

Enrollment & Success in Transfer-Level English & Math for Special Populations

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Introduction

With the implementation of AB 705 in the California Community Colleges, colleges saw a positive impact in direct enrollment and success counts in transfer-level courses across their student bodies. According to our previous report, [Enrollment Transfer in Transfer-Level English and Math in the California Community College System](#), there was a significant overall net increase in the total volume of students completing transfer-level English and mathematics, as well as an increase in the overall throughput rates (proportion of all students enrolled in a mathematics and English class passing transfer-level English and mathematics within one year). Overall, direct enrollment into transfer-level English rose to 95% in fall 2019, increasing 24% points from the previous fall. Similarly, direct enrollment in transfer-level mathematics courses rose by 36% points, which went from 43% for the fall 2018 cohort to 79% for the fall 2019 cohort. Overall throughput rates also jumped for both subjects, climbing from 49% to 67% for English and almost doubling for mathematics at 50% over a five-year span.

Of interest is whether AB 705 had an equal impact across student groups. Disaggregated data for special populations—including economically disadvantaged students,ⁱ students impacted by the foster care system, veteran students, and students who partook in student services programs such as Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS),ⁱⁱ Extended Opportunities Programs and Services (EOPS),ⁱⁱⁱ Mathematics Engineering and Science (MESA),^{iv} Puente,^v and Umoja^{vi}—are presented in this report. Disaggregated data allow for identifying instances of inequitable outcomes, disproportionate impact, and/or performance gaps among specific student groups. Our research found **significant gains in enrollment and throughput rates for every special population subgroup.** This brief summarizes the impact on transfer-level enrollment and throughput rates for student in these groups who enrolled in either discipline for the first time from fall 2015 to fall 2019.

Enrollment in Transfer-Level English & Mathematics

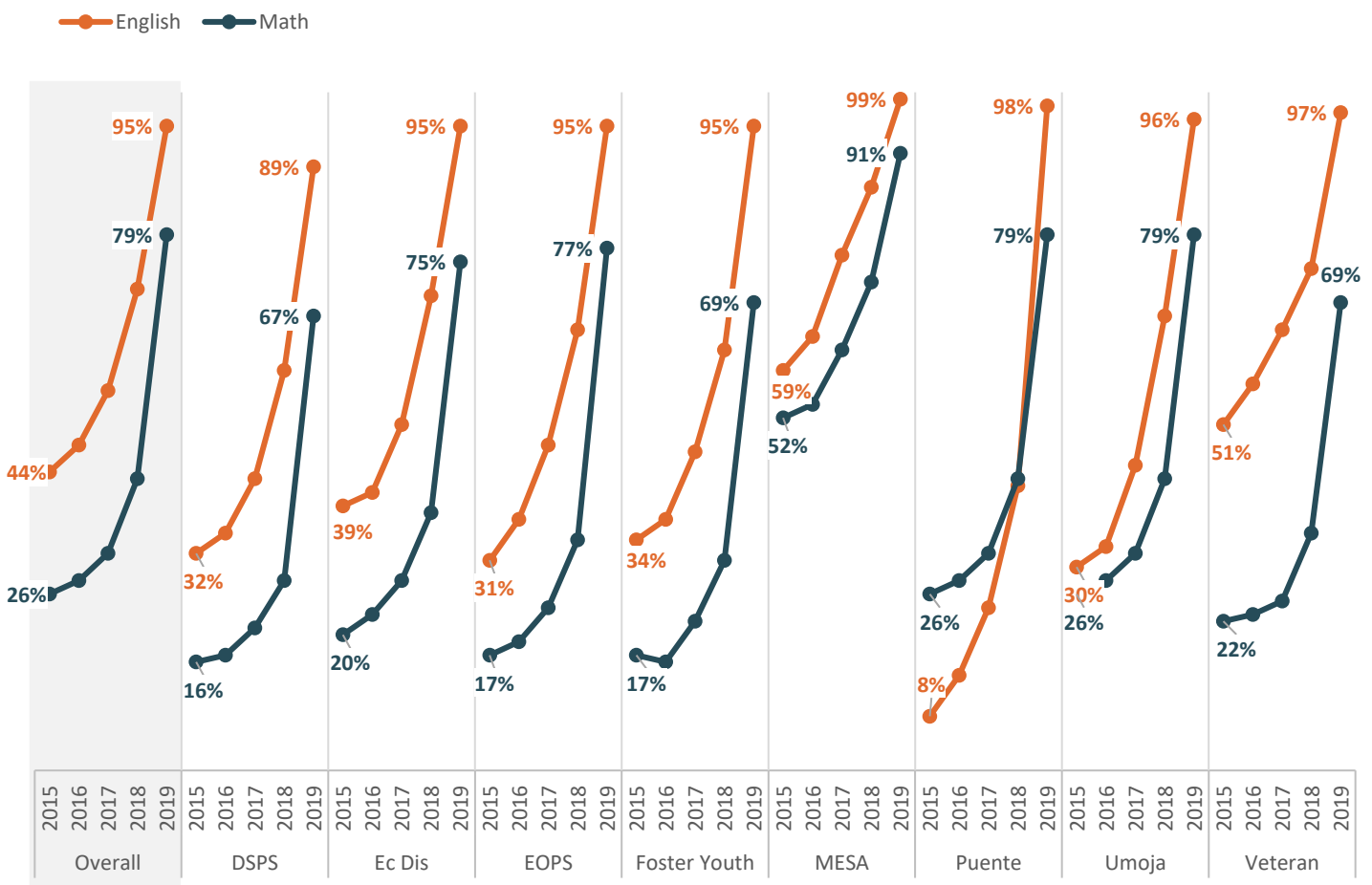
Disaggregated data for special population groups in Figure 1 show significant increases in direct enrollment in transfer-level English and mathematics courses across all student groups. Overall statewide trends show that students experienced overall increases of +51% points in English and +53% points in mathematics from fall 2015 to fall 2019.

