



Best Practices for Supporting Minnesota's PSEO Students

July 2024

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# Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a study on Minnesota's Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program. Our purpose is to better understand perceptions and mindsets surrounding the PSEO program and to deliver actionable recommendations for secondary schools and postsecondary institutions to follow to better support the success of their PSEO students. We employ a mixed-methods approach by collecting 138 survey responses from high school staff, current PSEO students, and college PSEO advisors. This dataset represents 73 different high schools and 16 postsecondary institutions. Six focus groups were also conducted to provide deeper qualitative insights.

## Key Findings

1. **Student Challenges:** PSEO students primarily struggle with academic rigor, time management, class scheduling, and adjusting to the college environment.
2. **Resource Utilization:** Students rely primarily on professors, tutoring services, college PSEO advisors, and high school counselors for support.
3. **Unaddressed Issues:** Key challenges include lack of interventional support from high schools and colleges, a lack of communication between high schools and colleges, inadequate transportation options, limited social interaction opportunities, and insufficient preparation for the college environment.

Based on our findings, we recommend the following practices that Minnesota high schools and colleges may choose to follow to address the concerns raised by study participants.

## Key Recommendations

For Colleges:

1. Provide regular grade reports to high schools.
2. Ensure students are aware of and can access tutoring services.
3. Develop PSEO-specific orientation programs and online resources.
4. Offer flexible transportation solutions.

For High Schools:

1. Expand intervention-based monitoring and support for PSEO students.
2. Enhance collaboration with college advisors.
3. Provide early and in-depth information about PSEO opportunities and challenges.

# Introduction

## Background

In our contemporary landscape of secondary and postsecondary systems, various terms, such as dual credit, dual enrollment, and concurrent enrollment, are used to describe programs that allow high school students to earn college credits. While these terms are often used interchangeably, they have distinct meanings that are crucial for understanding the nuances of different educational pathways. This paper defines "dual credit" as the broadest term, encompassing all credit-bearing partnerships between high schools and colleges and all exam-based programs such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and language proficiency seal programs. Within this umbrella, we use 'exam-based credit' to refer to college credits that a student can earn by passing a test and we use "dual enrollment" to refer specifically to programs where students are simultaneously enrolled in both high school and college, regardless of the physical location of instruction or the instructor's affiliation. A subset of dual enrollment is "concurrent enrollment," which describes courses taught in high schools by high school teachers using college-approved curricula. Thus, concurrent enrollment is a type of dual enrollment, which in turn is a type of dual credit. The Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program, the focus of this study, falls within the category of dual enrollment, offering students the opportunity to take college courses taught by a college instructor while still in high school.

These programs have grown rapidly over the past 25 years, from 200,000 students in 1997 to more than 1.5 million high school students in 2021. In three states - Indiana, Iowa, and Idaho - high school students make up about 40% of all community college enrollment (Community College Research Center, 2023). This trend is expected to continue. In 1985, Minnesota led the nation by enacting legislation enabling high school students to earn college credits. This law is called the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Act. Today, the PSEO program enables over 20,000 high school students per year in 10th-12th grade to enroll directly into courses taught by a college or university instructor. By completing the course, PSEO students earn college credits which are applicable to their high school graduation requirements. PSEO students may enroll in PSEO on a part-time or full-time basis, online or in-person, leading at least some students to complete a 2-year degree program before graduating from high school (Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act, 2023).

Enrollment in the PSEO program can offer numerous benefits to students, including reduced cost and time to degree, exposure to a wider variety of class options than what is offered at their high school, improved self-confidence, and a more flexible schedule. However, failure to complete PSEO coursework can harm both a student's high school and college GPA and even lead to delays in high school graduation. Inequitable access to dual enrollment programs like PSEO is a consistent challenge both in Minnesota and across the nation. Anecdotal evidence of these issues,

backed by relevant academic PSEO research produced by other institutions such as the [University of Utah](#) (Taylor et al., 2022) and the [College in High School Alliance](#) (Perry, 2023), informed the need for this paper.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to better understand perceptions and mindsets surrounding the PSEO program and to deliver actionable recommendations for secondary schools and postsecondary institutions. This research is particularly focused on understanding the needs and preferences of diverse PSEO participants to ensure that the solutions proposed are inclusive and broadly applicable.

Data points for this study were collected from several stakeholders. Throughout the paper I will refer to data collected from high school guidance counselors and high school college and career counselors as “high school staff.” When talking about college PSEO advisors, I will refer to them as “college PSEO advisors,” and when I’m talking about current PSEO students, I will refer to them as “students” or “PSEO students.”

### Research Questions

This paper seeks to answer three key research questions:

1. What challenges do PSEO students face and what resources do they rely on to address these challenges?
2. What challenges do PSEO students face that are unaddressed and affect their academic success?
3. What services can feasibly be implemented to address top unmet challenges?

