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# IMPROVING MINNESOTA'S DUAL ENROLLMENT FUNDING SYSTEM

*Reflections and Recommendations from the Field*



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# Solving Access and Funding Challenges for Dual Enrollment

**Minnesota has the nation's oldest state policy architecture supporting college in high school programs like dual enrollment and early college, beginning with the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program that was created in 1985. For over 35 years, Minnesota's college courses have been free to high school students through PSEO and Concurrent Enrollment programs.**

These investments have allowed thousands of Minnesota high school students every year to get a jumpstart on college. However, in recent years, attention has turned towards disparities in access to college in high school programs as a serious concern for policymakers. Particularly given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, policymakers are seeking research-backed interventions that will increase students' ability to access college and succeed in college. Dual enrollment is one such intervention, with a lengthy research record showing its benefits for many students. However, nationwide and in Minnesota, there are significant access gaps that need to be addressed.

The causes of these access gaps are many, and vary state to state. A number of comprehensive recommendations for improving access to college coursetaking in high school for more students have been advanced by Minnesota state agencies and nonprofits. It is essential for the state to take a comprehensive look at how it can solve access and success challenges for dual enrollment.

One of the key challenges that has been identified is the way that Minnesota funds its dual enrollment programs, and specifically how it funds PSEO. In May 2021, the Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership applied to the College in High School Alliance (CHSA) for technical assistance to explore how the existing funding system for Minnesota's dual enrollment programs was creating or exacerbating access gaps by unintentionally creating competition between models, and to work with key stakeholders to develop proposals on how to solve identified challenges.

Since late 2021, CHSA has been working with the Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership, and in particular with the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities, the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Office of Higher Education, and the University of Minnesota Twin Cities to conduct a comprehensive series of listening sessions to understand the impact that Minnesota's dual enrollment funding system is having on program access and success, and to develop a series of principles for reform and specific recommendations to advance to the legislature that would begin to address identified challenges.

## How Minnesota Funds Its Dual Enrollment Programs

Minnesota has different funding mechanisms for PSEO and for Concurrent Enrollment, and school districts and colleges have a third option for funding on-campus course-taking that operates independent of the state and is known as PSEO by Contract. Importantly, each of these funding mechanisms require that no tuition costs be passed onto the students, and many other

costs are covered for students as well, removing significant cost barriers for high school students in accessing college courses under all three models.

Under PSEO, where students have the opportunity to take college courses in person at the college campus or online, when a student elects to participate in taking college courses through the program, the Minnesota Department of Education will use funds from the pupil's K-12 state aid to pay the institution of higher education for the courses the student is participating in. The school district will then receive the remainder of the student's per pupil funding. If a student is taking PSEO full time, and no longer taking courses at the high school, the district will receive 12% of the per pupil in state aid for that student, while the rest of the funds will be used to pay the institution of higher education that the student is enrolled in.

In response to the rigid formula of the statutory PSEO program, a number of dual enrollment partnerships have developed their own funding arrangements, which are agreed to directly between the high school and the college. Known as PSEO by Contract, the contract agreements relate to students being able to participate in courses offered by the college as PSEO students, but bypass the state funding mechanism. Instead of the statutory formula for determining funding, the high school and college use the contract as a mechanism for agreeing their own rate of reimbursement for the college, which the high school then pays the college directly, with no loss of per pupil funding as experienced under statutory PSEO.

The Concurrent Enrollment program, where students take the courses at the high school using a credentialed high school instructor approved by the college or university to teach the college course, is funded by a fee paid by the school to the college. The school then receives a portion of the fee back through a separate state appropriation.

The concurrent enrollment appropriation of \$4 million dollars supports funding of up to \$150 per student to districts and charters that offer a concurrent enrollment course, according to an agreement under Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 124D.09, subdivisions 10 and 16. Note that reimbursements are prorated based on total concurrent enrollment participation across the state. In FY 2021, the prorated reimbursement was \$50.48 per student per course.

### How This Report Was Developed

After being selected to receive technical assistance from CHSA in 2021, the Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership's Dual Credit Working Group recommended that an additional, smaller working group be set up to consider questions related to how Minnesota funds its dual enrollment programs, and provide reports back to the main Dual Credit Working Group.

