

January 9, 2026

The Honorable Jamie Pedersen  
Senate Majority Leader

The Honorable John Braun  
Senate Minority Leader

The Honorable Joe Fitzgibbon  
House Majority Leader

The Honorable Drew Stokesbary  
House Minority Leader

The Honorable Laurie Jinkins  
Speaker of the House

The Honorable June Robinson  
Chair, Senate Ways & Means

The Honorable Derek Stanford  
Vice Chair, Senate Ways & Means

The Honorable Yasmin Trudeau  
Vice Chair, Senate Ways & Means

The Honorable Noel Frame  
Vice Chair, Senate Ways & Means

The Honorable Chris Gildon  
Ranking Member, Senate Ways & Means

The Honorable Timm Ormsby  
Chair, House Appropriations

The Honorable Nicole Macri  
Vice Chair, House Appropriations

The Honorable Mia Gregerson  
Vice Chair, House Appropriations

The Honorable Travis Couture  
Ranking Member, House Appropriations

Dear representatives and senators:

On behalf of the Workforce Education Investment Accountability and Oversight Board (WEIAOB), thank you for your broad investments in higher education and ongoing commitment to increase postsecondary attainment in Washington.

The Board was established in 2019 through [E2SHB 2158](#) to provide guidance and recommendations to the legislature on what workforce education priorities should be funded by the Workforce Education Investment Account (WEIA). This work is intended to uphold four key principles: helping 70% of Washington high school graduates complete a postsecondary credential, supporting equitable educational access and economic outcomes for systemically underserved students, helping Washington businesses fill current and future jobs with qualified Washington students, and improving both statewide systems and innovative approaches to increase student success and career readiness.

In preparation for the 2026 legislative session, the Board conducted a comprehensive review of appropriations from WEIA in the 2025-27 biennial operating budget, totaling almost \$1.6 billion. While this work affirmed Washington's commitment to state financial aid programs like the [WA Grant](#) (\$458.7 million, 29.0% of total appropriations from WEIA) and high-demand degree programs (\$115.1 million, 7.3%), it also highlighted the Legislature's deeply concerning

decision to supplant \$400 million (25.3%) in existing General Fund-State appropriations for UW with funding from WEIA. (More information on 2025-27 biennial appropriations from WEIA is available in the Board's [2025 legislative report](#).)

Given these circumstances and significant cuts to total higher education funding during the 2025-27 biennium, the Board presents the following recommendations to the Legislature for consideration as a 2026 supplemental operating budget is developed:

- **Do not supplant additional higher education funding with appropriations from WEIA during the 2025-27 biennium.** This practice goes against the Legislature's original intent for the account and limits Washington's capacity to invest in high-demand degree production, state financial aid programs, and other critical higher education needs.
- **Reinvest in financial aid and maintain existing investments in higher education.** WSAC, SBCTC, and public four-year IHEs have already been asked to weather hundreds of millions of dollars in funding cuts during the 2025-27 biennium. More reductions will further inhibit Washington's ability to reach 70% postsecondary attainment and build an educated workforce.
- **Protect and prioritize investments in equitable high-tech degree production and industry-aligned programs.** Appropriations from WEIA should be used to address critical access and equity gaps in sectors and occupations that require technical knowledge, skills, and credentials. The Board recommends protecting and prioritizing investments in programs that:
  - Increase outreach and recruitment efforts to communities with traditionally low rates of matriculation.
  - Increase the availability and accessibility of student retention, success, and support services.
  - Add capacity to current high-demand degree programs.
  - Add new programs in technical, high-demand fields and occupations.
- **Continue funding career connected learning programs via Career Connect Washington (CCW).** This recommendation is made pursuant to [Directive 24-03](#) from former Gov. Inslee, following CCW's annual performance update to the Board on October 9, 2025.

Thank you again for your commitments to students and higher education during the 2026 legislative session. More information about the Board is available at <https://wsac.wa.gov/WEIAOB>.

Sincerely,

Jane Broom  
Co-chair, WEIAOB

Rep. Dave Paul  
Co-chair, WEIAOB