## **Methodology**

### Data Collection Methods

This research project utilizes a survey and focus groups to collect primary data about the experiences of high school counselors, college and career readiness coordinators, college PSEO counselors, and current PSEO students. Contact information for high school staff were collected from public contact lists on the Minnesota Department of Education website, while contact information for PSEO counselors was collected from PSEO webpages on college websites. From there, surveys intended for students were shared by high school staff or PSEO counselors with their students.

Survey questions were posed as open-ended questions. After the data collection period was closed, I manually categorized responses into thematic categories. Confusing or unclear

responses were discarded from the survey analysis. Then, I sorted the responses by frequency and compared top responses between stakeholders. A full list of questions and responses can be found in the Appendix.

Sample Size and Demographics

This dataset includes 138 individuals representing 73 different high schools and 16 different postsecondary institutions.

	Survey Response Count	Unique High Schools Represented	Unique Colleges Represented
High School Counselors or College & Career Readiness Coordinators	52	47	
PSEO Students	80	33	15
College PSEO Counselors	6		6
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>16</b>

Racial/ethnic data was recorded for PSEO student responses to measure whether our feedback is coming from a diverse population of students.

Race/Ethnicity	Survey Participation Rate*	K12 Enrollment Rate**	PSEO Enrollment Rate**
American Indian	1.25%	3.00%	1.50%
Asian	7.50%	6.50%	8.90%
Black or African American	28.75%	11.10%	12.90%
Hispanic or Latinx	1.25%	10.30%	5.40%
Middle Eastern	1.25%	NA	NA
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%	0.10%	0.10%
Prefer not to answer	5.00%	NA	NA
Two or more race/ethnicities	5.00%	4.10%	3.30%
White	51.25%	64.80%	68.00%

\* some students identified with more than one race/ethnicity, leading to a total greater than 100%

\*\* data from the 2024 MDE Rigorous Course Taking Report for the 2022-2023 school year

### Limitations

This design enables an informal analysis of experiences and perspectives of current PSEO students, high school staff, and college staff. This research is not a statistically valid survey and may not capture a full depiction of PSEO experiences across the state of Minnesota. In addition, self-reported data has potential for bias. Please consider this to be an exploratory study that provides useful insights into attitudes/mindsets around the PSEO experience to identify key areas for improvement. The study is focused on Minnesota, which may limit applicability to programs in other states.

Further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of PSEO participation, evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed recommendations, and investigate how to increase participation among underrepresented student groups.

## **Key Findings**

This section presents the primary insights gathered from our research involving high school staff, PSEO students, and college PSEO advisors. We aim to investigate three key research questions:

1. What challenges do PSEO students face and what resources do they rely on to address these challenges?
2. What challenges do PSEO students face that are unaddressed and affect their academic success?
3. What services can feasibly be implemented to address top unmet challenges?

The following tables have categorized survey data accompanied with discussion points interpreting the data. Complete aggregated response data from our surveys can be found in the Appendix.

**Table 1: What Challenges do PSEO Students Face?**

<u>High Schools</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Colleges</u>	<u>Count</u>
Issues with transportation	13	Academic challenge of college courses	28	Time management	3
Course is too challenging/not academically ready	13	Time management and organization	16	Balancing high school and college lifestyles	2
Lack of self-advocacy or ability to ask for	6	College class scheduling issues	14	Accessing college resources	1

help					
Admission requirements are too low, setting students up for failure	5	Adjusting from HS to college environment	9	Being youngest students in the room	1
Lack of motivation, ability to be independent	5	Understanding the responsibility that comes with college	7	Course Availability	1

The main challenges that PSEO students reported were:

1. **Academic challenge/workload of college courses.** This was the top response given by students. Many students reported that college coursework was a bigger ‘step up’ from high school classes than they thought it would be.
2. **Time management/organization.** This was often related to struggling to study without being prompted, not having time to work on homework in class, and staying organized enough to meet assignment deadlines.
3. **Class scheduling issues.** Students reported issues with the availability of the college courses that they wanted to take. Students also reported that it was highly difficult to balance a high school schedule with a college schedule because neither institution is willing to be flexible for commitments that the student has at the other institution. Some students noted issues with transferring credits from the college to the high school, while other students faced issues with receiving counseling support from their high school during the summer when registering for their high school classes.
4. **Adjusting from high school to college environment.** Most often, this is related to physically navigating the college campus, socializing with older students, submitting homework through online portals, and needing to self-advocate more often.
5. **Understanding the responsibility that comes with being a college student.** Here, students generally point out that they are treated more like adults while enrolled in the PSEO program, and that it took time to adjust to this new experience.

Table 2: What Resources are Available to Address Challenges?

In response to these challenges, PSEO students most often report in Table 2 that they leverage:

1. **Professors.** Professors are the top resource that PSEO students go to when they are struggling with classes, don’t understand an assignment, or are feeling overwhelmed.
2. **Tutoring Services.** Students consistently share how valuable tutoring services are to them in better understanding class materials and homework assignments. It is worth noting that neither high schools nor colleges have considered tutoring as an important resource for students.



