Section II

Wisconsin's Approach to Career and Technical Education and Business and Information Technology Education

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What is Contemporary Career and Technical Education?

There are multiple components to consider when developing contemporary Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The standards outlined in this document provide an important foundation to prepare individuals for a wide range of careers. Effective CTE programs are dynamic and require utilization of varied resources and involvement from multiple stakeholders. The discussion that follows highlights the multi-faceted nature of CTE and outlines the critical components that drive the development of effective CTE programs.

A National Vision for CTE

- The National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc) has identified five guiding principles that should drive the development of quality CTE programs. Wisconsin supports these principles as spelled out in the NASDCTEc's *Reflect, Transform, Lead: A New Vision for Career and Technical Education*. These principles provide that Career and Technical Education is:
- critical to ensuring that the United States leads in global competitiveness;
- actively partnering with employers to design and provide high-quality, dynamic programs;
- preparing students to succeed in further education and careers;
- delivered through comprehensive programs of study aligned to The National Career Clusters framework; and
- a results-driven system that demonstrates a positive return on investment.

CTE in Wisconsin

Career and Technical Education is both a collection of educational programs or content areas as well as a system of preparing students to be career and college ready. Contemporary CTE programs are delivered primarily through six specific content areas; these include:

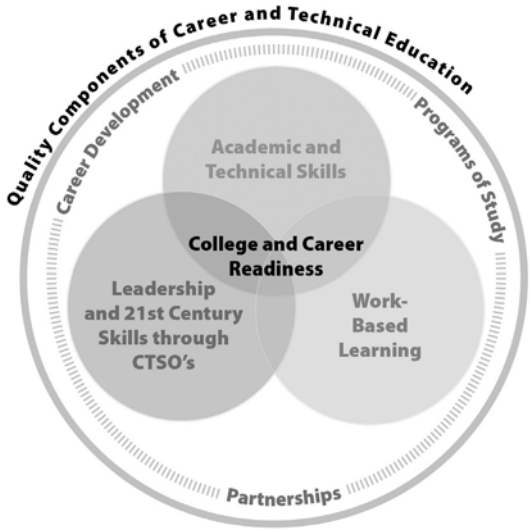
- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Business and Information Technology
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Health Science
- Marketing, Management and Entrepreneurship
- Technology and Engineering

Not all Wisconsin school districts offer programs in all of these content areas, but all should be offering CTE through a systemic approach that prepares students to be college and career ready.

At the elementary level, CTE content and concepts should be integrated throughout the curriculum. Teachers can effectively use CTE concepts in instruction and activities to develop foundational skills and also create a connection to the world of work. At the middle and high school levels, all students should have access to CTE courses and programs while also participating in activities prescribed by the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model. High quality CTE programs incorporate rigorous academic and technical standards, as well as critical workplace skills – such as problem solving, communication and teamwork – to ensure career and college success for its students. The Program of Study components provide a framework for building and maintaining a high quality, contemporary CTE program, but one can also recognize such quality programs by the presence of three distinct and crucial elements – rigorous academics and technical skill attainment, work-based learning and Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). The diagram and description that follows on the next page illustrates the quality components of Career and Technical Education programs.

Rigorous Academics and Technical Skill Attainment

CTE programs prepare students for high-skill, family-sustaining jobs that typically require high levels of core academic skills as well as various technical skills. Consequently, CTE students must be held to high academic standards; often this includes course and performance expectations exceeding typical graduation requirements. CTE students benefit from a source of relevance for their academic instruction. They see the connection between their academic knowledge and skill instruction and their future occupational and career goals.



Of course, at the heart of CTE is the attainment of technical skills that are required for potential high-skill, high-wage jobs. Where circumstances and resources allow, CTE programs provide opportunities for high school students to attain the highest level of skills possible within their desired career pathway. This is done through courses taught by high school CTE teachers and/or through partnerships with neighboring districts, employers, technical colleges and postsecondary institutions or other organizations.

Some of the specific means of achieving rigorous academics and technical skill attainment include:

- *Partnerships/Advisory Committees* – These typically include representatives of area businesses within the given program's career area as well as representatives from related postsecondary training and education programs. They may also include parents, students and program alumni. They can provide recommendations on program changes and improvements, as well as serve as advocates for the program.
- *Transcripted or Dual Enrollment Options* – Opportunities such as these allow students to earn both high school and college credit concurrently. Various options are available for CTE students include advanced standing and transcripted coursework taught at the student's high school, as well as Youth Options and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- *Equivalency Credit Options* – These provide opportunities for students to earn credits required for high school graduation through CTE courses proven to have sufficient academic content.
- *Work-Based Learning* – See separate section below
- *Career and Technical Student Organizations* – See separate section below

Work-Based Learning

A vital part of comprehensive career and technical education programs is a structured work-based learning experience. One goal of education is preparing students to successfully enter the workforce. The best way to achieve this goal is for students to spend time in a work setting. Many factors will influence the work-based learning options that can be offered.

