



Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program Report

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About the Office of Higher Education

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state agency providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The agency also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding up to \$210 million in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending eligible colleges, universities and career schools in Minnesota. The agency oversees other state scholarship programs, tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs for youth.

About This Report

This is a legislative-mandated report. As requested by Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197, this report cost approximately \$859.30 to prepare, including staff time.

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Introduction

During the 2015 Minnesota legislative session, the Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program (CEGP) was established to award grants to Minnesota colleges for the development of new concurrent enrollment courses and for the expansion of existing concurrent enrollment programs. The 2021 higher education omnibus bill provided \$225,000 each year of the 2022-2023 biennium to support the development of new concurrent enrollment courses in career and technical education, as well as \$115,000 each year of the biennium for the expansion of existing concurrent enrollment programs and courses.

The CEGP grant competition is open to all Minnesota two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions, both public and private, that are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and are working on/have received accreditation from the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). Eligible expenses are not explicitly defined; however, most grantees use their award to pay for teacher and faculty salaries/stipends, textbooks, equipment, student materials and supplies, marketing materials, etc. This allows them to develop implementation strategies while providing tools for implementation that aid in concurrent enrollment expansion.

This report satisfies the reporting requirement that was included in the state appropriation language, as follows:

(c) By December 1 of each year, the office shall submit a brief report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over higher education regarding:

(1) the courses developed by grant recipients and the number of students who enrolled in the courses under paragraph (a); and

(2) the programs expanded and the number of students who enrolled in programs under paragraph (b).

This report will provide: 1) a brief context on the state of concurrent enrollment in Minnesota, 2) a summary of fiscal year 2022 grant-funded projects 3) a summary of concurrent enrollment stakeholder work facilitated by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and 4) future recommendations.

Concurrent Enrollment in Minnesota

Concurrent Enrollment programs allow eligible high school students to take postsecondary courses for both college and high school credit while a student is enrolled in high school. Concurrent Enrollment differs from traditional Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) because Concurrent Enrollment courses are taught in the students' high school or online through partnerships with local colleges and universities. These programs can be referred to as "college in the high school" courses, but several branded program titles exist in Minnesota, such as College in the Schools or College Now.

