GROWING INLAND ACHIEVEMENT

Working Together for Inland Educational & Economic Success

GIA Governing Board

Dear Chair Fong and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

On behalf of Growing Inland Achievement, I write to express our continued support for the strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705 (Irwin).

Growing Inland Achievement is a regional K-16 collaborative dedicated to advancing educational and economic mobility across the Inland Empire. By partnering with a cross-sector network of education, government, nonprofit, and business leaders, we strive to create pathways toward a shared vision of success. We are committed to supporting student-centered, data-driven, equity-focused policies.

AB 1705 builds upon the transformative impact of AB 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) and has been instrumental in increasing transfer-level course completion in English and math, particularly for historically underrepresented students. As a result, the California Community Colleges has produced large and significant gains in the timely completion of transfer-level math and English coursework for every demographic group examined, including Black and Latinx students, low-income students, disabled students, non-traditional students, foster youth, and veterans.

For example, one-year transfer-level math completion jumped from 30% in 2017-2018 to 60% in 2022-2023 and tripled for Black and Latinx students. Equitable placement and completion policies have created nearly universal access to transfer-level coursework and improved completion rates in gateway math and English courses for all students.

The data from Riverside Community College District (RCCD) colleges demonstrates the significant progress made under AB 705 and AB 1705. Over the past five years, completion rates have grown substantially across the district:

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inlandempiregia.org • 909-256-0011

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Transfer-Level Completion Rates (2017-2018 to 2022-2023) at RCCD Colleges						
College	**Subject**	**2017-18 Rate (%)**	**2017-18 Count**	**2022-23 Rate (%)**	**2022-23 Count**	**Growth (%)**
Riverside City College	Math	22%	605	52%	871	+30%
	English	53%	1,187	60%	1,755	+7%
Moreno Valley College	Math	16%	199	44%	299	+28%
	English	56%	813	61%	942	+5%
Norco College	Math	31%	425	74%	654	+43%
	English	56%	668	61%	670	+5%

Additionally, Black and Latinx students saw significant improvements in completion rates at RCCD colleges:

- Black student math completion increased from 11% to 43% at Riverside City College, 8% to 32% at Moreno Valley College, and 23% to 61% at Norco College.
- Latinx student math completion increased from 20% to 49% at Riverside City College, 16% to 45% at Moreno Valley College, and 29% to 67% at Norco College.
- English completion rates for Black and Latinx students also improved, closing equity gaps across the district.

These outcomes underscore the effectiveness of AB 1705 in closing equity and completion gaps and expanding access to college-level coursework. To sustain this progress, we urge continued support for requitable placement and completion policies that empower all students to succeed.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to student success. We look forward to continuing our collaboration in advancing educational opportunities for California's students.

Sincerely,

Ashish Vaidya

Ashish Vaidya
President and CEO

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PUBLIC ADVOCATES
MAKING RIGHTS REAL

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Fong, Chair
Assembly Higher Education Committee
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 6210
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Fong and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As a non-profit civil rights law firm committed to advocating for student-centered, evidenced-based policies that remove barriers for Black and Brown students, **Public Advocates is writing to request your continued support for strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705.**

Public Advocates, Inc is a civil rights organization that spurs change through policy advocacy and litigation in partnership with grassroots groups representing low-income communities, people of color and immigrants. Since our founding in 1971, we have served as a key voice for educational equity in landmark cases such as *Serrano v. Priest* and *Williams v. California*. In 2021, we expanded our legal advocacy into higher education and defended students' rights to access transfer-level courses by enforcing AB 705 and playing a key role in advocating for AB 1705.

AB 1705 built upon the transformational gains achieved under AB 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) by providing needed clarity to colleges about issues that undermined implementation and contributed to racial inequity across the system. Specifically, when colleges that served significant populations of Black and Latinx students were continuing to push these students into remedial courses, AB 1705 made it clear that students had the right to be placed in the transfer-level math and English course that would actually help them meet the requirements of their academic goal.

As a result, the California community college system has produced large and significant gains in the timely 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. For Black students in particular, one-year transfer-level math completion tripled– from 13% in 2017-2018 to 49% in 2022-2023.

PUBLIC ADVOCATES
MAKING RIGHTS REAL

Continued strong and consistent implementation of AB 1705 is key to ensure that all students, no matter where they attend college, have access to the same evidence-based practices proven to lead to their success.

AB 1705 makes it clear that it is the affirmative duty of our colleges to provide evidence-based options that promote student progress, and to discontinue practices that do not. AB 1705 dismantles educational structures, policies, and practices that contribute to racial inequity in outcomes and embeds fairness and justice in access to higher education for all students **For these reasons, we encourage this committee to hold the community college system responsible for strong and consistent implementation of AB 1705 and to uphold the rights of all students to equitable access and completion of their gateway courses.**

If you have any questions, please contact Jetaun Stevens at jstevens@publicadvocates.org.

Sincerely,

Jetaun Stevens
Senior Staff Attorney
Public Advocates, Inc.

AB 1705 Content and Implementation: A DEEPER DIVE

Richard Ford, Mathematics Professor Emeritus,

California State University, Chico

AB 1705 was passed without dissent by the legislature and then signed into law in September, 2022 without comment by Governor Newsom. The RP Group issued a Report commissioned by the Community College Chancellor's Office in early February, 2024. A short time later on February 27, 2024 the Chancellor's Office issued a memorandum held a webinar and issued FAQs to all CCCs spelling out actions required to implement requirements of Assembly Bill 1705 pertaining to STEM placement. This article is supplemental to an EdSource publication regarding AB 1705 and takes a deeper dive into the **bill itself**, the **RP Group report**, and the **Chancellor's implementation** pertaining to STEM placement. The analysis concludes that the law and its implementation will amplify rather than mitigate inequities in STEM education. Many restrictions in the law relevant to STEM preparation must be removed.

ASSEMBLY BILL 1705:

Passed without dissent from the legislature and without comment from the Governor, the portions of this bill pertaining to STEM preparation apparently enjoyed little scrutiny or review. The bill contains unhealthy requirements that serve to illustrate the perils that accompany legislative intrusion into curriculum and standards based on well-intended but counterproductive efforts to increase equity. The net result of requirements in AB 1705 pertaining to STEM education will erode the quality of education that community colleges can deliver. This hurts everyone and in particular it decreases rather than increases equity in higher education. It removes the "second chance" underprepared and under-resourced students wishing to major in a STEM field currently enjoy.

We highlight a few of the clauses and requirements in the bill to illustrate just how illogical the STEM components of law are and what little vetting by level heads was involved. The legislated restrictions and requirements on STEM academic assessment and placement policies by the community colleges are terribly destructive. Validation requirements are impossible, the law will precipitate the dismantling of calculus prerequisite offerings, it actually requires the community colleges to lie to students, and it imposes illogical restrictions on how students without records are assessed and placed.

Validation Requirements: We first look at section 78213-(f)(1) that provides prerequisite validation requirements:

> *(f) (1) By July 1, 2024, for calculus-based associate degrees or transfer majors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), community colleges shall examine the impact of placing and enrolling students into transfer-level course sequences, composed of no more than two transfer-level courses, that prepare students for the first STEM calculus course, in order to verify the benefit of the coursework to students by showing all of the following:*

(A) The student is highly unlikely to succeed in the first STEM calculus course without the additional transfer-level preparation.

(B) The enrollment will improve the student's probability of completing the first STEM calculus course.

(C) The enrollment will improve the student's persistence to and completion of the second calculus course in the STEM program, if a second calculus course is required.

These requirements have expectedly and possibly intentionally proven impossible to meet. In fact the statewide study conducted by the RP Group failed to validate even the first of the three required metrics for any group including the cohort of students who never completed Algebra 2 in high school. Can you imagine? Even the group of students who never completed Algebra 2 in high school could not be shown to meet the first validation requirement. These validation requirements in the law are absurd. While new to STEM these kinds of restrictions on prerequisites as applied to general education courses are not new. And research has shown that they have been providing short term benefits in terms of general education English and mathematics enrollment and completion rates. But even these prerequisite restrictions are beginning to be questioned. Longer term student success data is coming to light showing that the benefits of prerequisite restrictions on general education courses are only short term. And these restrictions on college credit-bearing calculus prerequisites are most certainly not appropriate for STEM majors. The legislated extension of these prerequisite restrictions to calculus exposes a lack of understanding of the critical role a solid and deep mathematics foundation plays relative to college and career success in a STEM field. Without placement validation the law prohibits a community college from requiring or placing a student into any prerequisite to calculus. These validation requirements are opposed by virtually all STEM professors and many professional organizations and academic senates. (See the many links and articles provided below.)

Dismantling of Prerequisite Offerings: We next look at section (f)(2):

(2) If the benefit of the coursework, as described in paragraph (1), is not verified, the college shall not recommend or require students to enroll in that course after July 1, 2025, and shall notify students who continue to enroll in the course that it is optional and does not improve their chances of completing calculus for their STEM program.

The underlined section of the clause clearly anticipates the possibility of a student self-enrolling into a calculus prerequisite even if the validation requirements are not met. But how many students would ever be so proactive? Wouldn't most students assume the college knew what it was doing when they get placed directly into calculus? Furthermore, logistics and scheduling will constrict prerequisite course offerings because students are pre-enrolled into calculus and therefore the underenrolled precalculus and trig classes would be cancelled before students realize they are underprepared and decide to switch. The requirement to place all STEM majors into calculus will precipitate the dismantling of calculus prerequisite offerings.

Colleges Required to Lie: This same clause also contains a startling requirement that community colleges actually lie to students who manage to drop their imposed calculus course and self-enroll into a prerequisite. The clause states that without the validation the college must *"notify students*

who continue to enroll in the course that it is optional and does not improve their chances of completing calculus for their STEM program". This is an embarrassing and absurd component of the legislation. The specific lie is that the course won't help complete calculus. In fact, the RP Group report indicated that students who completed a prerequisite and went on to take calculus succeeded at higher rates than those who directly enrolled into calculus. Does this sound like the prerequisite doesn't help? The clause is apparently authored by folks who have confused the lack of validation that a course helps with evidence/proof that it doesn't help. While this might be a common error of logic for somebody in grade school, this type of mistake should never get put into legislation. The lack of evidence that the prerequisite helps does not equate with evidence that the course would not help. We reiterate: this is an embarrassment that requires the community colleges to actually lie to those students who might wisely decide to improve their mathematics preparation by falsely telling those students it won't help.

Assessment Restrictions: Last we highlight Section 78213-(c)(7)(D) having to do with placement assessment requirements when high school records don't exist or the student never graduated from high school:

> *(7)(D) District placement methods based upon guided placement, including self-placement, shall not do either of the following:*
>
> *(i) Incorporate sample problems, assignments, assessment instruments, or tests, including those designed for skill assessment.*
>
> *(ii) Request students to solve problems, answer curricular questions, present demonstrations and examples of coursework designed to show knowledge or mastery of prerequisite skills, or demonstrate skills through tests or surveys.*

What in the world motivates a prohibition against obtaining the exact information educators use to be able to competently and professionally convey to students a legitimate assessment of their readiness? Clauses (7)(D)(i) and (ii) are prohibitions against "solving problems", "answering curricular questions", "skill assessment", showing "knowledge or mastery of prerequisite skills". What is going on here? This is like telling a doctor he can't use a thermometer to assess his patient's health status. What was the legislative intent?

This illogical legislation serves to starkly illustrate the general inadvisability of legislative intrusion into academic assessment, curriculum and standards. Most obviously the Governor and those who voted for this legislation (everyone) didn't pay close enough attention. And the impossibly strict validation requirements have put tremendous pressure on the community colleges and its Chancellor.

RP GROUP REPORT:

Subsequent to the passage of AB 1705 the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office commissioned the RP Group, a non-profit research organization, to conduct a statewide study and analysis. The intent of the study was to meet a requirement in the law that by July 1, 2024 the community colleges *"examine the impact of placing and enrolling students into transfer-level course sequences composed of no more than two transfer-level courses, that prepare students for the first STEM calculus course, in order to verify"* ...that the validation requirements are met (or

not). The resulting RP Group report is both flawed and misleading. We highlight two critical flaws made in the report.

First Flaw: The first and most egregious flaw was to ignore community college placement processes and implicitly assume that all students with similar high school records had similar mathematics preparation. The report presentation gives the false impression that the preparation of a student who was first placed into calculus was the same as one placed into a prerequisite if they had similar high school records. The methodology of the report was to compare calculus completion rates between the cohort initially enrolled directly into calculus to those who initially enrolled into a prerequisite. This produced a "Key Finding" that

"Based on high school GPA or high school math preparation, no group was highly unlikely to succeed in STEM Calculus 1 when directly enrolled and given two years."

Of course not, because high school records alone don't tell the full story of a student's mathematics preparation. This is why colleges consider additional evidence of preparedness before placing the student. This "key finding" is misleading, in part by giving the false impression that the additional placement criteria used by community colleges is irrelevant. For example, consider the data for students who never went beyond second year geometry in high school. This cohort consisted of 2,868 students. Of these only 230 were placed initially into calculus and of those, 61.7% passed calculus within 2 years. In contrast, from the 2,638 who started in a prerequisite, only 17.7% ended up passing calculus within 2 years. This data and this approach could not possibly be used to conclude those 2,638 students were "highly unlikely to succeed" without the prerequisite. Does anyone who worked on the report believe those 230 students were not scrutinized further by their respective colleges before being placed into calculus? Does anyone believe those placed in prerequisites were equally prepared as those placed into calculus? Of course not. But that is exactly how ignoring the additional placement criteria leads to erroneous perceptions. Another common erroneous perception is that students would be *"more likely to complete the first STEM calculus course within two years if they started in calculus instead of starting in a preparatory course.*[1]*"* So sorry, but that isn't the correct interpretation at all. The correct interpretation is only that the data shows students who initially qualified for direct placement into calculus passed it at a much higher rate than less prepared students who were initially placed in a preparatory course. There is absolutely no evidence of how likely it would have been for a student to pass calculus had they been placed there initially instead. The correct interpretation of the data relative to validation is that the methodology failed. The "key finding" is really "no finding" and highlights the inadequacy of the methodology. The correct way to express the result would be this:

"Using the methodology of this report we were not able meet the validation requirements of AB 1705 for any cohort of students."

Second Flaw: A second major flaw in the report is that it inexplicably and unnecessarily clouds the issue of attrition. Some students in the study never enrolled in calculus because they never passed the prerequisite. Some students passed the prerequisite and still never enrolled in calculus. The

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[1] See the top of page 5 of the Chancellor's Office memorandum dated February 27, 2024

report clouds the issue of attrition by combining these two groups. The combination inflates the false perception that the prerequisite itself inhibited success in calculus. Instead, a professional look at attrition should carefully parse these two groups and run analysis on what excess attrition might be in play beyond the normal and quite high community college attrition that everybody knows about. That wasn't done. And, begrudgingly under faculty pressure the report provided data showing that over 80% of students who passed their prerequisite and subsequently did enroll in calculus passed within 2 years. Why wasn't any additional analysis conducted on the students who passed the prerequisite and self-selected not to take calculus? How many dropped out of college? How many changed majors? The resulting implication that this inflated group would have been better off going straight into calculus has no valid logical justification.

The RP Group report flaws result in several false impressions. Some have been embraced by key policymakers in the Chancellor's office. In fact, the data does NOT show that foregoing a needed prerequisite increases your chances of passing calculus. The data does NOT show that taking a prerequisite causes students to drop out. The data does NOT show that prerequisites are barriers to success. And the methodology can NOT be used to validate the actual placement practices that have been in use by community colleges. But what the data DOES SHOW is that if you properly prepare and meet current community college multiple measures placement criteria for calculus, then you have a really good chance of succeeding in both calc 1 and calc 2 (if needed).

CHANCELLOR OFFICE IMPLEMENTATION:

The Community College Chancellor's office issued a memorandum , held a webinar, provided FAQs and distributed other guidance to the community colleges that implement the portions of the bill pertaining to STEM calculus placement and enrollment practices. These documents disclose a plan that is based on data misconceptions, restricts student choice beyond the requirements in the law, imposes a failed methodology, and establishes a shocking definition of "unlikely to succeed".

Misconceptions: One startling data misconception by the Chancellor's office that seems to drive implementation policies is contained in the February 2024 memorandum. They write,

"Lowest STEM Placement students were more likely to complete the first STEM calculus course within two years if they started in calculus instead of starting in a preparatory course." (p 5)

This statement is absolutely false. As stated before, what the RP Group data actually reveals is that students identified by the local colleges as underprepared and placed into a prerequisite have a lower chance of passing calculus eventually than those identified as properly prepared for calculus when they arrive on campus. Contrary to the memo, this does not mean that the student who was placed in a preparatory course would be "more likely" to complete calculus if they bypassed the prerequisite. This false conclusion is a direct result of the failure of the report to take into account the community college placement processes and illuminates the policy impact of the misleading nature of the RP Group's data presentation.

Goes Beyond the Law[2]: The incorrect understanding of the RP Group data by the Chancellor's Office has led them to decide to prohibit any STEM student from taking a prerequisite to calculus, even if they want to. While the law allows and anticipates a student to self-place into a prerequisite the Community College Chancellor's Office implementation instructions do not. It is clear from their FAQs (p 14-15) that STEM students are prohibited from self-enrolling into any calculus prerequisite:

> *"Is the only way to continue to enroll students into PreCalc or Trig after July 1, 2025 by submitting data under Options B or C[3]?*
> ***Yes, that is correct.***
> *So even the LOWEST level must be given access to Calculus but can have the OPTION of an innovative course (Option D[4])?*
> ***Yes, that is correct.***
> *Can you please clarify, if we were to select option A[5], can students still elect to self-enroll in a STEM preparatory course as long as we don't require or recommend it?*
> ***No, colleges choosing Option A are discontinuing preparatory courses and offering concurrent support instead."***

The long and short of this is that the Chancellor's implementation goes beyond the law and will prohibit colleges from allowing STEM majors to self-enroll into a prerequisite course. This will certainly accelerate the dismantling of calculus prerequisite offerings.

Imposes Failed Methodology: Any college who wishes to try to meet the validation requirements of AB 1705 must fill out a form that explicitly applies the RP Group methodology. As reported earlier this methodology couldn't even meet the first validation requirement for the group of students who never took Algebra 2. And meeting all three of the absurd validation requirements in the law is nearly impossible. The requirements for validation as laid out in the webinar hosted by the CCC Chancellor's office are intended to correspond with the validation requirements in AB 1705:

1. Students starting in STEM Calculus must exhibit a throughput rate less than 15% and
2. Students starting in a preparatory course must be shown to have higher throughput than those starting in STEM Calculus 1 and
3. These students must be shown to complete Calculus 2 (when required) at higher rates than students starting in Calculus 1.

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[2] Note: The CC Chancellor, has now moderated prerequisite offering restrictions, but they still go beyond the law. See Edsource, Dec 13, 2024. Even the modification goes beyond the law and prohibits a student who may have passed precalculus years ago with a low grade from enrolling into a calculus prerequisite.

[3] Options B and C presuppose that data is acquired by the college that meets the validation requirements of AB 1705. No college has such data. It is unclear how partial validation would be allowed under AB 1705

[4] Option D allows colleges to develop and offer an "innovative course" that could accept underprepared students, but would need to meet strict assessment requirements by July 1, 2027. It is unclear how this is allowed under AB 1705

[5] Option A means the college is accepting that no data exists that meets the requirements of AB 1705.

These requirements reconfirm the deep misunderstandings about how the community colleges have actually been placing students. The colleges do not place students into calculus who they judge underprepared. Only when the law takes effect and prerequisites are eliminated will students judged as underprepared be placed into calculus without meeting prerequisite standards.

The current and past practice of community colleges is to try very hard to avoid placing underprepared students into calculus. The only students who start in calculus are deemed likely to succeed (not fail) based on the multiple assessment measures. So we should both hope and expect the current and past "throughput rate" to be quite high and certainly above 15%. In a sane world, no student would be placed initially into calculus without providing evidence that they were properly prepared. A legitimate validation methodology is not impossible, but would be extremely complex and far more sophisticated than the one imposed by the Chancellor's office. As stated earlier, the law's validation requirements themselves are unreasonable and must be changed.

Definition of Unlikely to Succeed: The imposed first validation requirement and the memorandum disclose that the CCC Chancellor's Office defines "highly unlikely to succeed" as a 15% chance or lower. This disclosure raises important questions: Where did this threshold come from? Was it vetted with the legislature? Did faculty have any voice in this definition? This threshold seems ridiculous, particularly for STEM fields where mathematical fluency is so critical to success. Operationally this means that over 85% of a target cohort would need to be placed directly into calculus and then fail before the colleges would be allowed to place similar students into a prerequisite. Can anyone imagine a responsible parent recommending their child take a course knowing the child were judged to only have slightly more than 15% chance of passing? And building a solid foundation in mathematics is literally impossible when the classroom is full of students with only a 15% chance of passing. This threshold defies both logic and common sense.

The spirit and intent of AB 1705 is to eliminate the downplacing of students who would otherwise succeed if placed into calculus. The resulting restrictions in AB 1705 go too far and are counterproductive. Both the fear of downplacing and the "highly unlikely to succeed" standard are inappropriate for students who need a solid and deep mathematics foundation. The RP Group approach to validation will only make sense once we start forcing at-risk students directly into calculus. It can not be used to validate existing placement practices. And the subsequent Chancellor's Office threshold of 15% is absurd.

CONCLUSION:

STEM preparation is too important for AB 1705, the RP Group Report, and the CC Chancellor's office implementation to go unchallenged. Building a strong mathematics foundation in our STEM majors is critical to their college and career success. Between fall 2012 and spring 2020 over 68% of community college STEM majors were place by multiple measures or self-enrolled in a calculus prerequisite. That's a lot of students. AB 1705 and its implementation will force all of them directly into calculus. The predictable result will be the dismantling of prerequisite offerings and the flooding of our community college calculus classrooms with a large majority of enrolled students inadequately prepared. Grade inflation, rising student failure rates, discouraged faculty and the

inadequate mathematics preparation of STEM majors transferring to the CSU and UC will be the sad but certain outcomes. You can say goodbye to the common sense of building strong mathematics foundations in our community college STEM majors. Cutting off this "second chance" will definitely discourage students from opting to major in a STEM field in the first place. The solution to all this is quite simple: AB 1705 must be revised to eliminate the restrictions on calculus prerequisite and placement practices. But beyond this action, all of us concerned with equity should be paying close attention to emerging research documenting the longer-term outcomes of these experiments with restrictions on mathematics prerequisites.

Relevant Links and References

C-ID Calculus
AB 705
AB 1705
AB 1705 Floor Analysis
ASCCC Resolution to allow students to take calculus prerequisites
ASCCC Senate Content Review to Establish Prerequisites 2010
ASCCC Resolution Aligning with AB 1705 Legislative Intent
ASCCC Resolution on Meaningful Metrics for Equitable Outcomes Fall 2023
ASCCC AB 705 Unintended Consequences
ASCCC 2014 Multiple Measures in Assessment
ASCCC Oppose AB 1705 (Irwin, 2022) as of April 9, 2022 Unless Amended.
California's AB 1705 Panicking, Reddit, January 2024
Community Colleges AB 1705 Implementation Memo Dec 2022
Community Colleges AB 1705 Validation of Equitable placement May 2023
Community College Chancellor's Office FAQs for STEM Calculus Pathway Placement – April 2024
Community Colleges Neglect Those that Struggle with Math
Community College AB 1705 Implementation guide
Community Colleges Equitable Placement, Support and Completion
RP Group Reports and Resources
RP Group AB 1705 Technical Report
RP Group AB 1705 STEM Calculus Descriptive Study
RP Group AB 1705 Business Calculus Completion
RP Group MMAP for AB 705 Phase II
RP Group AB 705 Throughput analysis for EOPS and DSPS students
Webinar Feb 2023 Community College (Aisha Lowe)
Webinar - Spotlight on Stem Calculus (RP Group - March 2024, includes validation criteria)

Ayerdi, J Relative Rates of Success of Students in Calculus I (Thesis)
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Ford, R. *New math placement rules undermine preparation of community college STEM majors*

EdSource, October 8, 2024

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Mejia, M.C. Ensuring All Students Benefit from Landmark Community College Reform.

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Research Center, Persistance and Retention study June 2024

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Sonnert, G. and Sadler, P.M. *The impact of taking a college pre-calculus course on students' college calculus performance*, International Journal of Mathematics Education in Science and Technology, Vol 45, 8, 2014

Walton, I Ketchup, 57 Varieties or AB 1705 - Your Choice or NO Choice. Faculty Association of California Community Colleges May, 2024

Yoshitsugu, E. Amid AB705 Improvements, Concerns Remain The Guardian, December 2022

Dear committee members,

First, thank you for ensuring California students have access to quality higher education.

My name is Cortney Schultz, and I am a full-time faculty member in the math department at Santa Rosa Junior College. I also serve as the President of the California Mathematics Council for Community Colleges (CMC^3), a group dedicated to supporting math education at the community college level.

I am writing to you today to discuss the impact of AB 1705 on our students.

To be transparent, I am not advocating for placing students into pre-transfer classes without reason. But for those who either want or need this option, it's important to have access to the classes they need. And without this access, many students are being set up for failure, and I've seen this firsthand in my classroom.

Positive Aspects of AB 1705

AB 1705 has increased access for students to enroll directly in transfer-level courses, eliminating barriers to acceleration. More students now can move forward in their education without being held back by placement tests. This is a positive step toward educational equity and progress.

In addition, because more students are enrolled in transfer-level courses, more students are passing transfer level courses, which is also great to see.

Key Concerns and Challenges

While this bill has increased access to transfer-level math courses, it has also eliminated access to pre-transfer level courses. This is the issue I would like to address.

1. **Student Success Rates**: In Fall 2022, over 55% of Santa Rosa Junior College students failed or dropped their first college math class, which was a transfer-level math course. Overall, we see 19.1% fewer students passing their transfer-level math classes on the first try compared to 2018 (*see Figure 1*). And for those students? They have no alternative but to retake the same course they failed or dropped.
2. **Equity gaps persist.** At my college, more Black and Asian/Pacific Islander students are enrolling in transfer-level math, but pass rates haven't improved—more students are attempting, but not succeeding (*see Figure 2*).
3. **Business Calculus pass rates at SRJC have plummeted among Latinx students** from 50–60% in 2017 and 2018 to 20–30% in 2021 and 2022 (*Figure 3*). Note that the pre-requisite course for Business Calculus is Intermediate Algebra, which is no longer offered.
4. **Managing Student Preparedness**: Now, imagine a single Pre-Calculus classroom where a few students are excelling, most are keeping up, and a few don't know their

multiplication tables. This is the everyday reality of your community college math faculty. In a classroom of 35 students with wildly different needs, a 2-unit co-requisite course is not enough to bridge that gap for those struggling students. They need more time and attention to hone their foundational skills.

5. **Financial Aid Risks**: Co-requisite courses also significantly increase student unit loads. Many students are required to enroll in 5, 6, or even 7-unit math and linked co-req courses to meet the new requirements. If they fail or drop, they risk not meeting SAP requirements and losing their financial aid—which can derail their entire education.
6. **Impact on Career Education (CTE) Programs**: Students in programs like Wastewater Treatment and Dental Hygiene used to meet their math requirements with pre-transfer algebra courses. Now, they're being forced into classes like statistics or finite math, which are often less relevant to their careers and are higher-level courses, effectively raising their graduation requirements.
7. **Declining Enrollment**: Has AB1705 affected community college enrollment? We think so. CTE programs that previously required pre-transfer level math may see lower enrollment if students struggle with the new math requirements or do not see them as relevant. Some students may choose for-profit technical schools or out-of-state programs instead of California community colleges.

   If students fail or drop their math class once, some will try again. But if they fail twice? Many of them leave college altogether.

Conclusion

The points included above are not unique to my college. Similar statements have been shared with me from the vast majority of CMC^3 members, who come from colleges all throughout California.

We must find a balanced approach—one that keeps transfer-level access high while also giving students who need it the option of pre-transfer support.

If our goal is truly to support student success, we need to listen to the data **and** to the students who are telling us what they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cortney Schultz

Santa Rosa Junior College Math Faculty
President of CMC^3

SUPPORTING DATA

All Students	Fall 2018	Fall 2020	Fall 2022
Percent passing	63.90%	49.10%	44.80%
Percent failing	14.90%	15.80%	23.60%
Percent dropping before census	6.90%	14.90%	9.80%
Percent withdrawing after census	14.30%	20.10%	21.80%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Student Count	158	406	427

Figure 1. Santa Rosa Junior College student completion rates after first attempt at a transfer-level math course.

Black Students	Fall 2018	Fall 2020	Fall 2022
Percent passing	71.4%	25.0%	22.7%
Percent failing	28.6%	32.1%	22.7%
Percent dropping before census	0.0%	21.4%	27.3%
Percent withdrawing after census	0.0%	21.4%	27.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Student Count	7	28	22

Asian/Pacific Islander Students	Fall 2018	Fall 2020	Fall 2022
Percent passing	100.0%	33.3%	0.0%
Percent failing	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
Percent dropping before census	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
Percent withdrawing after census	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Student Count	7	3	2

Figure 2. Santa Rosa Junior College Black and Asian/Pacific Islander student completion rates after first attempt at a transfer-level math course.

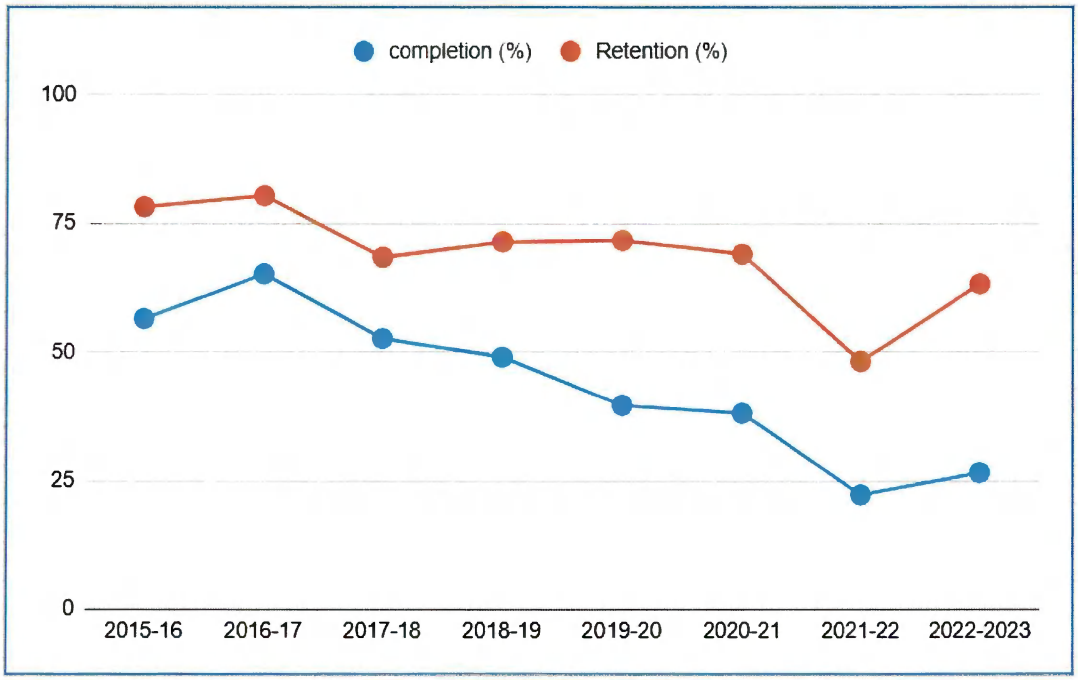

Figure 3. Santa Rosa Junior College Latinx student completion and retention rates for students enrolled in Business Calculus.

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Chair Mike Fong
California State Assembly Higher Education Committee
Legislative Office Building, 1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Regarding the direction of the implementation of AB 1705 (Irwin)

Dear Committee Members,

As the most diverse student body in the Nation, we students in the California Community College system are being gravely affected by AB 1705 and **having our dreams crushed.**

As a second-year political science student at Sierra College, I have witnessed and experienced the detrimental impacts of AB 1705 during my academic career. I am Native American, low-income, and represent the first generation in my family to pursue a higher education.

The sheer number of students I know trapped in the "fail-repeat" cycle is absurd and an example of inane policy failure. Students no longer have access to supplementary courses that make earning a higher education possible. Due to the lack of remedial coursework within STEM, I have chosen an entirely different college path. I attempted Chemistry 1A at Sierra College but ultimately dropped the class because, like most of my peers, I was sure of course failure.

Additionally, I have maintained a 4.0 Grade Point Average while studying at Sierra College and have consecutively held more than twenty governance roles in and outside the college. Though often encouraged to apply to Ivy League universities, I intend to transfer to a four-year university in Northern California in Fall 2025 and anticipate success in my studies.

My point is that ***the repeated failure of students of color in transfer-level Math and English courses has nothing to do with intellect and everything to do with the foul implementation of Assembly Bill 1705 within the California Community Colleges (CCC)***. As statistics and data begin to surface regarding post-AB1705 failure rates of BIPOC students in STEM and English courses, the attempts of Special Interest Groups to push their profit-hungry agendas have never been more evident. There is no question regarding the harms of AB 1705's implementation, and it is shameful to watch our advocates do nothing for us as community college students.

Regarding the profit-hungry agendas I alluded to, it is practically common knowledge that many "Higher Ed Groups" are funded by people who benefit from low economic mobility and uneducated people. I will not list organizations that are as such, but if you are interested, feel free to access these interest groups' Form 990s. As a student, I have examined many of AB 1705's

supporters' public tax documents. I was surprised to learn that the California Acceleration Project was not registered as a 501(c)3 but is only an arm to fulfill the will of the Foundation for California Community Colleges.

Preserving students' decision-making agency is tantamount to the CCC but only coupled with remedial course options for the students served.

If you have any questions about my position, please contact me at jroe4@sierracollege.edu or (530) 263-6663.

Sincerely,

Jacob Roe
Student
Sierra College

CC: Members, Assembly Higher Education Committee

Dear committee members,

First, thank you for ensuring California students have access to quality higher education.

My name is Cortney Schultz, and I am a full-time faculty member in the math department at Santa Rosa Junior College. I also serve as the President of the California Mathematics Council for Community Colleges (CMC^3), a group dedicated to supporting math education at the community college level.

I am writing to you today to discuss the impact of AB 1705 on our students.

To be transparent, I am not advocating for placing students into pre-transfer classes without reason. But for those who either want or need this option, it's important to have access to the classes they need. And without this access, many students are being set up for failure, and I've seen this firsthand in my classroom.

Positive Aspects of AB 1705

AB 1705 has increased access for students to enroll directly in transfer-level courses, eliminating barriers to acceleration. More students now can move forward in their education without being held back by placement tests. This is a positive step toward educational equity and progress.

In addition, because more students are enrolled in transfer-level courses, more students are passing transfer level courses, which is also great to see.

Key Concerns and Challenges

While this bill has increased access to transfer-level math courses, it has also eliminated access to pre-transfer level courses. This is the issue I would like to address.

1. **Student Success Rates**: In Fall 2022, over 55% of Santa Rosa Junior College students failed or dropped their first college math class, which was a transfer-level math course. Overall, we see 19.1% fewer students passing their transfer-level math classes on the first try compared to 2018 (*see Figure 1*). And for those students? They have no alternative but to retake the same course they failed or dropped.
2. **Equity gaps persist.** At my college, more Black and Asian/Pacific Islander students are enrolling in transfer-level math, but pass rates haven't improved—more students are attempting, but not succeeding (*see Figure 2*).
3. **Business Calculus pass rates at SRJC have plummeted among Latinx students** from 50–60% in 2017 and 2018 to 20–30% in 2021 and 2022 (*Figure 3*). Note that the pre-requisite course for Business Calculus is Intermediate Algebra, which is no longer offered.
4. **Managing Student Preparedness**: Now, imagine a single Pre-Calculus classroom where a few students are excelling, most are keeping up, and a few don't know their

multiplication tables. This is the everyday reality of your community college math faculty. In a classroom of 35 students with wildly different needs, a 2-unit co-requisite course is not enough to bridge that gap for those struggling students. They need more time and attention to hone their foundational skills.

5. **Financial Aid Risks**: Co-requisite courses also significantly increase student unit loads. Many students are required to enroll in 5, 6, or even 7-unit math and linked co-req courses to meet the new requirements. If they fail or drop, they risk not meeting SAP requirements and losing their financial aid—which can derail their entire education.
6. **Impact on Career Education (CTE) Programs**: Students in programs like Wastewater Treatment and Dental Hygiene used to meet their math requirements with pre-transfer algebra courses. Now, they're being forced into classes like statistics or finite math, which are often less relevant to their careers and are higher-level courses, effectively raising their graduation requirements.
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   If students fail or drop their math class once, some will try again. But if they fail twice? Many of them leave college altogether.

Conclusion

The points included above are not unique to my college. Similar statements have been shared with me from the vast majority of CMC³ members, who come from colleges all throughout California.

We must find a balanced approach—one that keeps transfer-level access high while also giving students who need it the option of pre-transfer support.

If our goal is truly to support student success, we need to listen to the data **and** to the students who are telling us what they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cortney Schultz

Santa Rosa Junior College Math Faculty
President of CMC³

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Student Count	7	3	2

Figure 2. Santa Rosa Junior College Black and Asian/Pacific Islander student completion rates after first attempt at a transfer-level math course.

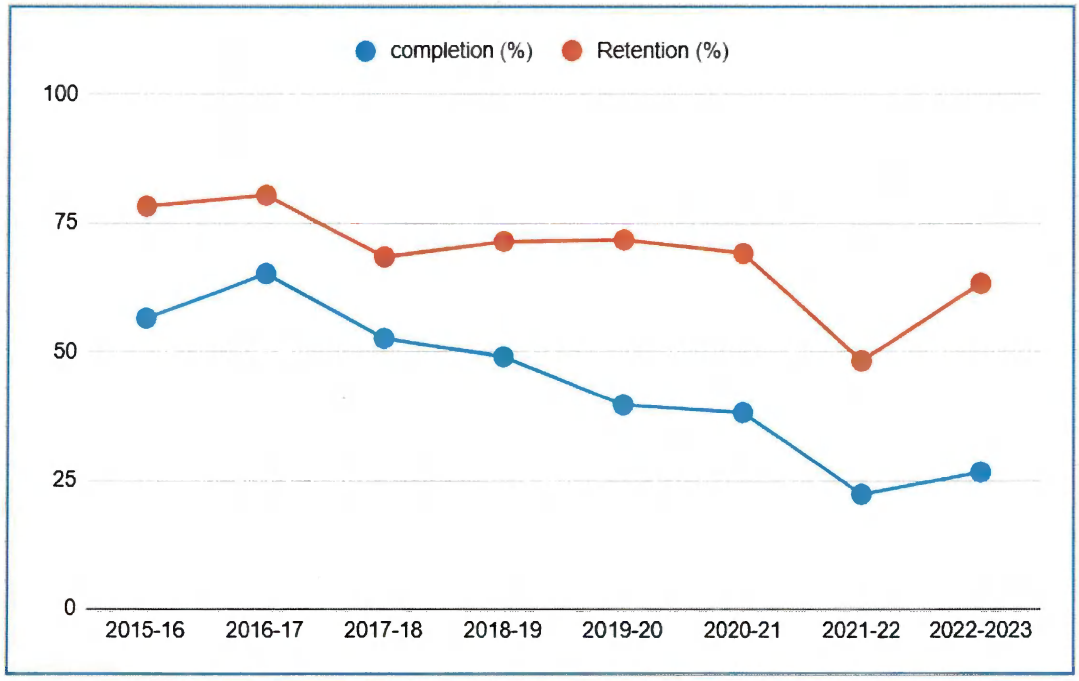


Figure 3. Santa Rosa Junior College Latinx student completion and retention rates for students enrolled in Business Calculus.

Dear Chair Fong and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As a community college alumnus, researcher, and counselor who deeply cares about equitable policies that are both student-centered and data-driven, I am writing to express my continued support for strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705.

When I was a CCC student, I saw many of my peers shuttled into remedial math and English courses that they never progressed past. Other students spent significant time and money before they could access transfer-level math and English courses. The landscape prior to AB 705 was NOT superior to the one we have established now for helping students like me achieve their academic goals. I know this is great detail from my student experience and when I served as a research intern at PPIC and studied the impact of remedial education reform. The anecdotes and the data were clear: the outcomes of my peers were not a failure of their own skills and abilities, but the result of a system that was not designed to support them.

In PPIC's November 2020 report A New Era of Student Access at California's Community Colleges published after the initial implementation of AB 705, the community college system saw unprecedented gains in access and completion of transfer-level math and English courses. Notably, students in corequisite support courses (instead of remedial classes) were approximately 30 or more percentage points more likely to pass a transfer-level gateway course. Since the implementation of AB 1705, there is now almost universal access to these courses and even greater gains in completion-with 68% of students completing transfer-level English within one year and 62% completing transfer-level math.[1]

In addition to these gains in access and completion I have also observed that students now have many more evidence-based options for support than my peers had before AB 705. I have seen the colleges I work at offer various timely supports such as co-requisite courses, embedded tutors, and winter/summer session math academies that offer students an opportunity to brush-up on their skills right before taking transferable math courses. These innovative strategies are proving to help students succeed in their transfer-level courses while not requiring students to spend precious time and money on ineffective remedial courses.

[1] Transfer-level Gateway Dashboard: https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/transfer-level-dashboard

While AB 705 has shown that many students previously pushed into remedial courses never needed them, I have heard many of my colleagues express concern that some students are struggling to complete transfer-level courses. However, from my experience as a counselor and instructor, what I have observed is that when these students are provided access to high-quality support in and outside of the classroom, they are able to be successful.

I firmly believe in the capacity of our students and dismantling educational structures, policies, and practices that contribute to racial inequity in outcomes. **For these reasons, I support strong and consistent AB 1705 implementation.**

Sincerely,
Chidi Agu
Black Student Success Center Counselor
El Camino College

Impact of a Decade of Policies on California's Adults

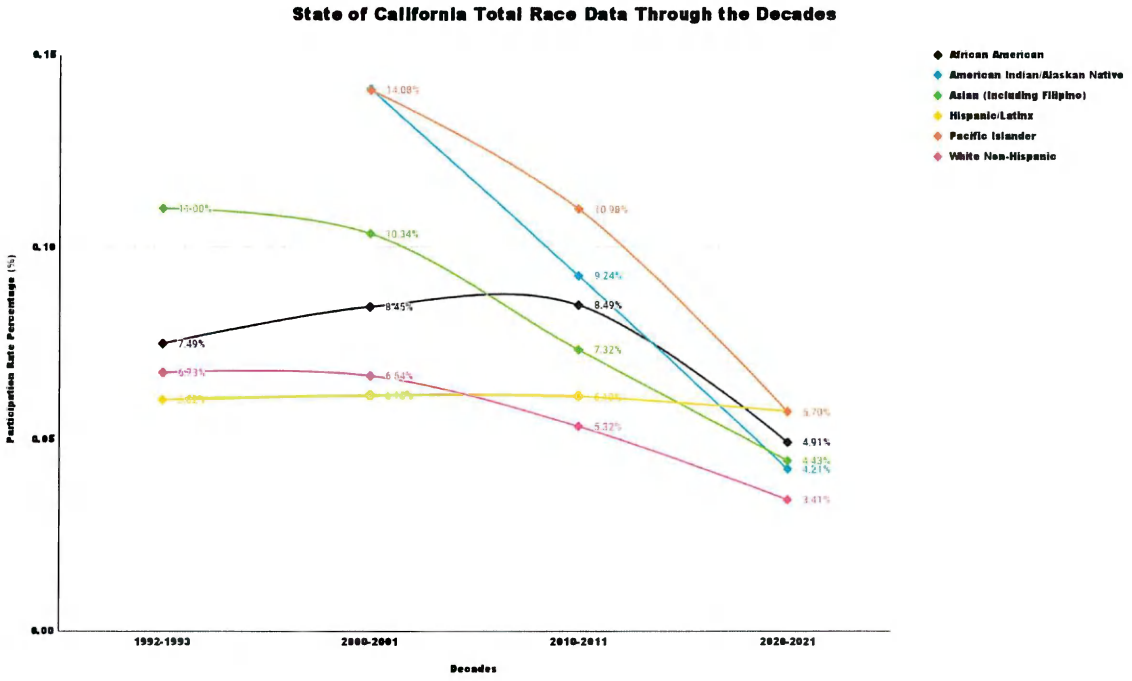
Leslie Plato Smith
www.leslieplatosmith.com

One out of 4 Californians over the age of 15 cannot read a sentence (https://capitolweekly.net/california-shockingly-has-the-lowest-literacy-rate-of-any-state/)

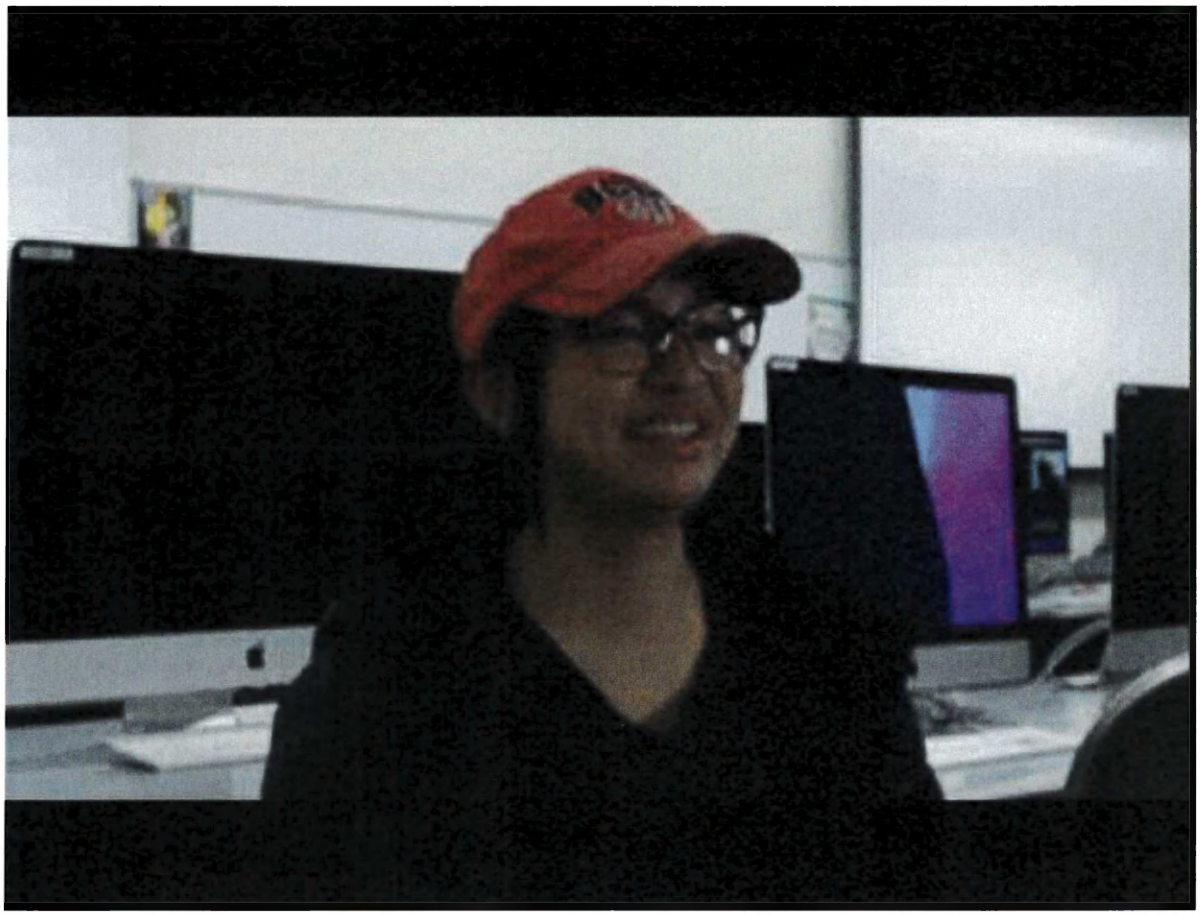
In 1947, Hoover's Higher Education Commission issued "The American Democracy Report" that recognized that the heroes who died for global freedom came from families that had no access to higher education (http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/courses/eol474/sp98/truman.html). They recommended:

1) Community colleges in every community;
2) Community colleges be free;
3) No academic floor and include adult education in the community colleges;
4) No tracking, I.e. arts and vocational students in the same institution; and
5) Equitable access to everyone.

In 2002-2003, over 8% of Californians attended a California community college; by 2022-23 the access to a higher education had been cut nearly in half. So, although the 2025-2026 Governor's Proposed Budget for California's Higher Education opens with the following: "Higher Education provides the adult population with basic and career skills" (https://ebudget.ca.gov/budget/2025-26/#/Agency/6013), we are headed in the wrong direction.



I made this documentary to strongly support opening access to STEM and all students



to the California community colleges and, specifically, about removing the Calculus requirement. You will hear from an immigrant, a math tutor, a university math and mechanical engineering professor, a third year physics graduate student, a college librarian, and a community college transfer student.

To reiterate, the California community colleges have been serving far fewer California adults as we become the state with the lowest literacy rate in the nation. This is not only a threat to our democracy, it removes any possibility of increasing economic opportunity, social justice, upward mobility, and creation and fulfillment of dreams.

Statewide Community College Participation Rate

	CC Data	Census	Participation
1992-93	2,264,549	29,950,000	7.56%
2002-2003	2,753,513	33,990,000	8.10%
2012-2013	2,183,953	37,320,000	5.85%
2022-2023	1,923,434	39,390,000	4.88%

Please find as a separate file the participation rate in every California county by district. I also have change in participation rate at every single community college district by ethnicity

upon request. All Charts were made by Diana Castro, community college student extraordinaire.

The Campaign for College Opportunity
Increasing college graduates to strengthen California

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Fong
Chair, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
1021 O Street, Suite 6210
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1705 (Irwin) Oversight Hearing

Dear Chair Fong,

On behalf of the Campaign for College Opportunity, I am writing to express our continued support for AB 1705, Chapter 928, Statutes of 2022 by Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, which will ensure that all 116 California Community Colleges have the guidance and support necessary to appropriately implement equitable placement and assessment practices. **Equitable placement and completion practice reforms have been underway across the nation due to the overwhelming data and research that has shown that reforms including AB 705 and AB 1705 are working for higher education students.** Equitable placement reform at the California Community Colleges has become a critical lever for improving transfer outcomes in California.

The Campaign for College Opportunity is a broad-based, bipartisan coalition of business, education, and civil rights leaders from across our state. Our sole mission is to ensure that all Californians have an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in college in order to build a vibrant workforce, economy, and democracy.

Prior to the legislature's efforts to improve equitable placement and completion statewide, 80 percent of incoming community college students were denied access to transfer-level English and math courses and required to take remedial pretransfer-level courses meaning millions of students were excluded from the gateway transfer-level courses in which they could have been successful—and Black and Latinx students were disproportionately impacted. [i] Following AB 705's passage in 2017, California saw dramatically better student outcomes and increases in student completion. In the first year of implementation, the law enabled tens of thousands of additional students to enter and successfully complete transfer-level English and math and every student group examined had higher completion rates after enrolling directly in gateway transfer-level courses instead of pretransfer, remedial courses (Data available via the California Community College's Dashboard).

Unfortunately, implementation of AB 705 was uneven across the community college campuses, with 49 of the 116 community colleges still offering a large number of remedial courses, and many continued to enroll students in these classes despite the data that showed that students placed in remedial pretransfer courses are less likely to make it to a transfer-level course in a timely manner, spend more time and money on non-credit courses, and are less likely graduate.[ii] With students' rights to transfer level coursework

depending on their zip code, in 2022 the legislature sought to build upon the historic equitable placement policy and close significant loopholes by providing clarity, guidance, and support to colleges to ensure that all students benefit from these successful reforms through AB 1705. AB 1705 also accompanied a significant investment made in the 2022-23 State Budget to further support equitable placement and completion reform, including providing $64 million to establish the Equitable Placement and Completion Support Grant Program. This funding was provided to colleges to directly support implementation efforts with a focus on supporting faculty and staff to implement best practices in course design and effective concurrent student support models.

The historic reforms that came from AB 705 and AB 1705 are still in progress. There are still deadlines in the legislation and for the grant program that have not taken place yet. Even so, the hard work by the community colleges has paid off for California's students:

- Racial equity gaps in transfer-level English and math throughput have gotten smaller. The racial equity gaps between Black and white students decreased by 4 percent and between Latinx and white students decreased by 3 percent.[iii]
- The implementation of AB 705 lessened the negative impacts of the COVID pandemic, allowing for an increased share of transfer ready students through the pandemic.[iv]
- For every $1 invested in the community college system, California sees $7 in return through increased earnings and tax revenue.[v] Additionally, Students have saved up to $20,000 by not having to spend additional time in remedial course sequences.[vi]

We are grateful for the legislature's continued commitment to equitable placement and completion at community colleges. The research is clear that these student-centered changes have proven to work by producing unprecedented gains for students. AB 1705 has aided in continuing this important work and helped students actualize their dreams. **For these reasons, the Campaign for College Opportunity asks that you continue to support the implementation of these policies and budget priorities at the California Community Colleges.**

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Joshua Hagen
Vice President of Policy & Advocacy
Campaign for College Opportunity

cc: Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy, Senior Consultant, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
Olivia Butler, Legislative Assistant, Office of Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin

[i] Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). (2016). "Preparing Students for Success in California's Community Colleges"

[ii] Campaign for College Opportunity. (2019) "Getting There II: A Statewide Progress Report on Implementation of AB 705 Are California Community Colleges Maximizing Student Completion of Transfer-Level Math and English?"

[iii] Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). (2023). "Tracking Progress in Community College Access and Success".

[iv] Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). (2022). "The Effects of COVID-19 on Transfer-Intending Students in California's Community Colleges".

[v] California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), Emsi, and Burning Glass. (2022). "The Economic Value of the California Community College System"

[vi] The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS). (2022). "The Detrimental Costs of Remedial Education for California Community College Students."

Education Equity Solutions

349 Colusa Ave.
Kensington, CA 94707
www.edequitysolutions.com

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Assemblymember Mike Fong

Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee

1020 N Street, Room 173

Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Oversight Hearing AB 1705 (Irwin) Equitable Placement at Community Colleges: SUPPORT AB 1705 IMPLEMENTATION

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As founder and Executive Director of Education Equity Solutions, I would like to express my organization's support for strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705 (Irwin, 2022).

At EES, our research focuses on what works to advance equity in higher education, and AB 1705 is a policy that does just that. AB 1705 addresses poor and inequitable educational outcomes driven by community college placement policies and developmental education practices. AB 1705 requires colleges to ensure that students begin in math and English coursework that gives students the best chance of completing requirements for a college degree.

A broad body of research across multiple states consistently shows that developmental education hampers students' progress. In California, after AB 705/1705 reforms broadened access to transfer-level math and largely replaced developmental education with more effective academic supports, one-year transfer-level math completion jumped from 30% in 2017-2018 to 60% in 2022-2023, tripled for Black students and more than doubled for Hispanic students. With greater access to transfer-level math, large completion gains were also achieved by economically disadvantaged students, students with low high school GPA, students participating in programs for the disabled, older students, foster youth, and veterans (California Community Colleges dashboard).

These reforms have underscored the capacity of community college students to succeed in rigorous, college-level math courses. Yet, not all are successful, and equity

gaps persist. The prevalent narrative is that some students are simply not prepared for college math, and that is why they don't succeed. However, research has already proven the harm, arbitrariness, and inaccuracy of efforts to hold back students presumed to be insufficiently prepared. In addition, our recent study, Counting on Math Faculty: Examining the Role of Faculty and Instructional Practices in Students' Gateway Math Success, found that faculty have a much larger impact on student outcomes in transfer-level math courses than other factors like high school preparation.

Our research examined the role of different factors that contribute to student success in college math. We analyzed 2020-2022 data for 22,827 students in 704 transfer-level math courses at four California community colleges. At these colleges, almost all students began in transfer-level math because of AB 705 placement reforms. We found that math faculty -- whose classroom students are in -- is the most important factor in explaining transfer-level math success, more important than a student's high school grades, their demographic characteristics, or the high school they attended. We also identified specific instructional practices, such as growth-oriented assessment practices, that reduced racial disparities in math outcomes.

Our research suggests that students will be far better served by investing in faculty supports and scaling evidence-based instructional practices in transfer-level math classrooms than by a return to developmental education. For these reasons, we support strong and consistent implementation of the policy reforms mandated by AB 1705.

Sincerely,

M. Dadgar

Mina Dadgar, PhD
Executive Director of Education Equity Solutions

Cc: Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, 44th District
Members, Assembly Higher Education Committee
Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy, Consultant

Dear Chairman Fong and other Higher Education Assembly Committee Members,

My name is Jason Wang and I am a full-time Mathematics instructor/professor at Santa Monica College and have taught mathematics for over 10 years. Thank you for allowing me this privilege of sharing my thoughts about the impact of AB1705.

Whenever anybody asks me what the effects of AB1705 has been on our community college students, I simply give them this analogy by asking them to imagine if a California law that were passed that mandated the following things:

For all language classes:

- *Students can no longer be asked to take a placement test, to see what level class is appropriate for them (whether it be Spanish 1, Spanish 2, Spanish 3, Spanish 4, or other languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, etc.)*
- *Now imagine if an additional addendum was passed that said: "All Spanish 1 and Spanish 2 classes are not allowed to be offered. Instead, all students wanting to take Spanish **must** start at Spanish 3. In addition, the following statement must be included: "Studies have shown that taking Spanish 2 does **not** increase your chances of passing Spanish 3."*

This is what we Mathematics professors are facing, due to the passage of AB705/1705.

I think most of us *preferred* having placement tests, so that students could accurately know of their math skills, before enrolling into a math class at the community college level, due to the wide variety of high schools, where many students had math skills that were accurately reflected from their high school transcript, but many other students had math skills that were significantly lower than what their high school transcripts showed.

But the removal of placement tests was something that we could live with (similar to how a removal of language placement tests would be an extremely helpful resource), but we could work around the removal of such a helpful resource.

But where the law caused massive chaos and frustration to our students is the abolishment of the lower-level math classes from being offered and all students were forced to start at math classes as the equivalent of Spanish 3 and were told: "Taking Spanish 2 does not increase your chances of passing Spanish 3."

Of course, certain students could start off and do well in a Spanish 3 class that had not taken Spanish 1 or Spanish 2. But this would be very few students and only

in isolated cases, such as coming from a family background/environment that spoke Spanish.

But for most students, they would have to take Spanish 1 and take Spanish 2, in order to succeed in Spanish 3.

Mathematics is a language; it has its own notation and its own logical steps. Just like any language class, you have to master the foundations of mathematics, in order to learn the intermediate level of and then the advanced levels of mathematics.

In addition, mathematics is a subject where one class builds upon another. You must master Pre-algebra before moving onto Algebra; you must fully master Algebra before moving onto Pre-Calculus; you must fully master Calculus II before moving onto Differential Equations. Unlike many History classes or Psychology classes, where you can often take classes "out of order" because one class does not impact the next class, this is not the same in mathematics.

Out of good intentions, this law was passed because oftentimes, too many of our historically disadvantaged black and brown students had satisfactory math grades on their high schools transcripts but their community college placement exams were showing that they had not been taught and not fully mastered these math skills in high school and were asked to repeat those classes at the community college level. And many of these students ended up being those from a historically disadvantaged background and from underperforming high schools.

But instead of fixing these problems at the high school level and raise the quality at the high school level, AB705/1705 decided to address this issue by forcing them all to start at a higher starting point at the community college level and use this as a standard of "success".

As a result, it caused an even greater inequity to occur to these students:

These historically disadvantaged black and brown students used to be given an environment where they were encouraged by community college professors to relearn mathematical topics that they had not been able to cover in high school. But with the passage of AB705/1705, an incredibly large number of black and brown students have now entirely dropped out of the STEM program, simply because starting them off at the mathematical equivalent of Spanish 3 makes a pursuit into the STEM field for these black and brown students almost impossible for them to succeed in.

One of the greatest films that has impacted the Mathematics teaching community has been the classic film "*Stand and Deliver*", which talks about the struggles and impact of the famous high school math teacher, Jaime Escalante. He saw the inequity that black and brown students faced in his high school in East Los Angeles. But instead of insisting that all students automatically be waived into a higher-level math class, he spent his own time and resources to prepare them for those rigorous classes and exams.

For many of us professors, we face a similar frustration. We love being there for our students - many of us willingly spend our own outside time to be there for our students; we love working alongside them; we love encouraging them and telling them: "Yes, Algebra may be hard. And yes, maybe your previous teachers didn't prepare you well enough. But that's okay! Here at the college level, we'll work alongside you and encourage you and we'll walk with you through these math concepts. And yes, you definitely can be an excellent STEM major, even though you're starting off in Algebra right now at the college level."

But AB705/1705 has undone much of that. Now, when students ask if they can take Algebra again, we instead shake our heads and sadly tell them: "I'm sorry that by law, we can no longer offer Algebra; I'm sorry that the only solution we can offer you is for you to find a private tutoring company where you have to pay hundreds of dollars each month out of pocket, if you want to re-take those classes. I'm sorry that by law, I can no longer offer you the support that you want."

For these students, I beg for the Assembly Committee Members on Higher Education to think very hard about the message that we are sending the next generation of students, especially these historically disadvantaged students. For many of them, due to no fault of their own, they may have come from underperforming high schools in their areas. Without the ability to offer the lower-level math classes, we are preventing so many of these students from being future STEM majors and STEM success stories.

Please allow us professors at the community college level to give them that chance to excel and to be the future success stories in the STEM field.

Sincerely,
Jason Wang
Santa Monica College
Mathematics Department

endocino Part Time Faculty Association
7-972-7977 (Janice Timm)
FA4us@gmail.com
os://www.4mpfa.org/

AB 1705 Resolution

Whereas, in the past decade the California legislature has consistently passed pieces of legislation designed to increase student access to equitable course placement in the California Community College (CCC) system and to streamline transfer processes;

Whereas, AB 705 was signed into law in 2017 with the aim to reduce lengthy remedial pathways within the California Community Colleges (CCC), establishing the need for a pathway to complete transfer-level math and English courses within a year;

Whereas, Title 5 § 55522 was enacted, going beyond the stated goals of AB 705 to increase access to transfer level courses and resulting in the effective banning of access to stand-alone pre-transfer classes;

Whereas, in 2022 AB 1705 was signed into law codifying the aforementioned Title 5 regulations, expanding beyond pre-transfer pathways and legislating transfer and degree pathways in STEM;

Whereas, California community college districts are no longer allowed to offer stand-alone foundational courses in mathematics and English, preventing students from enrolling in these courses even if it would be beneficial in their academic journeys, resulting in disproportionate drop and failure rates for historically underrepresented students;

Whereas, the prescribed corequisite model, while helpful to many students, is too accelerated and high-unit to be an adequate substitute for stand-alone foundational coursework which can help to prepare some students for academic success;

Whereas, the California Community Colleges are open-access institutions dedicated to addressing community needs and supporting local educational advancement and are, at their core, committed to equity, which requires flexibility in offering pathways to meet students where they are;

We, the Mendocino College Part-Time Faculty Association (MPFA) are:

Resolved, that the California Community Colleges provide students the option to enroll in stand-alone pre-transfer coursework in math and English; and

Resolved, that the agency for making decisions regarding curricular and enrollment matters be returned to the individual students and faculty experts, who are most able to determine their needs to continue their educational journeys.

On behalf of the Part-Time Faculty of Mendocino College, February 4, 2025

The Executive Board of MPFA

Janice Hawthorne Timm, President

Marilyn Simpson, Treasurer

Kathy Dingman Katz, Secretary

Kathryn Renderman, At-Large

Lucille Bayer, At-Large

Kailyn McCord, At-Large

Wendy Smith
English Department Chair
San Diego Mesa College
7250 Mesa College Drive
San Diego, CA 92111
wsmith@sdccd.edu
619-388-2347
February 10, 2025

Chairs Mike Fong and Carl DeMaio
California State Assembly Higher Education Committee
1020 N Street
Room 173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Public Comment on AB1705

I am writing to provide public comment on AB1705 and to express my strong support. As a teacher of college English for 37 years and as someone deeply involved in AB705 and AB1705 since 2008 when Myra Snell and Katie Hern first noted "exponential attrition" in our long remedial sequences and began subsequent developmental pathway reform.

Before 2010, the San Diego Mesa College English department believed that remediation helps students. I used to tell students, "it doesn't hurt to take another writing class–it's like broccoli: you may not like it, but it's good for you."

We offered two remedial writing classes and two reading classes. If students were determined to need all four classes, it would take them a full year of courses before they could enroll in English 1A, or freshman English. And because they were missing prerequisites for their major classes, they had to put off their major classes for that full year.

During this era, just 28% of students who took two remedial classes passed transfer-level English, given 3 years.[1] That means that out of every 100 students who began college, just 28 ended up enrolling in and passing English 1A. At that point, we realized we had what math educator Uri Treisman called "a six-lane highway into a swamp."[2]

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[1] SDCCD information system, 2010-2013; includes only students who enrolled in English 043.
[2] Treisman, 2012

Our reading courses were not included in the data, but my educated guess is that 14% of students who took the four courses that were supposed to help them make it through: 14 out of every 100 students.

You can imagine what it's like for students having to take four courses until you get to one that counts. For students with busy work lives, children, and family obligations, this may mean dropping out, sometimes after taking a course multiple times. Uri Treisman called this "Old Testament bad....rivers of blood, locusts, frogs."[3]

We originally swept those four remedial courses into just one course below 1A and By 2014[4], we more than doubled the number of students passing transfer-level English.[5] We were advised we could do even better, so, through our college's HSI grant, we created a new course: our usual 1A course with a two-unit sidecar of support, open to all students. Since 2016, we have eliminated the year-long sequence of remediation: all students have the opportunity to pass their first English requirement in one semester.

By 2022[6] **73%** (1547) of students passed transfer-level in the first year.

So, between **2014** and **2023**

- Black/African-America students went from a completion rate of **49% (146)** to **76% (120)**
- Latine students went from a completion rate of **43% (835**) to **69% (992)**

To restate, we doubled our completion of English (**28% to 73%**). And both Black/African-American students and Latine students completed at rates of 27 percentage points higher.

Students who pass gateway classes in their first year more likely to persist to graduation.[7] "African American/Black students who pass both transfer-level English and math in the first year are more than 300% more likely to make it near the transfer gate than those who do not."[8]

I have been a longtime witness, participant, early adopter, and advocate for years now. This has been the most rewarding and impactful work of my career.

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[3] Treisman, 2012
[4] Earliest year on the CCCCO Transfer-Level English and Math Completion Dashboard
[5] **46%** of students (**1130**) passed transfer-level English in the first year.
[6] The most recent year of data on the CCCCO Transfer-Level English and Math Completion Dashboard
[7] Jenkins and Bailey, 2017
[8] Cooper, Nguyen, Redix 2022

RPGroup's research on math and English, unfairly maligned recently, has established the viability of AB1705 here in California. But national work, by a range of organizations, colleges, and scholars, also supports it.

The goals of AB1705–for both English and math–have led many thousands of students to succeed in math and English and complete their degrees. The widening gap between rich and poor compels us to create reforms that make a difference in the economic and personal lives of our students. I appreciate the committee's leadership and urge you to continue supporting the needle-moving gains of AB1705.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any opportunity to discuss this further and can be reached at wsmith@sdccd.edu.

Sincerely,

Wendy L. Smith

Wendy Smith

English Department Chair
San Diego Mesa College

February 13, 2025

To: AB 1705 Implementation Oversight Committee

Most of AB 1705 needs to be repealed. The option of one pre-transfer level English course needs to be reinstated. We need to remove barriers that are clearly undermining the success of minorities, and hand control of their education back to the teaching professionals.

The damage done to many English and Math students who came through our system before AB 705 is not in dispute. Even as a novice instructor more than 15 years ago, I could clearly see the barriers a long developmental pathway created for students. I became involved in the acceleration movement early in my career, working with like-minded faculty to provide adult focused teaching (andragogy). When I was hired for a tenure track position at Mendocino College, I was able to lead the charge to create alternative solutions.

We developed a highly successful course, one level below transfer, and began the process of eliminating all other development level courses in English. We saw great strides initially and embraced guided self-placement and multiple measures. Reentry students and those who struggled with English were able to find their footing in the subject and in college. But once the Covid lockdown hit, we saw a fast slide down into lower throughput rates for all students.

It is clear that the legislature took that sudden dip in success rates as proof that no one should have access to any developmental support and codified it with AB 1705. The lack of sound critical thinking here is breathtaking. All campuses in the California Community College system saw a downturn in success rates because of the sudden move to online instruction. Blaming a highly successful developmental course is incredibly short-sighted.

I understand the impetus for passing AB 705. Educators (most of whom have since retired) had been too slow to make changes to long-entrenched ideas. I was a supporter of the acceleration movement and worked hard to reshape the offerings at Mendocino College. I do understand that it took the legislature's push via AB 705 to reduce or eliminate egregious pathways, but AB 1705 overrode logic and common sense. Ultimately it has pushed students back out of the college experience by setting them up for failure.

The legislation is forcing a one-size fits all approach. When Mendocino College stopped offering our last pre-transfer level English course, our transfer level success rates plummeted despite our attempts at revising curriculum and adding co-requisite support courses. Overall, the removal resulted in a decreased success rate of 10.41%. But there was more of an impact on Hispanic (-13.57%) and Native American (-25%) student success. We heard that the data pointed to increase overall success rates, but that is not what we have seen at Mendocino College.

More and more reentry students, those who hated English in high school, and first-time freshman are arriving in my class with often crippling anxiety. They see their arrival in a transfer level course as a high stakes situation they have been forced into. Too many students arrive feeling like failures, unfamiliar with the culture and expectations of higher education and ready to cut and run as soon as they feel challenged. We work hard to support them, of course, but we all know that at some point our economy will dictate a reduced level of services available, and we will be stuck with an unfair and racist barriers thank to AB 1705.

My oldest grandchild is a freshman at a nearby community college. That college's Math department refused to back down to the notion of only transfer-level offerings. My grandchild will succeed because there are pre-calculus classes to attend. Without them, my grandchild would not be able to pursue a STEM major as they did not learn the necessary Math in high school. This is a very strong, high achieving student.

I believe strongly that AB 1705 moved the retention and success rate needle backwards to pr-AB 705 levels. Our ability to offer real pre-transfer courses, not just co-requisites, is an imperative.

Sincerely,

Ginny Buccelli, MFA
English Professor
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gbuccelli@mendocino.edu

California Community College Faculty Supporting Student-Centered Policy and Practice
Since 2010
AccelerationProject.org

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Assemblymember Mike Fong
Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Oversight Hearing AB 1705 (Irwin) Equitable Placement at Community Colleges: SUPPORT AB 1705 IMPLEMENTATION

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As a community college faculty organization that advocated for Assembly Bill 1705 (Irwin, 2022), the California Acceleration Project (CAP) supports strong and consistent implementation of this law.

Benefit to every student demographic examined

AB 705/1705 reforms broadened access to transfer-level math and largely replaced developmental education with more effective academic supports. As a result, one-year transfer-level math completion **jumped from 30% in 2017-2018 (pre-AB 705) to 62% in 2023-2024 (post AB 1705)** and **tripled** for Black and Hispanic students. With greater access to transfer-level math, large completion gains were achieved by every demographic examined, including economically disadvantaged students, students with low high school GPA, students participating in programs for the disabled, older students, foster youth, and veterans.[1] Similar results were obtained in English.

While some faculty continue to argue for a return to remedial courses, the research statewide makes clear that these courses are not in students' best interest, even if the student struggled in high school[2] or failed transfer-level math on their first attempt.[3]

AB 1705 Addressed Uneven and Inequitable Implementation

AB 705 required colleges to give students access to transfer-level coursework but implementation was undermined by colleges that continued to enroll students into remedial classes, particularly in math. During the first three years of AB 705 implementation (fall 2019-fall 2021), approximately 20% of community college students (more than 76,000 students) began in remedial math with dire consequences for their college progress. Colleges serving the largest

[1] https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/transfer-level-dashboard

[2] Students with low high school GPAs are more likely to complete transfer-level math and English if they begin there, and they outperform students with strong high school GPAs who begin in remedial coursework (Graphic from CCCCO dashboard: https://accelerationproject.org/placement/)

[3] According to a PPIC study, students who start in transfer-level math and fail on their first attempt are more likely to pass if they try again than if they take pre-transfer-level math. In addition, students who fail transfer-level math are also struggling in their other non-math coursework, which suggests that they need a broader set of supports. (https://www.ppic.org/publication/community-college-math-in-californias-new-era-of-student-access/)

proportions of the state's Black and Hispanic students were twice as likely to maintain a relatively large number of remedial math classes. With the passage of AB 1705, and clear subsequent guidance from the state Chancellor's office, equity gaps in access to transfer-level math and English were eliminated in fall 2023.

AB 1705 Mandates for STEM Progress Undermined by a Shift in the Chancellor's Office Guidance

More needs to be done to ensure that STEM students begin in transfer-level math coursework that maximizes their likelihood of completing calculus requirements for their program.

For STEM students, both the letter and intent of the law is undermined by the CCCCO guidance (Academic Affairs memo 24-69) which allows colleges to continue to enroll students into preparatory STEM calculus pathways, adding anywhere from 4 to 18 units of additional transfer-level math courses prior to calculus that do not count toward a STEM degree. Research consistently shows that current pathways to calculus produce very poor calculus outcomes. This memo perpetuates the same loopholes that undermined earlier AB 705 implementation.

According to recent local validation efforts, colleges enrolling more weakly prepared STEM students into preparatory math courses, such as college algebra or precalculus, produced on average an appalling 17% calculus completion rate in two years.[4] At colleges early to implement AB 1705 standards, students with similar preparation are mainstreamed into calculus with concurrent support – producing large and unprecedented gains in calculus completion, e.g. 69% calculus completion in one-term at Cuyamaca College and 50% at Chaffey College.[5]

Previous CCCCO guidance (ESLEI memo 24-15 February 2024) mandated the uptake of similar innovations at all colleges, but the new guidance (December 2024) does not require colleges to make changes to their calculus pathways based on their local data.

We anticipate that the new guidance will create greater inequity in calculus outcomes across colleges. A few colleges will continue to broaden access to calculus and integrate precalculus support into calculus instruction – strategies shown to improve calculus completion rates, while most will continue their current prerequisite sequences that have very high rates of attrition with disproportionate impact on our Black and brown STEM students.

The California Acceleration Project encourages the legislature to support the full and timely implementation of AB 1705 to advance student success and progress in STEM.

Thank you,

Myra Snell

Myra Snell
Mathematics Professor, Los Medanos College
Co-Founder and Executive Director, California Acceleration Project
CaliforniaAccelerationProject@gmail.com

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[4] https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/Documents/Projects/MultipleMeasures/AB1705/PreparatoryPathwaysAndSTEMCalCompletionUnderAB1705_Nov2024.pdf?ver=2024-11-14-070022-180

[5] https://accelerationproject.org/publications/initial-stem-velocity-stem-calculus-pathway-redesign-at-cuyamaca-college/; https://accelerationproject.org/publications/stem-calculus-pathway-redesign-at-chaffey-college/

CMC^3 Academic Resolution in Support of Access in Math Coursework

Whereas, in the past decade the California legislature has consistently passed pieces of legislation designed to increase student access to equitable course placement in the California Community College (CCC) system and to streamline transfer processes;

Whereas, AB 705 was signed into law in 2017 with the aim to reduce lengthy remedial pathways within the California Community Colleges (CCC), establishing the need for a pathway to complete transfer-level math and English courses within a year;

Whereas, Title 5 § 55522 was enacted, going beyond the stated goals of AB 705 to increase access to transfer level courses and resulting in the effective banning of access to stand-alone pre-transfer classes;

Whereas, in 2022 AB 1705 was signed into law codifying the aforementioned Title 5 regulations, expanding beyond pre-transfer pathways and legislating transfer and degree pathways in STEM;

Whereas, California community college districts are no longer allowed to offer stand-alone foundational courses in mathematics and English, preventing students from enrolling in these courses even if it would be beneficial in their academic journeys, resulting in disproportionate drop and failure rates for historically underrepresented students;

Whereas, the prescribed corequisite model, while helpful to many students, is too accelerated and high-unit to be an adequate substitute for stand-alone foundational coursework which can help to prepare some students for academic success;

Whereas, the California Community Colleges are open-access institutions dedicated to addressing community needs and supporting local educational advancement and are, at their core, committed to equity, which requires flexibility in offering pathways to meet students where they are;

Resolved, that the California Community Colleges provide students the option to enroll in stand-alone pre-transfer coursework in math and English; and

Resolved, that the agency for making decisions regarding curricular and enrollment matters be returned to the individual students and faculty experts, who are most able to determine their needs to continue their educational journeys.

Signed: California Mathematics Council Community Colleges (CMC^3)

580 2nd Street, Suite 200, Oakland, CA 94607
Phone: 510.465.6444 | edtrustwest.org

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

RE: Oversight Hearing - Implementation Status of AB 1705 (Irwin)

Dear Chair Fong and Members of the Assembly Higher Education Committee,

As an organization committed to advancing policies and practices that dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in California's education system, EdTrust-West writes to express our continued **SUPPORT for strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 1705 (Irwin)**, Chapter 926, Statutes of 2022.

AB 1705 built upon the transformational gains achieved under AB 705 (Irwin, Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) by providing much-needed clarity to colleges about issues that undermined implementation and contributed to racial inequity across the system. As a result, the California Community Colleges system has produced large and significant gains in the timely completion of transfer-level math and English coursework for every demographic group examined, including:

- English students with low, middle, and high GPAs, including English language learners;
- Business, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (B-STEM) students with low, middle, and high GPAs, including B-STEM students who did *not* take Algebra 2 in high school;
- Statistics/liberal arts math students with low, middle, and high GPAs;
- Students with disabilities, students identified as current or former foster youth, and low-income students; and
- Students across every racial demographic (Black, Hispanic/Latine, White, and Asian).

For example, one-year transfer-level math completion jumped from 30% in 2017-2018 to 60% in 2022-2023 and tripled for Black and Hispanic students. Implementation of AB 1705 and the accompanying Equitable Placement and Completion Grant program are still underway and there is **still work to be done to ensure our students are adequately supported to complete their gateway coursework**.

On December 10, 2024, the Chancellor's Office issued updated guidance (Academic Affairs 24-69) regarding placement and enrollment for students in STEM programs that broadens the circumstances in which colleges can *require* STEM majors to enroll in prerequisite course sequences (i.e. trigonometry or pre-calculus) prior to Calculus 1, regardless of the ongoing validation procedures at the Chancellor's Office driven by AB

1705. EdTrust-West is deeply concerned that this guidance will roll back progress on AB 1705 implementation and will permit colleges to default to the status quo of lengthy prerequisite sequences that we already know do *not* help students complete STEM Calculus. The Chancellor's Office previously issued guidance on February 27, 2024 (ESLEI 24-15) that unequivocally stated, "Across all levels of high school math preparation and placement, **longer preparatory course sequences were associated with higher rates of attrition and lower STEM Calculus 1 throughput** in a two-year timeframe."

Furthermore, this guidance contradicts the intent of the AB 1705, which requires colleges to "... place and enroll students into transfer-level mathematics or English coursework that satisfies a requirement of the student's intended certificate or associate degree or a requirement for transfer within their intended major." The guidance issued in early 2024 already delayed implementation of the AB 1705 STEM validation provision by providing colleges with an **additional two years** to innovate and offer preparatory courses for STEM Calculus and contained strong oversight mechanisms to ensure that colleges are validating the efficacy of their proposed pathways. The conflicting guidance issued in December 2024 now allows colleges to ignore the validation procedures required by AB 1705 and continue to place STEM majors in prerequisite courses that are proven by college-level analyses to hinder their access and completion of Calculus 1. Policymakers must double down on implementation of AB 1705 or risk losing momentum on the innovation and systemic change that many colleges had already initiated.

We fully acknowledge that the California Community Colleges system is being asked to engage in challenging work reimagining the structure of course sequences and support for students. Systemic change is oftentimes uncomfortable and requires ongoing support, guidance, and adaptation; but we firmly believe in - and the data confirms – the capacity of our students to succeed in gateway Math and English courses when provided with the appropriate support. 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. **For these reasons, we strongly support the ongoing implementation of AB 1705 with strong oversight.**

Sincerely,

Denise Luna
Director of Higher Education Policy

cc: Members of the Assembly Higher Education Committee
Ellen Ceseratti-Monroy, Senior Consultant

COLLEGE of the DESERT

DESERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
43500 Monterey Avenue
Palm Desert, CA 92260
760.346.8041 | www.collegeofthedesert.edu

Feb 10, 2025

Dear Members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Thang Le, I am a professor of Mathematics at College of the Desert in Palm Desert, California. I am writing to express my extreme concern regarding the implementation of AB 1705.

The implementation of AB 1705 has caused tremendous harm to the students' education. Due to the lack of prerequisites enforcement, the students are a lot less prepared to take college-level math courses. The students lack fundamental mathematical backgrounds to be successful in their math courses. The success rate in all my math courses was at the lowest level during my 23 years teaching career. This low success rate has been detrimental to the students. They must repeat a math course several times before they can pass it or quit taking it altogether. Repeated failures or low grades force the students to change their educational goals or quit school altogether.

Open access is one of the core missions of the California Community College System. The system accepts all students who are 18 years or older regardless of their educational background. This means that the system will serve students who lack proper background in Mathematics. The lack of mathematical background makes the students unprepared to take college-level math courses. These students will fail in obtaining their educational goals without proper mathematical remediation. The implementation of AB 1705 forbids Community Colleges from offering remedial math courses for the students who need them the most. Thus, the implementation of AB 1705 is setting the students up to fail. Remediation in Mathematics is very necessary to students' successes.

The Chancellor's Office needs to give the students options and choices. The Chancellor's Office needs to let the students decide what is best for them and their educational goals with advice from the Counselors and Professors, who are experts in their fields. The implementation of AB 1705 is doing more harm than good for the students. The implementation of AB 1705 needs to pause immediately.

Sincerely,

Thang Le, PhD

A²MEND
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE
EDUCATION NETWORK & DEVELOPMENT

February 13, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As a non-profit organization that specifically focuses on the success of African American males who are committed to student-centered, data-driven equity policies, **we are writing to express our continued support for strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705.**
AB 1705 built upon the transformational gains achieved under AB 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) by providing needed clarity to colleges about issues that undermined implementation and contributed to racial inequity across the system.

As a result, the California community college system has produced large and significant gains in the timely 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. For example, one-year transfer-level math completion jumped from 30% in 2017-2018 to 60% in 2022-2023 and tripled for Black and Hispanic students.

AB 1705 supports the mission of the community college system. It allows 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 support, such as tutoring or enhanced transfer-level coursework. It fosters practices that will improve calculus completion for STEM majors. It maintains 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. AB 1705 is aligned with our values. **For these reasons, we support strong and consistent AB 1705 implementation.**

Sincerely,

Dr. Erin Vines

Dr. Erin Vines
Executive Director

ABC
Alliance for a Better Community

February 7, 2025

The Honorable Assemblymember Mike Fong
Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Oversight Hearing AB 1705 (Irwin) Equitable Placement at Community Colleges: SUPPORT AB 1705 IMPLEMENTATION

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

On behalf of Alliance for a Better Community (ABC), a multi-issue advocacy organization dedicated to advancing equity and economic mobility for Latina/os in Los Angeles, I am writing to express our continued support for the strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705. With over two decades of experience advocating for student-centered, data-driven policies that expand access to higher education, workforce opportunities, and social mobility, ABC remains committed to ensuring that AB 1705 fulfills its promise of improving educational outcomes for community college students across California.

AB 1705 will help ensure that California community college students have the greatest opportunity to reach their goals. AB 1705 builds upon the historic educational equity and evidence-based policy of AB 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) by closing loopholes in implementation, which will provide clarity and additional guidance to ensure all students benefit from this successful policy. This landmark law requires the state's community colleges to recognize high school coursework instead of relying on inaccurate and inequitable placement tests, and to place students into English and math classes with appropriate support, where they have the greatest chance to make progress toward a college degree. Prior to AB 705, 80% of incoming community college students were denied access to transfer-level English and math courses and required to take remedial courses. Remedial courses do not earn credit towards a bachelor's degree and they cost students time and money. Millions of students were excluded from transfer-level courses in which they could have been successful—and Black and Latinx students were disproportionately impacted.

As anticipated, AB 705 has produced dramatically better student outcomes and increases in student completion. In the first year of implementation, the law enabled tens of thousands of additional students to enter and successfully complete transfer-level English and math. Every group examined to date has higher completion enrolling directly in transfer-level courses instead of below-transfer, remedial courses (Dashboard). AB 705 has reduced racial equity gaps in access to, and completion of, transfer-level courses (PPIC 2020). And it has led to more students enrolling in and completing Business, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (BSTEM) math courses, 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, and a substantial number of students are still encouraged to enroll in below-transfer courses, despite evidence suggesting that doing so dramatically reduces their likelihood of completion. Just 14% of students who took one below-transfer math course in fall 2019 completed a transfer-level course in a year,

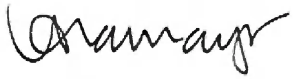
compared to 60% of students who enrolled directly in the transfer level. These classes clearly do not meet the AB 705 standard of maximizing student completion, but in fall 2020, below-transfer classes constituted 20% or more of the introductory math offered at 69 colleges. Black and Latinx students disproportionately attend colleges that maintained large remedial offerings, driving ongoing racial inequities in completion ("Still Getting There").

AB 1705 will help strengthen the implementation of AB 705 to ensure that all students benefit from these successful reforms by:

- Making clear that colleges must enroll students in math and English classes where they have the greatest likelihood of completing degree and transfer requirements.
- Clarifying that colleges should not require students to repeat math and English classes they passed in high school.
- Providing greater protections to ensure that students are not required to take extra math and English courses that don't count towards their degree requirements.
- Clarifying that it is the responsibility of colleges to ensure that students have supports that help them make progress toward their goals.

At ABC, we believe in the transformative power of higher education as a pathway to economic mobility and social equity for Latina/o students. Our mission is to advance policies that expand college access, increase degree attainment, and remove systemic barriers that disproportionately impact students of color, first-generation college students, and mixed-status families. We believe it is the responsibility of our community colleges to implement evidence-based practices that promote student success and to discontinue policies that hinder progress. AB 1705 aligns with these priorities by ensuring that students—particularly those from historically underserved backgrounds—are not placed into unnecessary remedial coursework that delays or derails their academic and career aspirations. Equitable placement and completion reform at community colleges have proven to work by producing unprecedented gains for students. This policy is a critical lever in meeting the goals of the California Community Colleges system's Vision for Success. For these reasons, we strongly support the full and consistent implementation of AB 1705.

Sincerely,



Vanessa Aramayo
CEO & President
Alliance for a Better Community

Resolution 1-2025 AB 1705

Whereas, in the past decade the California legislature has consistently passed pieces of legislation designed to increase student access to equitable course placement in the California Community College (CCC) system and to streamline transfer processes;

Whereas, AB 705 was signed into law in 2017 with the aim to reduce lengthy remedial pathways within the California Community Colleges (CCC), establishing the need for a pathway to complete transfer-level math and English courses within a year;

Whereas, Title 5 § 55522 was enacted, going beyond the stated goals of AB 705 to increase access to transfer-level courses and resulting in the effective banning of access to stand-alone pre-transfer classes, with subsequent Chancellor's Office guidance memorandum leading to the elimination of stand-alone transfer courses;

Whereas, in 2022 AB 1705 was signed into law codifying the aforementioned Title 5 regulations, expanding beyond pre-transfer pathways and legislating transfer and degree pathways in STEM;

Whereas, California community college districts are no longer allowed to offer stand-alone foundational courses in mathematics and English, preventing students from enrolling in these courses even if it would be beneficial in their academic journeys, resulting in disproportionate drop and failure rates for historically underrepresented students;

Whereas, the prescribed corequisite model, while helpful to many students, is too accelerated and high-unit to be an adequate substitute for stand-alone foundational coursework which can help to prepare some students for academic success;

Whereas, the California Community Colleges are open-access institutions dedicated to addressing community needs and supporting local educational advancement and are, at their core, committed to equity, which requires flexibility in offering pathways to meet students where they are at;

Resolved, that the California Community Colleges return to offering stand-alone pre-transfer coursework in math and English, especially for students who withdraw from or fail transfer-level coursework; and

Resolved, that the College of the Redwoods President and Board, join the College of the Redwoods Academic Senate, Academic Senate of California Community Colleges (ASCCC), and Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) in advocating and insisting that the agency for making decisions regarding curricular matters be returned to the faculty experts, and enrollment matters be returned to the individual students and faculty experts, who are most able to determine their needs to continue their educational journeys.

Approved by Academic Senate 2/7/2025

February 13, 2025

To The Assembly Higher Education Committee :

My name is Doug Gong. I am a full-time math instructor at Reedley College. I have devoted 34 years to math education from grades 7-12 and at the community college.

I ask that community colleges be allowed to offer courses that meet the needs of their students.

In particular to AB 1705, I ask that we treat community college students equitably with like students at a UC or CSU or in a California high school. Students at these institutions have the opportunity to access prerequisite classes for STEM calculus. UC and CSU eligible students generally have the advantage of resources that most community college students lack.

Why should community college students not have the same opportunity to learn important content found in prerequisite classes?

Clearly, there are problems with AB 1705 if the Chancellor's Office must continue to create additional guidance for implementation based on questions received during a webinar held on 2/13/2025.

Unfortunately, I have found the term "content area expert" to be rather patronizing. If the overwhelming majority of math educators believe that the prerequisites of STEM calculus should be enforced, then why should their expertise be rejected?

There is much more that can be said, but I can only give so much to this fight. I hope the voices of students that understand the consequences of well-intentioned but poorly conceived legislation will carry the day.

Thank you,

Doug Gong

Doug.Gong@ReedleyCollege.edu
Math Instructor
Reedley College
(559) 494-3000 ext. 3142

Teacher/Professional/Craftsman/Worker
First I learned to do math, now I do math to learn.

February 13, 2025

Members of the Assembly Higher Education Committee,

This is a letter from the undersigned faculty and staff of the Mathematics Department at Santa Monica College to express our strong concerns regarding AB 1705 and the negative impact it has had on our most vulnerable students.

AB 705 has eliminated level foundational mathematics courses at community colleges and unfairly removes the opportunity for students who need or want to review preparatory material, which is critical with a sequential subject like mathematics.

We attempted to meet the challenge by designing co-requisite courses where students could review algebra. However, most students are not reviewing but are re-learning the foundational concepts. We have gone through great lengths in designing co-requisite courses but a math course where students are re-learning algebra and the new course content is too much material.

The co-requisite support courses and the myriad of other supportive actions are not enough to meet student needs with learning mathematics. The success rates and withdrawal rates show that the outcomes espoused are falling short, especially for African-American and Latinx students.

We are in strong agreement with the Chancellor's Office most recent memo (December 10, 2024) which stated that preparatory courses like Pre-Calculus will continue to be offered. This is a step in the right direction and will provide the choice that students need and have been asking for.

Equity is more than "providing an opportunity and allowing them to fail" and it is our responsibility to provide a well-designed, foundational path, so that students are prepared to succeed at the highest levels of mathematics.

Sincerely,

Anahit Asadynan, Faculty
Sara Boosheri, Faculty
Barbara Bronie, Faculty
Gail Edinger, Faculty

Andrew England, Faculty
Zarik Evinyan, Faculty
Mark Foster, Faculty
Kristina Fukuda, Administrative Assistant
Jilbert Gharamanians, Faculty
Terry Green, Faculty
Matthew Hancock, Faculty
Alan Hong, Faculty
Gerald Kamin, Faculty
William Konya, Faculty
Jamar London, Faculty, SMC Academic Senate President
Maribel Lopez, Faculty
Kristin Lui-Martinez, Faculty
Sui Man, Faculty
Mario Martinez, Faculty
Iris Miano, Faculty
Matthew Musselman, Faculty
Dr. Andrew Nestler, Faculty
Dr. William Pachas, Faculty
John Quevedo, Faculty
Soury Sima, Faculty
Aaron Simo, Faculty
Shane Smith, Faculty
Alvard Tsvikyan, Faculty
Jason Wang, Faculty

ELENI KOUNALAKIS
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Fong
Assembly Higher Education Committee, Chair
1021 O Street, Suite 5650
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Oversight Hearing: Implementation Status of AB 1705 (Irwin, 2022)

Dear Chair Fong and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my appreciation for holding an oversight hearing on the implementation status of AB 1705 (Irwin, 2022), which I proudly co-sponsored in 2022. At the time, implementation of its predecessor, AB 705 (Irwin, 2017), had been uneven across community college campuses and resulted in a substantial number of students still enrolling in courses that were not transfer-level.

Through these legislative efforts by Assemblywoman Irwin and advocacy partners, there has been a significant increase in the number of students enrolling in and passing transfer-level English and math coursework. A 2024 report by the Public Policy Institute of California noted that direct enrollment in transfer-level math and English is at 100%, and the one-term throughput rate has increased by 38% and 34% for transfer-level math and English, respectively[1].

There is no question that additional work remains to continue improving throughput rate, transfer rates, and closing equity gaps. I am hopeful that any potential changes identified as part of this oversight process are thoughtful, data-driven, and student-centric and avoid the unintended consequence of undoing the progress that has been made to date.

I look forward to continuing my engagement with key stakeholders on this issue to ensure all Californians who seek higher education are successful in the pursuit of their degree.

Should you have any questions regarding my position, please do not hesitate to reach Karl Larson, Higher Education Advisor, at karl.larson@ltg.ca.gov or by calling (916) 445-8994.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Eleni Kounalakis (RET.)
Lieutenant Governor

cc: Members and Staff, Assembly Higher Education Committee
Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin

[1] https://www.ppic.org/publication/how-are-black-and-latino-men-faring-after-developmental-education-reform/

Implementation Status of AB 1705 (Irwin), Chapter 926, Statutes of 2022
Public Written Testimony

Testimony from John Rall – Professor of English – Pomo Pathways Instructor- Puente Co-Coordinator – ASCCC OERI Liaison – Mendocino College

Hi Assembly Higher Education Committee,

I wanted to share my concerns about AB1705. I am English faculty at Mendocino College. I have been teaching College composition for 20 years. When AB705 passed, I though this was a good idea as it would open the pathway to more students who were capable of achieving their educational goals. Our English Department developed an excellent pre- transfer level course (accelerated English). This course was so successful and instilled confidence in entering college students.

When AB1705 took effect, the dynamics changed, and the result was more students in transfer level English who were not prepared leading to the overall quality to diminish. Rigor was slowed to account for more students who were thrust into a college level class, singly the most important college class, with no idea what college was like and what expectations for college composition were. In my years of teaching I noticed that the students entering ENG 200 were facing a big wall, sending many of them away with failure. It is not that the students are not capable to complete the transfer level course, but there is no course that warms them up to college culture and expectations (Our accelerated English did this). Now we are seeing the course curriculum of ENG 200 being squeezed as we try to teach basic technology skills to meet the need of the students to function in all their classes.

I encourage a reconsideration of AB1705 and if it is permitted to remain in effect, please encourage the development of orientation courses that ought to be taken before transfer level courses so students can be properly supported with their transition into college expectations.

I tried to keep it brief. The main push that I would like to see is more support for a pre-transfer level course in composition that will make sure students have the basics to succeed in the transfer level courses.

Thank you for your time.

Jacob Brotherton – Former Student at San Joaquin Delta College –

Hello,

I write to you as a former student of San Joaquin Delta College, where I spent nearly a decade starting in 2014 before transferring to the University of the Pacific where I am pursuing a degree in Engineering Physics. In my last year at Delta, I also served as the Vice-President of the Associated Students of Delta College (ASDC). Having personally experienced the California Community College system before AB 1705 and even before AB 705, I have witnessed firsthand

the changing challenges CCC students face in STEM education. Along with this, my experience in the student government has given me a unique perspective that I think is valuable to share.

I have known since I was young that my calling was to be an engineer. However, my experience in school was complicated by ADHD, which made it challenging to perform at my true potential in a traditional classroom setting. As a result, academic success and its relation to my goals seemed abstract and unattainable. So, after high school, I did the only thing that seemed sensible to me: I enrolled at SJDC. In my first semester of college, the first math class I took was Precalculus, which I promptly failed. The next semester rolled around, and I found that, to my surprise, I was now able to enroll in Calculus 1. Unsure if it was a glitch in the system, I enrolled and never looked back. This marked the beginning of my long and rocky journey. Often, I found myself behind the other students in understanding key concepts because I had simply not learned them. I ended up making it through just about every math, physics, chemistry and engineering class offered at SJDC, but not without struggle. To list a few setbacks, I took Calculus 3 three times and General Chemistry, Statics and Materials twice each. I was able to pull through and overcome my fundamental deficiencies of knowledge and struggles with ADHD mostly due to repetition, my uncommon stubbornness and a supportive home life. Many of my peers were not so lucky.

