



March 16, 2022

Chair Richardson

443 State Office Building

St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: PSEO Modifications HF 4074

Dear Chair Richardson and members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our support for HF 4074, which would expand access to Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), particularly for traditionally underserved students who need access to the program the most. PSEO allows students to enroll in courses taught by college instructors on college campuses and earn college credit at no cost. This allows students to enter college with some course requirements already met and with college credits, which can shorten time to completion for a degree and lessen the debt burden, while also allowing students to build college-level study and academic skills.

In 2019, over 10,500 Minnesota students participated in PSEO. While there are ongoing disparities in PSEO access by race and ethnicity, enrollment rates for Asian, Black, and Latino students have grown significantly over the past decade. This is a trend Minnesota should support and accelerate given the program's tangible benefits. In November 2020, EdAllies published a report on inequities in rigorous coursework—including PSEO—in Minnesota.<sup>1</sup> Our report listed a number of barriers students face in accessing PSEO, several of which HF 4074 would rectify. In particular, we support:

- Remove "PSEO gag rule" (Lines 1.10-1.14): Current state law prohibits colleges from advertising the program's financial benefits to high school students. Revoking this prohibition would increase transparency and ensure that students and families have the most comprehensive information possible about which rigorous coursework program is best for them.
- Equal Weighting for Grades (Lines 3.2-3.22): Students' grades—which can impact class rank and GPAs—should not be negatively impacted because they choose to take a PSEO course over another rigorous course, like concurrent enrollment. This provision would rectify this inequity and ensure that all students receive equal weight for the same letter grade.

These policy changes would help more students—particularly students of color and low-income students—access PSEO and become better prepared for college and career. We applaud People for PSEO's leadership on this issue and look forward to continuing to work with this committee to help more students have access to these opportunities.

Sincerely,

Matt Shaver, Policy Director

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<sup>1</sup> Kaput, K. (2020). "Closing the Rigorous Coursework Gap: Supporting College and Career Readiness for Minnesota's Students of Color." EdAllies.