



## AB 1705 Information and Suggested Amendments May 17, 2022

[AB 1705 \(Irwin\)](#) – Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012: matriculation: assessment

### History:

In October 2017, the governor of California signed AB 705 (Irwin, 2017) into law. This law required that most community college students be placed into transfer-level English and mathematics coursework, which provided access for more students to transfer-level English and mathematics courses and authorized concurrent support for those students that may need it. The bill states that “The goal of this act is to ensure that students are not placed into remedial courses that may delay or deter their educational progress unless evidence suggests they are highly unlikely to succeed in the college-level course” and “a community college district or college shall not require students to enroll in remedial English or mathematics coursework that lengthens their time to complete a degree unless placement research that includes consideration of high school grade point average and coursework shows that those students are highly unlikely to succeed in transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics.”

The legislature allowed the colleges until fall 2019 to fully implement this law, although many colleges implemented it earlier. Faculty had begun revamping placement processes by 2017 to provide more students with direct access to transfer-level English and mathematics. Data shows significant gains for student access.

Following changes in placement protocols at colleges beginning in fall 2017 and then the implementation of AB 705, throughput, or the number of students entering and completing transfer-level English and mathematics, has increased.

According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office [Transfer Level Gateway Completion Dashboard](#):

- **More students are completing transfer-level English and mathematics courses.**
- **More students are failing transfer-level English and mathematics courses.** In other words, the percentages of students receiving substandard grade notations in starting transfer-level coursework is increasing.
- **Equity gaps for Black and Latinx students are not closing.**
- **Nearly 100,000 students in the 2019-20 cohorts received substandard grade notations on their transcripts in transfer-level coursework, nearly twice the number from the prior year,** which will follow them throughout their educational and career journeys. These cohorts are composed primarily of first-time students in English or mathematics courses. In the 2018-19 cohort, 31,505 students received substandard grades in transfer-level English compared to 52,346 in the 2019-20 cohort. In mathematics, those numbers are 22,549 and 46,604, respectively.

The Public Policy Institute of California collected data<sup>1</sup> that shows that **throughput is higher with first enrollment in below transfer-level mathematics** than direct enrollment in transfer-level mathematics

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<sup>1</sup> From Tables B8 and B10 in Public Policy Institute of California Report: *Community College Math in California’s New Era of Student Access* – Technical Appendix:  
<https://www.ppic.org/publication/community-college-math-in-californias-new-era-of-student-access/>



for some populations. Although not discussed in reports from many interest groups, this data should be considered as solutions are designed to meet all populations of students. **A one-size fits all fix is not the solution.**

**Philosophy:**

The ASCCC commends faculty for the work they have done in improving access to transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics. We have no request for nor interest in going back to pre-AB 705 placement processes requiring students to enroll in long remedial pathways in order to take their first transfer-level English or mathematics course.

The ASCCC fully supports the mission of the California community colleges as stated in Education Code §66010.4, which is consistent with student agency in choosing their educational pathways that best meet their educational and career goals: both full access to transfer-level English and mathematics with support when needed or desired and access to preparatory or remedial coursework for those students that may need or desire it due to gaps or missing components in their educational backgrounds.

**Suggested Amendments to AB 1705 (Irwin, 2022) as of May 6, 2022:**

1. **Include data requirements of the Transfer Level Gateway Completion Dashboard as written in the first version of AB 1705: SEC. 5. Section 78213.2.** If colleges are required to enroll students in transfer-level coursework, then **data on all enrollment must be collected and posted**, including enrollment data from the first day of class through the census date, to assess and evaluate compliance and effectiveness of AB 1705.
2. **Amend the language in Section 78213 (c)(8):** "...The regulations should ensure that, for students who seek a goal other than transfer, and who are in certificate or degree programs with specific requirements as ~~dicated~~ *determined* by the program's advisory board, ~~or~~ accrediting body, *or curriculum committee* ~~that cannot be met with transfer level coursework~~, a community college district or community college maximizes the probability that a student will enter and complete the required college-level coursework in English and mathematics." **Most of these programs are career and technical education programs.** Transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics will satisfy college-level or pre-transfer-level requirements due to the scaffolding of skills in preparing students for transfer-level coursework. Placing students in transfer-level coursework is absolutely supported. However, requiring colleges to enroll students in transfer-level coursework even when that coursework is not required will result in the elimination of college-level coursework. In order to stop students from enrolling in such coursework, the colleges will be forced to not offer such coursework. By not offering such coursework, degree and certificate requirements that only require college-level will amount to having those requirements raised. In addition, students that may not have needed concurrent support may now have to take concurrent support in the transfer-level coursework, thus adding a barrier to their educational goals.
3. **Eliminate the constraints on STEM pathways.** Determining appropriate and valuable major preparation coursework should be done by faculty, experts in their fields. The new language in the bill would now require colleges to document the value or need of college algebra,



