



# **Business Administration Career Pathway**

Preparing secondary students for careers  
in business management, finance, and  
marketing through Regional Career  
Pathways

# Education Building Blocks

## PURPOSE

The purpose of **Educational Building Blocks** is to give secondary educators guidance on the skills and competencies that will prepare their students for careers.

Education Building Blocks are not fully developed curriculum and lessons, **nor are they a replacement for state education standards in content areas**. Rather, they should be used as guidelines that reference the skills and competencies that employers are looking for in a particular industry. These guidelines should inform you as you develop curriculum aligned to state standards.

Education Building Blocks are comprised of four groups of skills:

- \*Employability Skills
- \*Digital Literacy Skills
- \*Academic Skills
- \*Technical Skills

The combination of these sets of skills comprise the necessary learning to prepare students to be future ready to transition to adulthood prepared for college AND careers.



## PROCESS

Groups of employers and employer professional associations (Appendix C) have gathered to develop this document in order to provide secondary educators with a current picture of skill sets desired in a particular high skill, high demand industry sector. Their input has been collated into this guidance document for use in regional career pathway development in secondary settings.

Once defined, the **State Career Pathway outline** is developed showing the career ladder progression, as well as the desired industry-recognized credentials and education needed to advance to different levels in the industry sector.

The State Career Pathway outline is adopted and modified into a **Regional Career Pathway Map** by regional collaboratives of higher education and public agency partners to leverage their local resources for implementation. Regional collaboratives must address barriers to access, as well as connect secondary students directly to available work-based learning experiences, dual enrollment (high school and college) course opportunities, and local district course offerings. This “ready-made Academic and Career Plan (ACP)” highlights to students the series of activities for those interested in the career sector. Regional Career Pathway Maps, adopted by the local school, can be used with students and families in ACP planning and advising.

# Education Building Blocks

## SKILL SETS

All Regional Career Pathways require districts to identify a sequence of courses that students will take in order to complete the secondary pathway. The specific courses may vary from district to district. However, every district's sequence of courses should reflect Education Building Block learning for the pathway. This ensures a consistent approach to the skills and competencies that are being developed while providing local flexibility in delivery.

### Employability Skills

Often referred to as "Soft" skills, the source for the Employability Skills Set in the Education Building Blocks is the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) Employability Skill Standards (Appendix A). Furthermore, because employers are also seeking job candidates that are able to think and act innovatively, it is also recommended to reference the Innovation Learning Outcomes (Appendix A) as part of this learning. Although this skill set was originally created for future entrepreneurs, it provides suggestions to prepare students to become innovation leaders with an entrepreneurial mindset.

### Digital Literacy Skills

Today's job market requires some level of digital literacy. Therefore, it is essential to include digital literacy skills in every Education Building Block model. For our purpose, Digital Literacy Skills are defined by DPI's Information and Technology Standards for Digital Literacy (Appendix B).

### Academic Skills

Academic Skills are clearly defined by states in standards which act as benchmarks of quality and excellence in education. Wisconsin Academic Standards specify what students should know and be able to do in the classroom. Setting high standards enables students, parents, educators, and citizens to know what students should have learned at a given point in time. State standards serve as a model. Locally elected school boards adopt academic standards in each subject to best serve their local community. Educational Building Blocks point to specific groups of academic skills that employer partners have indicated are critical to their industry.

### Technical Skills

Often referred to as "Hard" Skills, employers recognize that developing basic occupational skills in secondary settings allows students to apply academic learning in unique and contextualized ways. Employers identify specific technical skills in the Educational Building Blocks that should be developed for students interested in pursuing a career in the this area.

"The solution is to pursue initiatives that instill both hard skills and soft skills into the available workforce, not settle for one at the expense of the other."

Matt Kirchner, Lab Midwest

# Education Building Blocks

## THE PATHWAYS

### Business Management Cluster

Administrative Support and Management are focused on planning, organizing, directing and evaluating business functions essential to efficient and productive business operations.

### Finance Cluster

Accounting & Business Finance, Securities/Investments & Banking Services Insurance are focused on planning, services for financial and investment planning, banking, insurance, and business financial management.

### Marketing Cluster

Sales & Merchandising, Communications, and Research are focused on planning, managing and performing marketing activities to reach organizational objectives.

