



The Education Trust–West

Fierce advocates for educational
justice, pre-k through college.

May 7, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee

1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: AB 2458 (Berman) Public Postsecondary Education: Student Parents
SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Wicks,

As an organization committed to advancing policies and practices that dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in California's education system, the EdTrust-West is pleased to **SUPPORT** and **CO-SPONSOR** Assembly Bill 2458 by Assemblymember Berman. AB 2458 would improve college affordability, access, and success for student parents in California.

Given the upcoming amendments and working with our colleagues from the three education segments: California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California, we are confident that they will help reduce the bill's cost.

California is home to approximately [400,000 student parents](#), a majority of whom are first-generation and [students of color](#). Despite having greater food, housing, child care, and transportation costs than their non-parenting peers, the costs are not accounted for in their student expense budget, which creates barriers to accessing financial aid and completing higher education. Currently, student parents must individually request adjustments to their [cost of attendance](#) to account for their parenting expenses.

In some cases, student parents are asked to provide further proof of their child-rearing costs or are incorrectly denied adjustments. This process is not standardized across institutions, resulting in unnecessary burdens on students and financial aid administrators. In fact, the [U.S. Government Accountability Office](#) found that student parents are not maximizing their federal financial aid. Additionally, because campuses do not systematically identify student parents, the limited actionable data on their needs and outcomes makes it harder to design and provide tailored support.

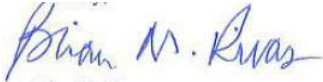
Streamlining the financial aid process to ensure student parents receive a cost of attendance adjustment that accounts for dependent care costs could help them claim thousands of dollars annually in available federal grants and loans. **If student parents receive even a modest adjustment, it could unlock access to hundreds of millions of dollars in aid in federal support throughout the state.**

AB 2458 would ensure student parents can access the financial aid they are entitled to and improve data collection for student parents. Specifically, the bill would:

- Require automatic financial aid cost of attendance adjustments for student parents to better account for their expenses, thereby maximizing access to available financial aid;
- Require institutions to uniformly collect and report data on student parents to system offices; and
- Share student parent data from the higher education system offices with the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data for inclusion in the longitudinal data system, allowing California to evaluate and identify policies that support student parent success.

Comprehensively identifying student parents and increasing their access to financial aid will allow student parents to better plan for, afford, and navigate their educational pathways. It is for these reasons we strongly support AB 2458 (Berman) and respectfully ask for an **AYE** vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian M. Rivas". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Brian Rivas

Senior Director of Policy and Government Relations

Cc: Assemblymember Berman
Natasha Collins, Assembly Appropriations Consultant