

October 2011

Dear District Administrator:

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is committed to expanding opportunities for students to meet the graduation requirements in §118.33, Wis. Stats., and Chapter PI 18, the *High School Graduation Standards*. Business and Information Technology courses have evolved into courses with 21st century English language arts concepts and serve as the newest avenue for equivalency credit.

Chapter PI 18.02 defines “equivalency graduation policy” as “a broad policy which meets the credit requirements specified (§118.33, Wis. Stats.) for each subject area, but which permits selected equivalent courses, as long as such courses contain the time allotment and substantially the same objectives to develop the knowledge, concepts, and skills of the course for which an equivalent is proposed.” This high school equivalency option for a district is not new; however, the process for seeking DPI approval in the area of business and information technology and English language arts equivalency has been updated.

A relevant question is whether or not an equivalent course meets established university or college entrance requirements. University of Wisconsin System (UW System) college preparatory entrance requirement states “all University of Wisconsin System institutions require new freshman to have completed a minimum of 17 high school credits. Thirteen of these credits must be core college preparatory from the following areas of study: four credits of English, three credits of mathematics, three credits of natural science, and three credits of social science/history.”¹ DPI is working with the UW System to establish an ongoing process for review and recognition of DPI-approved equivalent courses.

When documenting equivalency credit on a student’s transcript, it is important to note that the original course designation does not change; that is, a business and information technology course that is approved as an English language arts course will remain listed on the transcript as a business and information technology course. The district will, however, need to designate the course as being an English language arts equivalent on the student’s transcript.

Similarly, the required license for the teacher does not change. A business and information technology course approved as equivalent to an English language arts course would have to be taught by a teacher who holds a business education license.

¹ From UW System College Preparatory Course Requirements, UW System website.

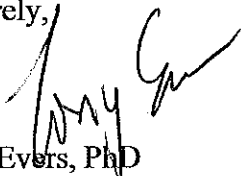
Use the following process to seek DPI approval for designating a business and information technology course as equivalent to an English language arts course:

1. Form a committee of district personnel that includes both business and information technology and English language arts educators. Review the knowledge and skills of the business and information technology course the district is seeking equivalency for and compare this to the knowledge and skills identified in the district English language arts curriculum or program. To assist with the process, DPI has completed a crosswalk document between the Common Core Standards for English language arts and the National Business Education Standards. This crosswalk is to be completed during the review process. DPI has several best practice examples available for business and information technology courses that are representative of an equivalent course. Please refer to www.dpi.wi.gov/bit/equivalency.html to locate the crosswalk and examples.
2. Request school board approval for the equivalent course.
3. Submit all documentation to DPI using Form PI-1803-BIT. This documentation is to include dates and meeting times, district personnel in attendance, documentation of course content with instructional time allocation specified, alignment to the crosswalk from DPI, and documentation of course approval by the district's school board, including the date of board acceptance of the equivalent course.

All required forms and information can be found at www.dpi.wi.gov/bit/equivalency.html on the department website. DPI will review the district's documentation described above and notify the district in writing that the course equivalency has or has not been approved.

Please feel free to contact Jennifer Wegner, Business and Information Technology Education Consultant, at jennifer.wegner@dpi.wi.gov or 608-266-2348; or Emilie Amundson, Assistant Director for the Content and Learning Team, at emilie.amundson@dpi.wi.gov or 608-267-3726, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Tony Evers, PhD
State Superintendent

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