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Statement on the California Budget: Investments in Equitable Placement and Completion at Community Colleges Will Benefit Students

Sacramento, CA – As a diverse coalition of higher education advocacy, civil rights, social justice, workforce, and student leadership organizations committed to educational equity and student success, we applaud Governor Newsom and the Legislature's commitment to investing in equitable placement and completion at California community colleges that will support over 1.8 million students attending one of our state's 116 community colleges.

In particular, we are grateful for the $64 million investment in the 2022-23 California state budget that will directly support the implementation of equitable placement and assessment policy (AB 705, 2017). In addition, we applaud the approximately $3.9 million ongoing (2022-23) and $1.4 million ongoing (2024-25) for increased staff capacity within the Community College Chancellor's Office to support the needed oversight and implementation of key efforts to improve student success and close racial equity gaps.

Redesigning course offerings and embracing new, innovative instructional models is critical work for faculty and administrators and requires appropriate investment and support from the state. This substantial investment is key to supporting faculty and campus leaders in implementing AB 705 and ensuring that faculty and students have the tools necessary to succeed. This investment will support colleges, faculty, counselors, and administrators to implement best practices in course design and effective concurrent student support models, bringing us one step closer to full implementation of AB 705 by fall 2022.

Prioritizing direct financial resources for equitable placement and completion policy, while developing a plan for moving away from standalone remedial courses, will ensure that student completion gains continue to improve, racial/ethnic equity gaps close, and that college success is a reality for all students across our state.

Please see below for quotes from higher education advocacy, civil rights, and student leadership organizations:

“These funds will do so much to support strong and equitable implementation of the law,” said Dr. Katie Hern, Co-Founder of the California Acceleration Project and a faculty member at
Skyline College. “These are big changes, and faculty need support to develop new classes and teach in ways that reach all students.”

“We commend Governor Newsom and our legislative leaders for investing $64 million in students to ensure equitable placement policy is implemented with fidelity across California’s community colleges,” said Audrey Dow, Senior Vice President of the Campaign for College Opportunity. “AB 705 has been transformational in the lives of thousands of low-income, Black, and Latinx students who are now well on their way to transferring and earning a four-year degree, however, not all students have benefitted from the new equitable placement practices. This $64 million investment ensures that all community colleges have the resources to better support students to enroll in and successfully complete transfer-level math and English, keeping students on track to earn a degree and contribute toward a vibrant workforce for California.”

“The $64 million investment to incentivize community colleges to phase out traditional remedial courses and scale up evidence-based alternatives is a critical budget investment,” said Brian Rivas, Senior Director of Policy and Government Relations with The Education Trust—West. “This approach will ensure that students who need these critical courses can equitably access them, which is a huge win for education in California.”

“These investments are urgently needed to improve equity initiatives and student outcomes in community colleges,” said Sbeydeh Viveros-Walton, Director of Higher Education with Public Advocates. “These initiatives support students in achieving academic milestones and goals necessary for their post-secondary degrees.”

“The budget investment will impact underrepresented and underserved community college students from all over California,” said Marjorie Blen, Director of Students Making a Change. “This investment is key in reforming, removing barriers, and creating a more equitable educational pathway. A pathway that will provide upward mobility to millions of students while simultaneously supporting educators.”

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