Work Place Visits, Employer/Employee Dialogues and Job Shadowing – At the very least, students should participate in work place visits and tours as well as hear presentations and have a dialogue with employers and employees to see how their school-based learning is relevant to the work place. Job shadowing – during which students spend several hours observing one or more employees at a work place – is an even better way to expose students to the work place.

Paid Work Experience – Ideally, students will have opportunities for paid work experience in a job related to their program of study and connected with one or more courses in which the student is currently enrolled. Such experiences should include a training agreement that spells out the expectations for everyone involved including the student, employer, teacher and parents. One of the critical elements of the training agreement is a list of the skills and knowledge the student is expected to develop through their paid work experience. Examples of structured, existing work experience programs in Wisconsin are the Employability Skills Certificate, State Certified Skills Coop programs and Youth Apprenticeship.

Leadership Certificate – An option for many students includes the Wisconsin Youth Leadership Certificate. This certificate is comprised of leadership skills and attitudes that are honed through community and school volunteer or service experiences, leadership positions and volunteer or unpaid workplace encounters.

The more time students spend in the workplace and the broader the experiences, the better prepared they will be. These students will also be better prepared to plan and make decisions about their futures. Work-based learning allows students to put into action the knowledge and skills learned at school.

Career and Technical Student Organizations

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are the third critical element found in the best contemporary CTE programs. Through CTSOs, students match their skill level against those of other students and established industry standards. In addition, CTSOs allow students to develop civic responsibility, leadership and 21st century skills.

Wisconsin has six state and nationally recognized CTSOs that are intra-curricular in that they are connected directly to the classroom through curriculum, activities and community resources. All CTSOs include leadership development elements and competitive events where students demonstrate technical and leadership skills. CTSOs prepare young people to become productive citizens and leaders in their communities and their careers. This is done through school activities as well as regional, state and national leadership conferences and competitions. Students grow and develop through these events and receive recognition for the work they have done and the skills they have developed. CTSOs provide an exceptional extension of CTE instruction. Wisconsin's recognized CTSOs include:

WISCONSIN DECA	SkillsUSA	FBLA	hosa future health professionals	FCCLA	FFA
An Association of Marketing Students	An Association of Technology and Engineering Students	An Association of Business and Information Technology Students	An Association of Health Science Students	An Association of Family and Consumer Students	An Association of Agricultural Education Students

The Powerful Outcomes of Quality CTE

Beyond the technical knowledge and skills developed by CTE students, the overall outcomes of students who have enrolled in a CTE course – and in particular students who have taken a sequence of courses in a CTE program of study (called CTE concentrators) – are exceptionally positive. Approximately two-thirds of Wisconsin students have taken at least one CTE course. These students have a higher graduation rate (84.2%) than students who have not taken a CTE course (81.8%). CTE concentrators have an even higher graduation rate (95.7%). In addition, within a year after graduation, CTE concentrators report overwhelming positive outcomes with approximately 95% either working, attending postsecondary education or engaged in training programs.*

CTE and Programs of Study – Expanding Student Opportunities

Such positive outcomes as those noted show how CTE programs expand student opportunities. To support quality CTE programs, it is critical to foster partnerships, implement Programs of Study and promote career development through academic and career planning. CTE students develop a strong base of academic knowledge and skills that better prepare them to enter nearly any postsecondary program and pursue any career pathway compared to students who have not taken CTE courses. The relevance created by CTE and programs of study opens up additional opportunities and prepares students to pursue those opportunities when they graduate from high school. Students who select and pursue a program of study through CTE, based on identified career goals, will be in the best position for all job and career opportunities that arise in their future,including those they have never considered or those not yet in existence. ***Quality CTE programs are at the forefront of preparing college and career ready graduates.***

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*Statistics from 2011 Wisconsin Career and Technical Education Enrollment Report (CTEERS) data.

Delivering Career and Technical Education through Career Clusters and Pathways

Career Clusters Framework

One of the keys to improving student achievement is providing students with relevant contexts for studying and learning. Career Clusters do exactly this by linking school-based learning with the knowledge and skills required for success in the workplace. The National Career Clusters Framework was developed by the National Association of State Directors for Career and Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc). This framework is comprised of 16 Career Clusters and related 79 Career Pathways to help students of all ages explore different career options and better prepare for further education and career. Each Career Cluster represents a distinct grouping of occupations and industries based on the knowledge and skills they require. They provide an important organizing tool for schools to develop more effective programs of study (POS) and curriculum.