For fall 2015 cohorts, direct enrollment in transfer-level English ranged from 8% (Puente students) to 59% (MESA students). All but two groups (MESA and veteran students) had enrollment rates below the overall state rate. After the implementation of AB 705, the fall 2019 cohorts experienced enrollment rates ranging from 89% to

99%. Puente students experienced the most significant percentage point increase (+90% points)¹ while all other subgroups experienced increases between +40% points (MESA) to +66% points (Umoja) (see Table 1). Importantly, **most groups reached enrollment rates in transfer-level English at or higher than the overall rate (95%)**. Students who participated in DSPS programs were the only exception with a rate of 89%.

Enrollment rates for transfer-level mathematics also increased significantly within this period. All student groups in the fall 2015 cohort had rates at or below the overall rate (26%), ranging from 16% to 26%, except for MESA students who had an enrollment rate of 52%. By fall 2019, these student groups experienced direct enrollment into transfer-level mathematics at rates ranging from 67% to 91%, exhibiting percentage point increases between +39% points (MESA) to +60% points (EOPS). **While all groups experienced increases in mathematics enrollment rates, several groups still lagged behind the overall rate (79%)**. Notably, gaps increased for DSPS, foster youth, and veteran students over these five years.

Figure 1. Enrollment Rates in Transfer-Level by Student Subgroup (Fall Cohorts)



¹ Prior to AB 705, Puente students were expected to begin their English course one level below transfer as a requirement of participation: thus, the stark increase was due to this change in program requirements.

Table 1. Enrollment Rates in Transfer-Level by Student Subgroup (Fall Cohorts)

Subject	Subgroup	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	5-Yr % Pt. Change
English	DSPS	32%	35%	43%	59%	89%	+57%
	Ec Dis	39%	41%	51%	70%	95%	+56%
	EOPS	31%	37%	48%	65%	95%	+64%
	Foster Youth	34%	37%	47%	62%	95%	+61%
	MESA	59%	64%	76%	86%	99%	+40%
	Puente	8%	14%	24%	42%	98%	+90%
	Umoja	30%	33%	45%	67%	96%	+66%
	Veteran	51%	57%	65%	74%	97%	+46%
	Overall	44%	48%	56%	71%	95%	+51%
Math	DSPS	16%	17%	21%	28%	67%	+51%
	Ec Dis	20%	23%	28%	38%	75%	+55%
	EOPS	17%	19%	24%	34%	77%	+60%
	Foster Youth	17%	16%	22%	31%	69%	+52%
	MESA	52%	54%	62%	72%	91%	+39%
	Puente	26%	28%	32%	43%	79%	+53%
	Umoja	26%	28%	32%	43%	79%	+53%
	Veteran	22%	23%	25%	35%	69%	+47%
	Overall	26%	28%	32%	43%	79%	+53%

Throughput Rates

To examine success in transfer-level English and mathematics courses, we consider the proportion of the entire cohort of students attempting any transfer-level English or mathematics course and successfully completing that course within one year (i.e., throughput rate). Overall, **throughput rates increased substantially between 2015 and 2019**. See Figure 2 and Table 2.