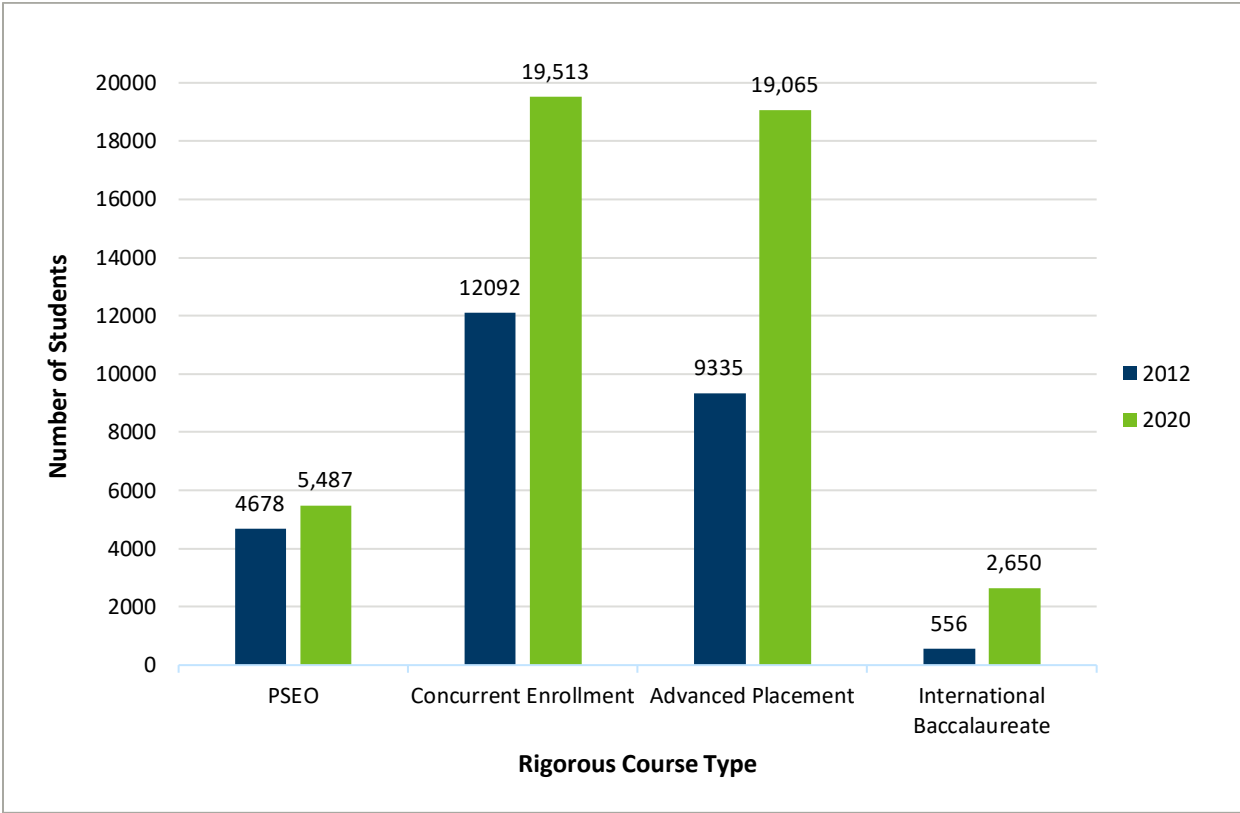
Concurrent Enrollment course standards are governed by regional and national accreditors such as the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). These accreditation bodies conduct standard audits to ensure that courses match the level of rigor as those taught on the college campus. NACEP accreditation can take up to three to five years for postsecondary institutions to complete, and many do not receive approval after their first attempt at accreditation. The cost, paid by the postsecondary institution, for each attempt, not including salary/time on the effort, can range from \$700 - \$1,550. There are currently 24 colleges and universities that have received NACEP accreditation and many more currently in the process.

Courses are taught by high school teachers who meet the appropriate credentialing requirements and are mentored by faculty from the partnering postsecondary institution. This relationship between the teacher and faculty member assists in assuring college-level quality in the course, as syllabi and pedagogy are often developed in tandem. Concurrent enrollment courses can include subjects from various liberal arts, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), and career and technical disciplines. The most popular courses in Minnesota tend to be easily transferrable general education courses, such as English, math, and foreign languages. Successfully completing these courses in high school can help accelerate time to college completion for those student who pursue post-secondary education following high school. Concurrent enrollment has been linked to positive outcomes including: creating a college-going culture in high schools, increasing rates of college attainment (An, 2012), enhancing self-efficacy among students (Ozmun, 2013), and shortening the time to college completion (An & Taylor, 2019). Research shows student participation in dual credit programs, such as concurrent enrollment, positively affects first-year college grade point averages, drawing a correlation between participation in these programs and academic performance in college (An, 2015). In addition, these programs strive to enhance and diversify high school curricula, increase access to higher education, and improve high school and college relationships (Higher Learning Commission, 2013).

