



The Education Trust–West

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

July 10, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
1021 O Street, Suite 8220  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1348 (Bradford) Black-Serving Institutions of Higher Education – As amended  
July 3, 2024  
Support**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks,

As an organization committed to advancing policies and practices that dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in California’s education system, Ed Trust–West (ETW) writes to share our strong support for Senator Bradford’s SB 1348, which creates a state-level designation for Black-Serving Institutions of higher education.

California is home to the fifth-largest population of Black people in the United States, approximately 2.8 million individuals. However, when Black Californians seek access to our state’s colleges and universities, they face undue bureaucratic and financial barriers. Black students are historically underrepresented on college campuses. National data shows their student enrollment declined by 22 percent (650,000 students) between 2010 and 2020 according to the National Center for Educational Statistics.

In our, [\*Black Minds Matter: 2022 Fact Sheet\*](#), we highlighted the unacceptable fact that only one in four Black adults in California have been supported to attain a Bachelor's degree. We saw how one in 4 black students have a bachelor's degree or higher in California. Further data shows that Black students are more likely to delay attending college after high school and more likely to attend college part-time.

This bill notably established eligibility criteria for colleges and universities in California to qualify for inclusion in the Black-Serving Institutions Program. To be eligible, an institution must have a headcount of at least 1,500 Black and African American students or meet a 10% Black student body enrollment threshold. If selected, the BSI designation would be valid for five academic years

with the option for renewal with evidence of satisfactory progress in supporting Black student success.

The bill also outlines additional criteria that institutions must describe and confirm via an application process to be selected as a BSI. As part of the application process, eligible colleges and universities must 1) explain their institutional commitment to Black and African American student success and 2) share key data points

Introducing a BSI designation in California presents a unique opportunity for our state to demonstrate its commitment to Black communities and the success of Black students. Senator Bradford's proposal is a strong start, and advocates should collaborate to ensure the bill becomes law this year. Moreover, advocates should continue to work together in the future to improve the program and designation. This includes identifying sustained investments in BSIs, expanding community engagement, and embracing evidence-based practices and continuous improvement.

For more information regarding the benefits from this proposal, please see our equity alert: <https://west.edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ETW-EquityAlert-BlackMindsMatter-BSIs-Final-May2024.pdf>.

For these reasons, we urge your support on SB 1348 (Bradford).

Sincerely,



Brian M. Rivas  
Senior Director, Policy and Government Relations

Cc: Senator Steven Bradford  
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
Natasha Collins, Assembly Appropriations Committee Consultant