

**SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
NINETY-THIRD SESSION**

S.F. No. 5128

(SENATE AUTHORS: OUMOU VERBETEN)

DATE
03/20/2024

D-PG

Introduction and first reading
Referred to Higher Education

OFFICIAL STATUS

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to higher education; creating a pilot program to provide meal stipends to
1.3 full-time PSEO students; requiring a report; appropriating money.

1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.5 Section 1. **POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS (PSEO) MEAL STIPEND**
1.6 **PILOT PROGRAM.**

1.7 Subdivision 1. Program established. The commissioner of the Office of Higher
1.8 Education shall establish a pilot program to provide meal stipends to students enrolled
1.9 full-time in postsecondary enrollment options (PSEO) courses under Minnesota Statutes,
1.10 section 124D.09, at two Minnesota postsecondary institutions.

1.11 Subd. 2. Program administration. (a) By September 1, 2024, the commissioner shall
1.12 develop and issue a request for proposals to solicit responses from Minnesota postsecondary
1.13 institutions to participate in the program. By June 1, 2025, the commissioner shall select
1.14 two responding institutions to participate in the program. One selected institution must be
1.15 located in the seven-county metropolitan area, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section
1.16 473.121, subdivision 2, and the other selected institution must be located outside the
1.17 seven-county metropolitan area. A selected institution shall:

1.18 (1) have a population of full-time PSEO students sufficient to utilize the program's funds
1.19 until the program expires;

1.20 (2) demonstrate high financial need among its full-time PSEO students, according to
1.21 criteria developed by the commissioner, which may include the rate of eligibility for free
1.22 or reduced-price meals; and

2.1 (3) commit to cooperating with the Office of Higher Education to facilitate program
2.2 evaluation and mandated reporting requirements.

2.3 (b) By September 1, 2024, the commissioner shall develop and issue a request for
2.4 proposals to solicit responses from vendors capable of implementing a secure, efficient,
2.5 transparent, and user-friendly fund disbursement system for program stipends to students.
2.6 By June 1, 2025, this commissioner shall select a vendor to implement the system. The
2.7 selected vendor shall:

2.8 (1) have a proven record of successfully managing digital wallet systems;

2.9 (2) provide strong security measures for data protection;

2.10 (3) offer a user-friendly interface for students and administrators, including those with
2.11 disabilities;

2.12 (4) commit to working with selected institutions to ensure compatibility with existing
2.13 institutional food service and payment systems; and

2.14 (5) commit to cooperating with the Office of Higher Education to facilitate program
2.15 evaluation and mandated reporting requirements.

2.16 Subd. 3. **Student eligibility.** (a) A student is eligible to receive a stipend under this
2.17 section if the student:

2.18 (1) is a PSEO student; and

2.19 (2) is enrolled full-time in PSEO courses at a Minnesota postsecondary institution selected
2.20 by the commissioner to participate in the program.

2.21 (b) If the commissioner determines that the amount appropriated for this program is
2.22 insufficient to provide full stipends to all eligible students at a selected institution, the
2.23 commissioner may prioritize stipends for eligible students based on demonstrated financial
2.24 need, which may include eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

2.25 Subd. 4. **Report required.** (a) By February 1, 2025, the commissioner shall submit a
2.26 preliminary report on the program to the chairs and ranking minority members of the
2.27 legislative committees with jurisdiction over higher education on the current status of the
2.28 program and its anticipated outcomes.

2.29 (b) By June 30, 2026, and by each June 30 thereafter, the commissioner shall submit a
2.30 report on the program to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative
2.31 committees with jurisdiction over higher education on the details of the program. The report
2.32 must include the following information:

3.1 (1) relevant data about PSEO enrollments statewide and at each selected institution;

3.2 (2) summary data on stipend recipients at each selected institution, including relevant
3.3 demographic information;

3.4 (3) an accounting of expended and remaining funds for the program; and

3.5 (4) an analysis of the program's outcomes and any recommendations for expanding the
3.6 program or making the program permanent.

3.7 (c) Reports required by this subdivision must be filed according to Minnesota Statutes,
3.8 section 3.195.

3.9 Subd. 5. **Expiration.** This section expires July 1, 2028.

3.10 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment. The
3.11 commissioner shall make the first round of student stipends available in the fall 2025
3.12 academic term.

3.13 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION; PSEO MEAL STIPEND PILOT PROGRAM.**

3.14 \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2025 is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner
3.15 of the Office of Higher Education for the PSEO meal stipend pilot program in section 1 of
3.16 this act. This appropriation may be used for student meal stipends and administrative expenses
3.17 related to the program. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until June 30, 2028.