

BLACKOUT ADVOCACY DAY POLICY PRIORITIES

BLACK STUDENT
SUCCESS WEEK
APRIL 24-28, 2023

The Black Student Success Week Coalition was established in 2020 in response to an urgent need for state leaders to take action in supporting Black students and as a timely resource for stakeholders to move intentionally in the spaces they occupy to support Black student success. Rooted in the collective vision that came out of the [African American Male Education Network \(2AMEND\)](#) and [Umoja Community](#) statewide summits, we are a coalition of campus and system leaders, faculty, students, and advocates committed to ensuring Black students across California have the tools they need to succeed in reaching their college goals.

This document is a call to action. It outlines the state priorities that we believe will be key to increasing Black student access immediately and in years to come. As the California Community Colleges work to see through the [Vision for Success](#) and [California Community College Roadmap](#), state policymakers have the opportunity to continue the important investment in enrollment and growth with a goal of closing racial and regional equity gaps.

California is home to the fifth largest Black population in the United States, where a majority of Black undergraduates attend a California Community College. Despite this, California continues to systematically underinvest in Black students' educational journeys when it comes to higher education funding, perpetuating economic inequity for Black Californians and the maintenance of a permanent underclass. In 2020, we released the [Follow the Money Report](#), which referenced the disparities in the funding of Black students at the systems of higher education in California. Our recommendation remains that the state of California must provide equitable funding across its higher education systems with an explicit focus on closing racial equity gaps in lower-division courses. *Failing to support this key student population represents a major loss for our communities and economy. Now is the time to INVEST IN BLACK STUDENT SUCCESS.*

Informed by the wealth of knowledge, research, and lived experiences of Black students, faculty, and leaders across our higher education system, the following legislative and budget opportunities will be key to ensuring colleges and universities across the state have the resources and guidance necessary to support Black students in reaching their college dreams.

PRIORITY #1: ENSURING COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY FOR ALL BLACK STUDENTS

STATE BUDGET: Cal Grant Equity Framework

Black students, especially those attending a California community college, are more likely to face affordability challenges as they pursue higher education. We encourage the Governor and legislature to prioritize the implementation of the Cal Grant Equity Framework (2022-23 State Budget) and ensure adequate new and ongoing resources are invested in the development and success of this program. A laser focus on Cal Grant Equity Framework will ensure over 11,000 additional Black Californians will be able to more affordably pursue their college dreams and is urgent now more than ever as we work toward a multi-year vision for higher education funding.¹

¹ Data accessed from the California Student Aid Commission.



LEGISLATION: Ensuring Seamless & Affordable Transitions to HBCUs

Assembly Bill 1400 (Bryan) Student financial aid: College Access Tax Credit Fund: community college student transfers: Historically Black Colleges and Universities

In 2018, California Community Colleges and HBCUs across the nation entered a Memorandum of Understanding to uplift academic opportunities for students seeking an inclusive and quality education at HBCUs. Since its launch, thousands of students have sought an education out-of-state at an HBCU, but with the state aid being limited to in-state students, affordability remains a challenge for those leaving the state for these institutions. AB 1400 will create intentional funding to support Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) students transferring to an HBCU. By explicitly supporting this population of students, we ensure those seeking to transfer and who may not be able to attend a California State University or University of California school, may still be able to affordably attend a prestigious four-year university.

Senate Bill 447 (Atkins) BRIDGEs for HBCU Access

In 2016, California enacted a necessary policy to limit travel to states with harmful discriminatory policies that impacted LGBTQ+ and other minoritized communities. As a result, California Community College students seeking an education at an HBCU that resides in these states saw challenges in navigating travel to these institutions. SB 447 is a key lever in remediating challenges posed to Black students seeking an HBCU education by opening doors to opportunity. Additionally, SB 447 may be key to supporting community college representatives in traveling to states of concern in pursuit of meaningful professional development opportunities focused on closing racial equity gaps.

PRIORITY #2: FUNDING AND SUPPORTING BLACK STUDENTS WITH INTENTIONALITY

CCC Enrollment & Retention: As California continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and students seek access to higher education, we must prioritize student enrollment and retention in the Governor's \$200 million proposed budget. We also recommend that the state's administration and the legislators consider providing the enrollment and retention funds to California Community Colleges as ongoing funding versus one-time as currently outlined in the budget. Additionally, funding must be intentionally aimed at closing racial equity gaps for Black students with colleges utilizing high-impact, evidence-based strategies for supporting our state's most vulnerable students. Additionally, as we consider how to measure the successful use of such funds, we recommend colleges develop plans for fund spending to ensure the greatest impact on closing racial equity gaps.



PRIORITY #3: PRIORITIZE DUAL ENROLLMENT OPPORTUNITIES AS A LEVER FOR BLACK STUDENT COLLEGE ACCESS

Assembly Bill 368 (Holden) Making Dual Enrollment More Affordable and Accessible for All

Dual enrollment programs are a key access point to higher education for thousands of students across the state. Increasing enrollment in these programs for Black students and communities of color across the state is vital for closing racial equity gaps in terms of college access and success. Ensuring dual enrollment programs do not pose a financial burden for high school students will ensure all students seeking dual enrollment access may do so regardless of income, background, or location.