



SSHB 2513

TRANSCRIPT WITHHOLDING AND LIMITING THE PRACTICE OF REGISTRATION HOLDS AS DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES

December 1, 2020

Table of Contents

Overview of SSHB 2513	2
Community and Technical College System Policy for Complying with SSHB 2513.....	2
Student transcripts	3
Class registration	3
Lowest debt amount sent to collections.....	3
Data requirements.....	3
Recommended quarterly timeline for colleges.....	4
Number of Student Accounts Sent to Collection Agency	4
By-College Registration Holds and Number of Past Due Accounts Assigned to Collections	5
Conclusion	6
Contact.....	6

Overview of SSHB 2513

Second Substitute House Bill 2513, which took effect June 11, 2020, prohibits higher education institutions from withholding a student’s official transcript as a debt-collection tool when the transcript is requested to apply for a job, transfer to another institution, pursue another postsecondary opportunity, apply for financial aid, or to pursue service in the military or National Guard.

Under SSHB 2513 higher education institutions may continue to withhold a student’s official transcript—or deny class registration—due to unpaid tuition or room and board, unpaid transcript-processing fees, or because the student needs to pay back the higher education institution for financial aid due to withdrawal from school, a miscalculation, or another reason.

Higher education institutions that choose to withhold official transcripts or registration privileges as a tool for debt collection must let students know the following information through a secure portal or e-mail. If registration privileges are also withheld, the institution must also notify the student through the class-registration process

- any debts owed by the student to the institution including the amount of debt;
- information on setting up a payment plan; and
- any consequences that will result from the nonpayment of the debt

The Washington community and technical college system has developed a system-wide policy for all 34 colleges in order to meet the requirements of SSHB 2513. This report summarizes the key provisions of the policy.

This is the first of an annual report due to the Legislature’s higher education committees and Governor’s Office every December under SSHB 2513.

Community and Technical College System Policy for Complying with SSHB 2513

The community and technical college system’s policy for complying with SSHB 2513 was led by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) in consultation with the Washington Office of the Attorney General and representatives from college registration and business offices. This system-wide policy allows all colleges to meet legislative requirements, eliminate the possibility of varied college processes, and to serve students enrolled in one or more colleges.

Student transcripts

Given the number of provisions in SSHB 2513 regarding the mandatory release of student transcripts, the system-wide policy is for colleges to release official transcripts upon request, regardless of the type of debt that is owed. No transcripts will be held for debt collection in the community and technical college system. This also applies to other entities that are requesting the transcripts at the student's request.

Class registration

The system-wide policy allows colleges to withhold registration privileges for students with unpaid debt, including but not limited to, failure to pay tuition and fees and room and board, and/or financial aid that is owed back to the institution because the student withdrew from school, there was a miscalculation of aid, or another reason.

Registration holds are fluid and are removed once a student pays the debt owed, allowing the student to complete subsequent quarter course registration processes. The by-college spreadsheet on page 6 represents active registration holds as of November 23, 2020.

Lowest debt amount sent to collections

Under the system-wide policy, colleges may only send overdue accounts to a collection agency if the amount owed is \$100 or more. Individual colleges may, however, set a higher threshold. Four colleges chose to do so.

Data requirements

The policy requires each college's registration office to keep college-level data on:

- the number of transcripts held for debt to the college, and
- the number of students denied registration privileges for future classes for debt to the college

Each college's business office will file quarterly information with SBCTC on the following:

- the number of student accounts referred to outside collection agency(ies)
- the lowest amount owed that is sent to a collection agency(ies)

As a result, two new sections have been added to the [SBCTC Policy Manual](#) with links to the process documents and statutes.

Recommended quarterly timeline for colleges

All communication about holds and/or debt to the college must go through email or a secure portal. Letters can still be mailed to students in addition to the email or secure portal notifications. The following quarterly timeline meets standard payment policies and payment due regulations.

Week 0 – Payment due for quarter commencing first day of week 1

Week 1 – Registrar generates class rosters.

Week 3 – Census cutoff; Enrolled students without payment or a payment plan are presumably dropped for non-payment – Students are given 14 days grace period before receiving the First Notice of outstanding debt.

Week 5 – Business Office generates list of unpaid accounts after last day to drop classes and earn a partial refund has passed. The College Registrar then reviews the list for those with pending third-party payments and/or awaiting financial aid. After the Registrar cleans the list, the Business Office sends the First Notice letters to unpaid account holders after Registrar cleans the list.

Week 8 – Business Office generates list of unpaid accounts; College Registrar reviews list; Business Office sends Second Notice letters to unpaid account holders after Registrar confirms accuracy that those on the list are still currently enrolled.

Week 12 – End of Quarter. Business Office generates Final Notice email/letter and sends it directly to enrolled students. The list of enrolled students with outstanding balances is sent to the College Registrar for final review before accounts are assigned to a collection agency.

Thirty days after Week 12 – Business Office sends all unpaid accounts to collections.

Registration holds are fluid and are removed once a student pays the debt owed, allowing the student to complete subsequent quarter course registration processes. The by-college spreadsheet on page 6 represents active registration holds as of November 23, 2020.

Number of Student Accounts Sent to Collection Agency

The following by-college spreadsheet indicates the number of students sent to collections with accounts owed since the effective date of SSHB 2513 of June 11, 2020.

By-College Registration Holds and Number of Past Due Accounts Assigned to Collections

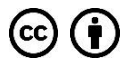
College	Registration Hold	Number of Past Due Accounts Assigned to Collections
Bates Technical College	390	31
Bellevue College	529	94
Bellingham Technical College	152	46
Big Bend Community College	41	15
Cascadia College	19	0
Centralia College	101	0
Clark College	412	125
Clover Park Technical College	79	17
Columbia Basin College	332	0
Edmonds College	539	302
Everett Community College	110	182
Grays Harbor College	81	0
Green River College	0	0
Highline College	370	15
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	154	94
Lower Columbia College	403	0
North Seattle College	484	50
Olympic College	97	0
Peninsula College	0	0
Pierce College District	1289	95
Renton Technical College	197	45
Seattle Central College	502	157
Shoreline Community College	291	209
Skagit Valley College	165	5
South Puget Sound Community College	117	426
South Seattle College	282	132
Spokane Community College	243	0
Spokane Falls Community College	231	0
Tacoma Community College	446	0
Walla Walla Community College	187	0
Wenatchee Valley College	474	0
Whatcom Community College	38	20
Yakima Valley College	62	50
		November 23, 2020

Conclusion

Washington's 34 community and technical colleges have worked together to establish a statewide infrastructure to effectively implement the statutes of RCW 28B.10.293 and RCW 28B.10.294. Subsequent annual reports will only include college-level reporting data.

Contact

Scott A. Copeland
Associate Director, Campus Relations and Policy Guidance
Washington State Board for Community and Technical College
scopeland@sbctc.edu | 360-704-4397



[CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), unless otherwise noted.

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges