

PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Background:

State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) staff have received numerous questions about the regulatory and policy framework governing Parent Education Programs across the system. This is a complex policy area given the longstanding variation in local program design and operation, modernized program-approval and accountability practices, the interaction between graded/ungraded course rules and tuition and waiver policies, and the recent adoption of a new system allocation model. Further adding to the complexity, colleges have historically operated Parent Education Programs across a mix of instructional program types, including continuing education, credit-bearing credentialed pathways, and a mix of student-funded (self-supporting) and state-funded approaches. This brief summarizes the relevant policies, describes how they may affect local college Parent Education Programs, and outlines a framework for colleges to use when making local programmatic decisions. This document is intended as a resource for local decision-making and does not constitute a change in system policy.

Related / Intersecting Policies:

Required Credential Approval (PAR)

Under [RCW 28B.50.090](#) and State Board [Policy Manual Chapter 4.40](#), SBCTC is required to approve all professional-technical degree and certificate programs prior to program implementation.

Evidence of workforce outcomes (e.g., credential requirements for employment, link to wage outcomes, and ties to industry/employer demand) is a foundational requirement of the State Board's [professional technical program approval](#) framework. Programs must present evidence of specific entry-level occupation(s) students would be qualified to obtain immediately upon completion of a program, and whether the credential is required for employment in those roles. Please note: PAR Requirements are enumerated in the [PAR Guidelines](#).

Prior to the implementation of ctcLink, SBCTC procedures permitted colleges to locally implement short-term certificate programs of fewer than nineteen (19) credits without SBCTC review. Colleges remained responsible for operating these programs in compliance with RCW/WAC requirements and State Board policy; however, SBCTC did not routinely review these certificates for program-approval (PAR) compliance. During the transition to ctcLink, SBCTC staff became aware of instances in which programs appeared to operate outside established policy. As the system implements the new allocation model, and as the potential funding and accountability implications of these programs become more material, SBCTC has initiated a review of historical short-term certificate approvals migrated from the Legacy system into ctcLink. SBCTC staff are working with colleges to confirm compliance and address any concerns identified through this review. Parent Education Programs are a key example of this work currently underway.

Instructional Program Types

Washington's community and technical colleges differentiate distinct curricular and administrative pathways for credit-bearing and noncredit courses. These differ in purpose, transcript documentation, financial aid eligibility, oversight systems, and connection to credentials. Credit-bearing courses (coded as UGRD) are eligible for inclusion in credit-bearing credential programs. Noncredit courses (coded as CNED) are designed for program areas such as community education and personal enrichment and are not eligible for academic credit or credentials.

Proposed [state-funded](#) credit-bearing credentials must demonstrate a direct connection to a specific workforce role, and/or function as an entry point into a career pathway. (See [Required Credential Approval \(PAR\)](#) above.)

Advisory Committees

As stated in [RCW 28B.50.252](#), each college offering professional-technical education programs must establish local program advisory committees to provide advice on industry alignment, program curriculum and training, equipment and technology, and employment of program completers.

Three essential functions of a balanced advisory committee are specific to ensuring a workforce outcome:

- Review labor market information to ensure the occupational program area is in demand and that vacancies exist for future employment.
- Advise the college as to the industry standard or certification required by the occupational area, and/or assist in the development of skill standards where appropriate.
- Review the content of the professional-technical program and respective courses. Advise the college of changing market conditions, employment needs, occupation-specific skill requirements, and industry standards regarding technologies, equipment, software, etc.

Program approval is withheld from programs not in compliance with these requirements. (See [Required Credential Approval \(PAR\)](#) above.)

Tuition / Waiver Policy

Per [WAC 131-28-026](#), waiver authority applies to ungraded courses only ([See Instructional Program Types above.](#)), including Parent Education. The waiver is optional, and colleges may determine locally whether to apply a waiver—and at what rate—to ungraded Parenting Education courses. Applying a tuition waiver to credit-bearing programs that lead to a credential is inconsistent with current state policy.

- [5.20.18](#) Ungraded courses are defined as courses that do not earn credit or grade points on the student's transcript. The credit is used to calculate FTE only. Credits and grade points associated with ungraded courses do not apply to program requirements that lead to a degree or certificate nor are eligible for federal or state financial aid. The State Board has authorized community colleges to set their own rates for ungraded courses.