The working group dedicated to dual enrollment funding began meeting in early 2022, and met monthly through the remainder of 2022 to consider the issues and path forward. The working group comprised representatives from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Minnesota State), the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), and the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

To support the learnings of the working group, and to ensure robust outside input from all interested parties related to how Minnesota funds its dual enrollment programs, CHSA facilitated a series of listening sessions with practitioners while OHE provided grants to colleges to run a series of listening sessions for students across the state.

- Practitioner Listening Sessions:** In December 2021, CHSA hosted five virtual listening sessions that were open for any interested attendees to discuss their perspective on Minnesota's dual enrollment funding. The sessions received 234 sign ups and robust attendance, with over 90% of attendees comprising representatives of either secondary or postsecondary education. The sessions discussed questions such as what elements of Minnesota's dual enrollment funding system that practitioners appreciated or thought were well constructed, what areas of challenge exist, and solicited ideas for how to solve those challenges.
- Student Listening Sessions:** In July 2022, OHE solicited applications from colleges to conduct a series of listening sessions with students to understand their perspectives on Minnesota's dual enrollment system. OHE provided funding to 9 colleges, who hosted more than 22 listening sessions across the state, which included attendance from over 340 students, parents, and community members. Colleges were required to focus their outreach on underrepresented students in Minnesota's dual enrollment programs, and to balance perspectives from students who have and students who have not participated in one of Minnesota's dual enrollment programs. In addition, CHSA conducted several listening sessions with organizations like [People for PSEO](#) and other interested student groups as the opportunity arose.

#### Grant Competition Student Listening Sessions



*Student listening sessions funded by the OHE grant competition were conducted by:*

- *Century College*
- *Dakota County Technical College*
- *Lake Superior College*
- *Ridgewater College*
- *Minnesota State University Moorhead*
- *Minnesota West Community and Technical College*
- *St. Cloud State University and St. Cloud Technical College*
- *University of Minnesota Twin Cities*

The findings of this report are a synthesis of the learnings from the listening sessions, the meetings of the working group, and additional outside and expert input.

## WHAT WE LEARNED *from* PRACTITIONERS

In listening sessions, practitioners were asked to share reflections on what was working for the system as a whole, and specific challenges facing each of the three major models of dual enrollment funding in the state — PSEO, PSEO by Contract, and Concurrent Enrollment. Key takeaways from those discussions, and informed by the totality of work by the working group, are outlined in the following pages.

## ADVANTAGES

### ■ Minnesota Has Invested in Making Dual Enrollment Free for Students

Minnesota is one of a small number of states that has committed dedicated state funding to dual enrollment, and approached this work through the lens that it must be free for all students. Minnesota is also one of the only states to invest in reducing or eliminating other costs for students, including for transportation and textbooks. To the extent that the state pursues reforms, they should be to expand upon opportunities for students and not to reduce them.

### Dual Enrollment Has Significant Benefits for Minnesota Students



A number of participants in the listening sessions referred back to the body of evidence that exists around dual enrollment and shows that there are significant benefits when high school students participate in college course experiences.

For example, a recent report that reviewed the existing dual enrollment literature to develop a new research agenda found that the current body of dual enrollment research shows:

- **Dual Enrollment is an Evidence-Based Practice that Has Broad Positive Impacts on Student Outcomes** — Participation in these programs improves a student's likelihood of graduating high school, enrolling in college, and completing college.
- **Dual Enrollment Expands Learning Opportunities and College Access, and has the Potential to Improve Local Communities** — More access to dual enrollment leads to better college outcomes for students, which creates a more educated populace who can contribute more to the local economy.
- **Dual Enrollment Addresses Increasing Demand for College-Level Education and Increasing College Costs** — Dual enrollment, as mentioned above specifically for Minnesota, provides students with access to free college course experiences, potentially reducing the overall costs of college.
- **Dual Enrollment has Broad Support from Students, Families, High Schools, Colleges, and Policymakers** — Support for these programs from different stakeholders is strong and bipartisan.
- **Dual Enrollment Requires Intentional Alignment and Integration of Secondary and Postsecondary Education Systems, Structures, and Policies** — These programs create the space for important conversations about properly integrating secondary and postsecondary education to support students' college and career goals.