> **CTE is delivered through comprehensive programs of study aligned to the National Career Clusters framework**
> *"Programs of Study aligned to the National Career Clusters framework…should be the method of delivery of all CTE. A rigorous and comprehensive program of study delivered by qualified instructors is a structured sequence of academic and CTE courses that leads to a postsecondary credential. We must be willing to take bold steps necessary to jumpstart dramatic change in our nation's education and workforce preparation systems. The dichotomous silos of academics versus CTE must be eliminated and their supporting infrastructures must be re-imagined to meet the needs of the economy. As the lines of economies blur, so too must the lines that currently separate CTE and academic education."*
> ***~Reflect, Transform, Lead: A New Vision for Career and Technical Education, NASDCTEc***

In Wisconsin, the Career Clusters and Pathways have been embraced by CTE programs to provide a context for learning the skills specific to a career. Furthermore, the nationally recognized 10 components framework (see the Wisconsin Program of Study Implementation Guide for details) delineates promising practices necessary to fully implement programs of study. Programs of Study are designed to produce higher levels of achievement in a number of measurable arenas, including academic and technical attainment, high school completion, postsecondary transitions to career and education and attainment of a formal postsecondary credential. They also contribute to increased student proficiency in vital areas such as creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving.

Delivering CTE through Career Clusters

Delivering CTE through Career Clusters and Pathways means acknowledging three sets of standards (nationally-developed **Common Career Technical Core, Wisconsin Common Career Technical Standards and the Wisconsin Standards for Career and Technical Education**), their relationship to each other and how they can be used collectively to deliver quality instruction. It means shifting the way we approach curriculum and instruction to allow for a strategic approach for implementing these standards in a school or district. This section will outline the relationship that exists between these standards.

In our ever-changing society, many CTE programs are transitioning from helping students prepare for an entry-level job to helping students prepare for a career. As part of that transition, national organizations, such as the NASDCTEc, individual states and even industry-based organizations, have created different sets of standards for student learning in CTE programs. The result is an assortment of standards that vary in quality and specificity from one state to the next. In response, Wisconsin has made a concerted effort to outline these standards and their use for educators as they develop curriculum and programs of study.

Educating students is about the preparation for postsecondary options along with transferable skills that balance current business and industry needs and future career trends. CTE brings students, educators and employers together to develop and strengthen the relationship between what is being taught in the classroom and its application in the workplace. Having a skilled workforce and a vibrant economy depends on CTE programs that can deliver high quality

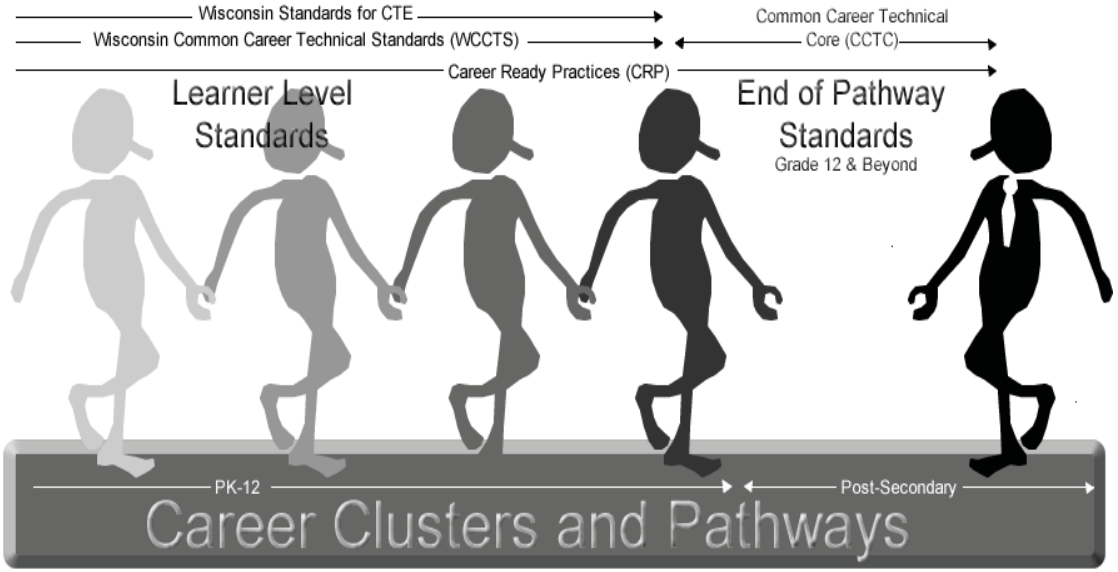
education and training. Because of this, understanding each of the following sets of standards and how they can impact classroom instruction is imperative and will need to be a priority for Wisconsin's CTE educators.

