

2025 Delegate Assembly Proposed Legislative Resolution

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: District Authority for Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)

SUBMITTED BY:

Hermantown Community Schools, ISD 700
Ashley McFarland, Board Member

RECOMMENDATION: **Passage**

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT MSBA URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO:

Grant school districts the authority to determine student eligibility for Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) with an established set of criteria determined by the district. This affords the district the ability to prioritize enrollment in-district when comparable coursework is already offered through concurrent enrollment options (College in the Schools). This promotes student access to rigorous coursework taught by in-district teachers who know and care for them, while also strengthening peer connections and keeping support systems in place for academic success.

DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM:

Dual credit options offered to high school students in Minnesota play an important role in their educational pathways. Coursework through Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) provides the opportunity for diverse educational experiences that may not be offered in-district. However, there has been a significant erosion of purpose and intent for which PSEO was built upon. Instead of leveraging this program to seek additional subject content, students are often opting into PSEO for ease of academic rigor; pursuing coursework that is already offered in-district. With no ability to manage this practice, the value of in-district education, and the educators that provide it, are being undermined and devalued. Furthermore, this puts a significant strain on district finances and their ability to appropriately plan and staff to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

EXPLAIN WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM:

The Minnesota Department of Education's Strategic Plan states: "Public education is a fundamental right for all students with access and equity as the foundational principles." Instead of being used to enrich the educational experience, PSEO outsources our privilege to support this fundamental right and puts students in an environment that may not hold the same standards and values. There are several issues associated with unchecked PSEO participation that are placing a significant strain on public school districts.

Devaluing educators

PSEO has created a highly competitive environment, essentially treating our students as commodities. Our secondary education professionals have had to adjust their content, delivery, and rigor just to keep students in their classrooms. In the attempt to retain students, some districts are providing hybrid course schedules to stay attractive against highly flexible college



PSEO schedules, even if the student is not mature enough to manage that learning format. If Minnesota values public education and the educational professionals that are entrusted to providing this fundamental right, then we need to entrust those same people to counsel and educate our students when and where those opportunities exist. Teacher recruitment and retention is heavily reliant on a high level of trust and morale that is being eroded by these destructive PSEO practices. This environment further complicates efforts to bolster positive concurrent enrollment options, like College in the Schools that uplifts, not degrades, our existing educators. The incentive for educators to offer advanced and rigorous coursework is diminished when students are likely to opt into less rigorous work through PSEO.

Accountability

The bar keeps getting lowered by post-secondary institutions for qualification into these programs and very little accountability exists to ensure those students are successful. Because a district has very little ability to monitor student progress due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), students chance failure and yet are returned to the district to remediate, often by the same teachers they walked away from initially. In addition, nothing stops a student from enrolling in PSEO courses, despite an earlier failure. They can continue to enroll in PSEO at the school's expense without support and structure to help them be successful. Whether students are seeking easier coursework or are simply on the quest to "chase college credits," without the appropriate guidance from district counselors, students may not be prepared for the next step in their educational or career journeys.

Financial strain and staffing

When a student chooses to take a course through PSEO, despite it being offered in-district, funding is taken away from the school that is bound to provide education for all students, including those not enrolled in PSEO. If our belief in Minnesota is "Every child, no matter their race or zip code, deserves a world-class education, with caring and qualified teachers, in a safe and nurturing environment," (MDE Strategic Plan) then we must support our school districts to do so and retain the funding entrusted to them for this mission. If we continue to allow students to take a junior-level English or senior-level math course through PSEO, the funding eventually will not be there to retain an educator to continue to provide that same class to all learners. Equity disparities will continue to widen.

To be clear, this proposed resolution is not intended to restrict PSEO for students. It is intended to frame reasonable sidebars around how PSEO should and should not be leveraged to further student education opportunities. In-district coursework should always be prioritized in order to support our educators and the students they serve while being good stewards of district finances. PSEO coursework should be used to enrich, not replace, public education. This resolution supports district development of a decision tree approach that aids in counseling student choice while supporting in-district education.



