 Adult Education Advisory Council

June 6-7, 2023

# Call to order

The Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC) held their summer retreat June 6-7, 2023, in Yakima. [Meeting Materials on SBCTC – AEAC website](https://www.sbctc.edu/about/task-forces-work-groups/aeac/meeting-materials.aspx)

# Attendees

Babette Roberts-Chair, Cindy Guertin-Anderson, Ricardo Chavez, Amy Diehr, Sherri Fujita, Anne Goranson, Kelli Graham, Courtney Jacobsen, Aaron Parrott, Lucretia Robertson, Kenny Ryan, Heidi Summers, and Lin Zhou

SBCTC Staff: Will Durden, and Christy Lowder

# Members not in attendance

Kristen Morgan-Vice-Chair, Paul Francis, Eleni Papadakis, and Mandy Paradise

# Business meeting

Approval of Meeting Minutes – April meeting minutes – Babs asked if there are any changes that anyone would like to make before the motion. Yes, there is a bullet on page 4 that has no content – it will be removed. *MOTION made to approve minutes as submitted, seconded, and approved, no abstentions.*

Draft By-laws were reviewed with both the chair and chair-elect terms reduced to 1-year terms. We added the CBS Chair as the liaison to the AEAC and the CBS past-chair will serve for continuity. Also removed the “CTC” student under 4-2 section. Babs asked it there are any changes that anyone would like to make before the motion. No, *MOTION made to approve minutes as submitted, seconded, and approved, no abstentions.*

# New business

## EDI Activity

To reflect on structural racism and implicit bias in American society and higher education, we are going to arrange two timelines, one of adult ed in America and one of white supremacy culture. And then we'll give reasons and understand why adult education is a form of social and economic justice.

## Basic Education Funding (federal/state) and AEAC Accomplishments

Centering Washington State – What’s the investment being made by the government, state and federal into adult education?

* The federal investment is Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). That is the investment the feds make into adult education, which is three quarters of a billion nationally that goes to 50 states and a handful of territories and is primarily based on the census data.

What Washington state receives is about $12 million dollars, which goes out to all the community & technical system and 5 community-based organizations. There is a funding formula that is used to disperse the money, it’s based on a mix of full-time equivalents (FTEs) and 50% based on performance. We fund based on credit load, not head count and there is some talk of changing this in the future, as part-time students need just as many wraparound services as a full-time student does.

The federal funding our providers receive goes mainly for faculty salary and benefits, and administrative salaries.

Our state has no real dedicated state funding for adult education. Technically the legislature makes two small investments: $750,000/year to support our I-BEST programs and $1.5 million/year to support students from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

* To further support basic education, the colleges have certain incentives in the allocation that goes from the state to the colleges for basic education through some weighted enrollments and performance funding. The issue is that those funds don’t get earmarked for the basic skills programs. The basic skills program helps to generate that money, but the institution decides what to do with those funds – it’s a local decision.
* Discussion around the council’s role when it comes to funding. We’ve tried to get a caseload forecasting bill to obtain stable funding for basic education. Our new Executive Director has a real commitment to helping us obtain stable state funding, so keep posted as we work through this process as we may be coming to ask you for advocacy help in your role as a member of the Adult Education Advisory Council.

A state ask would be how can we try to calculate what the gap is or what additional dedicated state investment can go to the colleges and CBOs who are funded?

SBCTC State Board Vision

Our state vision is that when we do this work of maximizing student potential, transforming lives within a culture of belonging and serving diverse communities, that we do, that leading with race equity, and specifically we focus on race, and we understand that it's not the only salient issue that affects society. It's not the only issue affecting our students, but it's a consequential lens to view and assess other oppressive systems, and therefore it's prominent.

BEdA Vision

This vision was crafted as a collaboration between the Council for Basic Skills, which includes leadership for all the programs, community and technical colleges and community-based organizations as well as the state office. So, this is something that we own collaboratively, and economic justice is also always front and center in the work that we do, and we see those things as happening at the same time with race equity. And so, to advance racial and economic justice we seek to provide equitable programing for all Washingtonians to realize their potential as they launch on a supportive college and career pathway to living, wage and employment, and to strengthen the vitality of their communities.

The AEAC Council

The Adult Education Advisory Council and getting into the heart of who you are and what you do. How great is it that this council exists, to say that there's a governor appointed council that's dedicated to the issues of adult education is a great opportunity.