## CHALLENGES

### Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)

#### ■ **The Current Funding Formula Disincentivizes High Schools to Recruit Students for PSEO**

Given the loss in K–12 funding when students elect to participate in PSEO, there is an incentive for high schools to try and limit the number of students choosing to take PSEO. That can manifest itself in high schools not making information freely available to students about PSEO (as required by statute), and erecting other artificial barriers to disincentivize participation by high school students and subsequent loss of funding to the high school.

#### ■ **The PSEO Transportation Reimbursement Mechanism is Outdated**

The formula for the mileage reimbursement program is out of date, and covers only a fraction of the costs for low income students who travel to the college campus to participate in college or university courses.

#### ■ **Additional Funding is Needed to Expand CTE Course Availability**

The current funding mechanism does not account for the additional costs of providing Career Technical Education (CTE) dual enrollment courses, including the costs of necessary equipment and course materials. Given costs are often higher for CTE courses, they are more difficult to offer.

#### ■ **PSEO Coordinators Spend Significant Time on State Reporting, Limiting Student Interactions**

PSEO coordinators must spend a lot of time focused on state reporting and ensuring the paperwork is correctly filed on funding and reimbursement, which limits the time that the coordinators can spend working directly with students on advising and academic development.

### PSEO by Contract

#### ■ **PSEO By Contract Is Well Liked, But Lacks Data**

As PSEO By Contract grows, there are significant concerns about the availability of public data for students participating in PSEO through this arrangement. How many students? Who are they? Does PSEO by Contract show better or worse equity outcomes for students under traditional PSEO?

#### ■ **PSEO By Contract Lacks Consistency in Contract Terms**

Colleges and school districts must individually develop their own contracts, oftentimes starting with a blank page. This likely leads to wildly divergent contracts across dual enrollment partnerships. There is some value to that in allowing local conditions or requirements to govern, but stakeholders repeatedly asked whether it leaves one partner vulnerable or opens the door for lower quality programming.

### Concurrent Enrollment

#### ■ **State Funding for Concurrent Enrollment Each Year is Too Low**

Funding for concurrent enrollment courses does not come close to reaching the statutory maximum each year, limiting the ability of colleges and school districts to expand services to students, particularly for wraparound supports.

### ■ **Recruiting Credentialed Teachers Remains a Significant Challenge**

Concurrent enrollment programs still face significant challenges with recruiting and retaining credentialed high school instructors, who must have a masters degree in the discipline specific subject they are teaching, or at least 18 graduate credit hours in the specific discipline, according to Higher Learning Commission accreditation rules. Creating incentives for mid- and late-career teachers and consistently funding programs that provide support to instructors taking additional graduate coursework or professional equivalency would provide avenues to sustain concurrent enrollment the high school curriculum.

## WHAT WE LEARNED *from* STUDENTS

Listening sessions with students intentionally focused on what elements of Minnesota's dual enrollment programs need improvement or reform to respond to the needs of students better, but students expressed across the listening sessions a number of positive sentiments about taking college courses in high school.

In their own words, students reported:

“ I ENJOY THE FACT THAT THESE COURSES OPEN OPPORTUNITIES and teach me more about what classes are like in college AND STEER ME MORE TOWARDS MY CAREER and what I want to do in this.”

“ I WANTED TO GET MORE OF A FEEL INTO THE COLLEGE LIFE and learn more and START LEARNING MORE ABOUT JOBS I CAN WORK IN AFTER SCHOOL.”

+

“ I wanted to be able to get a college experience a little before I actually ended up in college. BEING ABLE TO EARN COLLEGE CREDITS BEFORE ENROLLMENT HELPS MY TRANSCRIPT LOOK BETTER as well as getting a head start on generals.”

“ I LIKED THAT IT ALLOWED ME TO TAKE COLLEGE CREDITS IN HIGH SCHOOL FOR FREE. I graduated with 70 credits and junior status. ALL OF MY CREDITS TRANSFERRED AND IT FEELS GOOD TO BE WHERE I AM.”

However, across the student listening sessions, a consistent set of messages recurred about the ways in which students have interacted, or not interacted with, Minnesota’s dual enrollment programs, and PSEO specifically:

#### ■ Students Lack Information About PSEO

Too many students say they are not receiving information about the programs, and if they do, it is from friends or parents and not from their schools. Parents have a big influence, but many don’t know/aren’t in a position to help students with enrollment.

