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**GOVERNOR ALLOCATES \$1.1 MILLION TO A²MEND TO HELP INCREASE
BLACK MALE ENROLLMENT IN CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**

***With Historical Declines in African American Male College Enrollment, New A²MEND Funding
to Expand Mentoring Programs for Black Men to Enroll and Succeed in Community Colleges***

LOS ANGELES – January 13, 2022 – As a clear sign of Governor Gavin Newsom's commitment to increase Black male enrollment in California's community colleges, the Governor's 2022-23 budget proposal has allocated \$1.1 million to the African American Male Education Network & Development (A²MEND) organization. A²MEND comprises African American male educators who voluntarily use their scholarly and professional expertise to foster institutional change within California's community college system by operating mentoring programs for Black male students. Since forming in 2006, A²MEND has mentored hundreds of African American male students to inspire them to enroll and succeed in the state's community colleges.

The Newsom Administration's \$1.1 million allocation to A²MEND was announced in the midst of a crucial climate for African Americans in higher education, as Black male college enrollment rates are currently at an all-time low. According to a recent report published by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, U.S. college attendance among African American males dropped 8% since the onset of the pandemic compared to the previous year. The new funding will greatly support A²MEND's efforts to help reverse this troubling trend among California's African American male student population.

"We're thankful for the Governor's budget allocation to increase enrollment and graduation rates among African American male students. We're equally thankful to the Chancellor's Office for their call-to-action to improve Black student success and for partnering with A²MEND to manifest this vision," said Dr. Amanuel Gebru, President of A²MEND. "As college enrollment of Black men is declining at an alarming rate, our organization is eager to continue engaging with our partners to expand our impact on retention rates among Black male students."

A²MEND aims to leverage the new funding to broaden the organization's 23 statewide student charters that were established to improve academic success by creating an affirming environment where African American male students and other students of color are able to thrive. With the hope of doubling their student charters at community colleges throughout California, A²MEND's executive board plans to request an additional \$400,000 from the Governor's budget, as the organization estimates that a total allocation of \$1.5 million will ensure that their expansion goals are met. Still, the executive board is unequivocally appreciative for the current allocation commitment.

"A²MEND is honored and deeply inspired to be acknowledged in the Governor's budget," said Dr. Abdimalik Buul, Vice President of A²MEND. "For the past 16 years, A²MEND has been unapologetic about radically redefining Black male success in our community college system. With the \$1.1 million allocation, A²MEND is uniquely poised to widen our presence of student charters on campuses in every rural, suburban and urban community in California."

The announcement of the Governor's allocation was met with praise from A²MEND partners, including the California Community Colleges Organización de Latinx Empowerment, Guidance, Advocacy for Success (COLEGAS). "COLEGAS is proud to see that Governor Newsom has affirmed his commitment to social justice and racial equity in our state through his proposed budget, which provides significant resources that can lead to an extraordinary transformation of our community college system. We are especially pleased to see \$1.1 million for the A²MEND organization that will expand student charters across the state among other critical services for African American men," said Dr. Cynthia Olivo, President of COLEGAS. "Investing in this effort will lead to the goal of addressing the 'education debt,' as coined by expert research and scholar Dr. Gloria Ladson Billings, who stated that 'the cumulative impact of fewer resources and other harm directed at our minoritized students' are certainly a result of systemic inequities. We believe in the mission of A²MEND – the name of the organization itself is a call for all of us to do everything possible to make amends to our Black community members. These resources are a move in the right direction. We commend Governor Newsom!"

Another A²MEND partner, Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE), also extended a congratulatory statement about the allocation. "As President-Elect of APAHE, I would like to express our support to Governor Newsom for his January proposal and his continued support of the California Community Colleges as well as the diverse programs and students they serve," said Dr. Rowena M. Tomaneng, President of San Jose City College. "Specifically, I am grateful to Governor Newsom for his longstanding commitment to student programs centered on closing the racial opportunity gap for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. I commend the Governor's proposal of an ongoing \$1.1 million to expand A²MEND student charters to additional college districts. APAHE believes A²MEND's programs for Black male students provide a critical intervention to historical racial inequities."

The African American Male Education Network & Development (A²MEND) organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit led by African American male educators who utilize their scholarly and professional expertise to foster institutional change within California's community college system to increase success of African American male students. Since establishing the organization in 2006, A²MEND has served as the premiere nonprofit solely focused on addressing the lack of educational success for African American male students in community colleges.

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