The guidance from the governor's office on what that needs to look like, it's pretty lean. So, the opportunity is that this group gets to create the goals of the council and what we’d like to accomplish.

The council has been around since 1991, when we moved from the K-12 to the community technical college system. We believe that this council was designed with that purpose in mind to support that transition into thinking of if you're an adult education student, and we’re treating you as an adult and we're not having you, quote unquote, go back to K-12, you’re moving forward into a space that is ripe for postsecondary transition.

The AEAC can provide advice, guidance, and a variety of perspectives on basic education for adults efforts across the state. You represent key agency partners. So, it's great when we hear friends from DSHS and commerce, that have a different view on state government view of things, and it helps us round out our perspective. We've got industry partners to help us think what it looks like when students transition to jobs and the careers and the areas that you work in. We have community-based organizations here in a couple of different roles, some more general, some more literacy focused, but that helps us understand the full range of what adult education looks like in the state, so that while it's administered through the college system, it is not only offered through the college system. We have a couple unfilled roles, a student, and a Labor representative, that we're eager to get back on to the council as we continue to round out our perspective.

Council Accomplishments

* In 2003-04, this council was part of the decision to charge $25 tuition per quarter for basic education students. This is a state rule and there was a time when there was real scrutiny on programs that looked like they were giving away taxpayer dollars for free. So, there was a feeling that there needed to be some money paid by participants.
* In 2012-13, Helped BEdA stand up the High School Plus program, which has been one of the most radical and innovative levers around high school completion.
* In 2021-22, Were instrumental in helping BEdA advocate for a bill that passed allowing fine forgiveness, that stopped the practice of holding student transcripts for unpaid fines. Now students can obtain their transcripts and enroll in college without being held up by something 5, 10, 15 or more years in their past.

## Re-Centering AEAC

In the working age population of 18 to 64, 420,000 need a high school credential. Approx. 45,000 need to improve their English skills past a basic level. 146,115 don't have a high school credential and don't speak English very well at all. ([*NASDAE WA State Program Fact Sheet*](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/patricia.tyler/viz/NASDAEAdultEducationFactSheetsPY2022_16837391201510/ProgramYear2020-21FactSheet)) *\*Note the data from 2021-22 is low due to the pandemic.*

And you can see our enrollment is, you know, we really serve a fraction, a small fraction of who we could be serving potentially. And I think that comes back to that state funding piece; we have just enough money to serve the people who are coming to the doors. But what about the hundreds of thousands who aren't? To truly meet the need, we need a lot more money than just enough to cover who's coming to our doors.

## Goal #1 – student/faculty interview

The group working on Goal #1 shared a summary of what they learned from their student/faculty interviews. Kenny shared a roll-up he created from the six meeting summaries:

We have two very different audiences - ESL and non-ESL. They have very different motivations and needs. Recommend different subcommittees for each of these groups.

* **FACULTY**
	+ **Top reasons for applying**
		- To get better jobs: 7+
		- ESL is life-changing: 7+
		- Inspired by children: 4+
		- Steppingstone to college: 2
	+ **Access**
		- Staff / teacher / class capacity: 7+
		- Language barrier: 5+
		- Digital access: 4
		- Application process: 2
		- Awareness: 2
		- **Navigators**, who would help w/ most of this: 6
	+ **Retention**
		- Jobs interfere: 9+
		- Childcare: 8
		- Mental health: 4
* **STUDENTS: *Seems we talked exclusively to ESL students?***
	+ **How did you and your peers learn about the education program you're in**?
		- *Hopelink: Afghan student saw something shared in a WhatsApp group. Called the #, but English wasn’t good, so they emailed the prospective student back and set up a 15-minute interview with someone who quickly got them enrolled in ESL.* “I'm so glad to call them and they will so kind pupil, they answer every message. Every message, my emails, my calls anytime and in this way, I enjoy Hopelink.
		- Hopelink: “(A friend) introduced the class for me. She told me that this class was so helpful for her …, helping help her understand about the American working culture and prepare for an interview and write her resume and cover letter, something like that. … at that time, I even didn't know what is cover letter because it's very different from my country.”
	+ **You probably had a moment where you were weighing reasons to sign up and reasons not to. Do you remember what some of those reasons for and against were**?
		- *Hopelink ESL students were immigrants who knew they had to learn English and, with classes free, how could they not?*
		- Wenatchee: *When they learned about the ESL classes, they applied. One did it for their kids*
	+ **What was the application and enrollment process like? Was it easy? Hard? What stands out from your memory about how it could be easier**?
	+ **Is there anything that can be done to make adult education more accessible**?
	+ **Sticking to an education program isn't easy. What are some of the biggest challenges to continuing the program that you hear about from your peers**?
		- Hopelink: “(When you have children), It's so hard. To be in front of computer 2 hours,” (3 students commented its hard-to-get time with kids)
		- Wenatchee: “his biggest challenge is coming at coming to school after work. He feels like sometimes it's the time that he's tired or he came and then the material that he learns if he's not practicing, he just flies over his head.”
	+ **Is there any kind of support that doesn't exist, but if it did, it would make staying enrolled and completing the program much easier**?
		- Hopelink: *ESL advisors who are specialists in areas and can help with interviews for specialist roles, like tech*
		- Transportation
			* *Hopelink: Transportation*
		- Daycare
			* *Hopelink: Daycare. (brought up repeatedly by the 3 students)*
	+ **If we had a magic wand and there was one thing we could do to support low-income or minority students in your program, what would you want that one thing to be**?
		- Hopelink: *driving class*
		- *Wenatchee: Publicize more*
		- *Wenatchee: Hybrid, offer video for when students can’t get to class that day due to work or whatever*
		- *Wenatchee: Voucher for school supplies at a discount*

## Council’s Purpose

* What do you see as your potential power, your individual and collective power for what this council can accomplish? What information do you think you would need to help them do that?
	+ Around 2020-21, we were sending letters supporting legislative action. The advocacy was around nontraditional evaluations, like waivers, funding for education. We were also talking about the diversity of this council and that when the council is supporting an issue, it’s more than basic education and corrections education views – it was views from all over the state working on the same topic. *Would like to see us continue with this type of work.*

We can work on items that are planned legislative items and the ones that come up and require a response. The BEdA office could mobilize the council around a specific piece of legislation that requires testimony or support on.

* + AEAC and the CBS council have been viewed as two-sides of the same coin. CBS concentrates on how the programs do their business and how they connect with each other to meet state goals. The AEAC is more of a strategic partnership and advocacy, reaching outward to touch those on behalf of CBS and those college/CBO programs and help setting priorities. How adult basic education functions within the workforce development system, working with One-Stop’s and other players, Wagner Peyser and their players.
	+ We had a clear goal when we did the High School 21 work, there was a lot of energy behind a very specific problem. The council understood why it was important to come up with something new and CBS did a lot of the work, but this council helped provide support to the partnership.
	+ Reentry is a big topic and ESD is talking about it. Wouldn’t it be great if we could develop an electronic system for our whole system where incarcerated students could connect not only with training, but with job search when they come out in a different physical location. How can we maximize the handoff when students are released?

Maybe there’s some energy to develop a taskforce or sub-committee to dial into that.

* + Funding for the new Afghan arrivals pointed out deficiencies in our system, so as we’ve worked hard over the past year, coordinating with one another seems to have improved. Their arrival represented so many different needs, extreme low-level literacy (never learned to read or write), never touched a computer all the way to the other end of the spectrum, extremely well educated, trained professionals coming with credentials, but their language proficiency is holding them back from being successful. This was pointed out as an example of where our systems need to improve as this issue is not isolated to just this population.

Basic education students require more wraparound services and referrals to partner agencies and other resources. They need a “person” to go to that can provide all this information, so they are not going from one place to another to try and find whomever they were sent to.

* + Like the direction the council is headed with focus groups, excited about doing more listening and learning and from that identifying and/or building more permanent solutions and building compelling stories around us. And from that, developing our advocacy efforts to align.

Wondering structure wise if we better organized ourselves around the segments that we want to help and get more focused on that. For example, ESL vs. non-ESL.

* + How do we take a topic/subject and turn it into impact and legislature? What's the next step for that? Is that something SBCTC would work with us on? Is that something SBCTC would have somebody else on? I mean, how do we take that something? Whatever it is, something comes out of your eyes like we've heard all these stories in the day and then you build a case or, you know, the map checks out. What does it look like?