#### ■ Students Must Navigate Gatekeepers to Access PSEO

Students reported that they are being actively dissuaded from participating in PSEO as not the right option for them by counselors and other gatekeepers within the schools. Students also report not being allowed to participate in school activities, particularly if they are participating in PSEO classes full time.

#### ■ Students of Color Don’t See Themselves Reflected in Dual Enrollment

Students of color don’t see themselves reflected in PSEO and other college coursetaking, and therefore feel excluded and not as though these options are ones they can or should be pursuing. The messaging around the programs from the adults in their lives is exclusionary towards them.

#### ■ Students Are Not Receiving Consistent Communication About the Options, and Potential Value of, College Course Experiences in High School

Students are not correctly being informed about the value of participating in these course experiences, particularly in high school and before, and therefore are not seeking them out.

Without deliberate efforts to communicate with students about the opportunities for PSEO and CE (beginning in the years prior to their eligibility), they will continue to reproduce current equity gaps for postsecondary enrollments.

#### ■ **Students Experience Transportation Barriers for PSEO**

Many schools do not offer transportation to the college campus for in-person classes, which means only students with a license and access to a car can attend.

Despite these challenges, students who felt like college course experiences were supported by the school, and were built into the expectations for high school students and communicated to them early, students reported that they were satisfied with the level of services received from the school and the opportunities created for them by taking college courses in high school. These sentiments were particularly prevalent from students participating in concurrent enrollment, which may be a feature of the funding model for concurrent enrollment being more generous to schools and therefore creating the integrated culture of college coursetaking that students found beneficial.

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

While not all of the challenges identified by practitioners and students directly relate to the way Minnesota funds its dual enrollment programs, many are directly related to how funding influences the behavior of schools and colleges. These challenges can be solved, and should be addressed through a series of actions that would move Minnesota towards an idealized funding system for dual enrollment.

This section outlines three strategy components.

**1** A set of principles for dual enrollment funding reform that outline the ideas underpinning the components of a well functioning dual enrollment funding system in Minnesota and the specific recommendations for the 2023 legislature.

**2** The components of a well functioning dual enrollment funding system that outlines what it looks like to have achieved a system that is working in the best interests of students.

**3** A set of specific recommendations for the Minnesota legislature to consider in 2023 that align to the principles and would move the state towards having the components of a well functioning system.

## COMPONENT 1

### Principles For Dual Enrollment Funding Reform

Our working group believes that any changes to Minnesota's funding system for dual enrollment should be guided by the following five principles:

- 1 Minnesota's dual enrollment funding system is cost- and tuition-free for students, and should remain that way.
- 2 Any potential changes to the way Minnesota funds its dual enrollment programs should be student-centered and designed to use available resources to promote students' best interests as the top priority.
- 3 All Minnesota high school students who choose to participate, and who have received appropriate advising on postsecondary and career choices to inform their course selections, should be able to access dual enrollment courses.
- 4 Reforms to Minnesota's dual enrollment funding system should be intentionally designed with equity at their core, specifically seeking to expand access and success in dual enrollment at high schools with very low or no availability of dual enrollment, particularly among students of color, students whose families are low income, and students with disabilities.
- 5 Dual enrollment programs in Minnesota should operate as true, collaborative partnerships with shared responsibilities between high schools, institutions of higher education, and community partners. The state's funding system should not stand as an impediment to developing that close collaboration.

## COMPONENT 2

### Components of a Well Functioning Dual Enrollment Funding System In Minnesota

Aligned to those principles, and reflecting on the feedback received from the listening sessions we have conducted, we believe that the following are components of a well functioning dual enrollment funding system in Minnesota.

