



HB 1375 & HB 1702

Notification to Students Regarding Textbook Costs

Prepared for the 2025 legislative session

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Introduction

HB 1375 and HB 1702 both address a significant, but often overlooked, factor in the cost of higher education – the cost of textbooks.

Approved by the Legislature in 2017, HB 1375 (RCW 28B.50.789) requires community and technical colleges to provide students, upon registration, cost information for required course materials. Colleges may include the information in their online course descriptions or provide links to their bookstores' websites. All 34 Washington community and technical colleges are complying with HB 1375 by providing links to their college bookstores in the textbooks section of class search results.

HB 1375 also requires each college to report which courses use open educational resources (OER). In 2020, the Legislature went one step further by passing HB 1702, which requires colleges to also identify which courses use low-cost course materials.

While similarly named, there is a distinction between OER and low-cost course materials. OER refers to free materials that are openly licensed or in the public domain, enabling anyone in the world to use or modify them, without fear of copyright violation. Low-cost course materials are affordable resources priced at \$50 or less.

To help colleges comply with HB 1375 and HB 1702, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) created [policies and tools to help colleges identify whether courses should be labeled as OER or low-cost course materials](#). Additionally, SBCTC created ways for colleges to tag and label courses appropriately within "ctcLink," which is PeopleSoft software configured for Washington's community and technical college system. These course attributes appear on the class search page, enabling students to make informed choices at the time of registration.

All community and technical colleges enter and share data through ctcLink, which allows SBCTC to gather data about cost savings associated with OER and low-cost course materials.

This report provides a summary of the progress made by Washington community and technical colleges to implement both OER and low-cost labeling policies over the past two academic years (2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years).

Outcome and Student Savings

According to the data provided by SBCTC's data services department, Washington's community and technical colleges have made significant progress in implementing OER and low-cost labeling policies, resulting in significant savings for students.

2022-23 academic year

During the four quarters of the 2022-23 academic year (summer 2022, fall 2022, winter 2023, and spring 2023), a total of 8,629 class sections were labeled as OER courses enrolling 101,186 students. Additionally, 6,290 class sections using low-cost materials (priced at \$50 or less) enrolled 69,305 students during this same period. It is estimated that the total savings for students amounted to \$17,049,100 for the 2022-23 academic year.

2023-24 academic year

The implementation of OER and low-cost labeling policies continued to result in significant savings for students for the 2023-24 academic year. During the 2023-24 academic year (summer 23, fall 23, winter 24, and spring 24), 10,520 class sections were labeled as OER courses enrolling 124,038 students. Additionally, 6,340 class sections using low-cost materials (priced at \$50 or less) enrolled 72,059 students during this same period. It is estimated that the total savings for students amount to \$19,609,700 for the 2023-24 academic year.

Tables 1 and 2 present a yearly and quarterly breakdown of labeled class sections and student enrollment figures, while table 3 highlights the estimated cost savings during the same period. Following the tables, charts 1 and 2 illustrate the growth and progression of this data.

Table 1. Number of OER & low-cost class sections by academic year

Academic year	Term	OER class sections	Low-cost class sections
2022-23	Summer 2022	868	708
	Fall 2022	2,514	1,981
	Winter 2023	2,615	1,735
	Spring 2023	2,632	1,866
	Yearly Total:	8,629	6,290
2023-24	Summer 2023	1,130	737
	Fall 2023	2,985	2,097
	Winter 2024	3,133	1,829
	Spring 2024	3,272	1,677
	Yearly Total:	10,520	6,340

Table 2. Enrollment in OER & low-cost class sections by academic year

Academic year	Academic year	Academic year	Academic year
2022-23	Summer 2022	9,028	6,958
	Fall 2022	32,127	22,468
	Winter 2023	30,506	19,356
	Spring 2023	29,525	20,523
	Yearly Total:	101,186	69,305
2023-24	Summer 2023	11,730	6,733
	Fall 2023	36,820	24,067
	Winter 2024	37,873	22,174
	Spring 2024	37,615	19,085
	Yearly Total:	124,038	72,059

Table 3. Estimated savings from OER & low-cost class sections by academic year

Academic year	Quarter	Quarterly savings
2022-23	Summer 2022	\$1,598,600
	Fall 2022	\$5,459,500
	Winter 2023	\$4,986,200
	Spring 2023	\$5,004,800
	Yearly Total:	\$17,049,100
2023-24	Summer 2023	\$1,846,300
	Fall 2023	\$6,088,700
	Winter 2024	\$6,004,700
	Spring 2024	\$5,670,000
	Yearly Total:	\$19,609,700

Note: The cost savings were calculated by multiplying the total number of enrollments by an average commercial textbook cost of \$100. According to the College Board's "[Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2024](#)" report, students at public two-year colleges budgeted an average of \$1,520 for books and supplies during the 2024-25 academic year. Given that students typically enroll in 12-15 credit hours per term, which equates to 3-4 courses per term and approximately 12-15 courses per academic year, the average commercial textbook cost is estimated at \$100 to \$125 per course. Using \$100 as a baseline provides a conservative estimate for cost-saving calculations.