Will’s response: I think that gets to the root of what's involved in the outcome of this work. Is it funding? Is it legislation that's not so much about funding, but about the policy change? So, I think we can think about buckets of where things can go. So, the first two that I think in our funding, and sometimes it's a legislative change, but sometimes it might be more local policy changes or more local policy guidance. I think there could be something around interagency collaboration, not everybody belongs to a different agency, but enough of us to do that I think there could be some outcome there around how we coordinate services in the state. Those are a few things initially that are coming to mind.

* + Another thing this council has done in the past was to help us craft marketing plans. Our new unique problem is our system is having a teacher shortage. We’d like the council’s input on whether instead of marketing to recruit students, we should recruit faculty.

What would a teacher recruitment campaign look like? The council’s suggestion is to put together an ELA and high school experience focus group. Find out, why do you want to do this? What would stop you from doing this? Like the same questions, from that, you develop a method to develop some solutions. How do we make the case for people to come and invest their time in getting their credentials, when they're able to work for $16/hour? We need ELA teachers with strong teaching knowledge.

## SBCTC Update

* Dr. Carli Schiffner is leaving us to be the new President at Grays Harbor College and Dr. Joyce Hammer is our new Deputy Executive Director of Education.
* BEdA’s new Administrative Assistant, Katrina Whittle will begin on June 20, 2023.
* BEdA is hiring for our Corrections Education Policy Associate in August.

## CBS Update

* Serving the new arrivals from Afghanistan and Ukraine. First and foremost, we were not prepared for this. So many of our providers saw a decline throughout the pandemic, so we were working to try and get enrollment back up and all the sudden, campuses were slammed with 2,104 new arrivals in addition to the people that were already here looking for a high school diploma.

Sherri (Spokane CC) shared that with the new arrivals, they’ve had to hire a lot of people very quickly and we can't give them the support that we would normally get access adequately, even though we need to pair everyone with a mentor and then we have to we pay stipends to the faculty to mentor in our group because this extra time of takes, they work with local university and sometimes specifically you can get students for their master's program to come in necessary classrooms, we do a lot of different things, but it's the quality of education.

Ricardo shared that back around 2017-18 there was a trend to get a lot of teachers through some computer training and received a “Certificate in eLearning Design and Development” from RTC. It was great training and helped him with his job on campus. Maybe there is a way to put together a training program for ESL/ELA faculty across the state. Something that meets the specific needs of demand for quality faculty and could then be continuously improved upon.

Kelli (Hopelink CBO) shared that for them, the new arrivals have expanded the geographic area they serve. They check out computers to them and bend-over backwards to help them get started and then, unfortunately, they move out of their service area, so they have had to expand to retain the student. Their volunteers are meeting the students at the libraries closest to where they are living.

What Amy (Tacoma Community House/TCH CBO) has found is that this population is either level one or level six. There doesn’t seem to be an in-between with this population, they’re either super educated and ready to go to work or they’ve never really done English at all. This population is also different due to war zone trauma, the need for mental health support. TCH has been unable to find Ukrainian speakers that deal with mental health in Pierce County to help this population. TCH had been part of a training project funded by ORIA and SBCTC where their faculty went to volunteer programs and trained on this topic and the materials are still available on the [TCH website](https://www.tacomacommunityhouse.org/services/education/literacy-now-downloadable-material/), it’s dated, but might still be helpful.

* The BEdA population has been why many of the colleges have been able to meet their enrollment targets.
* ctcLink is a standardized system for the whole community college system, where the prior Legacy system was very customizable to each college. PeopleSoft (ctcLink), was built specifically for the four-year universities which impacts how we do classes and the experience for students.

We’ve had a committee working on these issues from the beginning:

* + BEdA Grading Basis, as ctcLink could not unlink the courses from financial aid, was developed. In the class build would show zero credits, so it wouldn’t calculate into the students overall GPA. So, the student could still see that they took an integrated history and English class that was for high school credit and they got an A in it, but it wouldn't factor into any certain GPA. This caused other issues for our students as now students don’t have a valid and legitimate transfer because it doesn’t show their GPA – it looks like zero credit! And so, when we’re sending these transcripts back to high school for an Open Doors program, we had an example of a student who had court involvement and had to show a transcript that the student was enrolled in classes, or for a student who wants to go on to a four-year university that has a GPA threshold in admissions requirements. It really disadvantages our students.