It is important for you to recognize that, like me, many of our students are non-traditional students. Many of us are not solely focused on finishing school as quickly as possible; we are working, raising children, caring for family members, dealing with disabilities and fulfilling other responsibilities alongside our education. We come to Community Colleges because they are quite literally our only option to better ourselves. By their very name, Community Colleges are supposed to exist to enrich our communities by providing accessible and flexible education for those that would otherwise be left behind. Meeting us where we are at and bridging the gap that separates us from success is fundamental to this mission, and AB 1705 undermines this critical function.

Before these legislative changes, students who needed additional preparation had the option to take remedial math courses, allowing them to build a solid foundation before advancing. Now, I see students being pushed into transfer-level mathematics without the necessary preparation, resulting in higher failure rates and declining retention in STEM majors. From my own observations, the number of students in advanced engineering courses seems to be shrinking, and those who do persist often have a weaker grasp of the material. It is increasingly common for my peers to retake multiple courses multiple times, struggling to keep up with concepts they were never given the proper opportunity to master.

Assembly Bill 1705, while well-intentioned in its goal to increase access to transfer-level courses, is having the opposite effect on STEM students. By eliminating remedial math courses and forcing underprepared students directly into calculus, the policy assumes that extra tutoring and support courses can replace years of mathematical development. In reality, many students find themselves overwhelmed, failing calculus once, twice, or even three times before

they reach the limit on retaking a course. At that point, they are effectively locked out of STEM majors, not because they lack potential, but because they were not given the chance to develop the mathematical skills they needed to succeed. This policy is not accelerating students, it is filtering them out.

This attrition from STEM is compounded by the broader push to increase the number of students transferring and passing transfer-level math, often at the expense of true comprehension. AB 1705 prioritizes these metrics over mastery, assuming that more students in advanced courses equates to better success. However, this approach ignores the realities of STEM education, where a strong mathematical foundation is non-negotiable. Additionally, in many cases this strategy has done nothing towards its stated goal to increase equity amongst historically disadvantaged student groups. During my term in ASDC, I served as a student representative to the Equity Action Taskforce Curriculum Project Team, a mouthful, I know. From what I recall of a debriefing about the academic year before my term, not a single student who identified as African American at SJDC passed a transfer level math course that year. This was utterly appalling to me. The educational equity problem is obviously complex, and access to remedial courses may not be the answer to every problem, but their removal is demonstrably not the solution, and I believe that policies like AB 1705 will only compound equity gaps over time.

Furthermore, many students, particularly those balancing part-time work and family responsibilities, struggle to keep up with the expectations placed on them without adequate preparation. As a result, an increasing number of students are turning to artificial intelligence tools to complete assignments rather than doing the work of learning the material themselves. While AI has the potential to enhance education when used responsibly, its misuse in this context is further eroding students' mathematical proficiency. Instead of truly understanding calculus, they are simply getting by until they enter upper-division coursework or the workforce and find themselves fundamentally unprepared. Students now tend to be focused on the memorization of formulas rather than relying on the physical intuition of how math describes nature to guide them in solving problems because they are constantly on their back foot trying to catch up during lectures, and they don't have the time to really understand what they are doing.

The long-term consequences of these skills gaps are deeply concerning. The students currently struggling through and barely passing community college math courses are the same ones who will one day design our bridges, construct our levees, and develop the technologies that power California's economy. If they are not given the proper foundation, we risk a future in which our critical infrastructure is built by professionals whose fundamental skills have been compromised. California cannot afford to lose an entire generation of STEM talent due to misguided policy decisions that prioritize short-term statistics over long-term educational outcomes.

This issue is particularly urgent given the broader political and economic landscape. As global competition in science and technology intensifies, California must maintain its role as a leader in education, research, and innovation. Our state has long been at the forefront of technological advancement, with thriving industries in aerospace, biotechnology, renewable energy, and now artificial intelligence. Weakening the pipeline of STEM talent at the community college level will have ripple effects throughout our economy, workforce, and research institutions.

At the same time, the federal government has begun to adopt an increasingly adversarial stance toward education, devaluing public institutions and limiting access to resources. While other states allow their education systems to be undermined, California has a responsibility to stand as a testament to the power of an effective and equitable education system. If we allow short-sighted policies like AB 1705 to weaken STEM education and prevent us from solving the problems we face, we will not only be failing our students, we will be ceding our position as a global leader in innovation.

As someone who has an extensive and intimate understanding of the experience of STEM students in the California Community College system, I urge the Assembly Committee on Higher Education to reconsider the rigid restrictions imposed by AB 1705 and work to restore the flexibility for community colleges to offer remedial math courses for students who need them. California's future depends on our ability to cultivate a strong and capable STEM workforce, and that begins with ensuring that students have access to the foundational education they need to succeed.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent issue. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and explore policy solutions that better support STEM education in California. Please feel free to contact me by email at jake.r.brotherton@gmail.com.

Dr. Denise Kruizenga-Muro – Professor of English and Writing and Reading Center Lead – Riverside Community College

Dear Assembly Higher Education Committee Members:

I am an English instructor at Riverside City College, a position I have held since 2008. I teach an amazing class that I would like to tell you about. It is called English 885, the writing clinic. It is a zero-cost and zero-unit course that provides individualized help to students who need or want it in areas of grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and college essay writing. Over the years, I have helped numerous students gain both the skills and the confidence needed to succeed in transfer-level English courses. One student, whom I'll call Billy, came to community college after losing his job. With only a high school diploma, his job prospects were not good, and with a baby on the way, he needed to upskill quickly. However, he had been out of school for a few years, and by his own admission had spend more time skipping high school than attending, so his writing skills were poor. With the help of English 885, he was able to pass transfer-level English. More importantly than the passing score, however, was the huge boost in confidence he received from

this pre-transfer-level course. He went from seeing himself as a failure to seeing himself as a student, a father, and a future provider for his girlfriend and their child. It is changes like these that I have seen in students who are allowed to take pre-transfer-level courses.

My school eliminated all pre-transfer-level courses as soon as AB 705 passed; indeed, we were praised for being early adopters by some of the documents written by such corporate-backed organizations as the RP Group and the California Acceleration Project, and their word "throughput" became our catchphrase, too. Our community college stopped focusing on all members of our community and turned our attention solely to those students who were already most likely to succeed in transfer-level English. In other words, our community college turned its back on the very members of the community who needed us the most, the students like Billy who needed time to refresh their skills and build their confidence so they could become successful members of our community.

My college came to understand AB 705 and AB 1705 to mean that NO stand-alone pre-transfer-level courses in English were permitted. My department developed some concurrent-enrollment courses that were recommended but not required for students who failed or nearly failed high school. Currently, English 885 is tied to English courses, meaning a student can enroll in it only if that student is also enrolled in an English class. This is despite writing being required in numerous non-English courses like history, sociology, early childhood development, and dance. My college has placed these tight restrictions on enrollment in this course because of the perceived penalties associated with not complying with the mandates of AB 1705.

The students who have been most impacted are those with disabilities and returning students, like Billy. Just this past fall semester, I encountered two disabled students who would have benefitted from a pre-transfer-level English course like English 885 yet who were barred from taking the course. One was Kensasha (a pseudonym), an older deaf student. As you are aware, ASL is a foreign language with structure, verbs, and symbols that are vastly different from Standard American English. Kensasha cannot succeed in a transfer-level English course because of the big difference between her language and the language she needs to succeed. She needs individualized assistance, time to practice, and a safe place to gain skills and confidence. Right now, here in California, there is no place like that for her.

Another student, Jeanette (also a pseudonym) came to see me with a helper from our Disability Resource Center. Jeanette has Autism Spectrum Disorder and had just dropped out of her transfer-level English course because, as her helper said, is was too much for Jeanette. Jeanette needed a slower pace, a quiet environment, and a teacher who could take the time to break writing tasks down into tiny parts. A regular transfer-level English course cannot go as slow as Jeanette needs, but an individualized course like English 885 can. Both Kensasha and Jeanette can be successful, but with AB 1705 in place, they are being left behind. My heart hurts at the thought of what these students' fate will be with no education.

To sum up, then, AB 1705 has taken the community out of community college. Instead of meeting all community members where they are academically, socially, and psychologically, we have been forced to help only those students who are most likely to succeed anyway while

turning away those students who need us most. Under AB 1705, we have eliminated pre-transfer-level English courses and with them students' ability to choose the courses that make the best sense for them where they are. We are forced to treat all students as if they are the same instead of recognizing that community college students come to use from a variety of preparatory backgrounds and with a variety of goals. In other words, we have eliminated equity in favor of equality: treat everyone the same regardless of need.

It is for all these reasons that I ask you to consider loosening the restrictions that AB 1705 has placed on community colleges and allow us to offer stand-alone pre-transfer-level courses in English and math. While no one wants to go back to the old days of multiple pre-transfer-level sequences, a single preparatory class and non-credit classes like English 885 are beneficial for students and can increase throughput by helping students in need build skills and confidence. Please, help put the community back in community colleges.

I am happy to speak to you further about this matter. Please feel free to contact me.

Logan Fisher – Los Angeles Pierce College – AFT 1521 Student Coordinator

Dear Assembly Higher Education Committee,

My name is Logan Fisher, and I am a recently graduated student at Los Angeles Pierce College. I am writing to share my perspective on AB 1705's implementation and its critical impact on California community college students, particularly those from underserved communities.

While im not a STEM major, my brother is a math tutor at Moorpark College, Coming out of the pandemic, he's encountered many students who were placed in transfer-level courses they were not yet ready for. He as a math tutor, did his best to help these students but many of them simply needed to develop there foundational skills in lower-level coursework and were not able to pass there class and eventually dropped out.

The recent data from the Chancellor's Office Student Enrollment Survey reveals concerning trends about the impact of eliminating standalone foundational courses. Students are increasingly dropping out or struggling to complete their coursework, with 33% of students needing to prioritize work and 30% citing mental health concerns when dropping classes. These aren't just statistics; they represent real students whose educational dreams are being affected.

The research from Brown University showing that students with weaker foundations who lack access to pre-transfer courses are 29% less likely to earn credentials within three years should be a wake-up call. This matches what we're seeing in our classrooms. A decade of data from Tennessee's community colleges demonstrates that after similar reforms, lower-achieving students were more likely to drop out and less likely to earn credentials.

The current implementation fails to recognize that equity doesn't mean treating everyone the same way. Students come to community colleges from vastly different backgrounds and preparation levels. Some of us are coming from under-resourced high schools; others are returning to education after years in the workforce, and many are balancing full-time work with

our studies. The pandemic's impact on learning continues to affect students differently, particularly those from communities with limited access to educational resources.

When colleges are restricted from offering pre-transfer courses, it creates significant barriers for students who need additional support. First-generation college students often lack the academic foundation that their peers from college-educated families take for granted. Students from underserved areas are likely to be systemically denied access to resources that would strengthen their math and English skills. Working students need more flexibility in pacing to balance their education with employment. Adult learners returning to education may need to refresh fundamental concepts before diving into transfer-level work.

The community college system exists to serve the whole community, not just those who arrive fully prepared for transfer-level work. When students tell us they need more support and different pathways to success, we need to listen. True equity means meeting students where they are and providing the support they need to succeed, not assuming everyone can thrive in the same accelerated environment.

As an educational institution, success should not be measured simply by transfer but by how many students we've taught foundational skills that help them succeed in life and in there professional career. Transfer is important, yes, but without access to pre-transfer courses, we were leaving much of our community out, which is antithetical to the mission of the community college system, which is supposed to serve all of our community regardless of where they are in life.

I urge you to consider supporting policies that restore student agency in choosing their educational pathway. We need to allow colleges to offer standalone foundational courses and provide multiple paths to success rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. These changes would recognize that true equity means meeting students where they are, supporting them in reaching their goals, and trusting them when they say they need more support.

Thank you for considering the real impact these policies have on student success.

Kimm Sisson Blackwell – Laney College – Counselor and Coordinator

Good morning — When is the last time you took a math course? What grade did you get in that class? What is your comfort level working on a laptop or a computer? Do you own a laptop or a computer? Did you attend and/or graduate from high school? If so, how many years of English did you complete?

I am a Counselor and Teacher of currently and formerly incarcerated students, however I have been a community college counselor working with transfer, Veteran, EOPS, CalWORKs, disabled, honors, STEM, English learners and re-entry students for 20+ years. In my role, I assist both advanced students in high school hoping to get ahead in their academics, but mostly what I call the "traditional community college student".

I think I understand the sentiment of AB 1705 but when I tell you, I hate this law more than anything, I do. As a former lifeguard, it reminds me of taking away all that keeps swimmers safe.

Just like people who want to swim, students want to take classes, learn, earn their degrees, and possibly receive financial aid along the way. They rely on our institutions and professionals like me to create safe environments for them to reach their goals.

Community college students turn to us for fresh starts. Many turned to the military, low-wage jobs, lives of crime because their relationship with K-12 education failed them. As a Counselor, I'm so excited to reintroduce them to learning that begins with English and math. They often stopped out between middle and 10th grade in high school. If they graduated, their last math class was somewhere between 7th - 10th grade, and their grades were poor. They have high hopes and new goals which require college-level English and math but AB 1705 strips them away from a true fresh start.

When I begin learning the answers to the questions I first asked you in the beginning, even young graduates of 2023 say, "...man, I can't remember anything..." Imagine students fresh out of prison who are adjusting to cell phones or the certified nurse assistant of 15 years who wants to study to be a registered nurse. AB 1705 forces me to offer these students high level English and math courses. Ugh.

Please take a statistics and English course this summer or fall and tell me you think these are the only choices we should offer students. Failing these courses destroys their self-esteem. It kills allied health majors' opportunities in the field. Failing and withdrawing has a negative impact on their financial aid. They should've never been in those high level classes in the first place.

Please open the options for students who are not privileged to have 4 years at a quality high school, talks at the dinner table that prime the brain for quality writing and critical thinking, and let us get back to being a place for fresh starts!

Help us do our jobs of presenting options to people who rely on US to show them the way. Please.

Anne Donegan – History Professor – Social Science Department – Santa Rosa Junior College

Hello:

Please support legislation that allows students to be able to choose to take pre-transfer -level classes in English and Math at the community colleges. Where else can students go if they need to take an Algebra course?

Too often I see students in my History class (which has a recommendation to be eligible to take college level English) come into my class unprepared to write at the college level. I regularly see 3-4 page papers where most proper nouns are not capitalized and the entire paper is one long paragraph.

Our students need more options.

Thanks.

Catherine Cumberland – Biological Sciences – Santa Rosa Junior College

Dear Assembly Higher Education Committee,

PLEASE allow our community colleges to teach remedial math and English courses for students who need them! AB 705/1705 have been a disaster for students who want and deserve extra help! Students shouldn't be penalized if they didn't get good math skills before starting college.

As an instructor in biology I'm seeing the impact of AB 705/1705 on the students. Some are lacking basic math competency, but the courses that could help them improve are no longer offered.

This is an equity issue! Wealthy parents can afford to hire tutors for their kids — low-income parents don't have the resources to do that and community colleges should be there to help them!

Please give students the courses they need to succeed in STEM professions, which require a strong math background. These are some of the highest paying and most prestigious jobs out there and students need our help to do well.

Aleemah Perez-Muhammad – MESA Tutor – Mission College

Hi, my name is Aleemah and I'm a MESA tutor and student majoring in biology at Mission College. I've tutored students in different walks of their life, some coming to learn a new trade or just needing a second chance in education. I noticed that when students build a strong foundation in college algebra, they have an easier time following along in calculus. This isn't simply done overnight but through continuous practice and reciprocal teaching amongst their peers. Many first gen students come to MESA without any exposure to precalculus or trigonometry. Algebra and trigonometry are like roots to a plant that need to be strong before they can grow. Without roots, it's difficult for a person to advance through calculus. You can argue that high school should have taught it before graduation, but Mission College receives people from diverse areas. Many of our students are coming back to school after years it could be 20 maybe 30 years since they graduated. Some students didn't even get to precalculus and trigonometry in their school. Community college is a place adapted to meet students where they are, without precalculus and trigonometry, it will be hard to bridge their preparation for classes like calculus and physics. Thank you for your continued support in making these classes available.

Tammi Marshall, Ed.D – Dean of Math, Science, and Engineering – Cuyamaca College

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As a community college Dean that oversees Math, Science, and Engineering and a Math faculty for 30 years, I am committed to student-centered, data-driven equity policies. As such, I am **writing to express my continued support for strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705.**

AB 1705 built upon the transformational gains achieved under AB 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) by providing needed clarity to colleges about issues that undermined implementation and contributed to racial inequity across the system.

As a result, the California community college system has produced large and significant gains in the timely 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. For example, one-year transfer-level math completion jumped from 30% in 2017-2018 to 60% in 2022-2023 and tripled for Black and Hispanic students.

AB 1705 supports the mission of the community college system. It allows 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 support, such as tutoring or enhanced transfer-level coursework. It fosters practices that will improve calculus completion for STEM majors. It maintains 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.

I believe in the capacity of our students. I 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. I believe in dismantling educational structures, policies, and practices that contribute to racial inequity in outcomes. I believe in building equity-minded colleges that welcome and empower all students to succeed. AB 1705 is aligned with our values. **For these reasons, we support strong and consistent AB 1705 implementation**

Miriam Simpson – Chair of Engineering and Physical Science – Chair of Chairs – Equity Mind teaching and Learning Coordinator

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As a faculty member at Cuyamaca College committed to student-centered, data-driven equity policies, I am writing to express my **strong support for AB 705 and AB 1705** and its continued role in **expanding access to STEM education, particularly in physics at the community college level**. As an educator committed to student success and equity, I have seen firsthand the **transformative impact of AB 705 in increasing access, diversity, and completion rates for historically underrepresented students** without introducing barriers to transfer or success in upper-division coursework.

Prior to AB 705, students—especially those from historically underrepresented groups—were often placed into long remedial math sequences, preventing many from ever

enrolling in physics. We did not get to meet them. As a result, these students were not better prepared for physics; instead, they were disproportionately **filtered out of STEM pathways altogether**. **AB 705 effectively removed these unnecessary barriers, enabling more students to reach and succeed in physics courses**.

At **Cuyamaca College**, we were early adopters of acceleration and multiple measures for math and English placement, and our **data strongly supports the effectiveness of these policies**. We anticipated concerns that eliminating remedial prerequisites would negatively impact students in physics courses due to weaker math backgrounds. However, **our data has shown no significant differences in algebra, trigonometry, geometry, or calculus skills among physics students before and after AB 705 implementation**.

Physics Enrollment Growth and Equity Gains Post-AB 705

The **Cuyamaca College Physics Program** has experienced **significant enrollment growth** in key STEM transfer courses, demonstrating that **AB 705 has increased access without negatively affecting student outcomes.** Beyond just enrollment, **equity gaps in physics have significantly improved**. The **Cuyamaca Physics Department has eliminated racial representation gaps over the past five years**, matching the college's numbers in Hispanic/Latino representation when we used to have a 10% gap. While gender equity remains a challenge in physics, **female representation has improved to 40-42% in recent years, compared to 30-40% in the past decade**.

AB 705's Role in Eliminating Barriers and Closing Equity Gaps

Our **preliminary research comparing traditional math sequences to co-requisite support models** reinforces the effectiveness of AB 705 in promoting STEM persistence:

- **Students are more likely to complete calculus when supported by precalculus rather than a long, sequential math pathway.**
- **Longer math sequences result in disproportionately high attrition rates for historically underrepresented students**.
- **Physics has benefited from these reforms without requiring additional remediation.** Students entering physics courses with diverse math backgrounds **have performed equivalently in essential math skills before and after AB 705**.

Additionally, **the department has actively addressed pandemic-related learning gaps** through **just-in-time math support interventions in physics courses. These interventions** reinforce key algebra, trigonometry, and calculus skills **without requiring remedial coursework**. These efforts **target students' actual needs in real time rather than relying on outdated placement models that disproportionately harm equity**.

Conclusion: AB 705 is a Proven Success for STEM Education

In summary, the implementation of AB 705 has led to:

- ☑ **Increased access to physics for historically underrepresented students**
- ☑ **No significant decline in math preparedness for physics coursework**
- ☑ **Higher overall completion rates in calculus and physics**

- ☑ **Elimination of racial representation gaps in physics enrollment**

Any attempts to weaken or repeal AB 705 would **reverse our progress in making STEM education more equitable** and would **disproportionately harm students who have historically faced systemic barriers** in these fields. The evidence is clear: **AB 705 has succeeded, and its continued implementation is essential for equitable STEM education in California's community colleges**.
Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to provide additional data or discuss these findings further

Joy Hancock – English, Literature, and Creative Writing Department – Mt. San Antonio College

Hi to all on the Assembly Higher Education Committee,

Though AB 1705 had the best of intentions, it was always "pie in the sky" thinking that it would benefit students. Most community college instructors knew it was ridiculous from the start. Many students entering college are not ready for Freshman Composition which includes critical analysis, research, and properly formatted MLA-style research papers.

I've been teaching community college students for over twenty years, and numerous students came to me in the past in classes geared to learning how to write a simple paragraph or how to write a two-page essay with success and moving on to a higher level. When graduating from the community college, they were thrilled to not only graduate, but to know their skills would continue to grow through university and beyond. I loved the letters and emails - and in-person hugs - that I have received over the years.

Now, most students fail if they are expected to start and learn what they were supposed to learn all in Freshman Composition, which includes MLA style, researching, and completing a research paper in addition to numerous essays. I must admit my expectations have lowered and students pass that would not have passed before, but few pass. I fear having classes where no students pass.

What kind of advice are we supposed to be giving? I am trying to encourage students by saying that most students fail Freshman Composition on their first attempt. Nowadays, I tell them they can take Freshman Composition two or three times at the community college where I teach - and they can even go to another community college and take it again if they need more practice to be able to pass. Several students have taken Freshman Composition with me two or three times, their perseverance, determination, and lots of work finally leading to success, but it would have made more sense to succeed in each easier level and work up.

If students are taking Freshman Composition, moving on to Critical Thinking and transferring to a university, I feel it would be sabotage to pass them before they are ready - and have them fail their university classes, which they are paying more for nowadays. That's probably already happening - well, I actually know it is happening with some instructors. Of course, I will admit there is something very wrong with the system that often passes students through high school without knowing more, but I'm guessing community colleges are now on their way to becoming similar.

In addition, AI use has added another level of agony onto many students who are falsely led to believe they can let AI write for them. I often teach Freshman Composition, and I check quotations for accuracy - it is time consuming - but the errors are so numerous with AI added on! Is there a program with an AI that writes well? If so, my students do not seem to have access to that. Instead, student essays are full of vague, general, and repetitive analysis, mostly devoid of specific details which are essential to use as evidence to support an analysis. Critical thinking and logic are often not to be found. And AI creates non-existent quotations, sometimes from non-existent sources. Am I being too strict to ensure they at least learn what I consider basic Freshman Composition skills even if they have some accidental plagiarism in their essays and research papers? If I can tell a student actually wrote their own essay nowadays, I am impressed.

Ken T. Kuniyuki – Assistant Chair/Professor – Department of Mathematics – San Diego Mesa College

To Whom It May Concern:

I am Ken Kuniyuki, Assistant Chair of Mathematics at San Diego Mesa College.

I sincerely thank the Board of Governors and the Assembly Higher Education Committee for listening to faculty and students on AB1705.

The new December 2024 guidance on AB1705 will greatly help our students, especially those from underserved communities, veterans, returning students, and part-time students – who are ¾ of our students.

In fact, our Mesa data shows that our part-time students need non-accelerated math classes; they fit in their schedule. On the other hand, if they're forced into an accelerated class, fail twice, and then barely pass with a C, they are **not** in a good position to transfer.

I have met faculty statewide. There is great concern that the new accelerated classes created under AB1705 can't cover the subject matter; they're substandard. There's pressure – just pass the students! **Throughput is an inappropriate metric.** Comparing an accelerated calculus class with a calculus class topping a sequence of courses? **They're not the same class!** Instructors of accelerated classes are trying to teach multiple levels of math that their students have never seen before. Our transfer students used to do great at the UCs; now they are underprepared and flailing.

Opponents of the new guidance must be careful not to conflate AB1705 with AB705.

Calculus is not statistics. To learn calculus, you need to know much more.

Opponents must also take caution with pandemic-era data and data provided by the

RP Group, whose February 2024 study was used to invalidate our pre-calculus classes. That study used a student cohort whose average age was **21.0 years old**. Ridiculous!

It should have been 26. Veterans and others who, for example, forgot their high school GPA on CCCApply were thrown out of the study, as were students who gave up before census. Furthermore, many of the students the RP Group claimed successfully accelerated through calculus had already taken precalculus or calculus elsewhere, and they were miscategorized.

For the most part, organizations such as The Campaign for College Opportunity, CAP (The California Acceleration Project), The Education Trust West, and Public Advocates **do not speak** for our students. Former FACCC president Debbie Klein found that 85% of their board members had no direct experience with our California community colleges as employees or students. **They don't know us.**

I do speak for nearly 400 faculty, staff, and students who signed my petition in support of student choice. Here are some quotes:

Quote:

"I'm an Administrative Assistant in the Math Department. Students come to my office

in tears frustrated because they are unprepared and can't pass their Math course and lower level maths are not offered."

Quote:

(Math faculty)

"… the 'extra' instruction is **literally driving them away** because they don't have the

time in the day, but would love to learn a bit and then move on."

Quote:

(a student at Cabrillo College)

"I have worked as a peer tutor for math and chemistry for several years and have seen the consequences of these changes … I now see students who either never received a good math education or have been out of school for decades being thrown into courses which they are **woefully unprepared for** because there is no alternative."

October 2019

I asked an acceleration leader, "What about our students who can't pass accelerated classes?

Quote: "They're not gonna make it anyway."

I have heard this sentiment repeated. That's not equity.

Again, thank you for listening to **us**.

Dr. Jessica Robinson MSW, President, Cuyamaca College

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,
As the President of Cuyamaca College, a college who is committed to student-centered, data-driven equity policies, I am writing to express my continued support for strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705.

AB 1705 built upon the transformational gains achieved under AB 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) by providing needed clarity to colleges about issues that undermined implementation and contributed to racial inequity across the system.

As a result, the California community college system has produced large and significant gains in the timely 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. For example, one-year transfer-level math completion jumped from 30% in 2017-2018 to 60% in 2022-2023 and tripled for Black and Hispanic students.

AB 1705 supports the mission of the community college system. It allows 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 support, such as tutoring or enhanced transfer-level coursework. It fosters practices that will improve calculus completion for STEM majors. It maintains 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.

I the undersigned believe in the capacity of our students. I 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. I believe in dismantling educational structures, policies, and practices that contribute to racial inequity in outcomes. I believe in building equity-minded colleges that welcome and empower all students to succeed. AB 1705 is aligned with our college values. For these reasons, I support strong and consistent AB 1705 implementation.

Sarah Kurtoic – Santa Monica College – Assistant Professor, Chemistry

Hello,

I will not be able to attend the oversight hearing, but I would like to share the following note with the Assembly Higher Education Committee:

I wanted to express my sincere appreciation for the release of the Chancellor's Office Memo Academic Affairs 24-69 AB 1705 STEM Preparatory Course Validations on December 10, 2024.

The memo responds to widespread student and faculty concerns regarding the planned elimination of precalculus and trigonometry by Fall 2025, and increases flexible access to these courses for students lacking adequate high school STEM preparation. I am grateful that concerns from the field have been acknowledged, explored, and addressed with enough time for colleges to act accordingly.

As an immigrant and first-generation college student from a low income family, I started my education at a community college in California. I needed additional support in math and benefited from preparatory math courses that were available to all students at the time. In these preparatory courses, I gained the skills and confidence I needed to navigate the chemistry curriculum. The academic success I achieved as a result of this support enabled me to transfer to UC Irvine, complete a PhD in chemistry at Princeton University, and ultimately become an Assistant Professor at Santa Monica College where I can give back to my community. *Without preparatory math courses, I would not be where I am today and my students need and deserve the same opportunity.*

My college serves a diverse student body and many students arrive without adequate preparation in math. Without preparatory courses, they do not have the background knowledge they need to succeed and concurrent support courses do not sufficiently meet all their needs. In the community college system, our mission is to provide an equitable path to success for all students and offering preparatory courses is a critical component of delivering that mission.

Thank you for releasing this guidance memo and I urge you to offer preparatory courses to support our diverse students.

Shawna M. Bynum – Math Professor – Napa Valley College

My name is Shawna Bynum and I am a math professor at Napa Valley College (NVC). I led our department through the **AB 705** changes and have been really pleased with the result and how much time/money/stress we are saving our students by allowing them to go directly into a transfer level math class and avoid basic skills. I do wish they had a choice about it, but, I can see it really works for many.

At NVC, this meant that any student who didn't complete Pre-Calculus or higher in high school, can start in either statistics or college algebra. Depending on their placement, they may be required to take a co-requisite support class to provide that just-in-time algebra remediation so they can do the college level content. It is working well.

Unfortunately, **AB 1705**'s complete elimination of pre-calculus for our STEM majors is not going nearly as well. Starting in Fall of 2024, as per the guidance issued by the Chancellor's office, we have disallowed enrollment of STEM students in College Algebra and Trigonometry (our pre-calculus series). We have always accepted high school pre-calculus as prerequisite for Calculus so the only change at our school impacted students who have not taken precalculus before. Those students are now required to enroll directly into Calculus I with co-requisite support.

For most of our fairly well-prepared students this is not a problem. They do well in our combined Calculus and co-req class and some may save themselves a semester or two. These students were also succeeding before. They already know how to be students, they don't have to work and have the time to devote to buffing up their algebra skills at the same time they learn calculus, they have time to spend hours in the Math Success Center, they have parents and friends who have taken calculus and can help them. They were fine under the old system, they are fine under the new.

However, it is devastating for those students who come to us from less privileged backgrounds. These are the students who were tracked out of pre-calculus in high school. They took financial algebra or didn't even have the math units to graduate high school. They come to us without a strong math background, without much experience succeeding in school, without family or friends to serve as role models or mentors. And we have always been able to welcome them in, provide support, and assure them they really do have what it takes to succeed in college.

But now, they are being asked to learn much of high school algebra, an entire year's worth of college level math (college algebra and trig) and calculus one, all in the same semester. We are compounding the problem. Students who were underserved in high school are not being refused the support they need to make up that learning difference in community college. It is not fair! They need that year of pre-calculus to learn not just the math, but all the college skills that will be vital to their success in the long run. We don't only want them to pass our Calculus one class, we want them to earn their degree, to transfer, and even to go on to graduate school!

I have spoken to many students who feel like they have been set up to fail. They are frustrated that they don't have a chance to learn the material well before moving into Calculus. Particular complaints have been about ruining their GPA, which makes them worry about their level of understanding and ability to succeed in other STEM classes (like chemistry, physics and the remainder of the calc series). They have also expressed concerns regarding eligibility for scholarships, financial aid or insurance discounts. Many of these students are low income, and this is a significant hardship.

Even louder, have been complaints from high school parents who had counted on having their student take precalculus at NVC to prepare them for calculus (in college or at their high school) as well as to have those units and grades on their transcripts before college and scholarship applications go out. The parents I've talked to express disappointment verging on disgust that NVC doesn't seem to be interested in serving our community. I know there is a carve out for dual enrollment students, but Napa is not large enough to fill an entire class with high school students, we usually have a handful or so who enroll in our existing classes.

My biggest concern is the students who drop out or are so intimidated they don't even enroll or switch majors before trying. One example is a young man, from an underserved background, who lives with my family. He just barely graduated high school but had been really excited to attend college and major in Robotics. The frustration and humiliation of not being able to succeed in his first math class led him to drop. Dropping his math class, made him ineligible for

his financial aid and Promise Grant. Without the financial support, he had to drop out of college all together. This is the exact opposite of what we are trying for!

This semester I am teaching three sections of calculus two and for the first time we have students who completed calculus one without the full precalculus series. Most of these students are not thriving in calc two. The end of calc one was so rushed, they are not solid on the skills they need at the start of calc 2. They don't have the algebra skills to even get to the calculus part of many problems (this past week that has been those related to work and arc length). They did remediate the skills needed for calc one, but now they need the rest of what used to be a year of preparation. We will do everything we can to support them, and I am going over as much just-in-time remediation as possible. However, I am in a horrible position of not serving anyone well. I don't have enough time in class to cover all of the necessary prerequisite material, so I'm not serving the underprepared students well. I am spending less time on calculus two material, so I am not serving those who are prepared well. I am very concerned that the end result for everyone will be lowered standards at all levels of calculus, making our students less prepared for upper division work and less competitive for grants, jobs, other opportunities in the future.

I urge you to roll back the strict interpretations of AB 1705 by the Chancelors Office and allow students to take two semester of precalculus (with corequisite support if needed). Even if we just made it an option instead of a requirement, we would be able to serve those lowest performing students and give them a chance at success.

I'm sure you're hearing from many math faculty across the state, but don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions or would like any more details to help inform your decisions.

Matt Knudsen – Professor - Cuesta College

I've been teaching community college mathematics for 25 years now, and I am sending this email to urge you to support allowing community colleges to offer stand-alone Trigonometry and Precalculus courses for any students who want to take them, with no restrictions. I can't believe that anybody would ever think it's a good idea to eliminate these important resources for students who want or need them, and somehow do this in the name of equity.

I am strongly in favor of not requiring any student to take these classes if they feel they have strong enough math skills to move on without them, and to offer support courses to provide additional help for those who choose to do so. That is the positive aspect of AB705 and AB1705 that is addressing equity issues. However, many students who did not do well in high school math or who have taken time off want to take these classes before taking calculus, and it is absolutely an equity problem to eliminate these resources for these students. Many students will not pass calculus without them, many students want to do more than just barely pass (both to get a higher grade and to maximize what they learn), and just as importantly, these classes are not just necessary to pass Calculus I, they are necessary for success in many other math and STEM classes. The argument to push students straight into calculus does not address any of these concerns, and the effect will be that only students who did well in high school classes will have a good chance to be successful in a STEM major. Again, that is a huge equity problem, and it goes

against the whole philosophy of community colleges being a resource for students who want to build their skills or even just for students who want to explore a subject.

Given the strong push to eliminate these math classes entirely (despite their claims to the contrary, that is exactly what they are doing) by some state legislators and the chancellor, we need legislation that allows community colleges to offer stand-alone Trigonometry and Precalculus (and really even pretransfer courses such as Beginning and Intermediate Algebra, because there are many students who want to take those and no longer have that option) for any students who want to take them. It's absolutely insane to have the chancellor telling community colleges that they should no longer be offering these courses, or placing any restrictions on which students should be allowed to take them.

Thank you for listening!

Christian Reyes – Student – CSU San Luis Obispo

Good Afternoon,
My name is Cristian Reyes, and I am a Graduate Student at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. I am providing public comment today in strong support of AB 1705 implementation because of its critical role in expanding equitable access to transfer-level coursework and ensuring student success in STEM and beyond.
As a first-generation college student from McFarland, CA, dual enrollment English boosted my college confidence. Though I was able to graduate on time, as a biology major, I lacked the support I needed, as a result I struggled in math, and felt isolated in STEM, leading me to switch majors. Many students like me are pushed out of STEM by remedial courses and multi-course sequences that delay progress.
AB 1705 ensures students are placed directly into transfer-level math and English courses with needed support, avoiding outdated remediation that harms Black, Latino, and low-income students.
The data is clear:
• Under AB 705/1705, student success in transfer-level math has doubled, rising from 30% in 2017-2018 to 60% in 2022-2023.
• AB 1705 is ensuring that STEM pathways are strengthened, so students can access calculus without unnecessary remedial barriers.

This law is not about lowering standards—it is about removing barriers. Students are capable when given the right support, and AB 1705 ensures that colleges take responsibility for providing that support.
As someone who has navigated these challenges firsthand, I urge you to fully implement and uphold AB 1705 to ensure that all students, regardless of background, have the opportunity to succeed in STEM and beyond.
Thank you.

Osvaldo Torres – Associate Professor – Counselor Cuyamaca College

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As a Community College counselor dedicated to student-centered, data-driven equity policies, I am writing to express my unwavering support for the strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705.

My name is Osvaldo Torres, and I am a STEM and Veterans counselor at Cuyamaca College, where I've had the privilege of working for the past 12 years. Prior to joining Cuyamaca College, I served as a part-time counselor at several community colleges in the San Diego area since 2003.

Before AB 705/1705, I worked with students placed in remedial coursework, where they were required to take multiple math and English courses before reaching college-level classes. STEM transfer majors, in particular, demand students to complete substantial coursework before transferring. For example, Engineering majors sometimes need to complete 80 to 90 units before transferring to a University. Remedial courses often extended this journey by adding, in some cases up to 20 additional units of remedial English and math courses, delaying or preventing timely transfer. I've also encountered many students who simply needed to complete one transfer-level course to meet transfer requirements, but standardized placement tests frequently forced them to take up to three remedial math courses before progressing. This not only discouraged students but also delayed or prevented many from achieving their degree or transferring to a university.

AB 1705 allows colleges to continue effective remediation practices while ensuring they are held accountable for demonstrating their positive impact on students. The bill ensures students have access to concurrent support, such as tutoring and advanced transfer-level courses, and fosters practices that will improve calculus completion rates for STEM students. Additionally, AB 1705 preserves the integrity of CTE certificate programs that do not require math and English, while accommodating specialized requirements for CTE associate programs.

Cuyamaca College was one of the first in California to adopt multiple measures for accurately placing students in math and English courses and to eliminate remedial courses altogether. Over the years, I've had the privilege of working with thousands of students, and I've personally witnessed the profound impact that AB 705/1705 has had on student success. Our college has seen substantial and positive gains in the timely completion of transfer-level math and English coursework across every demographic group, including Black and Latino students, economically disadvantaged students, students with low high school GPAs, students with disabilities, older students, foster youth, and veterans. Our data clearly shows that eliminating standardized assessment tests and allowing students to take transfer-level math and English courses with concurrent support courses has produced exceptional results.

I believe it is the duty of our colleges to offer evidence-based strategies that promote student progress and to phase out ineffective practices. Our focus is on building equity-minded practices that empower all students to succeed. AB 1705 aligns with these

principles, and for this reason, I strongly advocate for its continued and consistent implementation.

Carlos Rodriguez – Transfer Student Affairs Officer University of California Student Association -4th Year UCLA undergraduate student and Porterville College Transfer Majoring in Economics and Sociology.

Dear Chair and Members of the Assembly Higher Education Committee,
As an organization representing UC students who are committed to student-centered, data-driven equity policies, I am writing on behalf of the University of California Student Association (UCSA) to express our continued support for strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705.

AB 1705 built upon the transformational gains achieved under AB 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) by providing needed clarity to colleges about issues that undermined implementation and contributed to racial inequity across the state.

As a result, the California Community College system has produced large and significant progress in the timely completion of transfer-level math and English coursework for every demographic group examined, especially for Black and Latine student groups, economically disadvantaged students, students with low high school GPAs, students participating in programs for the disabled, adult learns, foster youth and veterans. For example, one-year transfer-level math completion jumped from 30% in 2017-18 to 60% in 2022-23, and tripled for Black and Hispanic students.

AB 1705 supports the mission of the community college system. It allows 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 support, such as tutoring or enhanced transfer-level coursework, which personally benefited me during my time at Porterville College. I was able to take co-requisites and was able to take college-level calculus instead of being placed into lower level math.

AB 1705 has fostered practices that are improving calculus completion for STEM majors. It maintains 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. These types of inclusive frameworks in our education systems are truly beneficial to students like me trying to transfer to a 4-year.

UCSA believes 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 inequitable outcomes. We believe in building equity-minded colleges that welcome and empower all students to succeed. AB 1705 is aligned with our values. For these reasons, we support strong and consistent AB 1705 implementation.

My-Linh Nguyen, Associate Professor, Counselor at Cuyamaca College

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As a community college faculty member who is committed to student-centered, data-driven equity policies, I am writing to express my continued support for strong and consistent implementation of Assembly Bill 1705.

AB 1705 built upon the transformational gains achieved under AB 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017) by providing needed clarity to colleges about issues that undermined implementation and contributed to racial inequity across the system.

As a result, the California community college system has produced large and significant gains in the timely 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. For example, one-year transfer-level math completion jumped from 30% in 2017-2018 to 60% in 2022-2023 and tripled for Black and Hispanic students.

AB 1705 supports the mission of the community college system. It allows 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 support, such as tutoring or enhanced transfer-level coursework. It fosters practices that will improve calculus completion for STEM majors. It maintains 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.

I believe in the capacity of our students. I believe in data. As a counseling faculty member, I believe in the expertise of our Math faculty colleagues. Colleges should provide evidence-based options that promote student progress and discontinue practices that do not. I believe in dismantling educational structures, policies, and practices that contribute to racial inequity in outcomes. I believe in building equity-minded colleges that welcome and empower all students to succeed. AB 1705 is aligned with the values at Cuyamaca College. For these reasons, I support strong and consistent AB 1705 implementation.

Alan Weiss, Santa Barbara City College

To whom it may concern,

My name is Alan Weiss. I have worked for over twenty years as a tutor in the drop-in math tutoring center (the Math Lab) at Santa Barbara City College, and I'd like to relate some of my experiences with and responses to the effects AB705 and (potentially) AB1705.

First, I should make it clear that I do not claim to know a lot of background or detail about these bills; I can only describe what I've seen. I also understand that the bills were passed with good intentions for the well-being and success of students.

My understanding is that, due to provisions of AB705, SBCC is no longer allowed to teach a basic mathematics course (arithmetic, elementary geometry, etc.) or beginning and intermediate algebra. As a result, we have students placed in college algebra, pre-calculus, and statistics classes who lack basic arithmetic and algebra skills.
These students come to the lab not just for the usual tutoring, but requiring what is essentially a semester or two's worth of background material, which we do not have the time or resources to provide. Even if we could provide the necessary background, that wouldn't be adequate, because it's simply not possible to replace an extended course with a cram session – it takes time and practice to develop the skills required for the courses in which they've been inappropriately placed. These students are not being well-served, and AB1705 will only make things worse, as most of these students will be placed directly into calculus courses, for which they will be even less prepared. We are setting the students up to fail, and it's extremely difficult for me to understand how anyone could think this is a good idea.

All this seems to me to be the result of focusing almost entirely on preparing students just out of high school for transfer to four-year colleges or universities, and going to great lengths to see that that's done in no more than two years. I realize that with each passing year less and less attention is being paid to the California Master Plan for Higher Education, but that plan was extremely successful (often considered to be a primary driver for the state's economy) and considered a model for the world, and it should be revived. Among other things, it specifically authorizes community colleges to provide remedial instruction. By not doing so, we are abandoning people we should be serving. In the pre-AB705 days it was quite common for us to see students in the lab who were in their forties, fifties, or sixties, who, for whatever reasons, wanted to learn math. These people typically were taking the basic math course or beginning algebra, but now those folks have disappeared; we have forsaken them. I also saw younger students who we might refer to as "late bloomers", who didn't come to value education until after they'd (just barely) finished high school. I know of at least two such students who started at SBCC with the basic math course and, taking more than two years, went all the way through the differential equations course. Today students like that are getting no help from us – another group we have forsaken.

It makes me very angry to see that we are not fulfilling our role as a community college, and I urge that the provisions of AB705 and AB1705 be reversed.

Joe Vasta, Cuesta College

I've been teaching math at Cuesta College since 2001. When I started teaching, the sequence of math classes was as follows:

arithmetic → prealgebra → beginning algebra → intermediate algebra → precalculus →

trigonometry → calculus → linear algebra with differential equations

Students would come to community college and start their math sequence at all different points depending on their past math experience. We were able to accommodate underprepared students and help them with their math. I've seen many students who started low on the math sequence and worked their way to getting a STEM degree. My wife started taking algebra at MSJC and worked her way all the way to a math Ph.D.

Then in 2017, AB-705 passed. It eventually had the effect of getting rid of our lower math classes. The sequence of math classes became:

precalculus → trigonometry → calculus → linear algebra with differential equations

"Oh, you can learn the algebra on the way as you take precalculus." That was the lie that was repeated. And do you know what the result was? Many California students gave up on math because they did not have the opportunity to learn the foundational topics. These underprepared students included first-generation students, African-American students, Hispanic students, disabled students, and the list goes on. Many of these potential students gave up on pursuing an education/career in STEM, and even worse, many gave up on college altogether.

Well, can you learn algebra on the way as you take precalculus? That would be the equivalent of building a house on the sand without a foundation.

The people who outlawed the lower math classes must think that math is the same as history. Let's take a look at four types of history classes: US history, European history, world history, and ancient history. A student can take any one of the four without taking the other three. But this does not apply to math.

I am not the only community college math instructor who experienced an increase in unprepared precalculus students after the lower math classes were prohibited. As a result, more students drop out or fail that class. As a student, you can't learn elementary algebra and intermediate algebra as you are taking a precalculus class. There's just not enough time.

Let's continue our story. Enter 2020. Government lockdowns forced students to learn online. A lot of students ended up passing math classes without fully applying themselves, without fully learning the fundamentals. But that was all right. We were in a "pandemic" and we kind of felt sorry for the kids.

In Fall of 2022, two things happened. Many students returned to face-to-face classes, and AB-1705 passed. Students were very unprepared for face-to-face math classes. Before this, a lot of them were able to take exams at home, with notes, with books, with internet, and with friends. This is what made the students unprepared, and we are still seeing consequences today. The effects of AB-1705 will make this situation worse. The math sequence will become: calculus → linear algebra with differential equations

Just throw students into calculus and they can learn precalculus and trigonometry on the way. Just start building the second story of a house without building the foundation or the first story.

The authors of AB-1705 must really loathe underprepared students! They say AB-1705 helps equity, but it does just the opposite.

I haven't found one student or instructor on our campus who was not upset by the effects of AB-1705. A few people in Sacramento are legislating something a mass majority of California students and educators oppose. Underprepared students will forget pursuing STEM, and/or just give up on higher education. Please bring back our lower math classes. This is about freedom of choice. Students should have the right to choose when it comes to math.

I can only speculate what a future AB-2705 will do to our math sequence: linear algebra with differential equations

Michael H. Peterson, Los Positas College

Dear Chair Fong and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

As a math instructor at Las Positas College, I would share appreciation for the Chancellor's Office Memo 24-69 from December 10, 2024. At the same time, I would like to share my deep concerns with the current legislative text of AB 1705 and its unintended consequences on students in the community college system.

Just today, I was meeting with a student from my Math for Liberal Arts class. She is a parent with three children, works nights and weekends at a nursing home, and is trying to earn her credential to teach preschoolers. The last time she took mathematics was over twenty years ago in Afghanistan and she is currently struggling with the material in this transfer-level class. She has not previously learned much of the prerequisite material for this class, plus her work and family commitments prevent her from enrolling in a corequisite support class.

I worked today with this student well past my office hours, and it is heartbreaking to see a student trying so hard to complete her degree requirements be enrolled in a course that is too advanced for her. It's never appropriate to enroll a student in a class where they are overwhelmed from the first week on, and I'm frustrated as an educator that the state prevents me from helping this student enroll in a class that's at an appropriate level. Even though the legislative text states that enrollment restrictions apply only to "US high school graduates," the enrollment is gutted so much that colleges can no longer offer these courses to international students. I should point out that many students from Afghanistan identify as white, which may hide any inequities they face in statewide data.

It is also frustrating to me that much of the raw data used to justify AB 1705 is not available to community college districts. When a college district wants to offer a pre-transfer class, the state currently requires them to produce data justifying their course offerings. When the district does so, the state responds that the district's sample size is too small to produce meaningful data. While this is challenging for all community college districts in the state, it is particularly demanding of rural districts that face smaller enrollments and serve unique student populations. Since districts cannot access statewide COMIS data, they are placed in a Catch-22 situation where we are mandating to justify our course offerings without being allowed the resources to do so.

The Chancellor's Office's memo in December was a step in the right direction by allowing districts to offer precalculus courses for the next two years. I respectfully ask the committee to request an independent audit of data used to justify restrictions on math course offerings. The ability to offer stand-alone, pre-transfer math courses to students who would like to take them is very important for the community college system.

Dr. Rick Scuderi, Past President of California Association of Postsecondary Education and Disabilities.

Thank you Assembly Higher Education Committee and Chairperson Fong for this opportunity to communicate with you. I am Dr. Rick Scuderi, Retired, Past President of the California Association of Post-Secondary Education and Disability (CAPED) and its Former Legislative Chairperson of 12 Years, speaking here for himself.