In English, overall the throughput rate rose from 49% in 2015 to 67% in 2019. Special population groups saw similar improvements in throughput rates with percentage point increases ranging from +8% points (MESA) to +24% points (foster youth). The student groups' rates ranged from 33% to 77% in fall 2015. Prior to AB 705 implementation in fall 2019, DSPS, EOPS, foster youth, and Umoja students experienced throughput rates lower than the overall state throughput rate (49%); and economically disadvantaged (Ec Dis) students, MESA, Puente, and veteran students completed transfer-level English within one year at higher rates than the state overall. In 2019, **all student groups surpassed the overall throughput rate (67%) except DSPS, foster youth, and Umoja students. Despite their over 20-point percent increases in English throughput rates during this time period, DSPS and foster youth students continue to have the lowest rates of these special population groups** with gaps -9% points and -10% points below the overall rate, respectively. Umoja students' rate was still below the overall rate in 2019, but it only lagged by -2% points.

Overall mathematics throughput rates jumped from 26% in 2015 to 50% in 2019. Except for MESA students (who already had higher than average throughput rates), **all special population groups doubled their throughput rates in mathematics from 2015 to 2019**. In 2015, mathematics throughput rates for these student groups ranged from 15% (DSPS and foster youth) to 65% (MESA). Post-AB 705, throughput rates improved to range from 36% (foster youth) to 70% (MESA). **DSPS, economically disadvantaged, foster youth, and Umoja students' mathematics throughout rates did not catch up to the overall throughput rate** and experienced larger gaps in 2019 than in 2015.

Figure 2. One-Year Throughput Rates in Transfer-Level by Student Subgroup (Fall Cohorts)