Common Career Technical Core

Recognizing the need for more consistency in today's global marketplace, in the spring of 2010, NASDCTEc united around a vision to develop a shared set of standards that meet a quality benchmark for students in CTE programs, regardless of where they live or which delivery system they use. The **Common Career Technical Core (CCTC)** has been developed to align with other college and career ready standards efforts, such as the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, while also articulating industry expectations for each of the 16 Career Clusters. The CCTC begins with a set of overarching **Career Ready Practices (CRP)** that apply to all programs of study. The **Career Ready Practices** include 12 statements that address the knowledge, skills and dispositions that are important to becoming career ready.

While the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics define the academic knowledge and skills students need to succeed, there are additional standards that individuals must achieve if they are to be truly career ready. For example, employability skills such as team work and time management, as well as the career specific skills, have not been referenced in the Common Core State Standards. These are skills that individuals must possess in order to be successful in the workplace. These skills make up the **Career Ready Practices** outlined in the CCTC.

The nationally-developed **Common Career Technical Core** contains standards developed for each cluster and pathway. These standards are meant to showcase the knowledge and skills students should have at the **end of the pathway.** These standards provide a mechanism for districts and states to collaborate to provide seamless educational opportunities for students across a **program of study** beginning at the secondary level. Most programs of study will require postsecondary or industry-developed skills beyond what is provided at the secondary level.



*As depicted in this graphic, there is a continuum or progression that students travel in their PK-12 career. The path begins with learner-level standards such as the **Wisconsin Common Career Technical Standards** and the **Wisconsin Standards for CTE**. As students graduate from high school and move seamlessly into postsecondary options, the focus moves to the end-of-pathway standards such as the Common Career Technical Core (CCTC-national). The Career Ready Practices (CRP-national) act as overarching concepts that students need to know and be able to do throughout their educational experiences.*

Wisconsin Common Career Technical Standards

The development of the **Wisconsin Common Career Technical Standards (WCCTS)** occurred at the state level at the same time as the national **Common Career Technical Core (CCTC)**. The Wisconsin standards writing teams identified six areas that have been further developed into standards that should be addressed across all six CTE content areas. These standard areas are Career Development; Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication and Collaboration; Environment, Health and Safety; Global and Cultural Awareness; Information, Media and Technology; and Leadership. The intended outcome of the WCCTS revolves around creating a set of standards that transcend CTE across the state and across all CTE content areas. To read more about the WCCTS, see Wisconsin's Approach to Common Career Technical Standards in Section III of this document. The WCCTS, along with the **Wisconsin Standards for CTE** form a strong foundation by which students move toward the completion of a program of study. The WCCTS and the Career Ready Practices in the CCTC correlate as shown below:

6 Wisconsin Common Career Technical Standards*					
Career Development Has a focus on personal and social, academic, career content and employability skills	**Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication and Collaboration** Has a focus on creativity and innovative problem solving, critical thinking used to formulate and defend judgments, to communicate and collaborate to accomplish tasks and develop solutions	**Environment, Health & Safety** Has a focus on interrelationships of health, safety and environmental systems and the impacts of these systems on organizational performance for continuous improvement	**Global & Cultural Awareness** Has a focus on solutions and initiatives related to global issues and the benefits of working in diverse settings on diverse teams	**Information, Media and Technology** Has a focus on information and media literacy to improve productivity, solve problems and create opportunities	**Leadership** Has a focus on applying leadership skills in real-world, family, community and business and industry applications
12 Career Ready Practices**					
Attend to personal health and financial well-being	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills	Consider environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions	Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence	Employ valid and reliable research strategies	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee
Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals	Communicate clearly and effectively with reason			Use technology to enhance productivity	Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management
	Demonstrate creativity and innovation				
	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and preserve in solving them				

***See Section III**

****See** http://www.careertech.org/careertechnical-education/cctc/

Wisconsin Standards for Career and Technical Education (CTE)

The **Wisconsin Standards for Career and Technical Education** are sets of standards in each of the six content areas of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources; Business and Information Technology; Family and Consumer Sciences; Health Science; Marketing, Management and Entrepreneurship; and Technology and Engineering. The **Wisconsin Standards for CTE** are written at the **learner level** and provide instruction and assessment at the PK-12 level, that, when coupled with postsecondary education and training, leads to the mastery of end-of-pathway standards. Therefore, the **Wisconsin Standards for CTE** align to **Career Clusters and Pathways** and provide an excellent foundation for students **toward meeting the end-of-pathway** expectations.

