Community College Math in California’s New Era of Student Access

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A landmark law transformed access to transfer-level courses at community colleges

- Assembly Bill 705
  - Requires that colleges maximize students’ chances of completing transfer-level English and math within one year
  - Mandates the use of high school records as the primary criteria for placement
  - Has dramatically transformed placement and remediation
Colleges continued to effectively implement AB 705 despite disruptions brought on by the pandemic.
Access to transfer-level math courses remained strong during the pandemic

% of first-time math students by starting course
SLAM and BSTEM retained their large pre-pandemic increase in access

% of first-time math students by starting course
Transfer-level completion increased since AB 705 and during the pandemic

TL course completion rate among first-time math students (%)
Racial and ethnic disparities remain in completion of transfer-level math

TL course completion rate among first-time math students, fall 2019 (%)
Despite tremendous progress, more work needs to be done.
1 in 5 colleges require or allow a third or more of first-time math students to enroll in BTL courses

Number of colleges

- Lower access (<68% in TL)
- Medium access (68% to 91%)
- Higher access (>91% in TL)

2018:
- Lower access: 109
- Medium access: 5
- Higher access: 0

2019:
- Lower access: 72
- Medium access: 24
- Higher access: 0

2020:
- Lower access: 23
- Medium access: 66
- Higher access: 0

2018 2019 2020

Lower access (<68% in TL)  Medium access (68% to 91%)  Higher access (>91% in TL)
Few students who start in BTL successfully complete transfer-level math by next fall

Outcomes for first-time math students starting in BTL (%)

- Enrolled in a TL course
- Successfully completed a TL course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Successfully</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students who start in transfer-level math have the best chances of successfully completing it

Adjusted difference in TL completion (pp)

Corequisite vs. BTL students
- As of next fall: 31
- Within one-year: 34

Initially unsuccessful TL vs. BTL students
- As of next fall: 7
- Within one-year: 4
Some groups are more likely to end up in BTL, especially at “lower-access” colleges

Adjusted difference in the likelihood of starting in BTL (pp)

- White-Latino gap
- White-Black gap
- White-Asian gap
- Limited-English-proficiency student
- Student with disabilities
- Non-traditional age student
- CPG/PELL recipient
Policy Recommendations

- Enroll transfer-intending students into transfer-level courses by default
- Strengthen messaging and coordination between math departments and counseling
- Support Black and Latino success, inside and outside of the classroom, and beyond introductory math coursework
- Build upon pandemic-inspired equity conversations and reforms
Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.