Because of the many proven benefits of concurrent enrollment participation, there has been a rapid increase in school districts offering these courses in recent years, which has greatly propelled student enrollment. For example, since its first year of implementation in 1986, the University of Minnesota's College in the Schools program - the largest concurrent enrollment program in Minnesota- has expanded to offer 38 courses from 17 academic departments and has worked with over 150 high schools in Minnesota (Regents of the University of Minnesota, 2020). Between 2014 and 2019, students participating in concurrent enrollment programs in Minnesota has increased from approximately 12,700 to about 20,000 students. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 32 percent of Minnesota high school graduates participated in at least one concurrent enrollment course. This indicates that concurrent enrollment has caught up to its main competitor - Advanced Placement – in popularity (32 percent participation) and greatly exceeds the 2020 Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) enrollment rate of 9 percent. During the same academic year, 38 percent of entering college freshman transferred an average of 19.65 credits that they earned prior to high school graduation. If a college were to accept 19.65 credits at entry, that would account for over one semester of full time coursework that the student completed at no cost to their families. It's clear that both school districts and students are taking advantage of concurrent enrollment opportunities. The intent of the Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program is to expand concurrent enrollment options by developing/creating college-level curriculum to be taught in the participating high school. It also allows colleges to increase student participation in a particular college-level course by

engaging/partnering with new area high schools and/or opening up additional sections of a popular concurrent enrollment course already offered. This report documents the Minnesota Office of Higher Education’s (OHE) work to increase capacity and participation in concurrent enrollment across Minnesota.

Table 1: Number of Minnesota Students Participating in Rigorous Courses, 2012 vs. 2020



The number of students in Minnesota who participate in rigorous courses while in high school has increased from 2012 to 2020, and continues to grow.

Fiscal Year 2022 Overview

In fiscal year 2022, five projects were funded through the Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program: three program expansion projects and two new CTE course development projects. Of the \$340,000 allocated for fiscal year 2022 projects, a total of \$202,452.40 was awarded. The grantees were given 18 months to fully implement their projects. Therefore, the total number of courses created and students enrolled has not yet been determined as the project period will end on June 30, 2023.

Fiscal Year 2022 Grant Cycle

The timeline used for the fiscal year 2022 Request for Proposals is as follows:

October 1, 2021	Request for Proposals available to applicants
October 6, 2021	Technical Assistance Session for interested participants
October 13, 2021	Deadline for receipt of Intent to Submit forms
November 1, 2021 (4:30 p.m.)	<u>Deadline for receipt of proposals</u>
December 22, 2021	Notification of recommended grant awards
January 15, 2022 (Start) – June 30, 2022	Project period

In response to the FY 2022 RFP, seven Intent to Submit forms were received from Minnesota State two- and four-year institutions.

On November 1, 2021, the deadline for receipt of proposals, six proposals were received. Three proposals, requesting a total of \$96,801, were submitted for Concurrent Enrollment Program Expansion funding. Three proposals, requesting a total of \$105,651, were submitted for Career and Technical Education Course Development funding. All proposals were reviewed by a grant selection committee composed of concurrent enrollment stakeholders including: three representatives of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (two institutional staff and one system staff), a concurrent enrollment/CTE coordinator for a large non-profit, and one representative from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities.

After a series of extensive conversations regarding the proposals submitted for FY 2022 funding, the review committee awarded \$202,452.40 to five institutions with questions and further detail needed from the grantees. Many of those requirements include submitting additional detail left out of the proposals initially, such as: 1) recruitment plans for underrepresented students, 2) detailed explanations of student supports available to the high school, and 3) sustainability plans beyond grant funding. While the proposals all showed promise and integrity, they required moderate revisions to the project plan. OHE was tasked by this group of reviewers to discuss individual feedback with the applicants and request a set of deliverables included above. OHE requested that these deliverables be submitted from the applicants no later than January 14, 2022.

The following summaries of these five projects do not include their respective updates/modifications, which are yet to be submitted as of January 3, 2022.

Concurrent Enrollment Program Expansion Projects

Projects that allow Minnesota postsecondary institutions to expand their concurrent enrollment offerings into new high schools/districts, offer additional courses in high schools that they already partner with, and/or offer additional sections of a course that they currently sponsor within a high school. Preference is given to projects that expand at-capacity courses in the high school.

Semester One: DONE, Minneapolis College, receives \$29,935¹

Minneapolis, MN

Minneapolis College will create seven new concurrent enrollment courses that open college credit-bearing opportunities for middle-achieving students in Minneapolis Public High Schools (Special District #1). Courses will leverage newly implemented policies that expand placement options for students and eliminate randomization of college credit accumulation. This will be achieved by creating a pathway of courses that work toward completion of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Preferred courses for the pathway will be those with a READ 0200 or lower placement level, allowing students with a 2.1 GPA participate in the courses. These would include history, art, geography, political science and Spanish. The college has successfully implemented this model in the past.

The key to making this accessible to middle-range students will be to align the college courses to the lowest level high school courses that accurately meet college outcomes for intro-level courses. The college will seek matching with an eye to accessibility. In all cases the high school instructor must agree to include all college outcomes and content for the course. Oversight by the college's mentor-liaison will ensure this standard.

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Resources for Students in the Southwest Teacher Pathway Project, Minnesota West Community and Technical College, receives \$29,516.40

Worthington, MN

Minnesota West Community and Technical College will partner with Worthington High School (District #518), Southwest Minnesota State University, and area K-12 schools to supply LiveText licenses and textbooks to students in the Southwest Teacher Pathway Project. The focus of the Southwest Teacher Pathway Project is to meet the ever-changing needs of southwest Minnesota – an increasingly diverse area of the state- by providing pathways for students to secure jobs in education. The grant funding will provide student licenses for LiveText, a software application that students use to track observation hours for courses, as well as textbooks for concurrent enrollment students in the pathway sequence at Minnesota West (five courses in total). The LiveText tracking mechanism is essential for students who will be transferring to a four-year institution and eventually

¹ Awards for all grantees are dependent on deliverables being complete, thorough, and including adjustments to strengthen project implementation. Dollar amounts may change.

applying for licensure. The software costs approximately \$139 for a seven-year license, which would typically be absorbed by the student after high school graduation, and upon transfer into a full-time program. Additionally, though the textbooks would typically be included in the district's cost of concurrent enrollment implementation (as opposed to the student), the program's viability is reliant on supporting the high school with the initial purchase. The goal of this project is to support a teaching pathway for diverse students with minimal barriers to completion.

Contact: Kayla Westra, (507) 372-3435, kayla.westra@mnwest.edu

Future Mavericks LEARN for Success, Minnesota State University, Mankato, receives \$37,350

Mankato, MN

The overall objective of this project is to teach students strategies from the science of learning (a subfield of Cognitive Psychology) combined with psychological topics of motivation, time management, and planning so that they can be more successful in college while also earning high school/college credit. In order to do this, Minnesota State University Mankato (MSU Mankato) will partner with New Ulm High School, Owatonna High School, and Saint Paul Public Schools to expand concurrent enrollment offerings to include PSYCH 150 (Science of Learning for College Student Success). Districts will target historically underrepresented students and students that do not meet automatic admission requirements. At least 60 students will enroll and complete the course, 30% or more of these students being from the target population. Through the course, high school students will learn about how to learn and apply knowledge in ways that lead to success in academics and life – a skill that is much needed in college – while earning college and high school credit in psychology.

Contact(s): Dr. Karla Lassonde, (507) 389-5827, karla.lassonde@mnsu.edu ; Michael Altomari, (507) 389-5119, michael.altomari@mnsu.edu

Career and Technical Education Course Development Projects

Projects that allow Minnesota postsecondary institutions to develop new concurrent enrollment courses under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, subdivision 10, that satisfy the elective standard for career and technical education. The courses may not be developmental (remedial) courses or any other course that is not college level.

Future Together Pathways, Riverland Community College, receives \$48,600

Austin, MN

This project features a partnership between Riverland Community College and Owatonna High School (District #761) to achieve two main objectives: 1) Develop a new course called College and Career Steps to Success and offer 2-4 sections to high school 10-12 graders during the 2022-2023 school year, and 2) Offer biology and other possible CE courses involved in the Nursing Career Pathway to help fill the pipeline of needed healthcare professionals in the region. The first-year experience and career exploration course, taught alongside biology,

will place an emphasis on increasing access for students who are currently underserved in higher education. A new course, College and Career Steps to Success, will be offered to help 10-12th graders explore high wage, high skill and high demand career areas. Students will also receive content from Riverland's first year experience course that focuses on key soft skills such as time management, study skills, and other essential life skills. Additionally, they will host a Human Biology concurrent college course in the fall of 2022 for students at Owatonna High School which will meet many prerequisites for health science and STEM degrees, also in the fall of 2022.

Contact: Jean Kyle, (507) 433-0659, jean.kyle@riverland.edu

High School to College & Career: Implementing a Manufacturing, Engineering, and Construction Pathway at Faribault High School, South Central College, receives \$57,015

North Mankato, MN

South Central College (SCC) will partner with Faribault Public Schools to offer students in grades 10-12 a manufacturing, engineering, and construction (MEC) pathway. They will do so by completing the following objectives: 1) Expand Faribault High School's concurrent enrollment opportunities by implementing courses that align with SCC's advanced manufacturing and carpentry programs, 2) Establish employer-driven work-based learning experiences within the MEC pathway, 3) Align MEC courses with nationally-recognized industry credentials, 4) Increase enrollment of underrepresented students in the MEC pathway, and 5) Ensure pedagogies are culturally-relevant and encourage student development. Manufacturing, Engineering, and Carpentry (MEC) are fields with high-demand, high-wage occupations in Southern Minnesota. Over the last few years, individual meetings and discussions with FHS stakeholders helped set the course for the MEC pathway. Current and former students, parents, local businesses, and Faribault High School (FHS) staff have all collectively voiced a desire to add and enhance coursework and hands-on learning opportunities in these fields. All concurrent enrollment students will have access to the same student support services that postsecondary SCC students do, including tutoring, career counseling, and disability services. Staff will assist students in accessing these resources to ensure their success in MEC courses.

Contact: Laura Attenberger, (507) 389-7241, laura.attenberger@southcentral.edu

Barriers to Continuous Expansion

While the Concurrent Enrollment grant program is intended to expand concurrent enrollment options in Minnesota, it has shown mixed success in terms of the number of applicants and funded projects since its inception. Since 2016, there has only been one year (2018) where OHE has been able to award the entire grant allocation to qualified institutions. When asked why they have not pursued this funding mechanism, college staff have identified two main barriers that have made continuous expansion difficult.

Teacher Accreditation

In 2017, the Higher Learning Commission updated requirements for accreditation in order to best guarantee that the rigor of concurrent enrollment courses matches that of courses taught on campus by faculty – most of which have graduate and professional degrees with coursework specific to their teaching field. The new requirement states that high school teachers must have a graduate degree in the field of the course they are teaching – for example, a high school educator who is teaching college-level Composition I must now have a graduate degree or equivalent graduate credits in English, writing, or a related field. Specifically, high school teachers must have at least 18 graduate credits related to the concurrent enrollment course content that they are teaching. While the new requirements don't go into effect until September 2023, this impacts concurrent enrollment expansion on a massive scale. Many high school teachers – especially in rural Minnesota – do not have graduate degrees related to specific course content, but may rather pursue a teaching certificate or Masters of Education degree after college, and/or may only have their Bachelor's degree. While many school districts are working to help their teachers obtain the appropriate graduate credits needed to continue teaching concurrent enrollment courses, this new requirement resulted in a shift from widespread expansion to a focus on quality assurance and sustainability.