The team is working on fixing the BEdA Grading Basis. At their spring meeting, it was discussed to hold PeopleSoft to one of the state policies about providing a valid and legitimate transcript for our students. Otherwise, we’ll have to go through an enhancement request process statewide and have PeopleSoft build it correctly vs. us having to do a work around.

* $25 Quarterly Tuition – CBS had discussed whether or not the $25 dollar tuition for basic skills students be eliminated. Most thought YEAH, let’s get rid of it, it doesn’t provide enough revenue to deal with all of the logistics with collecting it, doing waivers, tracking down students if they don’t pay. However, there are colleges that collect enough that pay for salaries, where other colleges waive the fee completely as they have foundations that cover the fee.

There’s a CBS committee that is researching this more thoroughly before moving any kind of decision forward. This council would like to know how much money would it be state-wide (including the waivers foundations pay)? Approximately $1.2 million dollars.

Is there an opportunity here to get private partners to contribute money to cover the gap? It could be a bragging thing for a business, *that I donated this much money and that helped this many students get their education*.

Another point of view is that when students pay for something, they get to demand a level of service, they are a customer. Is paying $25 by the student really a motivator to get to class? For some, yes, they paid for class, and they would come vs. something for free is easier to skip. Antidotally, no, our students face the same challenges with childcare and jobs that other students face and sometimes cannot come. They can’t leave their child or afford to lose their job over attending classes.

The bigger question is what our staff could be doing/accomplishing if they were NOT chasing students down and filling out paperwork! Also, what does the data reflect? Does it make a difference in retention?

Will chimed in that ultimately, looking from a system view, we hope to eliminate it. However, the handful of colleges that are getting money back, we hope they can find the funds elsewhere as we don’t want colleges to lose a position over this.

* The Innovations Committee has been working on piloting other methods to capture measurable skill gains and placement that our CASAS test currently does. We want to have alternative(s) to CASAS, to measure our student’s progress.

## Reconnecting with Committees

Catching up on our work and reconnecting with each other.

Goal #1 - Work with system partners to ensure equitable student access, retention, and completion in order to close the education gap for students of color and low-income students.

* We need to measure to know if we are improving. We are working on data sources to try and track that and if at the next meeting it’s not great, we’ll ask the state to track additional data.
* Access was a top ask from our focus group meetings, a need for navigators or navigators’ help. We will develop a questionnaire for navigators to answer some questions for us, what’s working? What’s not working? What was your experience like? What are the tasks that are taking the most time?
* Babs and Cindy possible sources of navigators – AmeriCorps volunteers being navigators. They are going to go to some board meetings / Poverty Reduction work group and bring the conversation to them.
* Why aren’t students coming? Jobs aren’t flexible and Childcare.
	+ The idea we discussed is a possible pilot program, get with Alliance to do a program with flexible hours for workers and we want to reach out to Spokane CC to pilot something like what they are running already.
	+ What are possible ways childcare could be addressed? Could pilot a childcare apprenticeship program at a college? Could we partner with a CBO to fund childcare centers? This wouldn’t just be for students, but open to the whole community.
* *The navigator information would be helpful for the Goal #2 people too. Currently, our Google Site, need a place to house everything.*

Goal 2: Advocate for innovative education and career pathways that advance current and graduates of Basic Education for Adults students into living wages and to achieve their career goals.

* We were targeting two groups: New Arrivals and Re-entry.
* Focused on reentry and who else they need to invite are Kristen Morgan and Hanan Al-Zubaidy to help with this work. Build a focus group of navigators, currently incarcerated, those that have just been released and came back. What part of our system failed? So, we then went into recidivism.

Why is this group more important than others? There’s a disproportionate amount of minority groups and low-income groups return at a much higher rate. Collecting existing data to work on with this focus group.

Goal 3: Promote training and information sharing on college and career pathways for faculty and staff statewide to support and advance the Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) and Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) plans.

* This council is advisory and does information sharing – this goal is not something that is attainable in a committee format, so this committee has sunset. We’ll revisit a goal to work on at the Fall meeting.
* What if this group focuses on the basic skills teacher shortage? Or broader, why is there a personnel shortage. *Let’s revisit this at the Fall meeting, do we need to work on three goals, or have those people transfer to the other two groups.*

## AEAC Meeting Schedule 2023-24

2022-25 Working Folders for Members (*permanent*)

* October – In-
* January – Virtual
* April – Virtual
* June Retreat – In-person