AB 1705 has much merit, but faults needing correction too. Consider the phrase 'to prepare' from the Latin root 'prepara' meaning 'to make ready beforehand'. Contrast this to the problem with AB 1705's descriptions as 'evidence based research' and its implementation descriptors as 'informed choice' for students. This 'evidence based research' does not examine in depth the drop out populations as many of the testimonies here today do, and the phrase 'informed

choice' actually means a student's being forced to adhere to research that clearly needs a closer examination. It really means 'no choice' for the student, especially students of color, disadvantaged background, and severity of disability.

In connection to my expertise, for students with specific disabilities, AB1705's research does not differentiate between complex disabilities that are difficult for academic adjustments (e.g. quadriplegia couple with speech impairment, spasticity, and their having taken watered-down modified High School classes) versus easy disabilities for a academic adjustments (mild auditory learning disability for easy academic adjustment and their perhaps lacking self-confidence). Instead AB1705 refers to all students with such diverse disabilities simply as 'Disabled Students Programs and Services Students'. Common sense dictates that AB 1705 is dropping out capable, unprepared students with complex disabilities difficult for academic adjustments, especially of color and disadvantaged backgrounds, in favor of capable students, perhaps lacking in self-confidence with easy disabilities for academic adjustments.

In my nearly hour long in-person session with the author of AB705 & it's successor AB1705 I emphasized these points and she was gracious to assign a chief staff member to study them. In written communications the chief staff member did verify this research design weakness in AB705 and AB1705 and promised further study of this, but so far nothing has come through.

This common thread – disproportional results from AB 1705 because of lack of preparation due to race, disadvantaged background, severity & type of specific disability. Solution: The need for exceptions of 1-2 semesters for adequate preparation for entry classes. THANK YOU.

Katie Alvarez – Student

I have taken Calculus classes during the fall/spring and during summer. Regardless of the amount of weeks (since summer is accelerated), there is barely enough time to cover all the calc material. There is no way that we can stop for a moment to cover the basics that we NEED to know in order to understand calculus. Remedial courses prepare the students and facilitate their calculus journey. It's not something that can be completely skipped; professors would end up having to interrupt the calculus lecture to give an algebra one and like this, the actual calculus course work would be left incomplete. Jumping straight into calculus would only make the students struggle even more.

Crimson Diggs – Student

I am writing to express my concerns about AB 1705.

As a lifelong homeschooler, I was quite behind in mathematics when I started community college. I knew only basic algebra, and I started in precalculus with a support class since intermediate algebra was no longer being offered. I was immediately overwhelmed by how far behind I was. I had to work incredibly hard to catch up, rushing through almost 2 years of prerequisite mathematics on my own within just a few weeks. Fortunately I was able to get support from the math tutors at my school, and I had a lot of experience teaching myself new subjects from my homeschooling. Because of these factors, I was able to pass the class.

However, if I had been forced to start my college math journey in calculus I, I fear I would not have been successful. It was difficult enough to fill in the gaps of my math knowledge while taking precalculus, but to learn all of precalculus on top of that *while* staying on top of the coursework required in calculus 1 would have been nearly impossible. It would have made a career in STEM incredibly difficult for me to access. I'm grateful I had the opportunity to take precalculus in college, but I am extremely worried for future students who may not have the same opportunity.

I've tutored many students as they took precalculus. Like me, many of these students would have been more suited to start in algebra, but they did not have that option. Understanding the concepts and doing the work in precalculus was very difficult for them without having that foundational knowledge off of which to build. Many of them also had jobs to work and children to take care of, making it even more difficult to catch up on the material they were expected to know before taking precalculus. Had these students been forced to start in calculus, far fewer of them would have successfully completed the course.

Many students who take community college classes have a low income, and I believe that community college provides working class people with an opportunity to climb the economic ladder. Removing remedial math classes will create a barrier that will make it far more difficult for people with a low income to access higher paying STEM jobs, thus widening the massive income gap that already exists in America. There are plenty of factors at work that ensure poor people stay poor, and I urge you not to add one more.

Ella – Student

I am a STEM student of San Diego Mesa Community College, and I have concerns over the law AB 1705. I believe that this law could hinder the success of present and future STEM students should it go fully into effect.

I do not believe STEM students should have to go immediately into upper level courses just because they are STEM majors. The speed at which someone transfers is not everything, and it is especially not indicative of how well someone has learned. I have many friends who have made it out the other side of hard high-level classes with a passing grade, but no real grasp of what they should have learned. They are then essentially screwed when they move to the next level. Some students can jump right in and learn well, and we should give them those opportunities, but not at the expense of others.

I went to a very good high school and was given some great tools to succeed in my further education. I am subsequently able to go into certain classes early because I have reached milestones such as M50, which I appreciate. I am also grateful, however, that I had to take certain lower division classes such as Math 104, as it was able to not only refresh my knowledge, but also build upon what I knew of the subject and apply it to other courses.

I believe that, while there should be an opportunity to bypass lower level classes, it should not be a requirement for STEM majors to do so. Our community colleges should not be barred from at the very least recommending to those who need to start smaller in classes such as Math 096, Math 116, Math 104, or Math 141. What is there to lose by allowing students who need it to get some extra support? Though the number of individuals who transfer within one year may not be maxed out, I believe the quality of student capability and understanding will be better.

Thank you for considering the voices of college students like me, I hope you will do what is best to ensure we get the best education we can.

Best regards,
-A college students with a future in STEM

Alison Damoose, Professor,, San Diego Mesa College

Thank you for your work and your attention here.

"Community college saved my life." I'm a mathematician and I can't count how many people have shared that with me. It captures so much of why I've passionately committed myself to this system.

"College isn't for me." I've heard this too- and often it is math that keeps them from returning. HOWEVER, I've only recently started to hear this from students who had actually made it onto campus!? It appears that this might even be an intended consequence.

With all due respect I feel like I've been witnessing a slow and painful trainwreck resulting from recent changes in legislation. Watching 1705 chase the heels of 705 - as we (and our adolescents) were trying to emerge from a pandemic had an indelible impact on my naive faith in California's political system. Of all times to expect adolescents to retain knowledge and understanding!? Not to mention those who have the courage to attempt a "pivot!?" Returning students are invaluable participants in the success of their peers. I've been desperately trying to remain open minded and curious. Does the state want to eliminate the community colleges? If this is an effort to save money, I'm not seeing "the math."

Placing students in a math class for which they feel unprepared while structuring most aid towards expedient completion marginalizes the "community" we are allegedly serving.

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Students are further demoralized and discouraged by the fact that they don't have the option to review - even if they identify the need.

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Higher degrees (in addition to meaningful education) are harder to acquire, and we are left with more low-wage less-fulfilled earners. I know there's more to the picture, but doesn't that mean they will pay less into our taxes? More likely to need social services in the future?

I'm not a reactionist. I'm someone who has been throwing myself into every opportunity to make this work for my students.

I'm imploring you to support students with inclusive options that support their integrity. Please don't rely on groups like the RP group, The Campaign etc.

Melissa Anisko, Instructional Support Specialist, Mathematics, Columbia College

I have a student I have been working with that has strong feelings about this and wanted to share anonymously. I am forwarding their words to you.

"I am a student studying to be an engineer. The main reason I decided to come back to school was because my math skills are very poor. I took an algebra 1 or lower class in high school over 20 years ago. I was shocked to find out that Trigonometry was the lowest course offered. I got an A in that class because of my work ethic but I didn't get much of a base in algebra.

Now that I am in pre-calculus, I have realized my base math knowledge is so low that I cannot do the work in a reasonable amount of time to the point it's ridiculous. I am so angry that I could not start at algebra like I know I need to so I can build a base knowledge strong enough to succeed in the higher math classes. If algebra is not offered, then the pre-calculus and other classes need to be at a slower pace. That to isn't fair to the students in those classes because it is slowing them down.

I realize that there would not be many people in a class like algebra, but it is needed for people like me who are returning to school after a long period of time or to the people coming from any host of circumstances. It could be an online class or in person. It is just necessary for some of us to succeed. My plan is to learn algebra during the summer on my own but struggling to learn algebra is the reason I came back to school in the first place. If a community college can't offer something as simple as algebra for those of us trying to better our circumstances in life, then I'm not sure what the purpose of a community college is? Offering an algebra class in a couple years won't help me but I'm hoping that it is offered to help others in the future. "

Karla Westphal, Mathematics Professor, Saddleback College

To the Assembly Higher Education Committee,

I am a full-time math professor at Saddleback College in South Orange County. I write to encourage you to remember that education is not a "one-size-fits-all" situation and to consider the wide array of students we serve.

AB 705's mission of streamlining student placement into transfer-level math and English classes is admirable and has had some excellent results. But its implementation with the passage of AB 1705 has gone too far. At Saddleback, we are no longer allowed to offer remedial algebra even to the students who want to take it. This population of students includes:

- Students who want to be STEM majors but have a very weak background in algebra. Unlike non-STEM majors, these students will be using algebra extensively throughout their academic careers.
- Returning students who have been away from school for years and need to re-establish their foundation, particular if they are wanting to go into a STEM field.
- Non-STEM majors who want to have a "warm-up" class before tackling statistics, which can be very intimidating.
- Parents who want to take an algebra class so as to be better able to help their kids with their homework. (I am not making this up. This is the best reason I was ever given in response for why a student was taking my class, and it saddens me that we no longer offer this option to the students who want it.)

I am not advocating that we return to the old system of requiring remedial classes of all students. I'm not even advocating that we require them at all. I am asking that we be allowed to offer them to the students who want them. It breaks my heart to see students forced into a class that they are not academically or emotionally prepared to be in and watch them lose confidence and fail or drop out. The attitude that "you can fail and just retake it" ignores the emotional damage caused by that initial failure.

The support classes that offer "just-in-time remediation" are a fabulous outcome of AB 705 and 1705. Students with just a few gaps in their background, and many non-STEM majors who need to refresh just the algebra used in Statistics are benefitting immensely from having this option. But the students with weaker backgrounds and the students with less self-confidence are being left behind.

Through-put rates are important. But when we focus so intently on them that we ignore the students who are struggling, we start treating education too much like a business and forget that we are serving fellow human beings. We need to be meeting students where they are.

Especially since the pandemic, many students are really struggling and want to invest the time necessary to establish a solid foundation for their academic futures. We do them a huge disservice when we deny them this opportunity. That we do so in the name of "educational equity" is nothing short of hypocrisy.

Aleemah Perez-Muhammad, MESA tutor, Community College student at Mission College. Biology/Pre-Med major

"Hi, my name is Aleemah and I'm a MESA tutor and student majoring in biology at Mission College. I've tutored students in different walks of their life, some coming to learn a new trade or just needing a

second chance in education. I noticed that when students build a strong foundation in college algebra, they have an easier time following along in calculus. This isn't simply done overnight but through continuous practice and reciprocal teaching amongst their peers. Many first gen students come to MESA without any exposure to precalculus or trigonometry. Algebra and trigonometry are like roots to a plant that need to be strong before they can grow. Without roots, it's difficult for a person to advance through calculus. You can argue that high school should have taught it before graduation, but Mission College receives people from diverse areas. Many of our students are coming back to school after years it could be 20 maybe 30 years since they graduated. Some students didn't even get to precalculus and trigonometry in their school. Community college is a place adapted to meet students where they are, without precalculus and trigonometry, it will be hard to bridge their preparation for classes like calculus and physics. Thank you for your continued support in making these classes available."

Noemi Nunez-Esquivel, MESA Student Assistant, Community College student at Mission College, Computer Science major.

My name is Noemi Nunez-Esquivel. I'm a student and a tutor here at Mission College. Today, I want to share my own journey in math and why it's so important for our community college to continue offering lower level math classes.

When I first enrolled here, I hadn't done any math in five years. Therefore I signed up for Math 1, which is Algebra. This class gave me the chance to rebuild my skills and develop a strong foundation. Thanks to that experience I was able to confidently move on to Calculus 1, and I passed it.

Now, let's think about students who attend a community college. Not everyone comes straight out of high school. We have students of all ages and backgrounds. Many of them haven't done math in years, just like I hadn't. As part of the MESA program, we worked with STEM Core to host a workshop for students in Math 1 who were struggling. During that workshop, I met a student in her late 40s who hadn't done math in over 25 years. She wasn't the only one in that room struggling and feeling overwhelmed by algebra. Even at the lowest level of math we offer, many students are working hard to catch up and succeed.

Now imagine if we didn't offer these lower level classes. If students were required to start in calculus without the option to build their skills first, not many would feel confident enough to continue. The truth is, without a strong foundation, success in higher level math is incredibly difficult.

Community colleges are meant to be places of opportunity and growth for all students, no matter where they're starting from. Offering lower level math classes ensures that every student has the tools they need to succeed not just in calculus, but in their academic and career goals.

Edrina Rashidi, Director, MESA Program, Mission College

Good afternoon, I'm Edrina Rashidi, director of the MESA Program at Mission College. I thank the Chancellor's Office for giving our students the choice and the support they need through new

ABI705 guidance rooted in the mission of community colleges to make the dreams of all California students a possibility.

Our MESA students come to California Community Colleges with dreams of becoming doctors, engineers and scientists who will make the State of California a better place. They also come with lived experience as first-generation, low-income students who come from a variety of marginalized intersectional identities and a variety of secondary educational backgrounds. The zip code a student grows up in impacts the resources their schools receive, and thereby impact whether they will reach community college with a strong math base (or not). Should we allow the education a student receives because of their zip code dictate whether they can be STEM majors? Without preparatory classes prior to Calculus, we'd do exactly that.

The December guidance allows students who have disabilities, veterans, non-traditional students, formerly incarcerated students, students from impacted zip codes, and students who didn't have the opportunity to build a strong math base in high school for whatever reason to reach their dreams of becoming engineers and scientists, and to become the doctors that could save our lives.

Also, it is in our best interest to invest in math education for our future STEM leaders. They will build the infrastructure we use every day—imagine going over a bridge designed by someone who still struggles with geometry and trig.

The reason Community Colleges works is students are welcomed regardless of their present math ability, and we build them up. It's important that education policy on math placement is in alignment with this mission to close the opportunity gap in California's skilled STEM workforce.

Student choice of where to begin math education is key. If a student is not Calculus ready, without choice, the door is effectively closed on them even before census. With support through our class offerings and learning services, students can become the future STEM professionals that our families need. Thank you again for your support of continuing student choice in math placement.

Sincerely,

Edrina

Tracie Catania, Mathematics Instructor, Department Chair, Monterey Peninsula College

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on the impact of AB1705 implementation on faculty and students. I have been a full time math instructor for over 30 years and am currently serving as department chair. I cannot emphasize enough how demoralized both students and faculty are feeling due to the over-reaching AB1705 implementation mandates.

In our largest local school district, high school teachers are not allowed to assign homework. Some students graduate without any "student skills" and have completed only the minimal amount of math (IM 2, Consumer Math, Math Readiness, etc. are self-reported as the highest math completed by some of my students). Some of them "complete' intermediate algebra or the equivalent with substitute teachers who are not math instructors - and everyone passes with little instruction or assessment. These students arrive at our college and some of them get excited about becoming STEM majors. They will need to take Calculus, but their prerequisite algebra and/or precalculus are often severely lacking. At this point we are only allowed to offer ONE course prior to Calculus and it MUST be college level. Students with no study skills and/or a very shaky math background start in this class. For Precalculus teachers, the task of preparing students for Calculus gets harder every year.

AB1705 requires colleges to provide students ACCESS to the first math class required for their program of study, which is fine. However, the implementation mandates take away a student's choice to begin at a level that works for the student. Our student population is diverse. We have students who are returning to school after many years and forgot most of the algebra or precalculus they learned in high school. We have students who work full time, need an onramp to STEM, and can't commit to taking a course with two hours of additional support per week. We have students who took the equivalent of intermediate algebra and/or precalculus in high school, but will honestly tell us they cheated their way through the course and learned nothing. These students need to have choices, and the current AB1705 implementation mandates do not allow for choice. The requirement to place students who have "completed" the equivalent of a course (no matter when or how) in the next course does not work in our reality.

We need to be able to offer an algebra foundation course that is NOT college level as an option (not requirement) for our students. Students should be offered an option to build their math skills and study skills without the pressure of being dragged through college algebra and trigonometry topics when they're not ready or can't make the time commitment to be successful in an intensive support environment. We need to allow students who have seen precalculus at some point in high school to repeat the course in college if that is what works for their specific situation. I am not advocating for reducing access to Calculus - I am advocating for choice. Students, counselors, and instructors should be trusted to make an appropriate placement choice without government interference. I am honestly stunned that California is not pro-choice when it comes to learning math.

Randolph G. Smith, Instructional Tutor – Math – Sana Monica Community College

I tutor students at Santa Monica College in all math courses, and I find the elimination of remedial courses to be disastrous. To succeed in a math course (*e.g.*, calculus), one must have a solid knowledge of at least major portions (usually over half) of prerequisite courses usually learned in high school (*viz.*, algebra, geometry and trigonometry). But many of my students are shockingly deficient in these prerequisites, not knowing algebra 1 topics (*e.g.*, factoring, exponents) and sometimes even arithmetic. For example, I once had a multivariable calculus student who was smart enough to understand the calculus concepts but had trouble adding fractions.

Students so ill-prepared cannot reasonably be expected to handle our core courses, and forcing them to do so generally leads only to stress, wasted time and failure. This is a reality you cannot erase by trying in this manner to maximize throughput of human educational units to achieve desired economic outcomes for the college. Ill-prepared students need access to remedial courses to have a fair chance to succeed.

If you want fewer remedial courses, I suggest you address the root causes of the problem. Some students return to school years after high school and don't remember their math; this is unavoidable. As for the failure of public schools, I think the main reason is economic deprivation: not enough funding for schools and teachers, and financial hardship of families, *e.g.*, students going hungry, having inadequate medical care, living in overcrowded environments, lacking access to educational materials, having to help needy family members, and working long hours to help support self and family. These factors can also impede the success of our own students.

Therefore, I humbly suggest that you turn your energy from AB 1705 and its procrustean throughput requirements, and direct it instead toward politics, by supporting candidates for national office (as well as those currently in office) who will actually do their best to help working people, rather than candidates who serve only the wealthy - either unabashedly, or falsely claiming otherwise.

In these times, nothing could be more urgent.

Becky Roberts, English Professor, De Anza College

Dear Assembly Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to share more about the impact of AB 1705 on our CA community college students.

I have taught English, both pre-transfer and transfer level, in CA community colleges for 26 years. I want to tell you about some of the students enrolled in my transfer level English composition course who could benefit from being in a pre-transfer class or who are otherwise struggling in my transfer level class:

I had a student who was enrolled in Disability Support Services whose counselor told me from day one that they did not expect him to pass the class, but there was no option for a slower paced class where he could have experienced success and built his skills.

I have students who due to the high cost of living must work many jobs. Because of poor high school preparation, they are forced into the accelerated pace of the "bundle" when what they really need is a slower pace to accommodate their work schedule.

I have students who need an onramp to college level writing after many years in the workforce where they didn't do any sustained writing. If they could take a low-unit, low-

stakes course to warm up for college level work, they would be less frustrated by a system that assumes they come straight from their high school preparation.

If these students had an option to take a noncredit Career Development College Preparation (CDCP) low-stakes course to warm up for college level work or pursue a different vocational pathway, they would be less frustrated by a system that assumes they come straight from their high school preparation and are prepared to succeed in transfer level college composition.

Thank you for your time reading this, and I hope you will consider approving this alternative for students who don't fit the traditional track.

Jesus Guiterrez, Citrus College

I am happy that guidance was given to allow pre-calculus to be offered, but my concern is that AB1705 is still fast-tracking potential students to the Gig-Economy. Our entry program of foundational math courses being removed out of the curriculum and into extended education program is giving students who need the most help someone with lower minimum qualifications to essentially teach them in the same manner that delayed their success. My ask is to expand foundational math courses (elementary and intermediate algebra).

Sarah Thompson, Communication Officer, Chabot-Las Positas College, Faculty Association, Vice President Faculty Association of California.

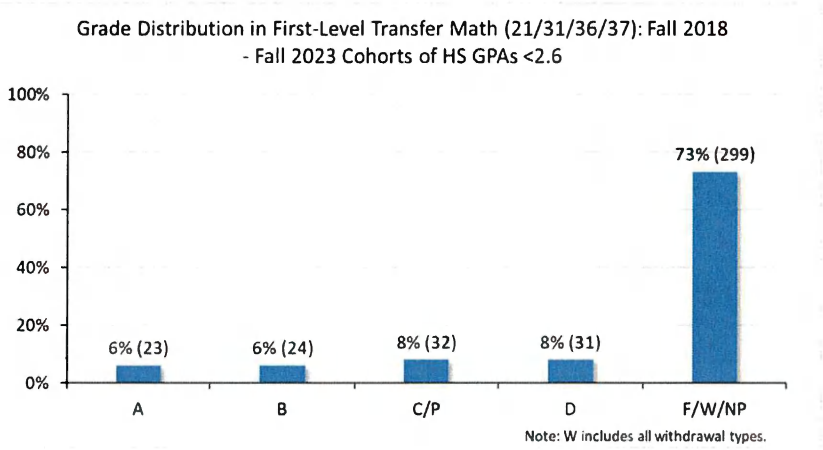
Dear Implementation Oversight Committee Members,

I am writing to you as the Communications Officer of the Chabot-Las Positas College District.

We had multiple members of our faculty publicly praise our statewide Chancellor for her guidance memo allowing for flexibility for students to create the learning sequence they need to succeed in their BSTEM majors. Our district has been long concerned about the elimination of options for students as we have dedicated ourselves to meeting students where they are in order to help them achieve their goals. The one size fits all approach of AB1705 is a disservice to our most vulnerable students, and we need the flexibility in curricular offerings to literally retain them as students. The flexibility in transfer prerequisites does not go far enough.

The following graph reveals the current status of our least prepared students at Chabot College (students earning a 2.6 or less high school GPA) in our transfer level Calculus prerequisite courses in the years since AB705 implementation:

It is important to note that the vast majority of students with HS GPAs of <2.6 who start in transfer level math withdraw or fail. So the 10% lower persistence rate impacts larger numbers of these students.



The majority of these students do not enroll in any classes the following semester. We want to be able to offer these students late start Pre-transfer level courses so they experience some success after dropping their transfer level courses. We feel this will keep them on their BSTEM trajectory more effectively than have them waiting to repeat the transfer course the next semester (which only a handful of the 299 students actually do).

When we have brought our concerns about these most vulnerable students to the architects and enforcers of AB1705 we are often told that "these students wouldn't have made it anyway". As educators who have embraced the California Community College mission, this is an unacceptable attitude. We are the first resort and the last resort for so many of our community members, we cannot brush off students' non-success when we know there are strategies we can employ to help them.

Our Board of Trustees unanimously supported a resolution of "oppose" to AB1705 when it worked its way through the legislature, understanding that its draconian limits would ultimately hurt some of our students. We are also in the process of approving student opportunity resolutions across the current constituency groups to ask our Board to once again support our efforts to meet students' needs. We are a district that long experimented and implemented English and Math acceleration for students prior to AB705 even being written. We found that these options helped many students achieve their goals faster without learning loss. But the impact differs based on students' college readiness. Research by the Public Policy Institute of CA (Li, 2023) illustrates that for students in the lowest quartile of college readiness, directly starting in transfer-level math has only a marginally positive impact on throughput. Thus, we are concerned about the students with lower levels of college readiness who start directly in transfer-level math, *but do not make it through*. Do we lose them from the system all together? In other words, higher throughput, at what cost? The higher throughputs afforded by AB

705 are not a trajectory for all students, which is why we are also asking for the ability to offer stand alone pretransfer level courses so that students for whom acceleration is not effective have the opportunity to enroll in classes that support them in their efforts to achieve their dreams.

Michelle Woods Haggerty, Professor of Psychology, College of the Redwoods

I am writing to share some of the impacts AB 1705 has had at our college in Eureka, College of the Redwoods (CR). We are in a remote section of California that is often referred to as "behind the redwood curtain". Our communities have many issues to deal with including high rates of substance abuse, suicide, poverty, homelessness and mental health disorders. College of the Redwoods is a haven in our community where individuals come to change their lives. I have been teaching psychology at CR for 22 years. In that time, I have seen countless students transform their lives through education. Many of our students did not have a pleasant and successful high school experience and are not confident in their ability to do well in college courses. When I first arrived at CR, students were placed into remedial courses that took over a year to complete. These courses did not work well for all students, many felt defeated by needing to take pre collegiate courses and dropped out. Our college worked hard to change the delivery of math and English creating more success. The math and English department embraced the "Acceleration Project", writing new intensive curriculum to help students get to collegiate classes in one semester. These students were successful in the courses and exhibited confidence in moving forward with their education. When AB 1705 was approved these accelerated courses no longer were available. All students now need to register for transfer level courses when they come to our college. The Student-Centered Funding Formula incentivizes students completing math and English in their first year, which adds pressure to put students through these courses. Data collected by our Institutional Research Department shows that we have less students attempting transfer level math (English data has not been analyzed) and failure rates are higher amongst BIPOC individuals. We worry about the students that never make it to our door and therefore are not counted in the data.