Allocation Model

In August 2025, with the recommendation of the System's Presidents and Chancellors, the State Board adopted [Resolution 25-08-36](#), modernizing the system's allocation model. Effective July 1, 2026, counted enrollments are designed to focus state funding on academic transfer, workforce training, and adult basic education. The model intentionally excludes enrollments in programs that do not lead to a credential or degree, including Parent Education programs that do not offer an [SBCTC-approved](#) credential. Importantly, the model includes a six-year phased implementation beginning July 1, 2026 (FY 2027), with institutions realizing 16.67% of their funding adjustment each year through FY 2032—a phase-in intentionally designed

to give colleges time to make needed program and enrollment adjustments.

Historically, some Parenting Education Programs: a) operated as ungraded (See SBCTC [Policy Manual 5.20.18 Ungraded courses](#)) and/or noncredit, b) didn't lead to a credit-bearing professional/technical approved credential, and c) contributed FTES to the DEAB targets. In the new allocation model, these enrollments no longer generate future state-funded support.

See the [Allocation Model Implementation Timeline](#) in the [Key References](#) section of this document.

Next Steps

Below is a set of near-term considerations to support local decision-making and program continuity, recognizing that colleges are concurrently navigating significant fiscal uncertainty as the 2026 Legislative Session draws to a close. As the system approaches implementation of the allocation model effective July 1, 2026 (with a six-year phase-in intended to provide time for local program adjustments), colleges will determine locally how to continue Parent Education offerings consistent with policy and funding rules.

- Colleges planning to continue Parent Education as a credentialed professional-technical program should collaborate with their faculty and SBCTC staff to submit or update the required program approval (PAR) materials for review and approval. Colleges are advised to submit these materials as early as possible, but no later than **Tuesday, June 16, 2026**, to ensure review and approval. SBCTC staff will prioritize prompt review and provide feedback on submitted components as needed throughout the process before final submission. All materials must be on file and approved by **Tuesday, June 30, 2026**. (See [Required Credential Approval \(PAR\)](#) above.)
 - Please Note: The deadlines noted above only apply to colleges currently operating existing Parent Education programs through credentialed, credit-bearing pathways and seeking to include these headcounts and FTEs from Academic Year 2026-2027 in the four-year rolling average calculation of the new allocation model that determines allocations for Fiscal Year 2028-2029. (See [Allocation Model Implementation Timeline](#).)
 - Colleges may continue to offer ungraded Parent Education courses via continuing education; however, consistent with the allocation model's focus on enrollments that lead to approved credentials, ungraded Parent Education enrollments that do not lead to an SBCTC-approved credential will no longer be included for allocation model calculation purposes beginning July 1, 2026. Please see the [Allocation Model Implementation Timeline](#) in the [Key References](#) section of this document.
 - Colleges offering credentialed programs should plan for standard tuition assessment (See [Tuition/Waiver Policy](#)). SBCTC and participating colleges will continue follow-up conversations as needed to ensure clarity on requirements, timelines, and local options.
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Key References:

Assessment of tuition and fee charges.

[WAC 131-28-015:](#)

- [State-funded course](#) shall be defined as any course reported by the college for state funding that is eligible for state funding under chapters [28.15](#) and [28B.50](#) RCW, [Title 131](#) WAC and state board policy. ([WAC 131-28-021](#))

Method of assessing tuition and fee charges.

[WAC 131-28-025\(1\):](#)

Tuition and fees charged to students in [state-funded courses](#) shall conform to chapter [28B.15 RCW](#), the legislative budget and policies of the state board and the following:

- 1) For credit- and credit equivalent-based programs, tuition, and fees charged to students:
 - a) Shall be based upon the number of credits assigned to such courses as listed in the official and current catalog of the college, or for courses not given such credit designations, the number of credit equivalents as computed by the method for deriving such equivalents established by the state board.
 - b) Shall be assessed on a per-credit basis at uniform rates for resident and for nonresident students, respectively. Partial credits shall be assessed on a proportionate basis. The respective maximums charged to any resident or nonresident student shall not exceed the amount allowed by law.
 - c) Shall be assessed for part-time students, for each credit of registration or its equivalent.
 - d) Shall include an additional operating fee for each credit in excess of eighteen at the tuition fee rate charged to part-time students.

State-funded course.

[WAC 131-28-021:](#)

State-funded course shall be defined as any course reported by the college for state funding that is eligible for state funding under chapters [28.15](#) and [28B.50](#) RCW, [Title 131](#) WAC and state board policy. ([WAC 131-28-021](#))

Student-funded course.