In Summary

Career Clusters and Pathways provide an organizational structure for developing Programs of Study while building connections to current labor market information and future workforce demands. As noted previously, Programs of Study used within CTE help to create relevance for students in all subject areas. This relevance translates into improved student engagement in the learning process and more in-depth comprehension and skill development. Further, the **Wisconsin Common Career Technical Standards (WCCTS**) and the **Career Ready Practices** serve as the foundation for career readiness that ensures students have flexibility to change career paths as their interests, passions and circumstances change while considering changes in the current and projected job market. In our dynamic and unpredictable world, Career Clusters and Pathways, along with **Wisconsin Standards for CTE** to include the WCCTS, provide a measure of stability and certainty on which to build a successful future.

The Importance of Career and Technical Education

By meeting the current needs and anticipating the future demands of the economy, CTE is critical to our nation's economic success.† Quality CTE programs have planned course sequences of high quality academic core content and technical skills that provide students with skills necessary for successful transition to postsecondary education or work in addition to a desire for life-long learning in global society.

CTE has grown and evolved to become a focus in schools, workforce and government. The importance and need for career and technical education in our society should be at the forefront of career decision making for the following reasons:

- CTE organizes both academics and career education into a practical program for workforce preparation, elevating the level of rigorous, challenging and applicable coursework leading to more informed preparation.
- CTE in schools promotes the wide variety of postsecondary options to help individuals choose and recognize pathways that will provide the most successful level and type of training for their future goals in postsecondary education, military or work, while understanding the need for lifelong learning and career development.
- CTE provides opportunities to develop 21st century and employability skills, exposure to work and mentoring from employers and connections with postsecondary education.
- CTE creates a positive, thoughtful learning environment for self-discovery, innovation and leadership to more lifelong career satisfaction and success.
- CTE recognizes the diverse needs, behaviors, backgrounds, environments and preferences of students by creating an approach for individual guidance and preparation for goals, plans and dreams.
- CTE is dynamic, flexible and responsive to the changes and advances of technology, education, the workforce and the economy by incorporating methods, ideas and resources to keep CTE relevant and contemporary.

CTE has a positive impact on student achievement and transitions. Programs help students find their passion, boost their confidence and empower them to succeed. Because CTE demonstrates a positive return on investment, CTE is a trusted, long-standing partner with the employer community.†

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† "Reflect, Transform, Lead: A New Vision for Career Technical Education." National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), 2010.

The Importance of Business and Information Technology in Wisconsin and Our Communities

Historically, business education has been one of the most popular elective areas at the high school level. High school graduates consistently identify business as the largest major field of study at the collegiate level. † Business and Information Technology (B&IT) in Wisconsin has a rich history of strong programs building on community and postsecondary collaboration. Through these collaborative efforts, high schools will continue to prepare today's students for tomorrow's challenges. B&IT, delivered through real-world simulations and problem-based and inquiry-based techniques, provides knowledge and skills to students in many career clusters and pathways.

B&IT is relevant and engaging

Wisconsin students who concentrate in the area of Business and Information Technology graduate at a rate over 96%.‡ Cooperative Education and Youth Apprenticeships intentionally incorporate curriculum associated with B&IT. While not all students will benefit directly from work-based programs while in high school, the skills and knowledge that are developed will support student achievement beyond high school. B&IT programs readily incorporate career development and assist students in identifying their interests and abilities to hone their career ambitions. Students who concentrate in Business and Information Technology are more likely to further their education at a college or university. ‡

B&IT is important to the economy

Business and Information Technology content comes from primarily six of the sixteen career clusters: Business Management and Administration; Arts, AV and Communication; Finance; Marketing; Hospitality and Tourism; and Information Technology. It is imperative that students in Wisconsin's high schools have access to Business and Information Technology programs since the business support area will have the largest number of openings in the future† and computer/information technology is projected to grow faster than the average for all other jobs. †

B&IT prepares for college and careers

During the 2011-2012 school year, nearly half of the Wisconsin Technical College System transcripted credit agreements in place in Wisconsin high schools were associated with a business-related course.ɜ Numerous opportunities exist for students to earn college credit through B&IT related examination programs, advanced standing, retroactive credit, credit for prior learning and work-based learning programs. Additionally, a variety of industry certifications in the areas of Business and Information Technology are available to students. These certifications may help students advance within their chosen career by setting students apart from other job applicants through documented proof of skills.