State Financing

Secondly, the funding model that facilitates Concurrent Enrollment expansion in Minnesota can cause a strain on both the secondary and postsecondary institution. Under a Concurrent Enrollment course or other PSEO course offered through an agreement with a partnering institution, the funding for a participating student is the same as for any other high school student at the school and is paid by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) directly from the state to the school district. Additionally, if the course qualifies as a concurrent enrollment course, the public school will receive additional aid under the concurrent enrollment aid formula. According to MDE (2019):

The concurrent enrollment aid appropriation supports funding of up to \$150 per student, out of a four million dollar per year appropriation, to districts that offer a concurrent enrollment course according to an agreement under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, subdivisions 10 and 16. Reimbursements are pro-rated based on total concurrent enrollment participation across the state. In FY 2017, the pro-rated reimbursement was \$54.01/student/course.

Under the traditional PSEO program, for a full-time student, 88 percent of the basic general education revenue is paid by the Minnesota Department of Education directly from the state to the postsecondary institution. The public school district in turn counts the student as 0.12 pupils in average daily membership across all school funding formulas. The remaining money that would otherwise follow the student (88 percent of all school funding formulas other than the basic general education revenue) is “saved” by the state.

Ultimately, the flow of funds is indirect and complicated – a high school district may pay the college a portion of tuition on behalf of the student (plus fees), which is reimbursed by the state, but often at a lesser rate than the cost of each credit hour. Meanwhile, the college receives state funding to offset tuition costs, but it is a smaller amount than what they would receive if the student were to attend the course on campus. While Minnesota’s concurrent enrollment funding model benefits students and families far more than many other states, it leaves both the secondary and postsecondary institutions short-changed.

In order to mitigate this challenge, many schools in Minnesota have opted to avoid the state funding model altogether and rely on independent agreements between high schools and colleges. This is typically referred to as “PSEO by Contract”. It is said that nearly 50% of all dual credit courses in MN utilize this funding model, though the actual number is unknown due to a lack of data reporting. This is because all state data for PSEO and Concurrent Enrollment is captured through the state funding model; if colleges and universities opt to circumvent the current funding model, then there will be no state data available for how many of these programs exist, the number of students in these programs, student demographics, student success, etc. The P-20 Council is currently working to revise the state funding model to make it more accessible for schools, which may decrease PSEO by Contract programs in the future.

Due to these two factors (among other capacity issues), the Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program has not been consistently utilized despite the need for funding to be funneled into concurrent enrollment opportunities in order to maintain sustainability, especially given the ever-increasing popularity of these programs.

Recommendations

Concurrent enrollment is an increasingly popular option for Minnesota high school students seeking to get a head start on their college career while saving on the cost of tuition, books, and fees. However, concurrent enrollment may not continue to expand to meet the demand of students if action isn’t taken to support these programs into the future. Recommendations include:

- Suspend funding to the Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program and instead shift the funds into other areas of concurrent enrollment development and sustainability that have been named as barriers to expansion in Minnesota. Specifically, a very high need area is supporting teachers through gaining the appropriate credentials to continue Concurrent Enrollment programming.
- While envisioning a new future for concurrent enrollment in Minnesota, provide increased funding for concurrent enrollment aid to the pro-rated reimbursement model for school districts. The additional

funds would support high schools with concurrent enrollment expansion without the fear of revenue loss.

- Increase financial support to programs that reduce or offset the cost of the graduate coursework required to adhere to the HLC's updated accreditation guidelines, which will take effect in 2023.
- Require MDE to conduct a needs analysis to determine the most equitable path forward for Concurrent Enrollment expansion – this includes ensuring that every Minnesota student has access to quality postsecondary programs while in high school.

