

October 2010

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*. Family and Consumer Sciences education courses, and in particular, food science courses, are evolving into courses with 21<sup>st</sup> century science concepts and serves as the foundation for high school science equivalency credit.

Chapter PI 18.02 defines “equivalent 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 course equivalency option for a district is not new; however, the process for seeking DPI approval in the area of family and consumer science and science course 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 freshmen 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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 family and consumer science course that is approved as equivalent to a science course will remain listed on the transcript as a family and consumer science course. The district will, however, need to designate the family and consumer science course as being a science equivalent on the student’s transcript.

Similarly, the required license for the teacher does not change. A family and consumer science course approved as equivalent to a science course would have to be taught by a teacher who holds a family and consumer science license.

Use the following process to seek DPI approval for designating a family and consumer science course as equivalent to a science course:

1. Form a committee of district personnel that includes both family and consumer science and science educators. Review the knowledge and skills of the family and consumer science course the district is seeking equivalency for and compare this to the knowledge and skills identified in the district science curriculum or program. To assist with this process, DPI has completed a crosswalk<sup>2</sup> document between Wisconsin’s Model Academic Standards for Family and

<sup>1</sup> From UW System College Preparatory Course Requirements, UW System website.

<sup>2</sup> FCS/Sci Crosswalk found at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/fce/fdsci.html>

Consumer Science Education and Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Science. This crosswalk is to be completed during the review process. DPI has several best practice examples available for family and consumer science courses that are representative of an equivalent family and consumer science course. Please refer to <http://dpi.wi.gov/fce/fdsci.html> to find those examples.

2. Request school board approval for the equivalency course.
3. Submit all documentation to DPI using Form PI-1803-FS. 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 pertinent information can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/fce/fdsci.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 Diane Ryberg, Family and Consumer Science Education Consultant at [diane.ryberg@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:diane.ryberg@dpi.wi.gov) or 608-267-9088; or contact Shelley Lee, Science Education Consultant at [shelley.lee@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:shelley.lee@dpi.wi.gov) or 608-266-3319 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Tony Evers, PhD  
State Superintendent

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