FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Students Stand Up for Access to Rigorous High School Curriculum

(OAKLAND) – Today, over one hundred students, parents, and community activists gathered in Sacramento to demand access to a rigorous high school curriculum for students in California.

Students testified this afternoon at a hearing of the Senate Select Committee on College and University Admissions and Outreach, chaired by Senator Richard Alarcon (D-Los Angeles).

“For too long these students have been denied access to the courses they need to succeed in the workforce and in college," said Education Trust—West Director Russlynn Ali. "They decided it was finally time to stand up and make their voices heard in Sacramento."

The testimony of these students and parents came two days before the consideration by the Assembly Education Committee of Senate Bill 1795, sponsored by Senator Alarcon. Students and parents came to the hearing from communities across the state, including Oakland, San Jose, Los Angeles, Fresno and Long Beach.

"Today policymakers have heard the voices of these students and parents and hopefully realized that this issue of a rigorous curriculum is not going away," said Ali. "Our students know that when they graduate, they will not be prepared for the world of work they are entering without a rigorous sequence of courses."

One measure of access to rigorous coursework is the number of courses that satisfy the “A-G” requirements of California’s four-year universities. According to a recent Education Trust West report, “Are California’s High Schools Ready for the 21st Century?” only one in six (17%) California school districts offer enough courses for all students to take the full sequence of “A-G” courses.

“Right now only 9% of high-poverty school districts offer enough A-G courses for all of their students to take the full sequence of courses” said Ali. “Instead, at their graduation ceremonies this month, the majority of students are receiving a 20th century diploma for a 21st century economy.”

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The Education Trust – West
Russlynn Ali, Director