## BLOCK 1

### Employability Skills

Appendix A

- Employability Skill Standards
- Innovation Learning Outcomes



## BLOCK 2

### Digital Literacy Skills

Appendix B

- Standards for Information and Technology Literacy



# Education Building Blocks

## BLOCK 3: ACADEMIC SKILLS

### Math Concepts

1. Explain the meaning of a problem and restate it in their words
2. Recognize the relationships between numbers/quantities within the process to evaluate a problem
3. Compare and contrast logical arguments and identify which one makes the most sense.
4. Justify (orally and in written form) the approach used, including how it fits in the context from which the data arose
5. Simplify a complicated problem by making assumptions and approximations
6. Use estimation to predict reasonable solutions and/or detect errors
7. Formulate precise explanations (orally and in written form) using both mathematical representations and words
8. Analyze a complex problem by breaking it down into smaller parts
9. Evaluate the reasonableness of results throughout the mathematical process while attending to the details

### Science Concepts

1. Ask questions and define problems
2. Develop and use models
3. Plan and carry out investigations
4. Analyze and interpret data
5. Use mathematics and computational thinking
6. Construct explanations and design solutions
7. Engage in argument from evidence
8. Obtain, evaluate and communicate information



### Literacy and Communication

1. Locate, understand, and interpret written technical and non-technical information in documents such as manuals, reports, memos, graphs, charts, tables, schedules, signs, and regulations
2. Identify relevant details, facts, specifications, and main ideas
3. Infer or locate meaning of unknown or technical vocabulary
4. Create documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts
5. Communicate thoughts, ideas, information, messages, and other written information, which may contain technical material, in a logical, organized, coherent, and persuasive manner
6. Develop ideas with supporting information and examples
7. Use standard syntax and sentence structure
8. Use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar
9. Write in a manner appropriate for business
10. Receive, attend to, interpret, understand, and respond to verbal messages and other cues
11. Apply active listening skills using reflection, restatement, questioning, and clarification
12. Pick out important information in verbal messages
13. Understand complex instructions
14. Speak clearly and confidently using proper grammar, tone, and pace
15. Express information to individuals or groups taking into account the audience and the nature of the information (e.g., explain technical concepts to non-technical audiences)
16. Ask questions or report problems or concerns to people in authority when information or procedures are unclear or need improvement, or when feeling unsafe or threatened in the workplace

# Education Building Blocks

## BLOCK 4: TECHNICAL SKILLS- CAREER SUCCESS

### Be prepared for a Business Administration Career

Students who want to pursue a career in Business Administration should have a basic understanding of the disciplines that underpin success, including:

- Business processes
- Problem solving, innovation & change leadership
- Project management
- Basic technology use and applications
- Ethical leadership

They possess characteristics such as:

- Logical, critical thinking and complex problem solving
- Versatility and adaptability
- Attention to Detail
- Self Control
- Time Management
- Active listening and learning
- Active, life-long learner
- Collaboration
- Flexibility
- Initiative

## BLOCK 5: TECHNICAL SKILLS- EDUCATION STANDARDS

This State Pathway Outline was developed by Wisconsin employers who identified the need to develop career pathways in Business Administration with a strong connection to academic standards. The MBAResearch national standards for Business Administration provide an educational framework with an alignment to the following pathways:

### Standards specific to Business Management:

- Knowledge Management (KM): Understand the systems, strategies, and techniques used to collect, organize, analyze, and share an organization's information
- Project Management (PM): Understand tools, techniques, and systems that are used to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate business projects
- Quality Management (QM): Understand the need for standards and the strategies and techniques used to implement, monitor, and evaluate them
- Risk Management (RM): Understand risk-management strategies and techniques to minimize business loss

### Standards specific to Finance:

- Compliance (CC): Understand business's responsibility to know, comply with, and enforce laws and regulations that affect financial business operations and transactions
- Financial-information Management (FM): Understand tools, strategies, and systems needed to access, process, maintain, evaluate, and disseminate financial information to assist business decision-making
- Risk Management (RM): Understand risk-management strategies and techniques used to minimize business loss

# Education Building Blocks

## BLOCK 5: TECHNICAL SKILLS- EDUCATION STANDARDS

### Standard specific to Marketing:

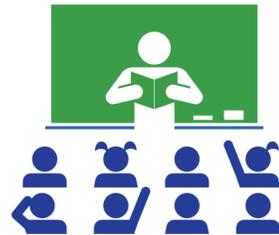
- Channel Management (CM): Understand the concepts and processes needed to identify, select, monitor, and evaluate sales channels
- Marketing-information Management (IM): Understand the concepts, systems, and tools needed to gather, access, synthesize, evaluate, and disseminate information for use in making business decisions
- Market Planning (MP): Understand the concepts and strategies utilized to determine and target marketing strategies to a select audience
- Pricing (PI): Understand concepts and strategies utilized in determining and adjusting prices to maximize return and meet customers' perceptions of value
- Product/Service Management (PM): Understand the concepts and processes needed to obtain, develop, maintain, and improve a product or service mix in response to market opportunities and to build brand for the organization
- Promotion (PR): Understand the concepts and strategies needed to communicate information about products, services, images, and/or ideas to achieve a desired outcome
- Selling (SE): Understand the concepts and actions needed to determine client needs and wants and respond through planned, personalized communication that influences purchase decisions and enhances future business opportunities