B&IT goes beyond the classroom

Numerous examples of students being engaged beyond the classroom can be found in a variety of work-based learning options from job shadowing opportunities to local cooperative education and State Certified Skills Certificates or Youth Apprenticeships and capstone experiences. Real-world experiences support the integration of B&IT into the educational experience for all students such as simulations with local community mentoring to school based enterprises exemplified through on-campus financial institutions that provide on-site student employability options while also promoting financial literacy for all students. B&IT students conduct themselves as professionals both in and out of the classroom. The opportunities for youth to grow year round can also be recognized in the area of B&IT as a number of summer enrichment programs are available through local colleges, non-profit foundations and private endeavors. Additionally, as part of the largest business student organization in the world, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) provides a network in Wisconsin of over 6,500 high school and middle school students. The goals of FBLA are to:

- develop competent, aggressive business leadership;
- strengthen the confidence of students in themselves and their work;
- create more interest in and understanding of American business enterprise;
- encourage members in the development of individual projects that contribute to the improvement of home, business and community;

- develop character, prepare for useful citizenship and foster patriotism;
- encourage and practice efficient money management;
- encourage scholarship and promote school loyalty;
- assist students in the establishment of occupational goals; and
- facilitate the transition from school to work.

B&IT is interdisciplinary and collaborative

The National Standards for Business Education coincide with core academic standards and meet the requirements for 21st century skills. B&IT courses are saturated with economic, communication, technology and mathematical skills. Courses also encompass skills from science, social studies, art and research and inquiry. B&IT courses also hold opportunities for students to receive equivalency credits for graduation and college entrance. B&IT knowledge and skills strengthen students' performance in all subjects and in careers. A focus on technology integration is an important part of the educational process of preparing students for academic success in our K-12 system. The refinement and mastery of technology skills are vital to success in core academic subjects and in careers. The importance of Business and Information Technology has been recognized by all education stakeholders to support academic achievement, promote postsecondary educational attainment and opening doors to career success.

B&IT creates students who care

Business and Information Technology education provides an educational experience that supports multiple aspects of student growth. Student experiences in B&IT programs support concepts that have a real-world focus with a global awareness of current trends and issues. Mentorship opportunities both in and outside of the classroom support student engagement in the learning process and encourage youth to also mentor others in need. B&IT incorporates experiences for students to work with others. Collaboration and leadership are imperative to the multi-faceted opportunities available beyond the high school classroom. A student that participates in Business and Information Technology coursework is able to develop essential knowledge and skills to support individual growth in both digital citizenship and ethics that are necessary for success in the 21st century.

In summary

B&IT education is an interdisciplinary STEM subject that provides multifaceted opportunities for students to become prepared for careers and for postsecondary education. B&IT programs have the potential to elevate the performance of students and provide foundational knowledge and skills for all careers.

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†U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). Occupational Outlook Handbook 2010-2011. Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/oco.

‡ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, CTEERS concentrator graduate follow-up report. Retrieved from http://www.dpi.wi.gov/cte/veershome.html.

ə Wisconsin Technical College System, School to Work Reports. http://systemattic.wtcsystem.edu/reports/STW/.

Work-Based Learning in Business and Information Technology Programs

Since a goal of Career and Technical Education programs is to prepare all students to be college and career ready, providing work-based learning opportunities is an important step to becoming career ready. Engaging in work-based learning experiences allows students to apply knowledge, leadership and technical skills to real-world projects and problems alongside professionals. Business and Information Technology students who participate in programs such as the State Certified Business/IT program and Youth Apprenticeship Finance or Information Technology programs increase individual qualifications that are necessary for a student to continue employment in a desired career area.

Business and Information Technology students seek a clear connection between their future career(s) and their classroom experiences. The opportunity to explore and experience the world of work is beneficial to career decision-making. These experiences provide students with a firsthand look at what knowledge, skills and aptitudes are needed to be successful in their chosen industry. Work-based learning is a key to a successful economy.

Some work-based education programs provide an opportunity for students to earn postsecondary credits concurrently while earning high school credit. This may occur through local agreements between a high school and college (such as a technical college or university) or through a more comprehensive agreement at the state or national level.

Today, most career pathways require some form of postsecondary education, whether it is an entry-level job, a management position for a mid-career professional or perhaps even a shift from practicing a profession to teaching others. A particular job might require a certificate, a two-year degree, a four-year degree, a doctorate or even a handful of courses to hone in on a particular piece of knowledge or a skill.[†]

Wisconsin Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and Work-Based Learning
Recognized as integral to the success of work-based learning programs, FBLA is an important part in the success of Business and Information Technology students. Through a proven system of developing leadership skills, positive attitudes and a sense of community pride, FBLA serves as a vehicle to transition students into careers. FBLA prepares students for future careers by introducing them to the corporate culture. FBLA emphasizes respect for the dignity of work, high standards, ethics and high-quality skills. It is an extremely effective instructional tool that connects Business and Information Technology classrooms with opportunities in postsecondary education and careers.