3. **College PSEO Advisors.** Students heavily rely on their college PSEO advisors for navigating degree requirements and building their college class schedule.
4. **High School Counselors.** Students rely on high school guidance counselors to set expectations about what they will experience as a PSEO student.
5. **Other Students.** Older students, especially those who are currently in the PSEO program, are a helpful resource when a student is struggling with their coursework or understanding how to navigate college environments.

Table 2:

<u>High Schools</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Colleges</u>	<u>Count</u>
We require intro meetings with individual students	12	Professors	21	PSEO-specific staff/advisors	3
We host evening information sessions for students and parents	7	Tutoring services	20	Letting PSEO students live on campus	1
Collaborate more with college PSEO advisors	5	College PSEO Counselors	20	Work with other institutions in cases of course unavailability	1
No issues identified that need to be solved	4	High School Counselor	15	Emphasize importance of time management in PSEO orientations	1
High School check-ins during the school year	3	Other students	8	Contact students via HS email, text, and Google Group as well as college email	1

Table 3: Which Resources Best Prepare Students for PSEO enrollment?

When asked what resources have been most helpful in preparing for PSEO enrollment, survey data shows a slight disconnect between students and counselors. High school staff responses that students use high school advisors and college advisors about the same amount and colleges indicate that their PSEO orientations are most helpful. However, student participants clearly

show that their high school counselor has been the most helpful, followed by their college PSEO advisor and then friends and peers who did PSEO.

<u>High Schools</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Colleges</u>	<u>Count</u>
College Advisors	14	High School Advisor	29	PSEO-Specific Orientation	4
HS Counselor meetings	14	College Advisor	20	Detailed PSEO Website	2
Self-made PSEO Informational Materials	9	Friends/Peers who did PSEO	15	High School Info Sessions	2
Prior enrollment in AP or Concurrent Enrollment	6	College Professors	12	Prior enrollment in AP or Concurrent Enrollment	1
Nothing	4	College Academic Resources	11	PSEO Welcome Gatherings	1

## **Analysis and Discussion**

Our research has uncovered several key challenges faced by PSEO students, as well as insights into the resources they utilize and the support structures currently in place. This section will analyze these findings in depth, exploring the implications for students, high schools, and colleges involved in the PSEO program. Through our survey and focus group data, we identified four primary areas of concern that are currently not adequately addressed within the PSEO framework:

### 1. Communication Gap Between High Schools and Colleges

One of the most significant issues emerging from our research is the lack of effective communication between high schools and colleges participating in the PSEO program. This manifests in two critical ways:

a) Information Silos: There appears to be a breakdown in the sharing of crucial information about student performance, course enrollment, and available resources between high schools and colleges. This information gap can lead to:

- Delays in identifying and addressing poor academic performance

- Missed opportunities for providing additional support services
- Inconsistent tracking of student progress across both institutions
- College counselors not understanding high school graduation requirements

b) Disjointed Support Systems: The lack of communication often results in uncoordinated support efforts between high schools and colleges. Consequences of this include:

- Students feeling uncertain about whom to approach for assistance
- A tendency for students to rely on familiar high school counselors, even for college-related issues
- Potential delays in students receiving timely assistance for academic or personal difficulties
- Difficulties in registering for college classes over the summer when high school counselors are on break

## 2. Transportation Challenges

Our research highlights that inadequate transportation options pose a significant barrier for many PSEO students. This issue is multifaceted:

a) Geographical Constraints: PSEO students often face considerable challenges in commuting to college campuses, particularly in rural or suburban areas. This can result in:

- Increased travel time, leading to stress and fatigue
- Higher rates of absenteeism
- Negative impacts on academic performance due to these factors

b) Financial Burden: The cost of transportation can be prohibitive, especially for students from low-income families. This financial strain may lead to:

- Irregular class attendance
- Increased stress and anxiety about program participation
- Potential exclusion of economically disadvantaged students from the PSEO program

c) Outdated Reimbursement Policies: It's noteworthy that while a transportation reimbursement program exists in PSEO state statute, it has not been updated since 1985. The current reimbursement rate of 15 cents per mile for families at or below the federal poverty line is inadequate in today's economic context.