Chart 1. Quarterly progression of OER & low-cost class sections

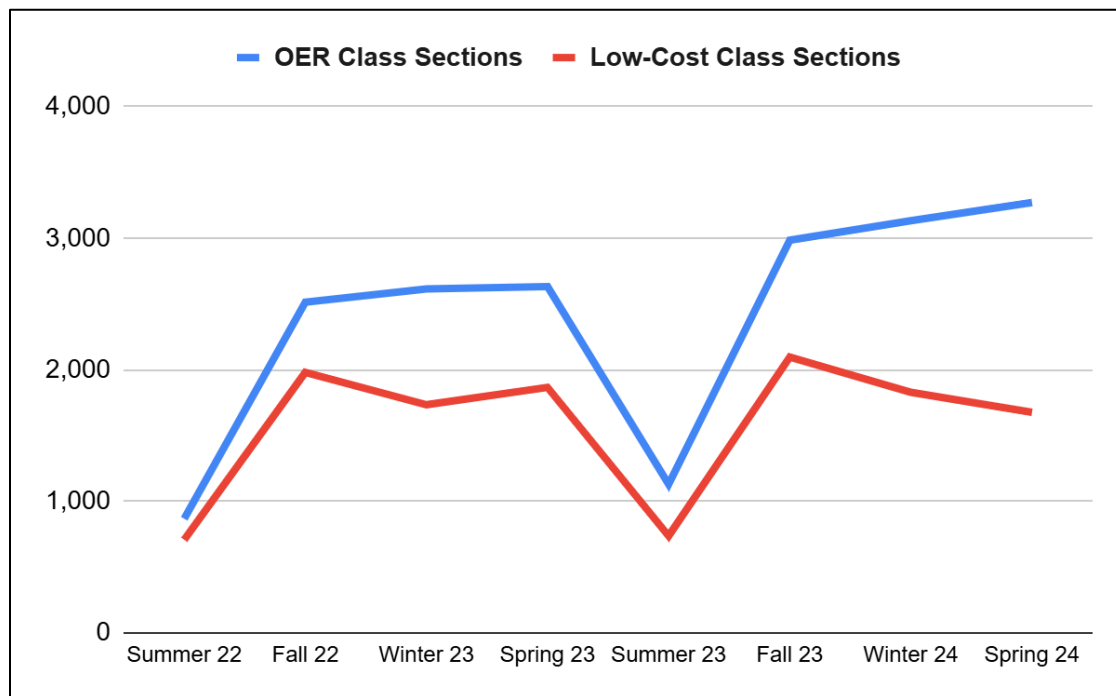


Chart 2. Quarterly enrollment progression in OER & low-cost classes

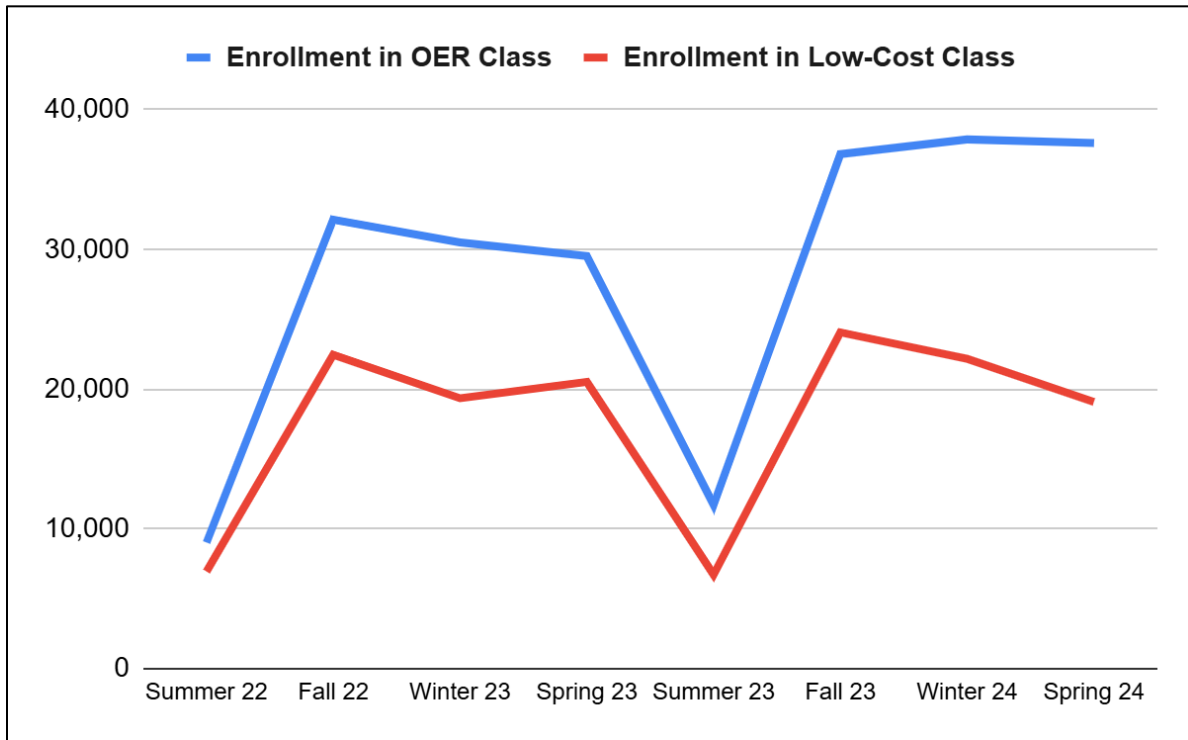
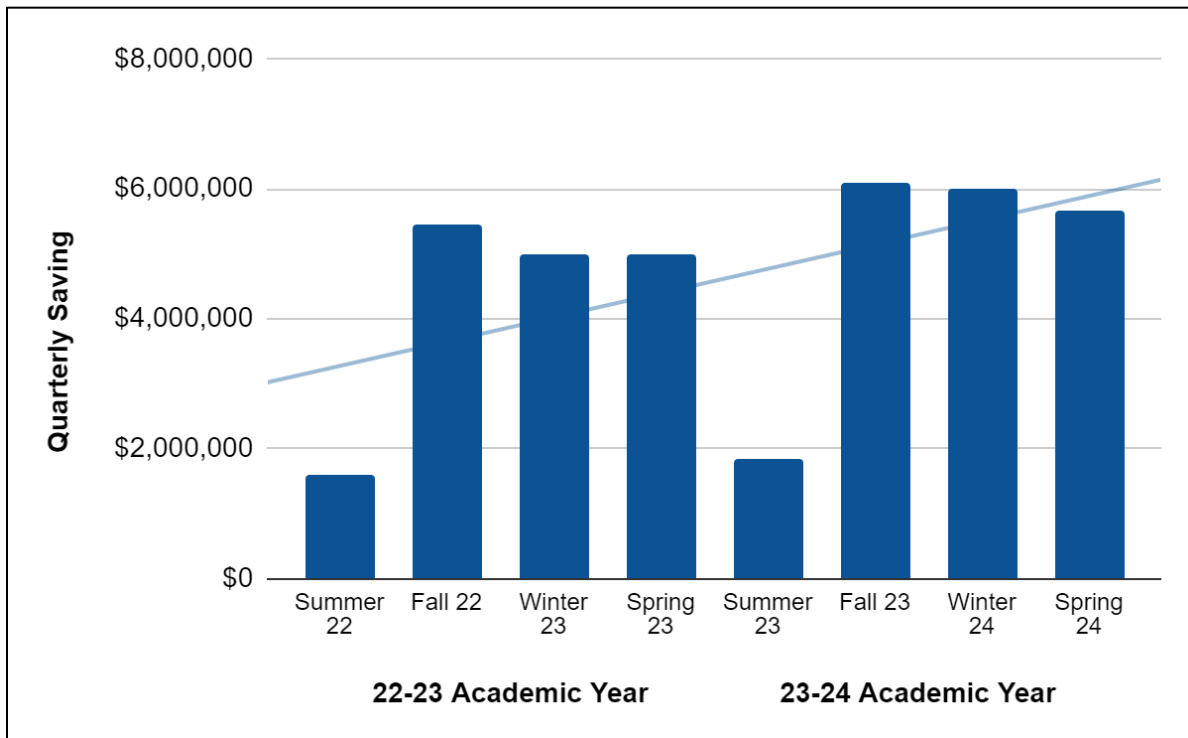


Figure 3. Quarterly progression in student savings



State Board Coding Manual Additions

SBCTC's coding manuals ensure colleges assign consistent and accurate codes to courses in ctcLink. Courses that use open educational resources are coded as "SOER" and courses that use low-cost course materials are coded as "SLCM." The definition and criteria required for these codes are specified in the [Implementation Guide of OER and Low-Cost Labeling Policies for Washington Community and Technical Colleges](#).

Conclusion

Washington's 34 community and technical colleges have collaborated to establish an effective mechanism for implementing HB 1374 and HB 1702. This comprehensive framework ensures that all community and technical college students can make financially informed choices at the time of registration by knowing which courses offer no-cost (OER) or low-cost textbooks and course materials. SBCTC has incorporated this requirement into the coding manual, providing colleges with clear instructions on policy implementation.

Our college system's commitment to textbook affordability goes beyond mere compliance; it demonstrates dedication to equipping students with essential information to make informed financial decisions about their education.

Contact

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