

## Questions and Answers Act 156 Technical Education High School Diplomas

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### 1. What is a technical education high school diploma?

A technical education diploma recognizes students that have met the requirements for high school graduation and have successfully completed a technical education program. A technical education program is also known as a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. In Wisconsin, Career and Technical Education subjects include Agriculture and Natural Resources Education, Technology and Engineering Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, Business and Information Technology, Marketing and Health Science Education. This option was created by 2011 Act 156, and can be found under s.118.33(1)(g)1., Wis. Stats.

### 2. Are school districts required to offer this diploma?

No. The technical education diploma is an option for school districts. A school board determines whether or not the district will grant a technical education high school diploma.

### 3. What requirements must be met in order to receive this diploma?

Under s.118.33(1)(g), Stats., a school board may grant a technical education high school diploma to a pupil who does all of the following:

- a. Satisfies the high school graduation credit requirements in s. 118.33(1)(a)

The requirements in 118.33(1)(a) include earning at least 4 credits of English including writing composition, 3 credits of social studies including state and local government, 2 credits of mathematics, 2 credits of science and 1.5 credits of physical education in the high school grades and in grades 7 to 12, at least 0.5 credit of health education.

- b. Earns in the high school grades the same total number of credits that the school board requires of other pupils for high school graduation.
- c. Successfully completes a technical education program, established by the school board, in a subject or subjects.

In establishing a technical education program, the school board may incorporate standards for industry recognized certifications. Annually, the department shall provide to each school board operating high school grades a list of such certifications. The school board shall indicate on a pupil's technical education high school diploma the certifications attained by the pupil.

### 4. Who is eligible to participate in these technical education programs?

Technical education programs are open to all students; therefore, the technical education diploma is available for all students. The technical education diploma is not designed to track certain populations of students. If a student with an Individualized Education Program

wishes to pursue a technical education diploma, their course of study should reflect this outcome [s. 115.787 (2)(g)].

**5. What is the value of a Technical Education Diploma?**

The technical education diploma recognizes students for successfully completing a technical education program. This diploma should be viewed as an additional endorsement to the regular high school diploma. Districts should ensure that technical education programs are comparably rigorous to other district programs and that the corresponding diploma holds comparable value for any and all post-secondary paths graduates may pursue.

**6. What does it mean for a student to successfully complete a technical education program?**

The school board must establish what constitutes a technical education program and the criteria for successfully completing it.

**7. What components should be included in a technical education program?**

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) encourages school districts to consider multiple factors in developing a technical education program and determining the subsequent components. Programs of study in Career and Technical Education (CTE), serve as a logical foundation for a technical education program. Programs of study include:

- a. Partnerships among education, business, and other community stakeholders.
- b. College and career readiness standards that define what students are expected to know and be able to do to enter and advance in college and/or their careers.
- c. Credit transfer agreements that provide opportunities for secondary students to be awarded transcribed postsecondary credits or other forms of postsecondary advanced standing.
- d. Career development through school counseling, career exploration, and academic advisement to help all students make informed career choices. This also includes individualized learning plans that incorporate the best pathway to be prepared for post-secondary options.
- e. Technical skills attainment through national, state, local, and/or industry-based assessments that provide ongoing information on the extent to which students are attaining the necessary knowledge and skills for entry into and advancement in postsecondary education and careers.
- f. Work-based learning in the form of state certificated programs such as Employability Skills, Youth Leadership, Co-op Programs, Internships, and/or Youth Apprenticeships.
- g. Career and Technical Student Organization participation.
- h. The school board shall indicate on a pupil's technical education high school diploma the certifications attained by the pupil.

**8. In meeting the high school graduation requirements can CTE courses that have been approved for equivalent credit count towards meeting the requirements for high school graduation?**

Yes. For more information please see <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/cte/equivalency.html>.

**9. What impact will the Technical Education High School Diploma have on a student's acceptance into a college or university?**

Colleges and universities base admission decisions on a variety of criteria. Students planning to attend any post-secondary institution should ensure that they meet the admissions requirements regardless of the type of diploma earned.

**10. Are there other diploma options that a school district may offer for students?**

School districts may offer diplomas based on criteria established under s.118.33(1)(a) Stats., or through alternative programs under s.118.33(1)(d), Stats. For additional information on pathways to graduation: <http://dpi.wi.gov/GRADUATION/paths.html>. For additional information on alternative education programs: <http://dpi.wi.gov/alternativeed/index.html>.

**11. How can one find out if a school district offers a technical education high school diploma?**

Students and parents should contact the local school counselor, principal, or administrator to find out if the school district offers a technical education high school diploma. DPI recommends that school districts offering a technical education high school diploma outline the policies and procedures for obtaining such a diploma in their school handbook.