### 3. Limited Social Interaction Opportunities

PSEO students often find themselves caught in a ‘gray space’ between two worlds, leading to social challenges:

a) Isolation and Integration Difficulties:

- PSEO students may feel disconnected from their high school peers due to spending significant time on college campuses
- Simultaneously, they may struggle to integrate with older college students
- This dual isolation can negatively impact mental health and overall well-being

b) Restricted Extracurricular Participation:

- The demanding schedule of balancing high school and college commitments often limits PSEO students' ability to engage in extracurricular activities
- This limitation affects both high school and college-based activities
- Reduced extracurricular involvement can hinder social development, limit opportunities for building competitive resumes, and detract from a well-rounded educational experience
- The transportation issues mentioned earlier further exacerbate this problem

### 4. Insufficient Preparation for the College Environment

Many PSEO students find themselves underprepared for the realities of college-level academics:

a) Academic Rigor: The transition from high school to college-level coursework often comes as a shock to PSEO students. This can lead to:

- Difficulties in managing increased workload
- Challenges in understanding and engaging with more complex material
- Struggles in meeting higher academic expectations

b) Self-Advocacy and Independence: The college environment demands a level of self-reliance that many high school students are not accustomed to. PSEO students may face challenges in:

- Navigating college administrative processes
- Accessing and utilizing academic resources effectively
- Seeking help proactively when facing difficulties

c) Time Management: Balancing the demands of both high school and college requires exceptional time management skills. PSEO students often struggle with:

- Juggling assignments and exams from both institutions
- Managing conflicting deadlines and commitments
- Coping with increased stress and potential burnout due to these pressures

### Note on Lack of Intervention-Based Support

Our research, as evidenced in Table 1, indicates that PSEO students primarily struggle with three key issues:

1. The academic rigor of college courses
2. Time management
3. College class scheduling

Correspondingly, Table 2 reveals that students most frequently rely on professors, tutoring services, and college PSEO counselors to address these challenges. This finding underscores the importance of these resources in supporting PSEO student success.

However, our data also reveals a significant disconnect between the resources students find most helpful and those emphasized by high schools and colleges. High school staff predominantly focus on providing solutions prior to PSEO enrollment, with only a small number (5 responses) indicating collaboration with college PSEO advisors. Similarly, colleges prioritize PSEO-specific orientations, which occur before the semester begins.

This data suggests that the current approach of both high school and college counselors is largely preventative, focusing on:

- Setting expectations about the PSEO program
- Screening out students who may not be ready for PSEO
- Implementing preventative measures to support student success

While this approach aligns with student reports that high school advisors and college counselors were most helpful in preparing them for PSEO, it falls short in addressing the academic challenges that arise during the semester.

Crucially, when facing in-semester academic difficulties, students report turning to professors and tutoring services. However, our research indicates that neither high school nor college staff commonly recognize these as important resources for PSEO students. This is a clear area for improvement in PSEO support systems.

### Implications and Areas for Improvement

To summarize, these findings have several important implications:

1. There is a need for better ongoing support systems for PSEO students, particularly once they have begun their college courses.
2. High schools and colleges should work to bridge the communication gap, ensuring that information about student performance and available resources is shared effectively.
3. Transportation issues need to be addressed, potentially through updated reimbursement policies or innovative solutions like shuttle services.
4. More attention should be paid to the social and extracurricular needs of PSEO students to ensure a well-rounded educational experience.
5. Pre-PSEO preparation programs could be enhanced to better equip students for the academic rigor and independence required in college courses.
6. The role of professors and tutoring services in supporting PSEO students should be recognized and better emphasized during PSEO orientations.

These insights form the basis for our recommendations, which will be outlined in the following section.

## Recommendations

Based on this dataset, what services can feasibly be implemented to address top unmet challenges? It is clear that PSEO students face several unaddressed challenges that can affect their academic success. To mitigate these issues and better support PSEO students, I recommend both colleges and high schools implement a variety of services. The following recommendations are based on the most common and significant challenges identified through this research:

Colleges:

- 1. Provide regular grade reports to high schools.** Establish a system where colleges send regular progress reports to high schools. These reports should include grades, attendance records where available, and any academic concerns. This will enable high school counselors to monitor their students' progress more effectively and intervene when necessary. Regular updates can also help in aligning the support services between high schools and colleges, ensuring that students do not fall through the cracks. FERPA regulations state that academic records may be released without the student's consent to school officials with a legitimate educational interest (Electronic Privacy Information Center).
- 2. Develop PSEO-specific orientation programs, social opportunities, and resources.** Create comprehensive orientation programs tailored specifically for PSEO students. These programs should cover topics such as navigating college campuses, understanding the academic expectations, utilizing campus resources (e.g., libraries, tutoring centers, counseling services), and managing the transition from high school to college. Online resources, such as webinars, guides, and FAQs, should also be developed to provide

ongoing support throughout the academic year. Organizing low-cost social events like study nights, movie nights, or ice cream socials to provide PSEO students with the opportunity to socialize and form peer networks. Some institutions, such as the University of Minnesota, have a PSEO student club that helps with these activities.

- 3. Offer or advocate for flexible transportation solutions.** Transportation is a significant barrier for many PSEO students. Colleges can address this by offering flexible transportation solutions such as free or subsidized bus cards, shuttle services, or partnerships with local transportation providers. By reducing transportation barriers, colleges can ensure that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to the benefits of the PSEO program. However, not all colleges are in a financial position to support these changes. I also recommend that college leaders advocate for an update to the PSEO transportation reimbursement statute to increase overall funding.