trigonometry, or pre-calculus preparation for STEM fields, which gives rise to a number of concerns:

- a. What problem is this language attempting to address? Has evidence surfaced that such pathways are not needed for success in STEM fields?
  - b. This language is analogous to the requirements for placing and enrolling all or nearly all students in transfer-level English and mathematics but is now legislating STEM pathways and will likely only permit students who have prepared for STEM in high school to enter a STEM pathway in community college;
  - c. If this language is passed, will it pave the way similar requirements for the benefit of coursework in English composition? Oral communication? History? Social science?
4. **Amend the language addressing noncredit education.**
- a. Does evidence exist that colleges have been using noncredit coursework to circumvent current law? **Amend Section 78213 (i)(4):** Either delete this subsection or recognize the purpose of noncredit education as follows: “A community college shall not ~~use~~ *develop new* noncredit coursework to circumvent...subdivision. *Noncredit course offerings that build basic educational skills shall continue to benefit noncredit underrepresented adult learners.*”
  - b. **Amend Section 78213 (j)(2):** “...school or *equivalency* ~~a-GED~~ *and students enrolled in noncredit courses that build basic educational skills, including noncredit ESL.*”
  - c. Change general equivalency diploma (GED) to high school equivalency certificate throughout the bill.
5. **Amend the following as requested by the ASCCC delegates through [Resolution S22 06.03](#):**
- a. **SEC. 3 Section 78213** of the Education Code is amended to read:  
*(n) Placement and enrollment of students in a transfer-level English or mathematics course should not prevent students from enrolling in a pre-transfer level English or mathematics course when a student determines a course fulfills their academic needs based on the desire to do any of the following:*
    - (1) Complete a certificate or Career Technical Education program.*
    - (2) Make up for learning loss from the COVID-19 global pandemic or break in education.*
    - (3) Build skills or re-skill.*
    - (4) Fulfill a lifelong learning priority in written communication and quantitative reasoning courses.*~~(n)~~(o) For purposes of this section, ~~“assessment”~~ *the following definitions apply:*
  - b. **SEC. 2. Section 78212.5** is added to the Education Code, to read: 78212.5. *(b) California community colleges shall 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. Consistent with the legislative goal of expediting program completion, this placement and enrollment will not create additional English or mathematics requirements in program pathways nor to increase the level of the English or mathematics requirements in program pathways.*



6. **Funding is needed to support teaching with the increased diverse learning needs of students resulting from this reform.** In order for faculty to design and deliver curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of the broad range of students' preparation in their classes, faculty need more contact and interaction with students. To achieve this purpose, the following are essential:
  - a. Lower student-to-faculty ratios with additional class assistance such as course assigned professional instructional aids and tutors.
  - b. Professional development: bring faculty together to evaluate what is working, determine where improvements are needed, and design and implement improvements based on those evaluations to fully meet the needs of students.
  - c. **Amend SEC. 2. Section 78212.5** is added to the Education Code, to read:
    - (e) Consistent with Section 66010.4, community colleges are not prohibited from offering students the opportunity to enroll in any pre-transfer level English or mathematics course based on students' rights to determine their educational goals and academic needs.*
    - (f) California community colleges shall receive sufficient funding to add support and resources for faculty to implement equitable placement, such as a lower ratio of instructor to students not exceeding 1:10, professional development, embedded faculty tutors in classrooms, and updating the classroom environment to accommodate small groups.*