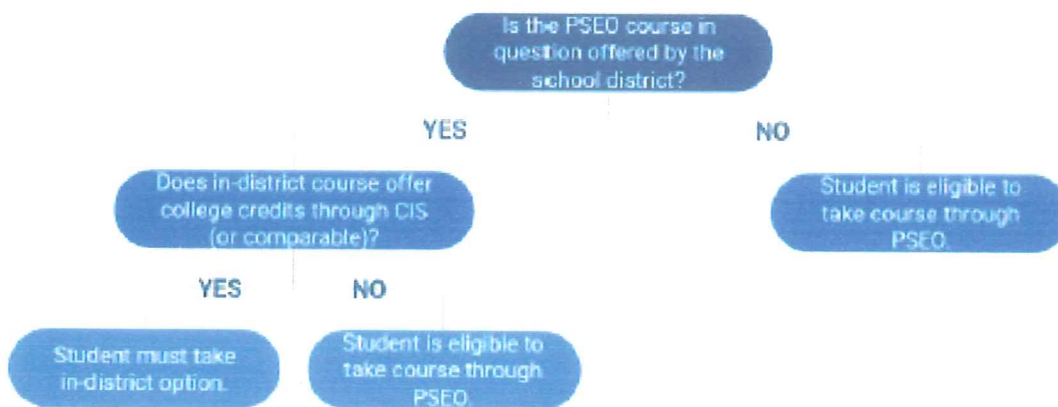
BACKGROUND PROVIDED BY SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Financial burden to Hermantown Community Schools

- 28% of eligible 11th and 12th grade students are enrolled in at least 1 PSEO course, with nearly 7% of eligible students enrolled full-time
- In the 2024-25 school year, contract payments totaled \$261,650 and direct payments totaled \$144,162 with total lost revenue of the PSEO enrollment costing the district \$405,812
- In the past 2 years, our students have realized a 7% failure rate in PSEO courses

Example “decision tree” to determine PSEO eligibility

If enrollment requirements from the hosting institution are met (class standing, GPA, pre-requisites), then:



Precedent in other states:

The states of Iowa and Wisconsin are already deploying a strategy where enrollment eligibility in their respective programs, Iowa Postsecondary Enrollment Option and Wisconsin Early College Credit Program, is determined by whether available courses already offered in-district, setting a precedence for this practice.

- Iowa Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program through Senior Year Plus (<https://educate.iowa.gov/media/1184/download?inline>, page 33): “Through the program, individual students may enroll in an eligible postsecondary course if a comparable course is not offered at their school.”
- Wisconsin Early College Credit Program (https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/dual-enrollment/2024_09_ECCP_Overview_updated_2024_09_2.pdf, page 4 & 9): “Nonsectarian courses that are not comparable to a course offered by the school district, private high school, or charter high school that the pupil is enrolled in are eligible.” AND “School districts, private high schools, and charter schools are not “approving” ECCP courses. Their role is only to determine if a comparable high school course is available to the pupil, if the ECCP course would fulfill a graduation requirement, and the number of high school credits earned (if any).”



CURRENT POSITION:

5.001 We urge the legislature to support dual enrollment options including Post-Secondary Enrollment (PSEO) pathways, Concurrent Enrollment and Career Technical Education (CTE) that are accessible and affordable to all students. These opportunities prepare students for post-secondary success by providing opportunities to earn college credits while still in high school, thereby reducing the time and cost of obtaining a degree. To ensure affordable and equitable access to all students we encourage the legislature to:

- Provide the necessary revenue to school districts to adequately fund all post-secondary programs.
- Require Minnesota PSEO institutions and school districts to collaborate on student success by sharing timely, relevant educational data including but not limited to: Mid-term progress, final grades, and attendance. (2022)
- Realign K-12 postsecondary educational programs in a uniform and consistent manner. (2014)
- Continue to engage the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in discussions to explore and find alternative approaches to the current HLC policy related to high school CE/CIS instructors and to provide financial assistance to mitigate the effect of the policy requirements put forth by the HLC to maintain the structure and high standards for CE/CIS instructors. (2015)
- Create a regional task force to resolve the faculty requirements for Concurrent Enrollment Program. (2015)
- Eliminate the roadblocks for high school students to access postsecondary credits. (2013)

CURRENT LAW:

BACKGROUND PROVIDED BY MSBA:

RATIONALE:

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION: