

K-AA: A Redefinition of Basic Education in the Washington State Constitution

According to our state constitution, all residents of the state are guaranteed access to a basic education. Washington state currently defines “basic education” as a K-12 education. A high school diploma is no longer enough to give a person equal access to quality jobs, with studies showing that by 2020 65% of all jobs in the US will require post-secondary education. To meet this demand, every resident of Washington state should have access to higher education as promised in the Washington State Constitution. Therefore, WACTCSA urges our state legislators to amend the definition of “basic education” to guarantee education from kindergarten to an associate’s degree. All students who are Washington state residents would be able to obtain a technical certificate or associate’s degree, which in turn would make our workforce more competitive and strengthen our state’s economy.

Ban the Box: Fair Chance Employment and Housing for the Justice Involved

All of our students and graduates deserve equal opportunity and access to employment and housing regardless of their criminal background. In light of recent legislation to support higher education in correctional facilities, the state should now turn their focus towards supporting these students who are looking toward reintegration after serving their sentence. To increase employment and housing opportunities, reduce recidivism, and racial disparity in the criminal justice system, we support legislation that will limit disclosure of criminal history on job and housing applications. There should be no check boxes on screening applications that ask if individuals have ever committed a crime: ban the box!

Textbooks and Open Educational Resources (O.E.R.s)

Affordability and Accessibility

CTC students continue to hold concern about the prohibitive costs of educational resources for most courses offered in the CTC system. We want to ensure that CTC students have equitable access to affordable content to support their education. We appreciate former legislative action to support the development of OERs, and we support even more development of OERs in our CTC system. The legislature should establish greater incentives and funding for specific staff members on each campus to facilitate OER development..

Higher Education for Undocumented Students

Washington residents are guaranteed education regardless of documentation status and we feel the legislature should lead efforts by pursuing widespread access to affordable higher education opportunities. Many undocumented students are unaware of existing resources and scholarship funding to aid them in their higher education goals. We believe public and private resources that are available should be communicated effectively. Ensuring applications are available in each student’s preferred language is a component of this. We feel should training be required for faculty and staff to be better prepared to handle undocumented students that this should be mandated and implemented.