

March 11, 2024

The Honorable Stephen C. Padilla
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 4
Suite 502
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA

The Honorable David A. Alvarez
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3
Suite 5320
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA

RE: Proposed 2024-2025 State Budget for Office of Cradle-to-Career and California College Guidance Initiative

Dear Senator Padilla and Assemblymember Alvarez:

As an organization rooted in research and working to expose and eradicate the injustices and inequities in California schools and colleges, from transitional kindergarten through higher education, EdTrust–West asks that you and your colleagues on the Budget Subcommittees adopt the following recommendations on the Governor’s proposed budget for the Office of Cradle-to-Career and the California College Guidance Initiative.

Office of Cradle-to-Career (C2C) – SUPPORT (\$16 million) The Governor’s proposed budget allocates \$16 million for the Office of Cradle-to-Career, \$600,000 of which is a reappropriation from the 2023-24 budget to expand the eTranscript tool in the upcoming fiscal year.

The state continues to face critical issues in education – an unprecedented teacher shortage, attrition of teachers, and declining enrollment – and we are still in need of a longitudinal data system that can help us get a clearer picture of what is happening with our education system and state investments. In the past three years, the Office of C2C has made great strides in their development while meaningfully engaging communities and advocates in the process. EdTrust – West believes that the state needs a longitudinal data system to provide cross-sector data on education and the workforce to give stakeholders insights into student outcomes and workforce development. Connecting these data will be critical for advocates and decision-makers to help us understand how students of color and multilingual students are affected by systemic barriers to opportunities along their path. This is an investment the state must continue prioritizing.

We also strongly support the reappropriation of \$600,000 of unused funds to create an implementation roadmap for the expansion of the eTranscript tool. The expansion of this tool into all school districts in California will facilitate the sharing of transcript records across schools and higher education institutions by housing student records in one single transcript. One of the biggest benefits from this tool will be for students who enroll in dual enrollment courses in high school. Currently, there is a lack of data integration between TK-12 and community colleges which has led to barriers for dually enrolled students seeking to receive college credit for dual enrollment coursework. This lack of data integration

must be addressed to facilitate a process for dual crediting of dual enrollment courses so that students receive both high school and college credits that count towards high school graduation, meet A-G subject-matter requirements, and satisfy transfer-level credit. The C2C Data System is designed by nature to bridge the TK-12 and higher education systems and thus is ideally situated to facilitate work focused on the integration and alignment of data across these two systems. Through the eTranscript expansion roadmap work, C2C will be able to bring together Local Educational Agencies and various institutions of higher education to address systemic barriers that harm students due to the current lack of data integration.

California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) - SUPPORT (\$5 Million) The budget proposes an increase of \$5 million ongoing funding for the scaling of this platform to all 6th-12th grade students in California. California currently does not have a statewide tool that allows students and families to plan for post-graduation goals, making CCGI a crucial investment to help families understand their options, inclusive of financial aid support. It will also be a platform where students and families can research job markets, submit college applications, and apply for financial aid. Housing all college-related processes in one platform can lead to improved family support by counselors and increased access for students and families. In addition, CCGI can help support the implementation of the universal financial aid policy and AB 469. After one year of implementation of the universal financial aid policy there has been a 17.5% increase in FAFSA completion and 1.6% increase in CADAA completion. However, equity concerns for students of color remain and CCGI is a tool that can aid equitable implementation, such as by providing high school counselors with information on which students still need support with completing their application.

We strongly believe that data should be the center of policy conversations and it is for these reasons that we encourage the legislature to continue prioritizing investments for the Office of Cradle-to-Career and California College Guidance Initiative. While we understand the current fiscal outlook, we also know that this funding is imperative for the students and families in California and future policy-making decisions.

Thank you for considering our views.



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EdTrust—West

cc: Members of Senate Subcommittee 4 on State Administration and General Government
Members of Assembly Subcommittee 3 on Education Finance
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The Education Trust–West