



# 2026 Legislative Session Summary

May 2026

The following brief summarizes legislative and 2026 supplemental operating budget outcomes from the 2026 legislative session related to the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) and the state’s broader postsecondary education landscape.

## Agency Legislation Requests

WSAC requested three bills in advance of the 2026 legislative session. **All three were approved by Gov. Ferguson’s office. One was subsequently passed by the Legislature:**

- [HB 2474](#)\*—Strengthening postsecondary education consumer protections in the event of school or program closures.
- [SB 5931](#)\*—Making administrative changes to the Workforce Education Investment Accountability and Oversight Board.
- [SB 5963](#)—Modifying funding for the Passport to Careers (PTC) program and automatically qualifying PTC-eligible students for maximum WA Grant awards.

*\*Did not pass the Legislature.*

## Agency Budget Requests

The table below outlines which WSAC requests were included in Gov. Ferguson’s proposed 2026 supplemental operating budget and the enacted budget:

Topic	Request	Gov. Ferguson	Enacted Budget
HB 2474	No cost	Approved	Did not pass
SB 5931	No cost	Approved	Did not pass
SB 5963	\$60,000* (annual, ongoing)	Approved (within existing appropriations)	Passed Legislature
WA529 Invest Startup Costs	\$525,000 (FY26, one-time)	-	-
Regional Partnerships	\$1.25 million (FY27, one-time)	-	-

*\*WSAC committed to absorbing associated costs within existing appropriations.*

## Other Postsecondary Education Legislative Outcomes

The table below summarizes other bills passed by the Legislature that relate to postsecondary education, organized by WSAC’s policy clusters (if applicable):

Policy Cluster	Legislation
Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing financial aid completion data with OSPI’s High School and Beyond Plan platform (<a href="#">SB 5841</a>).</li> <li>Reducing funding for public education programs, including Running Start (<a href="#">SB 6260</a>).</li> </ul>
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>
Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>
Student Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing certain non-academic student employees at WWU to collectively bargain (<a href="#">HB 1570</a>).</li> <li>Requiring registered apprenticeships in the building and construction trades to provide behavioral health and wellness training (<a href="#">HB 2492</a>).</li> <li>Establishing a heritage apple orchard program at WSU (<a href="#">HB 2525</a>).</li> </ul>

## Other Postsecondary Education Budget Outcomes

The table below summarizes new appropriations and cuts to postsecondary education in the enacted 2026 supplemental operating budget, organized by WSAC’s policy clusters (if appropriate):

Policy Cluster	New Appropriations	New Cuts
Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$6.2 million*</b> to cover College in the High School fees (UW, CWU, EWU, WWU, and SBCTC).</li> <li>• <b>\$137,000</b> to study state programs that have increased enrollment within one year of high school graduation (TESC).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$7.0 million</b> to reduce the Running Start enrollment cap from 1.4 to 1.3 FTE until the 2028-29 academic year (SBCTC).</li> </ul>
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$140.3 million*</b> to cover increases in the WA Grant caseload forecast (WSAC).</li> <li>• <b>\$6.0 million*</b> to cover increases in the College Bound Scholarship caseload forecast (WSAC).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$1.67 million</b> to eliminate the WA Student Loan Program (WSAC).</li> </ul>
Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A.</li> </ul>
Student Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$15 million</b> to fund programs at the Center for Behavioral Health and Learning (UW).</li> <li>• <b>\$10.4 million</b> to fund collective bargaining agreements (CWU, EWU, WWU, and SBCTC).</li> <li>• <b>\$3.7 million*</b> to maintain tuition rates through the college affordability program (all IHEs).</li> <li>• <b>\$2.7 million</b> to restore cuts to operating appropriations (TESC).</li> <li>• <b>\$250,000</b> to support the Bothell campus’ Center for Biotech Innovation and Training (UW).</li> <li>• <b>\$200,000</b> to conduct a higher education and workforce development landscape analysis (ESD).</li> <li>• <b>\$116,000</b> to expand behavioral health degree programs (CWU).</li> <li>• <b>\$63,000</b> to establish a heritage apple orchard program (WSU).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$2.45 million</b> to eliminate Centers of Excellence (SBCTC).</li> <li>• <b>\$1.93 million</b> to reduce funding by 50% for the Institute for NW Energy Futures (WSU).</li> <li>• <b>\$263,000</b> to eliminate funding for grant writers in the Thriving Communities Initiative (UW).</li> <li>• <b>IHE and other agency administrative reductions**:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>\$2.2 million</b> at SBCTC.</li> <li>○ <b>\$1.25 million</b> at UW.</li> <li>○ <b>\$750,000</b> at WSU.</li> <li>○ <b>\$521,000</b> at WSAC.</li> <li>○ <b>\$175,000</b> at CWU, EWU, TESC, and WWU.</li> <li>○ <b>\$58,000</b> at WTB.</li> <li>○ <b>\$44,000</b> at ESD.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

\*Maintenance level appropriations (to cover the estimated cost of currently authorized programs).

\*\***\$239.9 million** from IHEs’ capital projects/building accounts was used to replace operating appropriations in FY27 (one-time) and prevent further cuts.