High Schools:

- 1. Expand monitoring and support for current PSEO students.** Implement an intervention-based monitoring system that tracks the academic performance and well-being of PSEO students throughout the semester. This can include regular check-ins, mentoring programs, or dedicated staff members responsible for supporting PSEO students. By providing continuous support, high schools can address academic or personal challenges before they escalate or before it is too late in the semester. While some high school staff shared the belief that this should solely be the role of the college advisors, some students indicated that they prefer to go to their high school counselor.
- 2. Enhance collaboration with college advisors.** Along with expanded monitoring of PSEO student grades, strengthen the partnership between high school counselors and college PSEO advisors. Regular meetings and communication channels should be established to discuss student progress, share resources, and develop coordinated support strategies. Ensure college advisors know which courses satisfy which high school graduation requirements, especially if counselors are not available during the summer. Enhanced collaboration ensures a seamless experience for PSEO students and leverages the expertise of both high school and college staff.
- 3. Inform students and parents about PSEO opportunities and challenges early and in-depth.** Early and thorough information sessions for students and parents can set realistic expectations about the PSEO program. High schools should provide detailed information about the benefits and challenges of PSEO, the application process, academic requirements, and available support services. This proactive approach helps students and parents make informed decisions and prepares them for the demands of college coursework.

# Conclusion

The PSEO program in Minnesota is a significant opportunity for high school students to accelerate their academic progress and reduce the cost of higher education. However, as this research demonstrates, there are substantial challenges that need to be addressed to better support the student experience.

Our study has revealed several key issues facing PSEO students:

1. A communication gap between high schools and colleges, leading to information silos and disjointed support systems.
2. Inadequate transportation options, particularly affecting students in rural or low-income areas.
3. Limited social interaction opportunities, potentially impacting students' overall well-being and development.
4. Insufficient preparation for the college environment, including struggles with academic rigor, self-advocacy, and time management.

These challenges are compounded by a disconnect between the resources students find most helpful (professors and tutoring services) and those emphasized by high schools and colleges (pre-enrollment orientations and counseling).

Moving forward, several key areas require attention:

1. Improving communication and collaboration between high schools and colleges to create a more seamless PSEO experience.
2. Developing more comprehensive support systems that extend beyond pre-enrollment preparation to address challenges throughout the PSEO experience.
3. Addressing practical barriers such as transportation to ensure equitable access to the program.
4. Enhancing preparation programs to better equip students for the academic and personal challenges of college-level work.
5. Recognizing and formalizing the role of professors and tutoring services in supporting PSEO students.

Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impacts of PSEO participation, assessing the effectiveness of implemented recommendations, and exploring strategies to increase participation among underrepresented student groups. Studying the experiences of students enrolled in programs similar to PSEO in other states could provide valuable insights for further improving Minnesota's PSEO program.



By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging the insights gained from this study, high schools and colleges can enhance the PSEO experience, making it a more powerful tool for academic advancement and educational equity in Minnesota. The success of these efforts will depend on the collaborative work of students, educators, administrators, and policymakers.

Ultimately, the success of PSEO relies on the collaborative efforts of students, educators, administrators, and policymakers. By working together to address the challenges and leverage the opportunities identified in this study, educational institutions can ensure that PSEO continues to offer Minnesota's students a powerful tool for academic and personal growth.

## **About the Author**

Zeke Jackson is a former PSEO student and the Executive Director of People for PSEO, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote, defend, and expand opportunities for students through the PSEO program. Zeke has served as Executive Director since 2018 and graduated from the University of Minnesota in May 2023 after studying entrepreneurial management and political science. Learn more about People for PSEO at [peopleforpseo.org](http://peopleforpseo.org).

Special thanks to the Career Academies at Greater Twin Cities United Way for funding the publication of this research.

# Appendix

## Citations

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## High School Staff Survey Responses

Approximately how many students at your school are enrolled in at least one PSEO class?	Average
Average of	45.03846154

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your understanding of the PSEO program?	Count
	5      28
	4      20

	3	4
	2	0
	1	0

What resources have been most helpful in improving your understanding of PSEO?	
Close college partners	29
MDE Website and resources	20
Long-time experience in counselor role	14
Colleagues	4
Students	2
State Statute	1
Minnesota School Counselor Association	1

What are the most common reasons students choose to participate in PSEO, based on your experience?	
Financial benefits	28
Career acceleration	12
Wider class variety	10
Schedule flexibility	7
Dislikes HS environment	7
Avoid teacher or peers	5
Take classes not available via AP/CE	4
Challenging courses	4
To start college with a support system from high school	3
Exposure to college environment	3
PSEO classes are easier than other high school classes	2
To take fewer classes at once	1
They like specialized PSEO program	1
Parents push them towards it	1

