



AB 1805 (Irwin) Placement Policies Transparency Act

SUMMARY

AB 1805 provides students with easily understandable community college placement policies and requires colleges to report the percentage of students placed into college-level courses.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, AB 705 (Irwin) was signed into law which, among other provisions, required colleges to use the best of multiple measures to place students into English and math courses. To this end, many colleges are redesigning their placement policies to incorporate evidence-based practices to ensure students are placed into classes according to the best of their high school GPA, grades, self-reported or otherwise, and assessment test scores. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office has developed an implementation team for AB 705 and at this time expects its full implementation to be completed by fall 2019.

NEED FOR THE BILL

Placement policies at California community colleges can be inconsistent at best or confounding at worst. Many times rules vary drastically across campuses and can be confusing for entering students who may not have clear academic goals yet.

A 2016 PPIC report¹ found that, "while more than half of colleges reported using the Accuplacer test to assess college readiness in math, cut scores ranged from 25 to 96 out of 120. A student with a score of 58 on this test would be deemed college ready at only half of these colleges." Also, despite some colleges already using a form of multiple measures to place students, PPIC reports that, "between 7 and 30 percent of colleges described math and English placement policies in which the use of multiple measures was initiated if students requested it or challenged their placement." These findings present particular challenges for students of color who had a greater probability of attending a college with higher assessment cut scores and who may not be in a position to challenge a placement decision.

This bill seeks to provide clarity to placement policies by requiring colleges to:

- Inform students of their rights under AB 705 as to how they will be placed into English and math courses based on the best of multiple measures in easily understandable ways in college catalogs, orientation materials, and college websites;
- Include in reports to the Chancellor's Office what measures are used to determine placement, the number of students assessed, and the percentage of students placed into transfer-level courses disaggregated by race and ethnicity;
- Publicly post their placement results of students placed into transfer-level courses disaggregated by race and ethnicity;
- Match implementation of this bill with the implementation of AB 705.

With over two million students in the community college system, it is crucial that placement rules and results be presented in a clear and understandable way. AB 1805 will provide students with tools to be better informed while making decisions that will affect their pathway through higher education and career.

SUPPORT

Campaign for College Opportunity
California Teachers Association

OPPOSITION

No known opposition

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¹ http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_1116ORR.pdf
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