Dear Chair Newman,

As a trusted source of research, design, and advocacy for student-centered policies that promote affordability, accountability, and equity in higher education, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) is pleased to SUPPORT AB 2723 (Irwin) because of its importance to continuing the implementation of Cradle-to-Career data system and ensuring public-facing, deidentified data is shared with the public.

As an entity that has followed the design, planning process, and implementation of the Cradle-to-Career Data System (C2C) starting in 2019, TICAS is deeply appreciative of the commitment to transparency and community engagement throughout the design of Cradle-to-Career, and its ongoing implementation. AB 2723 continues this work by refining the system’s statute in ways that provide clarity about privacy related to existing data collected by other state agencies that are shared with C2C.

AB 2723 is designed to ensure the public can interact with their data in a way that responds to public inquiries effectively, while ensuring security of the data system. AB 2723 redirects public Information Practices Act (IPA) requests to data providers, rather than to the data system itself. **The bill does not remove any rights of individuals under the IPA,** but rather ensures that those rights are exercised at the point of data collection/origination, where data providers can verify a person’s identity. Because C2C does not collect data, but rather aggregates existing, validated state level education and workforce data, C2C is not able to safely verify an individual’s identity. As such, an IPA request could create a security breach, by releasing public data to an individual that does not match the requestor. Similarly, C2C does not have the statutory authority to amend any records and does not have the legal authority to do so at with respect to an IPA request. All these requests can be made at the data provider level, and any changes will “overwrite” C2C’s existing record with the new submission.
The bill also corrects a drafting error that currently denotes “any” data within the data system as personally identifiable information (PII). AB 2723 corrects this, by making C2C’s definition of PII the same as existing state law, where data including names, unique identifiers (such as social security number) phone numbers, addresses, and employment history are protected.

This change is critical to the functionality of the data system. **If “any” data is PII, then C2C cannot fulfill its statutory obligation to put forth public dashboards** that display deidentified, disaggregated data. Even using the public coordinates of a college or university to create a map might count as PII under the current definition. This change would ensure C2C is still following existing State law and protocol to keep personal information safe, while still producing useful tools and data dashboards for the public.

AB 2723’s provisions are essential to the state’s ongoing effort to provide access to quality data for students, families, and policymakers on education and workforce outcomes. For this reason, TICAS urges your support for AB 2723 (Irwin), and respectfully ask for an “Aye” vote.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel Rodriguez  
Director of Policy and Advocacy, California  
The Institute for College Access & Success

CC: Members, Senate Education Committee  
Olgalilia Ramirez, Principal Consultant Senate Education Committee