What resources have been most helpful in preparing your students to participate in PSEO, based on your experience?	
College Advisors	14
HS Counselor meetings	14
Self-made PSEO Informational Materials	9
Prior AP/CE enrollment	6
Nothing	4
Student peers and other families	3
MN Department of Education	2
People for PSEO website	2
Ensure family is aware	1
Visiting college campus beforehand	1
Strong communication with students	1
Learning from their own mistakes	1
Providing transportation to college	1
Providing space and resources at HS for PSEO students	1

What challenges do your students face when considering or participating in the PSEO program?	
Issues with transportation	13
Course is too challenging/not academically ready	13
Lack of self-advocacy or asking for help	6
Admission requirements are too low, causing students who aren't ready to enroll in PSEO	5
Lack of ambition/motivation/ability to be independent	5
Time Management	5
Adjusting to college environment/expectations	4
Being socially ready for PSEO	3
Missing friends and the HS experience	3
Balancing PSEO and HS at same time	3

Lack of accurate information about PSEO	3
Lack of structure & class time	2
Lack of support from professors	2
Lack of collaboration between college and high school	2
Understanding cons of starting college early	2
Access to support resources when taking online courses	2
Issues with registering for college classes	2
Issues with accessing academic support	2
Unsure	1
Lack of course availability	1
Doing PSEO for the wrong reasons	1
Understanding difference of CE vs PSEO	1
Access to support resources for IEP students	1
School wants to focus on AP	1
Credit transfer after PSEO	1
There are no common issues	1
Colleges see PSEO students as money instead of considering whether they will be successful in PSEO	1
Issues with technology access	1
Issues with getting textbooks	1
Issues with applying to PSEO without a GPA or class rank	1
High school putting rules on who can do PSEO	1
Issues with accessing CTE programs	1
None	1
Counselors don't have access to students grade	1

What solutions have your schools implemented or considered implementing in response to the challenges your PSEO students face?	
We require intro meetings with individual students	12
We host evening information sessions for students and parents	7

Collaborate more with college PSEO advisors	5
No issues identified	4
Check in regularly with PSEO students during the school year	3
We encourage/expand concurrent enrollment or AP instead of PSEO	3
We haven't implemented any changes	3
We require that students complete a PSEO contract	3
We offer study halls and study blocks for PSEO students	2
Strong advertising about PSEO and what it entails	2
Consulting with teachers about struggling students	1
Make family aware of PSEO risks	1
We aren't sure what to do	1
Collaborate more with college professors	1
Encourage online PSEO enrollment and stay in HS building	1
It is on the student to address issues independently due to funding model	1
Ensure student uses college resources	1
Provide access to high school academic resources	1
We began providing transportation	1
Continuous communication with students and families	1
Working more closely with the colleges to help them understand how non-graded programs work.	1
Encourage PSEO students to focus on general ed courses	1
Do research with students on how PSEO credits transfer after high school to the college they want to attend	1
Close monitoring of progress and connecting students to in high school and college resources to meet their needs	1

What barriers prevent your students from accessing the PSEO program?	
Transportation	14
None	11
Not meeting admission criteria	5

Not being academically ready for college-level classes	4
Geography - distance to nearest college	4
Low awareness	3
Lack of soft skills for succeeding in PSEO	3
There are few barriers due to low GPA requirements	2
High GPA requirements	2
Issues with scheduling	2
Lack of self-confidence	2
Burdensome enrollment processes and requirements	2
Not having home internet or device	1
Home responsibilities	1
Lack of appeal process for 8th grade MCE requirement	1
We do well with PSEO when students stay in our building. We are not successful when students travel to the college.	1
Lack of class availability at college	1
Lack of academic support for online PSEO	1
Poor grades in 9th grade, even if they've turned it around	1
Horror stories of PSEO	1
English barriers for EL students	1
Missing high school experience	1
lack of parent/teacher buy in	1

If you could wave a magic wand to make one major change to the PSEO program, what would it be?	
Raise minimum GPA requirements for PSEO	8
Providing a bus for transportation/Ease of transportation	4
That colleges and high schools worked together more often	4
Eliminate full-time PSEO to maintain connection to high school	2
Allow application appeals based on GPA or allow accuplacer retakes	1
Remove appeal processes outside of GPA requirements	1

