



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### SUPPORT CONTINUES TO GROW FOR KEY BILL TO INCREASE STUDENT SUCCESS AT CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**Sacramento, CA** – On Thursday, May 19th, new legislation from Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin (AD-44) is expected to be considered by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. [Assembly Bill 1705](#) will address remedial placement policies at California’s community colleges and help more students to achieve their educational goals. Last month, the Assembly Higher Education Committee offered bipartisan support to the bill, voting unanimously to move it forward.

AB 1705 is supported by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, the Student Senate for California Community Colleges, Students Making a Change, the UC Student Association, and a [diverse coalition](#) of higher education equity, research, civil rights, social justice, and student leadership organizations. In the last month, momentum has continued to build for the legislation, with new organizations offering their support for the bill including Complete College America, Central Valley Higher Education Consortium, Improve your Tomorrow, Promesa Boyle Heights, Southern California Access Network, the USC Race & Equity Center, and Young Invincibles.

“AB 1705 is an opportunity to address placement practices that have historically excluded thousands of students of color,” said **Adrián Trinidad, Ph.D., Assistant Director for Community College Partnerships, USC Race and Equity Center**. “To make our community colleges racially just, we need to upend a status quo that frames students of color as deficient and incapable of success. We support this bill because it will help transform out-of-date approaches that resulted in educational segregation at our community colleges.”

In tandem with AB 1705, Assemblymember Irwin is also pushing for one-time funding to be included in the California state budget. Supporters note that most of the changes required by the law can be accomplished by reallocating existing funds from remedial courses to transfer-level courses. However, the one-time funds would support colleges to transition to new

practices, such as expanding tutoring, developing corequisite models of remediation, and providing professional development to help faculty effectively teach a broader population of students in transfer-level classes. (See here for a recent [blog post](#) on this topic from the California Acceleration Project.)

“Pasadena City College has offered no below-transfer courses since 2019,” said **Carrie Starbird, Dean of Math at Pasadena College**. “For the most part, making these changes meant reallocating existing funds. We shifted the classes we were offering from remedial to transfer-level sections. We also reframed our thinking about what students could achieve with the right support. The results speak for themselves.”

Before AB 705, just 32% of Pasadena City students would complete transfer-level math in a year. In the first year of implementing the law, completion nearly doubled, with 59% of students completing transfer-level math. This is higher than the statewide average of 50%.

Advocates for the bill also call attention to the cost of remedial classes to students. According to a recent report from [The Institute for College Access & Success](#), “remedial coursework was associated with additional enrollment fees ranging from \$410 to \$1,390 per student, on average ... When including all costs associated with college, including food and housing, students with any remedial coursework history can face more than \$20,000 in additional college costs.”

“Remedial classes cost students time and money and don’t move them closer to their goals,” said **Jasmine Prasad, Vice President of Legislative Affairs of the Student Senate for California Community Colleges**. “The legislature should pass AB 1705 so that more students can achieve their educational and career goals without being delayed or derailed by remedial courses. The Student Senate for California Community Colleges - which is the official voice of 1.8 million students - strongly supports this bill.”

### **Background on California’s Historic Changes to Remedial Courses at Community Colleges:**

AB 1705 builds off AB 705 (Irwin), a groundbreaking 2017 law that required the state’s community colleges to recognize high school coursework instead of relying on inaccurate and inequitable placement tests. It required that students be placed into English and math classes where they have the greatest chance to make progress toward a college degree.

Prior to this landmark change, the vast majority of California community college students were denied access to transferable, college-level English and math courses. Eighty percent of incoming students started in remedial classes that cost time and money but did not earn credit toward a bachelor’s degree.

AB 705 changed this by restricting colleges from requiring remedial courses. After AB 705 became law, there was a dramatic and unprecedented increase in students completing their

classes at the state's community colleges. [Student completion of transfer-level courses increased](#) from 49% to 67% in English and from 26% to 50% in math statewide (2015-2019). This amounts to more than 41,000 additional students who completed transfer-level English and more than 30,000 additional students who completed transfer-level math than before the law (2015-2019).

Yet despite the clear evidence that changing placement policies benefits students, many of California's community colleges have yet to implement the changes mandated by AB 705. As of fall 2020, only a [handful of colleges had achieved](#) 100% implementation of the law.

In particular, colleges have continued to devote substantial resources to remedial math, despite evidence that these classes do not meet the AB 705 standard of maximizing student completion. This is especially true at colleges with more than 2,000 Black students. Enrolling students in remedial courses - even if voluntary - lowers students' completion and drives racial inequity.

AB 1705 provides clarity and additional guidance to help ensure all California community college students benefit from the success of AB 705. This legislation:

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

See [here](#) for a letter of support from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

See [here](#) for a letter from the many student groups and organizations who support AB 1705.

See [here](#) for a letter from over 90 community college faculty, administrators, staff, and researchers who support AB 1705.

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