Work-Based Learning Options and Implementation in Business and Information Technology

Job Shadowing
Job shadowing is a career exploration strategy. As such, it is most appropriate at the middle school level. Middle school is the time for students to explore the broad range of occupations so that later on they will be able to narrow their career interests. High school students who have not narrowed their career interests by tenth grade may also find job shadowing to be a useful activity.

Service Learning
Service-learning is a teaching method that engages students in solving problems within their schools and communities as part of their academic studies. In Wisconsin, service-learning is defined as “a teaching and learning method which fosters civic responsibility and links classroom learning and applied learning in communities.” The strongest service-learning experiences occur when the service is intentionally immersed in ongoing learning and is a natural part of the curriculum that extends into the community.

Local Cooperative Education Program
A local co-op program involves paid work for a local credential. Students can earn a high school credit for their co-op experience and possible postsecondary credit. The number of required work hours is determined by the local school district and the program is administered by the local school district. Typically a local co-op is one year in length and can include all Career and Technical Education content areas.

School Based Enterprise
School-Based Enterprises (SBE) are effective educational tools in helping to prepare students for the transition from school to work or college. For many students, a SBE may provide the first work experience; for others, they provide an opportunity to build management, supervision and leadership skills. SBE activities help students increase their skills in management, problem solving, business operations, time management and working in teams. SBE opportunities in Business and Information Technology (B&IT) include, but are not limited to, school stores, yearbook development and credit unions in schools.

Youth Leadership Skill Standards Program
The Youth Leadership Certificate is a set of competencies to recognize a student's mastery and exhibition of leadership skills valued by employers, communities and organizations. The certificate earned by the student will be issued by the State of Wisconsin and becomes a part of the student's portfolio and resume.

Employability Skills Certificate Program
The Employability Skills Certificate Program is a set of competencies developed for all students in order to recognize a student's mastery of employability skills valued by employers, to help students explore career interests and to provide a state credential of student mastery.

State Certified Cooperative Education Skill Standards Program
Wisconsin's Cooperative Education Skill Standards Certificate Program is designed in partnership with business, industry and labor representatives and educators around the integration of school-based and work-based learning and appropriate career development experiences. The program is designed to provide paid work experience for junior and senior high school students which contribute substantially to their educational and occupational development. Students learn technical tasks and employability skills validated by business and industry representatives in cooperation with high school, technical college and university instructors.

Business and Information Technology students can choose a business/information technology skill standards program. Other business related skills standards programs that may be considered are e-commerce and entrepreneurship.

Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship
Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship program is part of a statewide School-to-Work initiative supported by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD). It is designed for high school juniors and seniors who want hands on learning in an occupational area at a worksite along with classroom instruction. The program requires a minimum of 900 hours (450 each year) of paid experience. In mentored on-the-job training, the mentor serves as a guide and sponsor of the Youth Apprentice and encourages the student's progress in the workplace. The DWD issues a Certificate of Occupational Proficiency to students who successfully complete the program.

The Youth Apprenticeship area has several choices for Business and Information Technology students to choose from including Finance; Graphic Arts/Printing; Health Information Management; Hospitality, Lodging & Tourism; Information Technology; and Transportation, Distribution and Logistics.

In Closing

Career and Technical Education programs use contemporary concepts and strategies to prepare students for college and career readiness. Today's 21st century workplace requires people with the leadership, teamwork and communication skills to perform effectively. Work-based learning programs have proven successful in developing these skills in students of all ages and backgrounds.

† http://careerreadynow.org/docs/CRPC_4pagerB.pdf

Career and Technical Student Organizations in Business and Information Technology Programs

Wisconsin Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) has a long tradition of success in schools across the state beginning with the first chapter in 1942 and the first State Leadership Conference held during the 1953-1954 school year. Wisconsin FBLA is affiliated with Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda, Inc. representing the largest business career student organization in the world. College and careerfocused students build skills through FBLA competition, conferences and business mentoring. Multiple levels of membership are available at the middle level, high school level, collegiate level and professional level. It is an integral component of middle and high school business education programs which also include classroom instruction and work-based learning. FBLA can make teaching more effective by providing invaluable experiences in group dynamics that enable students to accept themselves within the total group situation.

Wisconsin FBLA Mission

Wisconsin FBLA's mission is to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs.