More support from the high school other than just from the Counselor office	1
Have flexible GPA requirements that are more equitable within and across grade levels (eg. 3.0 minimum gpa for juniors versus 2.5 minimum for seniors makes no sense).	1
Have a college in walking distance!	1
Not allow students on the college campuses. They are not mature enough to be there. They need to stay in high school where they can be a role model for other students, be a high school student, and participate in things high school.	1
Having transition counselors that works with students and parents, high schools, and colleges specifically for PSEO students	1
That the colleges do a better job of advising PSEO students	1
Unlimited seats for PSEO students	1
I wish the state would let students take a summer course.	1
Classes specifically for PSEO students on the college campus	1
More flexibility for students who have struggled in high school but would benefit from PSEO and have shown in other ways than previous grades that they would be successful in PSEO.	1
Stricter guidelines that when a student is failing PSEO it doesn't take so long for them to have to go back to high school courses.	1
making online classes NOT an option	1
increasing CTE classes that are available for 10th-12th grade students.	1
Consistency among the colleges on PSEO eligibility	1
That PSEO could occur within the high school	1
more transferable HS/College credits	1
I would like to have a part-time or even full-time PSEO liaison at our high school who works with the local colleges and whose main job is to support students in the PSEO program and help prepare them for college. I believe this would have to be someone who is housed in the high school that the counselors and teachers can refer students to talk to. If it is not someone on site in the high school, most students will not utilize them.	1
NO Sophomores, and still a smaller percent of students able to 'go' their Junior year. This program makes it harder for kids to be kids or student's be students. There are still in school programs allowing college credit; teenagers younger	1



than 18 don't need to be on college campuses.	
Student interviews at the college before being able to register for classes. The students who fail or withdraw from PSEO classes often blame it on not knowing the expectations, no matter how much I try to prepare them and let them know they need to be independent and advocate for themselves at this level.	1
That students have more discipline	1
As a small stand alone high school if we have too many students interested in participating in PSEO it can be a serious hit to our overall budget. If there was a way to reduce the cost to the high school that would be helpful.	1
That high schools/counselors were more supportive of the PSEO program	1
Better supports for high school students. Working in an ALC our students often utilize the Early/Middle College program-there should be additional supports for these students, often these students do not have support at home, do not have well developed study habits, and do not have an understanding of how to access supports. As their counselor I do what I can, however, I do not have access to their grades, attendance, etc. nor do I have unlimited time where I can consistently track that information down.	1
Make the NOSR an online form so counselors, students, guardians and college advisors can each log in separately and digitally sign it. It's a pain to pass it around either physically or through email to get each person to fill it out, sign it, then to have the student finally turn it in. This is the only part of the process that students frequently get confused about.	1
Helping others understand how for some students, PSEO can be a wonderful opportunity and to not make it seem like a bad thing. I feel like there is a stigma in our area that students who are taking PSEO courses don't want to be involved and are not wanting to be members of our school/community - which is not true for a majority of our students. As PSEO gets larger, we are having more pushback in our office about PSEO and being asked (by others, not our administration) to try to keep students in our building instead of giving them this option.	1
More ways to prove college readiness instead of just GPA or class ranking.	1

Our school is quite small and we are landlocked by the state border. Also, we have a lot of Amish population in our area and their kids aren't in our school system. When we get an imbalance of students taking PSEO courses, then it takes classes from our teachers. The risk is that some of our staff drop below full-time employment status causing them to look for full-time employment elsewhere. Additionally, since the PSEO courses are online, the kids are still in the building and need to be supervised. We provide supervision while the funding goes to the college that period of the day. We have a few teachers working on certification to teach dual enrollment classes, but it takes time and resources with no guarantee of higher wages or that the class will run.

Previously, we didn't require students to be in the building for PSEO classes, but what we found is that they would take courses at the start or end of the day so they could sleep in or run for food before sports practice. These kids struggled with time management so we went back to requiring them to be present in the school building for all classes - even PSEO.

We need to find a balance where our school is still viable and we are also able to offer challenging classes to our kids.

## PSEO Students Survey Responses

What resources, individuals, or programs have been most helpful in improving your understanding of how to be a successful PSEO student?	
High School Advisor	29
College Advisor	20
Friends/Peers who did PSEO	15
College Professors	12
College Academic Resources	11
High School Teachers	8
Orientation meetings	4
Independent research	4
Family who did PSEO	3
Teachers of AP/CE	3
Determined to Learn website	2
TRIO	2
College and Career Readiness class	2
Having a personal laptop	1
Setting aside time each week for PSEO classes	1
News articles	1
College Possible	1

What are the most common reasons students choose to participate in PSEO, based on your experience? Why did you choose to participate in PSEO?	
Career acceleration/head start/finish college early	48
Financial Benefits	45
More free time, independence, better schedule, fewer classes at once	25
Get experience of college environment before doing college 'for real'	13
Wider class variety/more advanced courses	10
Dislike high school environment	5

Provides more opportunities	4
More mature learning environment	2
Pushed by parents to do PSEO	2
Didn't fit in at the high school	2
To get an Associates degree	2
More 'real life'	1
Guaranteed credits for passing class	1
Career exploration	1
To have a more competitive college application	1

