



April 19, 2022

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

**RE: : AB 1705 (Irwin): Strengthening Equitable Placement and Completion at
Community Colleges - SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Medina,

On behalf of Just Equations, a California-based policy institute focused on ensuring equitable opportunity in math, I write to express support for Assembly Bill 1705 by Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin.

Our organization has written numerous reports and articles about the important policies enacted under AB 705 to enhance California community college students' ability to reach their educational goals. AB 1705 will strengthen those policies by providing needed clarity to colleges to ensure consistent implementation of practices that maximize student opportunities and increase racial equity.

Our May 2021 report, [*Solving for Equity: Design and Implementation of New Postsecondary Math Pathways*](#), highlighted the rigorous research behind policies to eliminate remedial math courses in favor of just-in-time supports. We have noted the dramatically improved student outcomes achieved under AB 705—including tens of thousands of additional students who entered and completed transfer-level math courses, increased equity in access to transfer-level courses, as well as improved access to required math courses for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and Business majors, particularly for Black and Latinx students, who have historically been underrepresented in those majors.

Our August 2020 report, [*Crossing Signals: What College Websites Tell Students About Taking Mathematics*](#), identified that some community colleges misdirect students toward below-transfer-level math classes and underscored a general lack of transparency surrounding students' math enrollment options. Absent new state

policies, the misdirection and lack of transparency allow students to make sub-optimal math enrollment decisions.

Our August 2021 report, [*Solving for Equity in Practice: New Insights on Advancing College Math Opportunity and Success*](#), further highlighted (and cited the work of others on) the uneven implementation of AB 705, particularly with respect to mathematics courses. Under current practices at some colleges, a substantial number of students continue to enroll in below-transfer level math courses, despite strong evidence that doing so dramatically reduces completion rates. 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.

Though below-transfer-level classes do not meet the AB 705 standard of maximizing student completion, colleges continue to make them available to students, and students, as a result, continue to think they are good options. In fall 2020, below-transfer classes constituted 20% or more of the introductory math offered at 69 colleges, including a disproportionate enrollment of Black and Latinx students.

The promise of AB 705 is clear from the results to date. Strengthening AB 705 through passage of AB 1705 ensure that all students can benefit from the most effective strategies, ensuring fulfillment of the goals of the California Community Colleges' Vision for Success and an equitable recovery from the pandemic.

Just Equations strongly supports AB 1705 and requests support from the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pamela S. Burdman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pamela Burdman, Executive Director

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