



The California Acceleration Project

A Faculty-Led Initiative Supporting the State's 116 Community Colleges
To Transform Remediation to Increase Student Completion and Equity
www.AccelerationProject.org

April 11, 2022

The Honorable Jose Medina
Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 1705 (Irwin): Equitable Placement at Community Colleges – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Medina,

As community college faculty, staff, researchers, and administrators who are committed to equitable, effective placement and remediation reform, we are writing to express support for Assembly Bill 1705 by Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin.

AB 1705 builds upon the transformational gains achieved under AB 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) by providing needed clarity to colleges about issues that are undermining implementation and contributing to racial inequity across the system. It is integral to helping California community colleges achieve the system's [Vision for Success](#).

We have seen firsthand the remarkable gains students have made under AB 705. In the first year of implementation, the law enabled tens of thousands of additional students to enter and successfully complete English and math milestones for university transfer. The Chancellor's Office Transfer-Level Gateway Completion [Dashboard](#) shows significant gains in enrollment and completion of transfer-level math and English coursework for every demographic group examined, including Black and Latino students, economically disadvantaged students, students with low high school GPA, students participating in programs for the disabled, older students, foster youth, and veterans. The law has also led to more students enrolling in and completing math courses in Business, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (BSTEM), with noteworthy gains for Latino and Black students, who have been historically underrepresented in BSTEM majors ([PPIC 2021](#)).

Nevertheless, implementation of AB 705 has been uneven across the community college system. We need AB 1705 to address issues impeding full implementation, in particular the continued enrollment of students into below-transfer-level coursework that hinders their progress in completing math and

English milestones for a degree and transfer. Just 14% of students who began math in a course one-level-below-transfer in fall 2019 completed a transfer-level course in a year, compared to 60% of students who enrolled directly in the transfer-level. Yet, in fall 2020, below-transfer classes constituted 20% or more of the introductory math offered at 69 colleges, and some colleges have increased remedial math offerings.

As we dig further into uneven implementation of AB 705, we see significant racial inequities. Black and Latino students disproportionately attend colleges that have maintained large remedial math offerings, and colleges serving over 2,000 Black students are more than twice as likely to be weak implementers of AB 705 as other colleges ([CAP 2020](#)). It is therefore not a surprise that the placement validation reports submitted by the 114 community colleges last year showed widespread disproportionate impact in transfer-level math completion for Black and Latino students enrolled in below-transfer courses ([CAP 2021](#)).

Contrary to opponents' claims, AB 1705 will not undermine the mission of the community college system. It allows for colleges to continue remediation practices that work, and it holds us accountable for providing evidence that these practices benefit students. It requires colleges to provide students access to concurrent supports, such as tutoring or enhanced transfer-level coursework. It has provisions for maintaining the integrity of CTE certificate programs that do not have math and English requirements and provides accommodation for CTE associate programs with specialized requirements. It also has allowances for programs in credit ESL, dual enrollment, and adult education.

We the undersigned believe in the capacity of our students. We believe it is the affirmative duty of our colleges to provide evidence-based options that promote student progress, and to discontinue practices that do not. We believe in dismantling educational structures, policies, and practices that contribute to racial inequity in outcomes. We believe in building equity-minded colleges that welcome and empower all students to succeed. And we believe that AB 1705 is aligned with our values.

We request your AYE vote when AB 1705 is heard in the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

Sincerely,

[INSERT SIGNEE'S NAME]

[INSERT SIGNEE'S POSITION]

Cc: Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, 44th District
Members, Assembly Higher Education Committee
Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy, Associate Consultant, Assembly Higher Education Committee
Lyndsay Mitchell, Consultant, Republican Caucus