

Dual Enrollment in Minnesota

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Minnesota legislators enacted the Postsecondary Enrollment Options program in 1985 (Minnesota Statutes 2025). Dual enrollment in Minnesota primarily takes two forms: Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) involves high school students matriculating at a college or university either part- or full-time, whereas concurrent enrollment (sometimes called ‘college in the schools’) involves students taking a course administered through a college or university but taught in their high school. Concurrent enrollment courses are taught by either a higher education faculty member who travels to the high school or by a high school teacher who meets credentialing requirements. Students may participate in either PSEO or concurrent enrollment for face-to-face courses or online (more commonly asynchronously). Courses taken through PSEO and concurrent enrollment toward both high school graduation requirements and a student’s postsecondary degree (subject to transfer requirements).

10th, 11th, and 12th grade students may participate in PSEO, with individual postsecondary institutions setting the eligibility requirements for PSEO applicants. 10th graders are limited to taking one career-technical course in their first semester in PSEO ([with each campus determining what counts as a career-technical course](#)) and may take additional courses if they pass their first with at least a C. The law caps how many years high school students may participate in PSEO, but there are no limits on the number of credits a student may earn (Minnesota Statutes 2025).

The funding models for PSEO and concurrent enrollment are distinct. For PSEO, the state covers students’ tuition, textbooks, and materials (and a portion of transportation costs for low-income families); tuition is paid out to college/university campuses by the Minnesota Department of Education. In 2024, the state paid \$48.6 million to 55 eligible institutions for PSEO coursework (Strom 2024). K-12 education financing means that when students participate in PSEO, their school district loses funding; tense competition for enrollment has emerged between school districts and postsecondary institutions, especially in rural areas of the state. For concurrent enrollment, school districts keep students in their buildings and keep the per-pupil local funding; the school district pays the sponsoring college/university a fee per course. The legislature provides some funding to offset the cost of offering concurrent enrollment, with \$4 million of state funding appropriated in 2023 (Minnesota Department of Education 2023).

In 2023, 21,165 students earned 286,970 credits through PSEO, and 32,440 students earned 198,544 credits through concurrent enrollment. PSEO students may attend public or private institutions at the expense of the state (Espinosa 2024). As of 2023, 90% of all dual enrollment students take their courses at the Minnesota State system, which is distinct from the University

of Minnesota. Some 24% of students in the Minnesota State system are dual enrollment, with wide variation in the system's 33 colleges and universities. Across Minnesota State's universities, community colleges, and technical schools, anywhere between 1% to 64% of the student body is PSEO. At my campus, Century College, 20% of the 13,031 students who took classes in FY25 were PSEO (Century College 2026). In disciplines where coursework counts toward high school graduation requirements, such as Political Science, this proportion is much higher. These students are not distributed evenly across disciplines, however. 63.5% of students I have taught in Political Science since Fall 2023 are PSEO, and in asynchronous courses I taught in Spring 2026, 85% of students were PSEO.

PSEO is touted as an opportunity to close equity gaps in higher education, and in recent years there has been a steep rise in the participation of students of color in PSEO. In 2013, 10.5 percent of PSEO students were BIPOC compared to 20.8% in 2023 (Espinosa 2024). This growth is important, but students of color enrolled in PSEO remain underrepresented against broader demographics, with students of color making up 36% of the PSEO-eligible population in 2023.

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