Attendees X=attended (all virtual)

Committee member	Attendance	Alternate member	Attendance
Andrea Anderson, Sr. Director of Program Development and Education, Apprenti			
Heather Hudson, Deputy Policy Advisor – Childcare, Education, and Workforce, Governor's Office (ex-officio)?		Dawn Gearhart	
Maryann Brathwaite, Executive Director, NW Career Colleges Federation			
Marie Bruin, Workforce Education Director, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	X	Genevieve Howard, Workforce Policy Associate	X
Joyce Hammer, Deputy Executive Director of Education, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	X		
Karen Dove, Executive Director, Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women			
Julie Garver, Director of Policy and Academic Affairs, Council of Presidents			
Rachel McAloon, Apprenticeship Program Manager, Department of Labor and Industries, Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council (WSATC)	X	Jordan Shepherd, Apprenticeship Policy Advisor; Brittany Craighead, Compliance Specialist	
Kimberly Hetrick, Director, Career Connect Washington		Therese Williams, Associate Director	
Laura Hopkins, Executive Director, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Multi-Employer Training Fund			
Brian Jeffries, Policy Director, Washington Roundtable Partnership for Learning			
Inez Olive, Director, Adult Pathways, Washington Student Achievement Council		Lyle Irimata, Assistant Director, Needs Based Programs, Contracts and Reporting	X
Kairie Pierce, Sector Lead, Innovation Workforce, Department of Commerce			
Heather Kurtenbach, Executive Secretary, Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council	X	Erin Frasier, Assistant Executive Secretary, Washington State Building Trades	

Christina Riley, Independent Consultant & Co-Chair of Tribal Subcommittee of State Apprenticeship Council	X		
Halene Sigmund, President, Construction Industry Training Council of Washington			
April Sims, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO		Shana Peschek, Machinists Institute	X
		Ryan Davis, Machinists Institute	
Donald Smith, Policy Manager, Long-Term Care Workforce	X	Eleni Papadakis, Director, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board	
		Maddy Thompson, Executive Director	
Sheila Steiner, Senior Director, Policy and Engagement, Independent Colleges of Washington		Terri Standish-Kuon, President and Chief Executive Officer	
Lynn Strickland, Executive Director, AJAC	X		
Becky Wallace, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Education and Pathways for Preparation, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction	X	Krista Fox, Director of Career and Technical Education	
Emily Wittman, Government Affairs Director for Education, Workforce and Healthcare, Association of Washington Business			
Additional Members (workgroup)			
Heather Winfrey, Curriculum Coordinator, Seattle Area Pipe Trades	X		
Cori Morris, Professional Development Navigator, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs	X		
Laura Kingston, Executive Dean, Georgetown- South Seattle College			