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Appendix A: Statewide Concurrent Enrollment Evaluation

Concurrent Enrollment Evaluation Stakeholder Group

In 2019, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Minn State) submitted revised language for Minn. Stat. 129D.09, Subd. 10a, which directs OHE and MDE to evaluate statewide concurrent enrollment outcomes via student survey collection and analysis. Due to a variety of issues in collecting accurate and useful information from the students (through the college in which they enrolled in a concurrent enrollment course), these systems collaborated and worked with the legislature to update the statute. It now reads:

Statewide concurrent enrollment evaluation. The Office of Higher Education and the Department of Education shall collaborate in order to provide annual statewide evaluative information on concurrent enrollment programs to the legislature. The commissioners of the Office of Higher Education and the Department of Education, in consultation with stakeholders, including students and parents, must determine what student demographics and outcomes data are appropriate to include in the evaluation, and will use systems available to the office and department to minimize the reporting burden on postsecondary institutions. The commissioners must report by December 1, 2021, and each year thereafter, to the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over early education through grade 12 and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

With the passing of this language in the 2019 Minnesota Education Omnibus Bill, OHE began recruiting stakeholders to help create the state's first universal evaluation measures and methods for concurrent enrollment coursework. The group, informally called the Concurrent Enrollment Evaluation Stakeholder Group (Stakeholder Group), convened virtually for the first time on August 19, 2020. Current stakeholders include:

- PSEO/Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, Century College
- PSEO/Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, St. Cloud State University
- High School Evaluation Specialist, Mounds View School District
- High School-to-College Transitions Manager, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
- PSEO/Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, Saint Paul College
- PSEO/Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, Ridgewater College
- PSEO/Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, Pine Technical and Community College
- State Legislator, House
- State Legislator, Senate
- PSEO/Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, Inver Hills Community College
- Postsecondary Director of Teaching and Learning, Dakota County Technical College
- PSEO/Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, University of Minnesota
- High School Evaluation Specialist, Saint Paul Public Schools
- Executive Director and PSEO alumni, People for PSEO

- Youth/Board Member, People for PSEO
- High School Partner, ISD 194
- Concurrent Enrollment Teacher, District 287
- PSEO/Concurrent Enrollment Coordinator, Riverland Community College
- Executive Director, Center for School Change

The Stakeholder Group has met for one hour monthly to discuss desired metrics for evaluating concurrent enrollment across all programs. A brief summary of these meetings is listed below.

- **Meeting #1:** What does success look like? An open discussion to identify success metrics for concurrent enrollment programs, from each stakeholder’s perspective.
- **Meeting #2:** Identifying Themes. From the list of success metrics, the group paired like items into categories and, ultimately, themes. From the themes, the group was able to come up with measures of evaluating each area of interest.
- **Meeting #3:** Data Sources. From the list of themes, the Stakeholder Group were able to name what metrics are currently measurable using with statewide data sources, what metrics will require a new data source, and what metrics are out of scope/for future study.
- **Meeting #4:** Research Proposal. OHE presented a full research proposal for metrics that are currently measurable with data sources available immediately. This proposal will be submitted as a Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) request and used to request data from other available sources, such as the Minnesota Common Course Catalog and MDE’s data collected from their concurrent enrollment funding mechanism.
- **Meeting #5:** Expansion. A discussion related to expanding the concurrent enrollment evaluation metrics across dual enrollment types. This would help agencies and stakeholders understand the “full picture” of student success across all dual enrollment types, which offers a more detailed view of concurrent enrollment outcomes.
- **Meeting #6:** Current Sources for Qualitative Data Collection. OHE isolated qualitative information that stakeholders deemed a priority for a complete, successful evaluation, then asked stakeholders 1) if they currently collect that information, and 2) how they currently evaluate their programs. Based on that conversation, OHE created a survey to help determine these factors, as well as better understand what concurrent enrollment staff feel like they have the power to change within their role.
- **Meeting #7:** Review Survey Results. OHE went over results of the survey with stakeholders and facilitated a discussion about the results.

The group is currently waiting the analysis of the SLEDS data pull associated with the research project. This data pull will benefit not only the evaluation group, but can inform other statewide initiatives as well related to equity in concurrent enrollment.

If you would like more detailed information on the Concurrent Enrollment Evaluation Stakeholder Group project, request meeting notes/other materials, and/or would like to participate in this group, please contact Lain DeSalvo, alaina.desalvo@state.mn.us.



2021