- 1 **Increased Matriculation Rates Among Students Otherwise Unlikely to Attend College** — Schools and colleges design PSEO and CE with clear objectives that include increasing the percentage of students underrepresented in higher ed who matriculate to college immediately following high school graduation. This includes explicit outreach strategies as well as scaffolded readiness activities to increase participation in PSEO and concurrent enrollment.
- 2 **Structured Pathways for Student Learning** — Students participate in pathways or sequences of courses, including career pathways, that have been vetted for transferability and applicability to various postsecondary degree or credential alternatives for those students.
- 3 **High Quality Advising and Supports for Students** — To maximize the state's investment in these programs and students' use of time and energy, students receive high quality advising about dual enrollment course selection to align those selections to the student's postsecondary and career goals.
- 4 **Sufficient Funding to Support Student Access and Success** — Sufficient funding to both the secondary and postsecondary systems ensures that all students who want to access dual enrollment programs in Minnesota, either through PSEO or Concurrent Enrollment, are able to do so.
- 5 **No Incentives to Gatekeep Student Participation in PSEO** — Current incentives that encourage high schools to obscure or deny students the ability to take PSEO courses are eliminated, so that only whether the student has interest and can benefit from participating in those courses is salient to the decision making about whether to let them participate. Secondary-postsecondary partnerships are driven by providing on-ramps that are intentionally designed to support equitable access and outcomes for students.
- 6 **Well Functioning High School and College Partnerships** — In any well functioning dual enrollment partnership, both the high school and the college play a role in supporting student success, and are funded appropriately to what their contribution is towards maintaining an authentic high school/college partnership.
- 7 **Acknowledge Concurrent Enrollment Serves Students and Instructors** — Concurrent enrollment programs serve both instructors and students. Colleges provide initial and ongoing discipline specific professional development that provides opportunity for deeper investment in the field and vibrant engagement with students. NACEP accreditation is required in Minnesota (to receive funding) and supports these partnerships.
- 8 **Robust Data Collection and Reporting** — Robust data collection and reporting of dual enrollment access and outcomes that allows for disaggregation by race, income, gender, and localized data to see by region or district type (large, small, rural, etc.) to identify often-masked gaps. This supports local data-informed decision making — including for students participating in programs under the PSEO by Contract model — and is essential to calibrate policies properly to maximize student benefits.

**9 No Binary Distinction Between PSEO and Concurrent Enrollment —**

Student selections around what kind of dual enrollment to take are based on what is in the best interests of the students, and not set up as an either/or proposition that has different benefits to different system actors depending on that student's selection.

**10 No Non-Tuition Course Costs —**

To promote equitable access to these programs, they need to be not only tuition free, but truly cost free for students. This includes eliminating non-tuition course costs such as books, fees, transportation, and other cost factors that may limit student participation.

### COMPONENT 3

#### Recommendations for the 2023 Minnesota Legislature

There are a number of actions that the legislature can take that would advance the components of a well functioning dual enrollment funding system in Minnesota, as outlined above. These steps are important to laying the foundational groundwork for a permanent statewide fix, and are essential to learning the effective strategies that will be most impactful in promoting student access and success in dual enrollment.

Specifically, the legislature should consider four strategies to advance these aims in the 2023 session.

#### 1 Pilot Full Funding of PSEO By Centering Equity

The Minnesota legislature should provide funding to create a pilot to fully fund PSEO. As part of the pilot, and to access supplementary funding to account for the loss of K-12 funding through the PSEO statutory formula, high schools should be required to develop strong equity plans for how the additional funding will be used to promote equitable access to all dual enrollment programs in the school, promote student success, and promote students taking intentional and meaningful dual enrollment courses that accelerate their journey to college and career success.

Such a pilot proposal addresses the two biggest challenges that appear to inhibit Minnesota's dual enrollment system as a whole from realizing its full potential.

First, many of the identified behaviors by school districts and colleges that cause inequitable access and success to PSEO in Minnesota are driven by the state's funding model. Because school districts stand to suffer significant budgetary impacts from students participating in PSEO, there are both conscious and unconscious incentives for schools to limit or gatekeep student decisions to participate. This leads to fewer students participating in or even knowing about the possibilities of college coursetaking, or lead students to participate in college and career readiness programs that may benefit the school's bottom line more than the individual student.

Second, many of the students participating in PSEO are not receiving the level of supports from either their schools or the colleges that would maximize the student's ability to thrive in these courses and make the most of college coursetaking in high school. Throughout the listening sessions it was communicated that there are concerns about students not receiving the counseling and advising necessary to make intentional course selections that are aligned to the student's goals post-high school. Engaging in meaningful college coursetaking in high school, whether on an academic pathway, engaging in a program of study, or other intentional course choices that help a

student realize their journey to college and career success is essential to gain the full value of Minnesota's investment in dual enrollment, both for the student and the taxpayer.

Longterm, to address many of the challenges in Minnesota's dual enrollment system around equity, and to encourage deeper partnerships between K–12 and higher education that serve students better, additional funding is needed to ensure that dual enrollment partnerships are centering the needs of individual students, prioritizing equity, and providing students a core set of wraparound supports that maximizes the student's investment of time and energy into college coursetaking in high school to derive the largest individual benefit possible.

#### *How Would This Work?*

The legislature should appropriate a fund to be made available to the Minnesota Department of Education to run a statewide competition to select as many pilot sites as can be funded with available appropriations.

As part of the competition, high schools or school districts would be asked to submit applications that detail a dual enrollment equity plan. This plan should outline how, if selected to be part of the pilot, schools intend to use additional funding to:

- Use data to identify and quantify gaps in student access and success,
- Close identified equity gaps in participation and success,
- Provide all students in dual enrollment — both PSEO and Concurrent Enrollment — with the supports they need,
- Invest in the school's counselors and advisors, and develop tools and resources necessary to help them counsel students into and through dual enrollment,
- Deepen the school's relationship with their college partner(s), including potentially sharing resources with that partner for their role (if any) in providing these extra services,
- Promote, to the extent practicable, students' selection of intentional and meaningful college course experiences are aligned to their post-high school goals.

Once selected, the grantee high school or school district would receive supplementary funding to offset the reduced state aid the high school loses from student participation in PSEO, and would use that additional funding to implement the equity plan outlined above. As part of the pilot, institutions of higher education would continue to receive the same level of compensation for PSEO students as they do outside of the pilot, and individual pilot grantees may choose to share some of the additional resources with their college partner to fund additional supports if the college will be taking on that role.

When the pilot sites have been selected and funded, the grantees should be given two years to implement the equity plans. A robust and funded evaluation of the pilot will also be essential to ensure that the equity plans have been a success and to evaluate lessons learned from the pilot sites that could inform potential statewide implementation of this proposal. The evaluation will also need to examine what impact fully funding PSEO had upon concurrent enrollment, if any, to ensure we fully understand how this change would impact Minnesota's dual enrollment ecosystem as a whole.

The pilot should last four school years:

- **2023–2024:** Statewide competition to select pilot sites, followed by a period of planning for implementation.
- **2024–2025:** Year one of implementation
- **2025–2026:** Year two of implementation
- **2026–2027:** Completion of robust evaluation of the pilot sites and development of lessons learned to inform additional pilots or statewide implementation.

There are a number of considerations that MDE will need to be mindful of as they design the competition, including considering how to account for pilot sites that might have more than one college partner, how to ensure funding is used to supplement and not supplant existing initiatives by the dual enrollment partnership, and how this funding can be blended and braided with other sources of K–12 funding (e.g. achievement and integration funding) to ensure aligned initiatives and realizing full value of investments. A robust planning year to properly design, solicit and award grantees, and afford those grantees planning time of their own will also be essential.



A version of this proposal appears in the [FY 2024–25 Governor's Budget Recommendations under Postsecondary Enrollment Options \(PSEO\) Pilot](#).

## 2 Update the PSEO Transportation Formula Statewide

The mechanism for reimbursement of transportation expenses for low income students is outdated and needs to be revisited. In a recent report on Minnesota's PSEO funding model, interviewed stakeholders identified a number of challenges with the current transportation reimbursement system:

- The funded mileage rate is significantly below the true cost of student transportation.
- It only accounts for mileage traveled by car, and does not reimburse for bus, rideshare, or other transit method.
- It requires low income families to pay out of pocket and wait for the cumbersome reimbursement process to complete before receiving payment.
- It assumes that even if a parent or student has access to a car that the car is accessible and available during the daytime and not being used to transport a parent to and from work or another child.

The state should revisit the transportation reimbursement mechanism and update it to reflect the needs, and the costs, faced by today's students. Even though the outlined pilot above, if authorized, would create opportunities for schools to pay the costs of transportation for students, that would only apply to the limited number of pilot sites until Minnesota was ready for statewide implementation of the pilot. As a result, updates to the transportation reimbursement mechanism cannot wait for the pilot process to complete in order to support all of Minnesota's low income high school students looking to take classes on a college campus in person through PSEO.