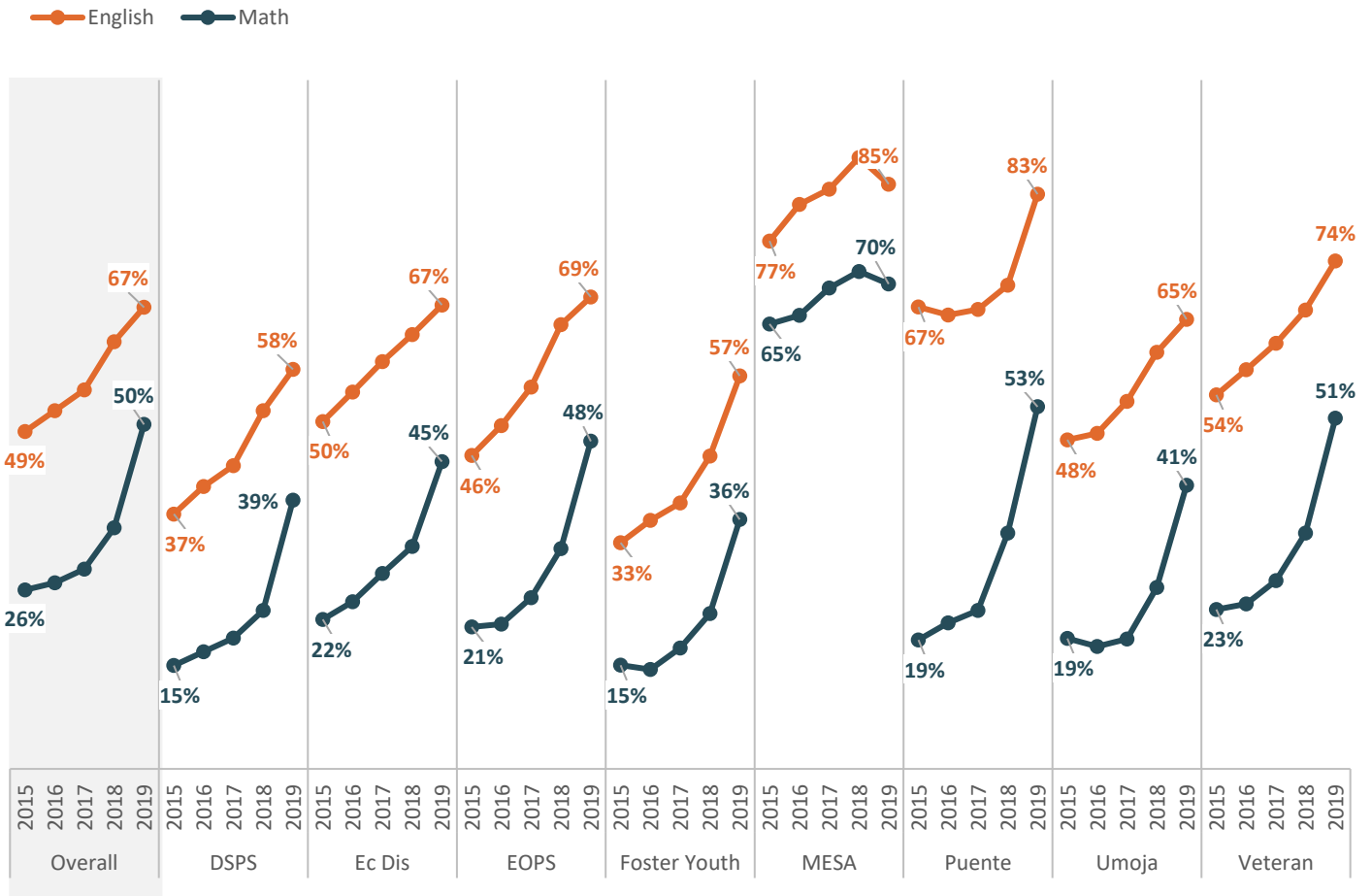


Table 2. Throughput Rates in Transfer-Level by Student Subgroup (Fall Cohorts)

Subject	Subgroup	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	5-Yr % Pt. Change
English	DSPS	37%	41%	44%	52%	58%	+21%
	Ec Dis	50%	55%	59%	63%	67%	+17%
	EOPS	46%	50%	55%	65%	69%	+23%
	Foster Youth	33%	36%	39%	45%	57%	+24%
	MESA	77%	82%	84%	89%	85%	+8%
	Puente	67%	66%	67%	70%	83%	+16%
	Umoja	48%	49%	53%	60%	65%	+17%
	Veteran	54%	58%	62%	67%	74%	+19%
	Overall		49%	52%	55%	62%	67%
Math	DSPS	15%	17%	19%	23%	39%	+24%
	Ec Dis	22%	24%	28%	32%	45%	+23%
	EOPS	21%	21%	25%	32%	48%	+27%
	Foster Youth	15%	14%	18%	23%	36%	+21%
	MESA	65%	66%	70%	72%	70%	+6%
	Puente	19%	21%	23%	34%	53%	+34%
	Umoja	19%	18%	19%	26%	41%	+22%
	Veteran	23%	24%	27%	34%	51%	+28%
	Overall		26%	27%	29%	35%	50%

Conclusion

Overall, **AB 705 proves to positively impact enrollment and throughput rates for special population groups.** For example, enrollment rates in transfer-level English for all but one group met or surpassed the overall state rate. Indeed, **close to 100% of each group could access transfer-level English after AB 705 implementation.** In addition, **transfer-level mathematics enrollment rates significantly improved for all students, with at least two-thirds of students enrolling for the first time in transfer-level.** However, when comparing transfer-level enrollment among certain student groups to the overall mathematics enrollment rate, **significant gaps were still evident for multiple groups,** and even increased among DSPS, foster youth, and veteran students.

Throughput rates also improved post-AB 705 substantially among all groups. Notably, **Puente students experienced the highest percentage point increase in mathematics throughput** in the five years examined. However, **DSPS, foster youth, and Umoja students' throughput rates in both subjects still lagged** behind the overall rate in 2019 at similar strength as in 2015. This continued disproportionate impact suggests that these groups of students were not being directed to or were not receiving access to transfer-level coursework at the same level as other students, resulting in these students not experiencing comparable throughput rates. **As such, colleges should continue to monitor enrollment and throughput rates for special populations groups, focusing on DSPS, foster youth, Umoja, and veteran students.**

ⁱ Economically disadvantaged students are identified using the MIS element [SG14](#), which considers students economically disadvantaged if they received financial assistance, such as CalWORKs/TANF/AFDC or social security income, have an income below the poverty line, is homeless, or other circumstance eligible under the guidelines provided in the "California State Plan for Career Technical Education."

ⁱⁱ [DSPS](#) provides support services, such as priority registration, specialized counseling, test proctoring, etc., to students with physical, learning, psychological, developmental delay, brain injury, visual, and/or hearing disabilities.

ⁱⁱⁱ [EOPS](#) offers comprehensive academic and support counseling, financial aid, and other services to students disadvantaged by social, economic, educational, or linguistic barriers to ensure they are able to meet their educational and career goals.

^{iv} [MESA](#) serves financially and educationally disadvantaged students seeking majors in mathematics and science-based fields.

^v [Puente](#) provides teaching, counseling, and mentoring services to students in order to build skills necessary for success in both academic and career goals.

^{vi} [Umoja](#) is a student success program specifically designed to increase retention and success rates of African-American students. Success is achieved through educational counseling, workshops, cultural events, mentoring, and personal development.