As a psychology instructor I am not in the room when students are learning math and English, but I see the impacts in my classrooms. AB 1705 and learning loss from Covid has set up students to be underprepared for college level courses. I spend much more time teaching writing and statistics in my courses than in years previous to these two critical events. I have restructured my courses and assignments to help mediate these effects. However, students are not all successful and failure in classes impacts their social and psychological health.

Please support modifications to AB 1705 that would put educational decisions back into the hands of the faculty.

Aisha Lowe

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

I am submitting this letter of support of AB 1705 implementation as a concerned community member, an experienced community college faculty member and

administrator, and as the former leader of statewide implementation of AB 705/1705 when at the state Chancellor's Office. I strongly encourage the state legislature to stay the course and continue to support full implementation of AB 1705.

The millions of students served by the CA community colleges (CCC) have various goals. No matter students' goals, placing students in the right courses when they enroll in community college has a significant impact on their academic success and future. Prior to AB 705, the vast majority of CCC students were placed in remedial courses and few successfully transitioned to transfer-level English and math courses. Attrition was high, particularly for African American and Latino/a students. The prior use of standardized tests forcing students into lengthy remedial course sequences significantly delayed students' academic progress, and far too often completely halted student completion. AB 705 reformed those practices and is proving to be one of the most significant educational reforms of our time – dismantling structural barriers that previously prevented hundreds of thousands of students from ever reaching their academic goals. The traditional placement systems AB 705 and AB 1705 have replaced, were systems in which students had no choice and the choices made for them were counterproductive to the success of students and CCCs. These laws have liberated student choice and expanded students' opportunities. AB 705 made it possible for thousands more students to access transfer level courses and significantly more students are successfully completing those courses, no matter their prior high school performance and across all student subgroups. There is a wealth of research data to support these claims (https://rpgroup.org/mmap/AB-705_Equitable_Placement_Support_Completion).

AB 1705 was passed because, despite the substantial progress that had been made, implementation of AB 705 was uneven and equity gaps persisted. Colleges were still offering significant numbers of remedial courses or not enough transfer level courses, which influences students' options and choices. AB 1705 clarified and strengthened AB 705 to support even greater placement of students in transfer level courses. Contrary to what you might hear from some opponents, AB 1705 **does not require** colleges to eliminate remedial or pre-transfer level courses. This bill provides the CCC system the flexibility needed to appropriately support CTE, adult education, DSPS, and dual enrollment students. AB 1705 also allows colleges to place and enroll any student population in pre-transfer-level courses and in transfer-level prerequisite courses **if these courses are shown to be the best option to help students progress toward their academic goals**. Colleges are simply being asked to validate their practices and demonstrate that their curricular choices best serve students, and not because they think so or they just "know", but because their own student and college data shows the positive benefits for students. Given the billions of dollars invested in the CA community college system, don't we want to hold them accountable for student outcomes? As both a taxpayer and as a member of the community college system, I support this appropriate accountability.

This equity reform is working. Changing course now will derail decades of work and lead the community college system to back-track essential curricular revisions. Students will suffer, and the work to try to re-establish the momentum we presently have will take decades or may actually not be possible. I implore you to follow the data, not the rhetoric, and support a proven educational intervention that is changing lives. Please support full implementation of AB 1705, and please provide the state Chancellor's Office with the resources and support they need to effectively hold this massive system accountable.

Erin Wall, Academic Senate President, College of the Redwoods.

As the Academic Senate President of College of the Redwoods and a long-time Math faculty member who supported acceleration and the intent of AB 705, I speak on behalf of the faculty at College of the Redwoods.

Our Academic Senate reviewed and passed unanimously the attached resolution regarding AB 1705 at our February 7, 2025 meeting. Our Math Department and faculty across the college are concerned about the increase in the number of students dropping before census in all demographic groups in mathematics, but particularly those in underrepresented groups, since AB 705/AB1705. This is despite professional development and changes to classroom pedagogy to increase just in time remediation, affective domain, metacognitive, and community building activities in our courses. Here's the concerning student drop percentage before census data we have observed:

Subject & Demographic Group	**2018-2019**	**2023-2024**
MATH (Hispanic/Latino)	8%	15%
MATH (20 & Under)	11%	15%
MATH (21 to 30)	9%	20%
MATH (31 to 40)	13%	23%
MATH (White)	11%	21%

We are also seeing a drop in our student success funding metrics of students successfully completing their transfer-level math and English courses in one-year.

We therefore request that you reconsider and allow the California Community Colleges to return to offering stand-alone pre-transfer coursework in math and English, especially for students who withdraw from or fail transfer-level coursework. And, that the agency for making decisions regarding curricular matters be returned to the faculty experts, and enrollment matters be

returned to the individual students and faculty experts, who are most able to determine their needs to continue their educational journeys.

Todd Olsen – Professor – College of the Redwoods.

I wish to start by thanking you and your committee for revisiting AB705/AB1705. I am a mathematics professor of thirty years at College of the Redwoods (CR) in Eureka, California. I grew up in Humboldt Co. and attended CR as a very young, 19 year-old man in the mid 1980s. This issue is deeply concerning to me on a personal level because I started out at CR taking basic skills math and English courses. I was a first-generation college student from a low income family. Without CR, I would not have had an opportunity to go to college at all. I also strongly believe that without basic skills courses in math and English I would not have been able to go on to earn degrees in mathematics and would not have had the wonderful career Teaching mathematics in our community. I am troubled that CR is no longer able to meet the educational needs of our students due to the inability to offer even a single, stand alone developmental math course.

Writing this letter is a bit ironic for me because I started out as an advocate for student self-placement and removing prerequisite requirements for our Introduction to Statistics course. I was also the lead faculty member who spearheaded developing "Path2Stats" which was our developmental pathway course for statistics. CR was a very early adopter of both these changes in paradigm. While equity and access are important principles we should be continuing working toward, outlawing all basic skills math and English courses goes too far and now we are seeing the negative effects of this legislation.

During the 2022/23 academic year faculty the CR math department grew concerned that we were not adequately serving students in our community. We wondered if there were potential students who were shying away from STEM pathways because they were too afraid to jump directly into college algebra or trigonometry. We also felt that there were students who did take the plunge so to speak but ended up bailing out because they were in over their heads. We went to our administration and made a compelling argument that we should offer a *free*, *non-credit*, basic skills algebra course. Our Dean agreed and put a section of such a course in the schedule. One of our counselors was so excited about the offering that she made an announcement on a statewide list serve. Shortly thereafter Vice Chancellor Dr. Aisha Lowe contacted our Dean. Dr. Lowe warned him not to offer the course and if we did that we would be in violation of the law. We felt we had no choice but to cancel the section.

At this point in time, we have given up on offering any stand-alone basic skills math courses. While we do have supported versions for transfer level math courses that work for some students, we also believe there are likely unknown numbers of students who simply do not come to CR or do not choose STEM pathways because we are not offering a starting point in our pathways that is viable for their success.. We are finding that our student success metrics are falling and ftes in our upper-level math courses is very low and I fear that at some point may become no longer viable. 1 am concerned that we are shutting out whole swaths of potential

students from our STEM pathways because we are not allowed to provide the courses students need to gain the necessary skills to be successful in STEM fields.

These issues have become so clear to faculty at CR that our academic senate recently passed a resolution, "that the California Community Colleges return to offering stand-alone pre-transfer coursework in math and English, especially for students who withdraw from or fail transfer-level coursework."

While I do believe that AB1705 brought with it positive change overall, I also think the way that the Chancellors are interpreting this legislation is far too narrow. The idea that CR cannot even offer a single free, non-credit basic skills math course is extreme and likely means we are not supporting students who wish to pursue STEM fields. The CR math department has a long history of helping students will limited preparation in mathematics succeed and excel in math and science majors. My hope is that the California legislature will pass new legislation allowing pendulum of basic skills education to swing back more towards a middle ground.

To: Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy Ellen.Cesaretti-Monroy@asm.ca.gov

Subject: Oversight Hearing AB 1705 (Irwin) Equitable Placement at Community Colleges: SUPPORT AB 1705 IMPLEMENTATION

Good Afternoon, my name is Cristine Tapia. I am an administrator with Napa Valley College, where I oversee dual enrollment and early college partnerships. I am providing public comment in support of AB 1705 implementation.

I strongly support AB 1705 for its commitment to ensuring students are placed in transfer-level math and English courses where they have the greatest likelihood of success. By eliminating unnecessary remedial coursework, AB 1705 strengthens protections for students, particularly those from historically underserved backgrounds, including Black, Latinx, low-income students, and students with disabilities.

Implementation of AB 1705 and the Equitable Placement and Completion Grant program that accompanied it is still underway and there is still work to be done to make sure our students are adequately supported to complete their gateway transfer-level English and math coursework. Every California Community College received funding from the$64 million Equitable Placement and Completion Grant program to assist them with AB 1705 implementation. Ensuring colleges utilize this funding is important to ensure faculty can provide direct student support in Math and Writing Success Centers, where they can offer structured workshops, tutoring, and one-on-one interventions. Currently, my Math and English faculty colleagues lack the dedicated time to provide these essential services, leaving students without the support they need to succeed in transfer-level coursework. To uphold the intent of AB 1705, colleges must be equipped to provide faculty-led academic support, particularly in high-demand subjects such as statistics and calculus. There should be key focus on expanding corequisite support and outreach programs to ensure students—especially those in dual enrollment—are placed in transfer-level courses with corequisite supports to provide them with the tools needed to thrive in them.

Dual enrollment students are a unique student population that can benefit from transfer-level English and math corequisites under AB 1705 to assist in streamlining pathways to degree completion. Many high school students who enroll in college courses can benefit from embedded corequisite supports to bridge the learning gaps. I urge you to support AB 1705 implementation with a focus on corequisite supports to encourage stronger partnerships between colleges and high schools, ensuring that dual enrollment students have access to faculty guidance, tutoring services, and structured academic supports.

AB 1705 has the potential to transform student success and increase transfer rates, and investing in faculty support and instructional resources, will support community college students to thrive. For those reasons I strongly support AB 1705 and urge policymakers and institutional leaders to continue strengthening implementation efforts so that all students can make meaningful progress toward their educational and career goals, and to champion funding for these critical areas to uphold the promise of AB 1705 and ensure that all students, regardless of background, can achieve their higher education goals.

Sincerely,

Cristine Tapia

Resolution in Support of Student Agency and Access in Math Coursework

Whereas, in the past decade the California legislature has consistently passed pieces of legislation designed to increase student access to equitable course placement in the California Community College (CCC) system and to streamline transfer processes;

Whereas, AB 705 was signed into law in 2017 with the aim to reduce lengthy remedial pathways within the California Community Colleges (CCC), establishing the need for a pathway to complete transfer-level math and English courses within a year;

Whereas, Title 5 § 55522 was enacted, going beyond the stated goals of AB 705 to increase access to transfer level courses and resulting in the effective banning of access to stand-alone pre-transfer classes, with subsequent Chancellor's Office guidance memorandum leading to the elimination of stand-alone transfer courses;

Whereas, in 2022 AB 1705 was signed into law codifying the aforementioned Title 5 regulations, expanding beyond pre-transfer pathways and legislating transfer and degree pathways in STEM;

Whereas, California community college districts are no longer allowed to offer stand-alone foundational courses in mathematics and English, preventing students from enrolling in these courses even if it would be beneficial in their academic journeys, resulting in disproportionate drop and failure rates for historically underrepresented students;

Whereas, the prescribed corequisite model, while helpful to many students, is too accelerated and high-unit to be an adequate substitute for stand-alone foundational coursework which can help to prepare some students for academic success;

Whereas, the California Community Colleges are open-access institutions dedicated to addressing community needs and supporting local educational advancement and are, at their

core, committed to equity, which requires flexibility in offering pathways to meet students where they are;

Resolved, that the California Community Colleges provide students the option to enroll in stand-alone pre-transfer coursework in math and English; and

Resolved, that the agency for making decisions regarding curricular and enrollment matters be returned to the individual students and faculty experts, who are most able to determine their needs to continue their educational journeys.

Adopted January 30, 2025
Mendocino College Federation of Teachers
AFT/CFT Local 6322
1000 Hensley Creek Rd.
Ukiah, Ca 95482

Resolution in Support of Student Agency and Access in Math Coursework

Whereas, in the past decade the California legislature has consistently passed pieces of legislation designed to increase student access to equitable course placement in the California Community College (CCC) system and to streamline transfer processes;

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Adopted February 6th, 2025
Mendocino College Counseling Department
1000 Hensley Creek Rd.
Ukiah, Ca 95482

Resolution in Support of Student Agency and Access in Math Coursework

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Adopted January 30, 2025

Mendocino College Math Dept. Faculty (Tenured)
Prof. Roger Ahders
Prof. Leslie Banta
Prof. Chantal Cimmiyotti
Prof. Jason Edington
Prof. Casey Terrill
Prof. Chatnaree Upton
1000 Hensley Creek Rd.
Ukiah, Ca 95482
math@mendocino.edu

ORANGE COAST COLLEGE

California State Assembly Higher Education Committee
RE: CA Assembly Higher Education Committee Hearing on Implementation of AB 1705
February 13, 2025

Dear Assembly Member Mike Fong (Chair), Carl DeMaio (Vice-Chair), and Members of the CA Assembly Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate the position and concerns of Mathematics and English faculty of California Community Colleges following the 2022 signing and implementation of AB 1705. Our concern is that the implementation of this Bill has done the opposite of its intended purpose, and is not taking into consideration some key needs, as described by the following.

1. Prior to the December 2024 CCCO Implementation Guide for Calculus 1, the implementation guidelines stated that ALL students in a STEM program requiring Calculus 1 would need to START their mathematics education in Calculus 1, regardless of their high school math courses and/or GPA. Colleges were told to develop a corequisite support course for Calculus 1 or create an "innovative" course (NOT Precalculus) that would help the "lower" students be ready for Calculus 1. We mathematics faculty were also told that we could not require students to successfully complete Trigonometry and/or Precalculus.

   The first corequisite model was a pairing of Trigonometry and Support (or Precalculus and Support). For Orange Coast College, the mathematics faculty decided that Trigonometry would be the entry transfer-level course for STEM majors. We offered this pairing starting in 2019, as we were well aware of the need for compliance with the Bill that was before the California Assembly.

   The data from the CCCCO Datamart for my college shows that the success rate for students enrolled in the Corequisite Trigonometry model pairing was consistently lower than the success rate for students enrolled in Trigonometry without a corequisite support course. This stands to reason, given that students who did not pass Algebra 2 in high school and/or had a low high school GPA were strongly

encouraged or forced to enroll in the corequisite pairing (depending on their GPA and last math course taken in high school).

Based on our data from students taking Trigonometry with a corequisite support, can you imagine how disastrous a Calculus 1 with support would have been?

2. The AB 1705 prescribed corequisite model is too high in units for stand-alone foundational coursework in mathematics or English. In the case of mathematics, students would be enrolled in six (6) or seven (7) units of mathematics, which is often the most difficult subject. In many cases students are discouraged by the high number of units taken at one time in mathematics, and as faculty we hear them say that they have decided not to pursue a STEM program, as the high-unit entry-level transfer course would be too difficult for them.

3. The data used by the RP Group and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office does not address what we mathematicians call "hidden" or "lurking" variables such as: (a) reasons for dropping out of courses or college preparation entirely, (b) length of residency in California, (c) gaps of time between the last mathematics or English course taken and enrollment in a community college, (d) learning disabilities, (e) the effects of K-12 education due to the Covid pandemic.

   One very important key factor not studied in the RP research shows up in our experience as math faculty: a "C" in Calculus 1 taken five or six years ago is not the same as a "C" in Calculus 1 today. This is because currently most students in Calculus 1 have skipped Trigonometry and Precalculus, courses which include core STEM major skills that are needed in future classes and promote mathematical majority. As our college's department chair explains this observation, teaching non-musicians a song is not equivalent to preparing them with skills to learn songs.

   Furthermore, the data collected at my college as well as most CA community colleges, does not include student drops (before census date) or how long after Calculus 1 or the first transfer level course in Math or English, a student enrolls in the next course of their academic program in those subjects. Some students take a "gap year" in mathematics after completing the first transfer-level course.

4. Many underrepresented groups have been affected by the passing of AB 1705, but I would like to plead for one group in particular: the veterans who have been unfairly treated by this law. In my 19 years of teaching mathematics at the community college level, I have been blessed with student veterans who have taught me so much about dignity, grit, love of country and family, and the drive to succeed. Many of them returned to college after more than 10 years of a life outside of a traditional academic program.

   We have been told that veterans will not benefit from their education financial resources if a mathematics course is not required for their program. Hence, if students want to go into engineering, for example, and need Calculus for their program, they cannot use their VA educational benefits for a course that is NOT a prerequisite or leads directly to Calculus 1.

   Besides the financial impact, student veterans are plagued with educational and emotional trauma that most of us have not experienced. They need encouragement to enter college and study at their own pace. We need to help them by granting them access to courses that provide the mathematical and language skills they need to be successful in their STEM programs. Allow me to share the experience of just one of my student veterans.

   Student A was a very intelligent and focused student in my Precalculus class. He wanted to study Psychology of Learning at Stanford University. His plan was very clear and specific! He sat in the front row, took meticulous notes, visited my office hours frequently, and chatted with me often about his experience in the Army. Student A had decided to take only one mathematics course, Precalculus, before transferring to Stanford University. Over that semester his academic plan changed when he saw that he really liked mathematics and was doing well. He thrived on the challenge of solving problems, "putting the pieces of a puzzle in place," as he described it. He loved that he was able to see how Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry topics began to weave together. He loved the connections. His course grade improved until he reached an A. The following semester he enrolled in my Calculus 1 course, completing the course with a high grade.

   Student A ended up in our honors program at Orange Coast College, participated in the honors research symposiums, gave talks on the psychology of the brain and how to learn, and transferred to Stanford University where he now works on his PhD in Psychology of Learning, focused on the human brain.

Student A may not have taken Calculus 1 had Precalculus not been offered. (And this is what we as a community college were facing between 2022 and December of 2024).

California community colleges at their very core are designed to be open-access institutions dedicated to community needs and supporting the local educational programs for students who seek life enrichment, preparation for employment in the community, or continuing their education in view of transferring to four-year universities and colleges.

However, with the passage of AB 1705, students are no longer allowed to enroll in foundational mathematics and English courses. This has resulted across the board in disproportional drops and failure rates for historically underrepresented students. Therefore, the community colleges do not align with their model, as students are prevented from enrolling in mathematics and English courses that will meet them at their individual levels of academic preparation.

We are thankful for the December 2024 AB 1705 Implementation Guide authored by Dr. Sonya Christian, Chancellor of the California Community Colleges system. This is a huge step in allowing us to allow our students to enroll in Trigonometry and/or Precalculus before entering the calculus sequence. We would like to encourage a more complete change to the Ed Code which would allow students to enroll in foundational mathematical courses according to their academic preparation and needs. Our role is to help our students advance in their academic pursuits at the pace that accommodates their circumstances and life goals.

Thank you again for allowing me to share my concerns with AB 1705 and its implementation. I look forward to collaborating with you on meeting the needs of over two million students in our state community college system.

Sincerely,

Linda M. Ternes

Linda M. Ternes
Professor, Mathematics
Orange Coast College

Hello. My name is Raine Porter, and I am a first generation Black and Filipino graduate student pursuing a Masters degree in chemistry at SDSU so that I can teach chemistry at the community college level. I earned my bachelor's in Environmental Chemistry at UCSD after transferring from San Diego Mesa College. In 2020 I was named tutor of the year at Mesa and in 2021, I earned the title of national tutor of the year due to my exceptional tutoring efforts all throughout my undergraduate years and still counting.

I tutor both chemistry and math and have assisted many students from all walks of life at various stages in their educational journeys. I've found that a solid understanding of algebra basics is crucial at every level of chemistry and math. Even when the focus of the tutoring session is for example on calculus, 9 times out of 10 we revisit algebraic concepts in order to be able to move forward and deepen the student's understanding of the content they initially needed help with. As an educator I have learned that you cannot force a student to begin at step 7 if their level of comprehension is at step 2. In order to truly assist students, you have to start where they are.

While I am not a math major, in every science class I have been in up until now, math is a prevalent factor. In order to even gain access to taking my current courses I had to take many math prerequisites, and while they may have been frustrating in the beginning, had I not taken them prior, I would not have had the skills necessary to be able to prosper in my courses and appreciate their applicability in not only an academic setting but also in everyday life. Without a foundational knowledge in math I probably would have been discouraged to continue a career in the STEM field; which is already deficit in people who look like me.

I support the chancellor's memo as it provides students who have taken a hiatus from their education the opportunity to pursue their desired academic path. This includes veteran students, students with dependents, and many others from diverse backgrounds. The memo embraces a universal design approach, ensuring equitable access to higher education for all.

JUST // EQUATIONS

February 11, 2025

The Honorable Assemblymember Mike Fong
Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Oversight Hearing AB 1705 (Irwin) Equitable Placement at Community Colleges: SUPPORT AB 1705 IMPLEMENTATION

Dear Chair and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

On behalf of Just Equations, I would like to **express our strong support for Assembly Bill 1705 (Irwin) implementation**. If properly implemented, AB 1705 will ensure that California's community colleges are helping all of our students to succeed.

Just Equations is a California-based policy institute with an emphasis on the role of math education in ensuring equitable opportunity. Our staff have been involved for more than a decade in analyzing and synthesizing research related to postsecondary math education practices and policies.

AB 1705 was designed to help ensure that California community college students have the greatest opportunity to reach their goals. Building upon AB 705, it requires the state's community colleges to recognize high school coursework instead of relying on inaccurate placement tests. This includes placing students into math classes with appropriate support, to ensure them the greatest chance of making progress toward a college degree. By eliminating remedial courses that were excluding students from transfer-level courses in which they could have succeeded, AB 705 has produced dramatically better student outcomes and increases in student completion, while reducing racial equity gaps in access to, and completion of, transfer-level courses. It has also led to more students enrolling in and completing Business, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (BSTEM) math courses, 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, and a substantial number of students are still encouraged to enroll in below-transfer courses, despite evidence suggesting that doing so dramatically reduces their likelihood of completion. Just 14% of students who took one below-transfer math course in fall 2019 completed a transfer-level course in a year, compared to 60% of students who enrolled directly in the transfer level.

AB 1705 was adopted to help strengthen the implementation of AB 705. It is essential to ensure that all students benefit from these successful reforms by:

- Making clear that colleges must enroll students in the math (and English) classes that offer the greatest likelihood of completing degree and transfer requirements.
- Clarifying that colleges should not require students to repeat math (and English) classes they passed in high school.
- Providing greater protections to ensure that students are not required to take extra math (and English) courses that don't count towards their degree requirements.
- Clarifying that it is the responsibility of colleges to ensure that students have supports that help them make progress toward their goals.

Equitable placement and completion reforms at community colleges have produced unprecedented gains for students. This policy is a critical lever in meeting the goals of the California Community Colleges system's Vision for Success. **For these reasons, we strongly support AB 1705 implementation.**

We also want to emphasize that successful implementation will require **effective data collection and analysis at the college and system level**. In particular, the December memo that allows colleges to offer Calculus prerequisites creates a risk that students who have the ability to succeed in a Calculus corequisite course will instead be required to take prerequisite courses that don't count toward a STEM major, possibly jeopardizing their progress toward a degree. It is essential that the system follow through with the plan to "rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the different approaches in students' completion of Calculus, Calculus 2, student performance and persistence in STEM, and their completion of STEM degrees." This requires that **any prerequisite sequences be shown to improve students' progress toward these outcomes or discontinued.**

Sincerely,

Pamela S. Burdman

Pamela Burdman
Executive Director, Just Equations

Cc: Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, 44th District
Members, Assembly Higher Education Committee
Ellen Cesaretti-Monroy, Consultant