

CCW Advisory Committee Notes

February 9, 2026

Hosted by: WSAC - Inez Olive, Shannon Peterson & ESD - Andrew Clemons

Presentation by: Joel Anderson - WSAC

Attendees: Ann Avary - NW Center of Excellence for Marine Manufacturing & Technology, Wendy Bart - Olympic Peninsula YMCA, Ryan Beard - WA STEM, John Bonner - WABS, Jessica Dempsey - ESD 101, Laura DiZazzo - Ballmer Group, Erin Frasier - WSBCTC, Faye Guenther - UFCW 3000, Srikant Iyer - Life Science WA, Jim Kindle - ESD 123, Scott Mauk Chimacum SD, Chris NeSmith - Elma SD, Sarah Patterson - AGC Education Foundation, Randy Spaulding - WA State Board of Education, Ingrid Stegemoeller - WA Round Table, Rathi Sudhakara - WSAC

Small Group Discussion Prompt

Based on your unique experience with CCW can you please advise:

1. If, or how, you believe CCW programs and funding supported student credential attainment - consider the state's 70% attainment goal
2. If there are any specific programs you recommend CCW Leadership study more closely
3. If there are any other potential impacts (e.g. for employers, education institutions) that CCW Leadership could study to get a more comprehensive picture of CCW.

Stakeholders raised concerns that Washington's 70% credential attainment goal could unintentionally reinforce inequities if it prioritizes completion over mobility. There was an emphasis on the need for stackable pathways, connecting credentials to higher education and employment by improving cross-system data integration and stronger tracking of employment outcomes. Participants highlighted the importance of increasing school district representation in decision-making to reflect Washington State's decentralized education structure, scaling effective initiatives rather than creating new programs, and evaluating the full student pathway experience.

Risks of the 70% Credential Attainment Goal

Main Takeaway: Credential attainment goals must be paired with mobility and postsecondary access, not just completion numbers.

- Concern that focusing on any [credential attainment to reach 70%](#) may unintentionally reinforce inequities.
- What students are being counted in the credential attainment - is it a certification or an IRC versus an associates or bachelors degree?
- Don't limit just to the attainment level, but what's next after that attainment? Are they employed and where? This data should be integrated.
- If pathways are terminal and not connected to higher education, students long-term mobility is limited.

Need for Connected Pathways Rather Than Separate Tracks

Main Takeaway: The creation of integrated pathways provides movement between credentials, degrees, and employment to mitigate dead ends.

- Academic Credit for Prior Learning (CPL/PLA) helps to look at the whole student and their learning, skills, and competencies outside of a traditional classroom. How do we create these pathways for students to establish economic mobility using a CPL/PLA as a mechanism to help accelerate that and connect it back to a pathway, whether it's higher ed, trades, workforce, etc.?
- Emphasis on dual credit, stackable credentials, and apprenticeships connected to degrees as there are numerous ways to gain credentials.

Major Data Gaps & Scaling What Works

Main Takeaway: Without integrated data, we cannot determine whether attainment goals are equitable or effective. Focus on data integration and scaling effective models.

- State data systems are not connected and it would be great to have CCW focus energy on this to say what's happening and build systems on top of this.
- Hard to track who earns which credentials, equity breakdowns, employment outcomes after completion.
- Scaling up what is working well rather than looking to reinvent the wheel. Take initiatives or projects that are very productive now and scale them out rather than trying something new due to limited resources. Many organizations are risk-averse, especially in this climate.

Evaluate the Whole Pathway Experience

Main Takeaway: Focus on pathway coherence and outcomes across systems, not just program-level metrics.

- Evaluate the continuum such as a student's experience or employers experience through the continuum rather than focusing on individual program evaluation. This is seen as a big value addition of CCW - aligning and coordinating programming so that there is a coherent experience throughout a pathway.

Local Control & Representation Issues

Main Takeaway: Policy and design must reflect local control realities and meaningfully include school districts in decision-making.

- Washington State's education system is decentralized and currently there is asymmetrical power in decision-making that is happening with it being overwhelmingly toward the employer side and not enough on the superintendents, board members, and local school districts. This does not translate well as the local school districts hold major decision-making power but are overwhelmingly underrepresented in state-level design conversations while being overloaded with competing priorities.
- Top-down models (like Switzerland) do not work in decentralized systems.
- How do we create a mechanism that's easy for school districts to implement and adopt so then they can come into place? There needs to be more energy into studying the organizational relationship design and grassroots models and more research on how the relationships between employers and school districts evolve naturally from a grassroots model.

Labor Market Alignment Questions

Main Takeaway: Better labor-market alignment data is necessary to guide pathway and program development.

- The [Skill Up for Our Future](#) report that came out in October 2024 broke down what percentage of jobs required associate's and bachelor's degrees, along with certificates and credentials within Washington State. How were these numbers attained?
 - Washington state job growth from 2023-2032 is projected at 12.8%
 - 75% of 1.5 million+ job openings will require postsecondary credentials
 - Bachelors and advanced degrees will be in highest demand - necessary 45% of job openings - and will continue to offer workers the greatest long-term wage premiums.
- Having this knowledge would make it easier for the workforce training development programs to benchmark themselves with respect to the programmatic development as to how they would align a set of jobs to specific degrees, sector by sector.
- Need more foundation in terms of what form can industries build that relationship with respective programs, whether they're in high schools, community colleges, credentials only, four-year degrees, etc.