[WAC 131-28-021:](#)

Student-funded course shall be defined as any organized instructional activity, typically ungraded, primarily offered for part-time students, not normally an integral part of any specific study program leading to either an academic or an occupational degree or certificate, and specifically identified as such by a community or technical college consistent with the course classification procedures established by the state board. ([WAC 131-28-021](#))

Waivers.

[WAC 131-28-02501](#):

Community and technical college boards may grant waivers from the standard tuition and fees rate to students in ungraded courses designated in [WAC 131-28-026\(3\)](#) and to students who qualify under a waiver created in [Title 28B](#) RCW.

Except for ungraded courses, colleges shall waive the building fee, services and activities fees, and operating fees in equal proportion.

Colleges may not impose conditions or eligibility criteria beyond that specified in this chapter, state board policy, or [Title 28B](#) RCW. Colleges may restrict the number of waivers granted.

Waiver of operating fees—Report.

[RCW 28B.15.91](#):

In addition to waivers granted under the authority of [RCW 28B.15.910](#), the governing boards of the state universities, the regional universities, The Evergreen State College, and the community and technical colleges, subject to state board policy, may waive all or a portion of the operating fees for any student. There shall be no state general fund support for waivers granted under this section.

By January 31st of each odd-numbered year, the institutions of higher education shall prepare a report of the costs and benefits of waivers granted under chapter 152, Laws of 2000 and shall transmit copies of their report to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the legislature.

"Operating fees"—Defined—Disposition.

[RCW 28B.15.031\(1\)](#):

The term "operating fees" as used in this chapter shall include the fees, other than building fees, charged all students registering at the state's colleges and universities but shall not include fees for short courses, self-supporting degree credit programs and courses, marine station work, experimental station work, correspondence or extension courses, and individual instruction and student deposits or rentals, disciplinary and library fines, which colleges and universities shall have the right to impose, laboratory, gymnasium, health, technology and student activity fees, or fees, charges, rentals, and other income derived from any or all revenue producing lands, buildings and facilities of the colleges or universities heretofore or hereafter acquired, constructed or installed, including but not limited to income from rooms, dormitories, dining rooms, hospitals, infirmaries, housing or student activity buildings, vehicular parking facilities, land, or the appurtenances thereon, or such other special fees as may be established by any college or university board of trustees or regents from time to time. All moneys received as operating fees at any institution of higher education shall be deposited in a local account containing only operating fees revenue and related interest: PROVIDED, That a minimum of four percent of operating fees shall be retained by four-year institutions of higher education and a minimum of three and one-half percent of operating fees shall be retained by the community and technical colleges for the purposes of [RCW 28B.15.820](#). At least thirty percent of operating fees required to be retained by the four-year institutions for purposes of [RCW 28B.15.820](#) shall be used only for the purposes of [RCW 28B.15.820\(10\)](#).

Allocation Model Implementation Timeline

New Allocation Model Enrollments

The new allocation model takes effect on July 1, 2026. The district enrollment allocation base (DEAB) will be calculated using a four-year rolling average of FTE and headcount, excluding international, corporate, and continuing education enrollments.

FY Allocations	Academic Year Enrollments Included 4-year rolling average of actual FTE and HC	International Enrollments Included	Continuing Education Enrollments Included
FY2027	2021-22 through 2024-25	No	No
FY2028	2022-23 through 2025-26	No	No
FY2029	2023-24 through 2026-27	No	No
FY2030	2024-25 through 2027-28	No	No

Old Allocation Model Enrollments

The old allocation model and its enrollment components will be used to calculate the initial gain or loss for each college district resulting from the change to the new model components in fiscal year 2027 only.

FY Allocations	Academic Year Enrollments Included DEAB target based on 3-year rolling average	International Enrollments Included	Continuing Education Enrollments Included
FY2027	2021-22 through 2024-25	Limited	Yes
FY2028	N/A	N/A	N/A
FY2029	N/A	N/A	N/A
FY2030	N/A	N/A	N/A

- In year one only, SBCTC will calculate the outcome from the old model and the new model.
- The difference between the two, gain or loss, will be smoothed over a six-year period.
- Each district will realize one-sixth—about 16.7%—of its total gain or loss per year.
 - For example, a district whose FY 2026-2027 outcome from the new model is \$600,000 less than its FY 2026-2027 outcome from the old model will only realize a \$100,000 reduction in year one.
 - In year two, the outcome of the new model will be determined (using updated enrollment data and the amounts appropriated by the legislature for that fiscal year). The outcome will be adjusted by two-sixths of their initial loss, \$200,000. The adjustment will increase by one-sixth each year until year 6, after which the model's outcome will no longer be adjusted.

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