What challenges do PSEO students commonly face? What challenges have you faced as a PSEO student?	
Academic challenge/workload of college courses	28
Time management/organization	16
College class scheduling issues	14
Adjusting from HS to college environment	9
Understanding the responsibility that comes with college	7
Balancing logistics of PSEO and high school commitments	7
Transportation/commuting	6
Professors less involved than HS teachers	5
Lack of social interactions/being with older students	5
Laziness/procrastination/lack of motivation	4
Understanding degree requirements and credit transfer	3
Missing high school experiences	3
Feeling pressured/overwhelmed	3
Confusing process to sign up	3
Online classes	2
None	2
Hard to get information about PSEO	2
Cost of food	2

Confusing D2L pages	2
Not asking for help	1
Finding spaces to work on PSEO classes at HS	1
Difficulty finding college resources	1
Biases from professors	1

<b>What resources are available for PSEO students to use in order to overcome the challenges you previously shared?</b>	
Professors	21
Tutoring services/centers	20
College PSEO Counselors	20
HS Counselor	15
Current or former PSEO students	4
Friends	4
HS Teacher	3
College clubs/student groups	2
Study rooms at HS	1
Using a planner	1
Homework Help Center	1
Online articles	1
In-person events with other PSEO students	1
MavConnect	1
Class discussion pages	1
Parents	1
Online asynchronous classes	1
Teaching assistants	1
Free/discounted transportation options	1
Maps of college campus	1
School therapist	1
Orientation course	1

<b>If you could make any major change to the PSEO program, what would it be?</b>	
Expand PSEO for 9-10th graders	4
Expand PSEO Orientations and PSEO-specific resources (PSEO Student Days)	4
More understanding and communicative professors	4
More tolerant college absence policies for PSEO students with high school commitments	4
Free bus cards/ bus routes for PSEO students	3
Inform students sooner and more in-depth about PSEO opportunities and risks	3
Allow PSEO students to take more than 20 credits per semester	2
Weighted grades for PSEO classes	2
More communication from my high school	2
Expand tutoring services for PSEO students	1
Make high school more like PSEO	1
Make parking easier for PSEO students	1
Allow PSEO students to register for classes earlier	2
Improve D2L page	1
Less confusing PSEO paperwork	1
More practice in college classes rather than all lecture	1
That more people did PSEO	1
Less funding taken from high schools so that they are more likely to help PSEO students	1
Better support transitioning into college classes	1
Offer PSEO students a second chances when they fail a class	1
Full payment of class-related fees	1
Better communication between high school and college	1
That high schools were more supportive and had more resources for their PSEO students	1

That PSEO students were treated like transfer students	1
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"I know other PSEO students from my college campus"	
Strongly agree	32
Agree	33
Neutral	7
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	5

"I have issues affording meals as a PSEO student"	
Strongly agree	2
Agree	7
Neutral	11
Disagree	29
Strongly disagree	31

"My high school is supportive of me doing PSEO"	
Strongly agree	45
Agree	20
Neutral	8
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	1

"I find success in taking online PSEO classes"	
Strongly agree	32
Agree	28
Neutral	12
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	3

## College PSEO Advisor Survey Responses

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your understanding of the PSEO program?		
	5	3
	4	3
	3	
	2	
	1	

What resources have been most helpful in improving your understanding of PSEO?		
Minnesota Department of Education		4
Coworkers/Colleagues		4
High School Partners		1

What are the most common reasons students choose to participate in PSEO, based on your experience?		
Financial benefits		4
Get a head start		2
Test college environment		1
Explore career fields		1
Gain competitive edge on college applications		1
No longer wants to attend high school		1
Challenge of college courses		1
Access classes not available at high school		1
Faith-based environment		1

What resources have been most helpful in preparing your students to participate in PSEO, based on your experience?		
PSEO-Specific Orientation		4



Detailed PSEO Website	2
High School Info Sessions	2
Taking AP and/or Concurrent Enrollment before PSEO	1
PSEO Welcome Gatherings	1
College PSEO Handbook	1
1:1 meetings to answer any outstanding questions	1
Student peers who did PSEO	1

What challenges do your PSEO students face?	
Time management	3
Balancing high school and college lifestyles	2
Access college resources	1
Being youngest students in the room	1
Course Availability	1
Adapting to college environment	1
Reading and responding to emails	1
Transportation and food costs	1
Self-advocacy	1

What solutions have your schools implemented or considered implementing in response to the challenges your PSEO students face?	
PSEO-specific staff/advisors	4
Letting PSEO students live on campus	1
Work with other institutions in cases of course inavailability	1
Emphasize importance of time management in PSEO orientations	1
Contact students via HS email, text, and Google Group as well as college email	1
Implemented PSEO Academic Recovery Plan with weekly meetings	1
Asynchronous Orientation Course	1

In your experience, how well do PSEO students do in online vs in-person classes?	
Better for in-person classes	2
No major difference	3
Unsure	1
Depends on student	1

If you could wave a magic wand to make one major change to the PSEO program, what would it be?	
More PSEO marketing in high schools	1
MinnState Common Application	1
Funding for food/transportation	1
Formalized PSEO Feedback process for MDE	1