

REGULAR ITEM (RESOLUTION 26-08-34)

August 19, 2026

Tab 4

Approval of the System Efficiency, Access, and District Structure Work Group Work Plan and Timeline

Brief Description

In the 2026 supplemental operating budget, the Legislature directed the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to submit a report to the governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2026. The report must include recommendations that may reduce redundancy and expenses that do not directly correlate to student success; consider regional access, multi-campus districts, and other regional factors where reduction and proximity may not substantially affect access to postsecondary education; and review the current district structure and its impact on campus operations and student success.

At its April 2026 meeting, the State Board adopted Resolution 26-04-19, chartering the System Efficiency, Access, and District Structure (SEADS) Work Group to support completion of the legislative assignment. The resolution established the Work Group as an advisory body to the State Board, with any final report and recommendations subject to State Board review and approval.

The proposed SEADS Work Group Work Plan and Timeline, included as Attachment A, establishes the framework for the Work Group. It identifies the study frame and guiding questions, areas of inquiry, structure for staff and stakeholder support, and a sequence of Work Group meetings and project milestones leading to State Board consideration of a proposed final report in November.

Approval of the work plan will establish the Board-approved framework within which the Work Group will continue its advisory work. The Work Group may identify and recommend modifications or additional areas of inquiry for State Board consideration but does not exercise decision-making authority on behalf of the State Board.

How does this item link to the State Board's Strategic Plan?

The SEADS study directly supports the State Board's 2020–2030 Strategic Plan, particularly the focus area of Institutional Financial Health.

Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan calls for the system to secure resources and develop systemwide strategies that support colleges' financial sustainability and resiliency. Within that goal, the Strategic Plan specifically calls for forward-looking collaborative strategies that lead to better funding, efficiencies, and savings across the community and technical college system, as well as process improvements within SBCTC and the colleges.

The work plan also reflects the Strategic Plan's commitment to equitable student access and success. The study framework considers efficiency alongside the potential effects of recommendations on geographic and programmatic access, institutional sustainability, historically underserved students, workforce needs, and student success.

Background Information

The Work Group began its work in June. The proposed work plan organizes the study into a series of phases that move from a common understanding of the legislative charge and baseline system information to analysis of efficiency and redundancy, access and regional considerations, district structure and governance, and development of proposed recommendations.

The work plan establishes five guiding questions:

- Where are there potential redundancies or costs that do not clearly contribute to student success, and what additional terms or concepts require clarification as the analysis proceeds?
- Where does the current district structure support or inhibit campus operations and student success?
- Where would reductions, consolidation, collaboration, or shared services create efficiencies without materially reducing access?
- What regional factors must be considered before any recommendation is made?
- What recommendations are actionable for the Legislature, State Board, colleges, or other state or federal actors?

The study is intended to be a structured policy and operational review rather than an examination that begins with predetermined conclusions regarding individual colleges, campuses, districts, programs, or services. The work plan defines efficiency in relation to effective use of public resources, student success, access, institutional sustainability, and administrative burden. It similarly recognizes that access extends beyond geographic proximity to include factors such as transportation, broadband, program availability, course modality, student supports, workforce needs, and the needs of rural, Tribal, low-income, working adult, and other historically underserved students.

The proposed structure distinguishes among the respective roles of the State Board, Work Group, and SBCTC staff. The State Board establishes the framework and retains decision-making authority. The Work Group reviews information, considers findings and tradeoffs, and develops advisory findings and proposed recommendations for State Board consideration. SBCTC staff coordinate research, data analysis, report development, and targeted technical and stakeholder input.

The schedule anticipates completion of recommendation development during October, final Work Group review in November, and State Board consideration of a proposed final report before submission to the governor and Legislature. Any final findings, recommendations, or report submitted in fulfillment of the legislative assignment remain subject to State Board review and approval.

Recommendation/preferred result

Staff recommend adoption of Resolution 26-08-34 approving the System Efficiency, Access, and District Structure Work Group Work Plan and Timeline, included as Attachment A.

Approval establishes the study framework, guiding questions, general areas of inquiry, stakeholder

categories, and timeline for the Work Group's advisory work. Administrative adjustments to Work Group meeting dates, staff assignments, data collection, and project sequencing may be made as necessary to complete the work within the Board-approved scope and legislative deadline.

Policy Manual Change Yes ☐ No ☒

Prepared by: Nate Humphrey, executive director

STATE OF WASHINGTON

STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

RESOLUTION 26-04-34

A resolution approving the work plan and timeline for the System Efficiency, Access, and District Structure Work Group.

WHEREAS, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges carries out its responsibilities and duties imposed upon it within the confines of the authority, power, and discretion granted to it by law (see [RCW 28B.50](#)); and

WHEREAS, the 2026 supplemental operating budget, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5998 (ESSB 5998), Chapter 268, Laws of 2026, § 602(44), directs the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to submit a report by December 1, 2026, pursuant to [RCW 43.01.036](#), to the governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature that includes recommendations that may reduce redundancy and expenses that do not directly correlate to student success, considers regional access and multi-campus districts, and reviews the current district structure and its impact on campus operations and student success; and

WHEREAS, on April 9, 2026, the State Board adopted Resolution 26-04-19 chartering the System Efficiency, Access, and District Structure Work Group to support completion of the legislative assignment; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 26-04-19 established the Work Group as an advisory body to the State Board and provided that any final recommendations or report submitted in fulfillment of the legislative assignment are subject to review and approval by the State Board; and

WHEREAS, the Work Group and SBCTC staff have developed a proposed work plan and timeline that establishes a structured process for examining system efficiency, access, regional considerations, district structure, campus operations, and student success; and

WHEREAS, the proposed work plan identifies the study framework, guiding questions, general areas of inquiry, stakeholder categories, project structure, and timeline for completing the legislative assignment; and

WHEREAS, the State Board intends for the Work Group to continue operating in an advisory capacity within the framework approved by the State Board, with decision-making authority remaining with the State Board;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges approves the System Efficiency, Access, and District Structure Work Group Work Plan and Timeline, attached to this resolution as Attachment A; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Work Group shall conduct its advisory work within the Board-approved framework and may identify and recommend modifications or additional areas of inquiry for consideration by the State Board; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Work Group does not exercise decision-making authority on behalf of the State Board, and that any findings, recommendations, or proposed report developed through the Work Group process are advisory unless and until acted upon by the State Board; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Director may make administrative adjustments to Work Group meeting dates, staff assignments, data collection, and project sequencing as necessary to complete the work within the scope approved by the State Board and the legislative reporting deadline; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any proposed final report and recommendations developed through this process shall be presented to the State Board for review and consideration prior to submission to the governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature pursuant to RCW 43.01.036.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED on August 20, 2026

Attest



Nate Humphrey, secretary



Martin Valadez, chair