A version of this proposal appears in the [FY 2024–25 Governor's Budget Recommendations under Rigorous Coursework Expansion](#). (Please note: The Governor proposes making more funding available for grants to colleges to provide transportation for students, as opposed to updating the formula itself as called for in this recommendation.)

### 3 Collect and Publicly Report PSEO by Contract Data from ALL Dual Enrollment Partnerships

To implement any statewide policy changes that impacts dual enrollment, particularly if it relates to funding, it is essential that the state know exactly how many students are participating and succeeding in PSEO, and who those students are. Unfortunately, under the current arrangements, statewide data systems for dual enrollment in Minnesota only capture a portion of PSEO students: those participating through the statutory PSEO program. PSEO by Contract data is, on the whole, not reported at the state level.

The legislature should require that PSEO by Contract arrangements across the state submit data on student participation — using the same reporting structure and metrics as statutory PSEO students — to the relevant Minnesota state agencies, and this data should be captured in both the annual Rigorous Course Taking Report and through the state's longitudinal data system, SLEDS. If the full funding pilot outlined above is successful and there is then a desire by the legislature to examine statewide implementation, knowing the total number of PSEO students statewide — inclusive of both statutory and PSEO by Contract — will be essential to create accurate budget forecasts for the costs of statewide implementation.

Statewide collection of PSEO by Contract data is not only relevant for the dual enrollment funding conversation, but the lack of access to this data leads to all policymaking decisions around dual enrollment in Minnesota lacking the full context and information. Anecdotal reports about PSEO by Contract heard during the listening sessions indicated that the demographic composition of those students may be very different from statutory PSEO, and that is essential information as the state continues to examine how to close equity gaps.



A version of this proposal appears in the [FY 2024–25 Governor's Budget Recommendations under Postsecondary Enrollment Options \(PSEO\) Pilot](#).

### 4 Commission New Funded Research into Minnesota's Dual Enrollment Programs

It is essential that Minnesota develop new research into its dual enrollment system in order to encourage continuous policy and practice improvements that enhance student access and success. Potential identified research questions for Minnesota's dual enrollment system include:

- What is the level of benefit to the average student in the state accessing dual credit courses?
- How could equitable dual enrollment improve economic mobility for low-income, students of color, and others?
- What level of dual credit coursetaking by 9–12 students most benefits the state? Employment? Education? Income? Is it equal based on when, where, and what dual credit courses are taken?

- Is there a model of dual credit that is more economical for the state than others? That has the best outcomes for students?
- Could intentional dual enrollment pathways engage business and industry to invest in education?
- Does dual enrollment keep students in Minnesota for degrees or employment?
- Could dual enrollment done right be a solution to free college efforts?
- Do business and industry or workforce boards understand the opportunity dual enrollment provides?
- Do Minnesota colleges and universities have the capacity to expand dual enrollment if the funding was available?
- What are the best mechanisms for supporting high school teachers in securing the graduate level, discipline specific coursework necessary to become credentialed to teach a dual enrollment course? What kind of incentives are necessary to encourage teachers to seek those additional credentials, and how can those incentives be used to expand and diversify the teacher workforce?

## CONCLUSION

Minnesota's dual enrollment programs, through all modalities, provide students with access to college courses that make them more likely to go to college, more likely to attend college, and improve postsecondary outcomes for students and the state as a whole. There are important ways that the system can be strengthened, most notably through how the state funds its dual enrollment programs, that would continue to expand these benefits to more students and realize strong returns for the state as a whole long term.

Through strong and open minded collaboration that included robust practitioner and student input on the current challenges, key Minnesota state agencies developed actionable recommendations that are currently before the legislature. These recommendations may not solve every challenge, but they do take significant steps forward towards building a dual enrollment system in Minnesota that works for all students.

**We look forward to continuing this collaboration to realize the dual enrollment opportunities, and supports, that students deserve.**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This report was authored by Alex Perry of the College in High School Alliance and Foresight Law + Policy. The working group that oversaw this project and contributed to the final report included:

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