FBLA is an integral part of career and technical education in Wisconsin schools. Being an integral part means FBLA is a tool of instruction that reinforces through activities what the student learns in the classroom and/or on the job. Integrated chapter activities improve the effectiveness of every educational program and help the student become more prepared to make the transition from school to work and/or postsecondary education. FBLA provides, as an integral part of the instructional program, additional integrated learning opportunities for students in business and/or business-related fields to develop vocational and career supportive competencies and to promote civic and personal responsibilities. Projects involving FBLA-PBL members include professional, civic, service, career development and social awareness activities.

Attributes and Values

The driving goal of Wisconsin FBLA is to train future business leaders to be contributing members of society. Members benefit from leadership and training, contact made through networking and opportunities to apply their knowledge through business-related activities. They learn to lead and participate actively in group discussions, preside at meetings and conferences, work effectively within teams and engage in practical problem-solving and decision-making. But members are not the only benefactors in the organization. Advisers, businesspersons and community members who support FBLA have the opportunity to share their hard-earned expertise and to experience the satisfaction that comes from helping others accomplish their goals. Sponsors who give of their time and resources are preparing those individuals who will someday inherit the reins of leadership.

College and Career Ready

Wisconsin FBLA members participate in a broad range of projects and ventures both on and off campus. They initiate business ventures, support school activities, organize community service projects, attend state and national leadership conferences, participate in fund-raisers and create publications. Members gain a competitive advantage in the business world by interacting with local companies and their executives. Students also have the opportunity to win accolades on the state and national levels. Through participation in these activities, students are better prepared for a postsecondary education, a future career and for life. To be prepared for both college and careers, Wisconsin FBLA members take advantage of numerous opportunities that connect experiences to national career clusters in Arts, A/V Technology & Communications; Business Management & Administration; Finance; Government and Public Administration; Human Services; Information Technology; Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security; Marketing; and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics).

Wisconsin FBLA Competitive Events

Wisconsin FBLA boasts over sixty competitive events that provide opportunities for members to participate in events designated for individuals, teams and chapters. All FBLA competitive events are aligned to the National Business Education Standards and encompass **Wisconsin Standards for Business and Information Technology**. Since competition is recognized as a major part of the free enterprise system, FBLA-PBL sponsors a National Leadership Conference (NLC) which begins with competition at the regional and state levels. Wisconsin is divided into seven regions with Regional Leadership Conferences being held each year the first Saturday in February. The State Leadership Conference is a two-day conference held each year in April. Winners from each Regional Leadership Conference may participate in the competitive events at the state level. State winners are eligible to advance to the National Leadership Conference. In addition to the competitive events, each conference includes business meetings, election of officers, special-interest sectionals, awards programs and other planned activities.

Leadership Opportunities

Students have the opportunity to serve as officers on the local, regional, state and national levels. Members who aspire leadership roles gain the experience of running a campaign, going through officer training and playing an important role in the development of the annual Program of Work for the year—not to mention the experience of developing a chapter in its activities and acting as an ambassador for the organization. Chapter activities can also provide for the development of leadership, development of a strong work ethic, promotion of standards of excellence, encouragement of broader educational experiences and encouragement of cooperative efforts. Annual fall leadership labs and conferences are available at multiple locations across the state as well as across the country. These events engage both middle level and high school level members to learn more about FBLA while participating in workshops, business tours, mentorship by business and community speakers, networking activities with members from other chapters and chapter development activities.

Community Service Opportunities

Wisconsin FBLA members have a unique opportunity to engage their high school peers, family and community members to reach one common goal that makes a difference in the lives of others. Wisconsin FBLA provides the foundation for students to champion community service projects with local businesses and charitable organizations. FBLA's charity of choice is the March of Dimes and in the nearly 40 years FBLA-PBL has been united with the March of Dimes, FBLA-PBL has consistently ranked as the top organization fund-raising partner, raising over $15 million dollars. Wisconsin FBLA has consistently contributed toward this national community partner's fight against premature birth. In addition to community service programs organized by the national officer team, Wisconsin FBLA empowers state executive board members and local chapter officers to develop a Program of Work to emphasize the following three areas associated with FBLA: education, service and progress. Local chapters annually develop a variety of experiences that reflect the needs of the local school and community.

In Summary

An important reason for the success FBLA shares is that all members, advisers and business partners believe in the organization and in each other. Career and Technical Student Organizations, like FBLA, provide valuable opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, present chances to get involved in communities and give back and showcase students' skills and abilities through competition. These opportunities, along with related classroom instruction, support young men and women in preparing for their future endeavors.