Concepts are taught at all grade levels by classroom teachers. Elementary and middle school education serve as the foundational background to advanced study in high school courses. This building blocks document connects employer recommendations to [Wisconsin's Standards for Business and Information Technology at: Pages 55-126](#) and [Wisconsin's Standards for Marketing, Management and Entrepreneurship at: Pages 53-118](#). A crosswalk document is available to connect educational materials associated with these national standards to our Wisconsin Standards:

[Marketing, Management, and Entrepreneurship Standards Crosswalk](#)

[Business and Information Technology Standards Crosswalk](#)

[Wisconsin Common Career Technical Standards Crosswalk](#)



As students move through the Academic and Career Planning (ACP) process into high school, identify those interested in pursuing a career in business administration. Counselors and advisors should help these students create an ACP plan that is developed from the Regional Career Pathway map, which includes: an appropriate sequence of courses, industry recommended certifications, related dual enrollment (high school and college credit) courses, and related work-based learning experiences.

# Education Building Blocks

## BLOCK 6: TECHNICAL SKILLS- ESSENTIAL TECHNICAL SKILLS

### Shifting demographics—cultural and generational differences in the workplace, including both “front and back” operations

- Multilingual
- Cultural competency
  - Inclusion
  - Diversity
- Multicultural understanding
- Emotional intelligence
- Communication skills/nonjudgmental
  - Public speaking
- Research
- Respect
- Ability to help foster positive interactions and collaboration within offices and across varying offices
- Ability to conduct and participate in virtual meetings
- Sensitivity to time zone differences
- Ability to understand cultural differences within the processes of supply chain management Interpersonal skills
- Ability to think independently but work collaboratively
- Continued learning and professional development
- Being able to “build and present” the slide deck— front vs. back
- Ability to adapt to change

### Increased use of automation, Internet of Things (IOT), and the use of analytics in decision-making

- Ability to understand what is behind the processes
- Analytical-thinking skills guided by data
- Coding language
- Systems architecture
- Hands-on and use of simulations
- Ability to embrace and utilize agile processes
- Ability to communicate with tech personnel about business requirements
- Ability to manage technology vendors
- Adaptability
  - New skills and change
- Resiliency
- Problem-solving process
  - Understanding and identifying problem
  - Lean process
- Comfort with ambiguity
- Understanding the underpinnings of technology
- Math skills—Advanced
- Ability to translate jargon
- Skills with Excel
- Mastery of business statistics and the ability to apply to real-world situations

# Education Building Blocks

## BLOCK 6: TECHNICAL SKILLS- ESSENTIAL TECHNICAL SKILLS

### **Risk management—greater awareness of legal implications of business and technical elements of higher court decisions and potential impact to businesses**

- Ability to understand impact of actions beyond risk of getting sued
- Ability to understand contractual language and obligations
- Awareness of cyber liability and protection of customer information
- Understand and utilize social media applications appropriately
- Detail orientation
- Critical thinking

### **New technology and the ability/desire to embrace the changes it brings**

- Adept at Excel (intermediate and advanced skill level—beyond basic)
  - Data analysis
  - Formulas
- Advanced database skills
  - Salesforce automation
- Understanding business system
- Data analysis
- Cross training
- Social media management and boundaries
- Advanced manufacturing
- Automation
- Basic coding scripts that fit into business operations (understand how the data was developed to be able to communicate about the data) (basic skills, not necessarily that all employees will use, but more that they understand the process)
- Ability to find new ways to complete tasks

### **Changing workplace cultures to encompass more collaboration, greater use of talent, workplace flexibility, and emphasis on values, and business ethics**

Communication skills (using face-to-face communication)

- Written communications
- Agile thinking (skillset and methodology)
- Leadership skills (be the example to help facilitate change)
- Ability to identify values of company
- Ability to understand psychology of people/bias/tolerance
- Human behavior training
- Emotional intelligence skills
- Need to be willing to fail

# Education Building Blocks

## BLOCK 6: TECHNICAL SKILLS- ESSENTIAL TECHNICAL SKILLS

### **Increasing digital communication paired with a decrease in the use of emotional intelligence in communication efforts**

- Generational understanding
- Written communication
- Phone skills
- Ability to conduct and participate in webinars
- Customer service skills and customer interaction skills
- Being concise, brief
- Writing a compelling message (i.e., headline writing, email subject line)
  - Head and heart messaging
- Technical writing—specific to digital
- Ability to use multiple styles of communication (capability to select the right communication channel)

### **Growing need for cybersecurity measures that stay up to date with potential threats— including cloud cybersecurity**

- Ability to be flexible and aware of changes around you—nimble
- Understanding the related risk

### **Rapidly changing and complex regulations**

- Intellectual curiosity
- Ethics—letter of the law/spirit of the law
- Understanding basics of legal theory—authorization, impact, process of the system
- Practical application of industry knowledge

### **Increasing importance of brand management**

- Understanding intersection between one's opinion and the brand one represents
- Understanding the line between representation of one's own brand vs. company brand
- Ability to connect the brand to the customer visually, verbally, via story, via channel, etc.
- Ability to understand customer story and journey
- Knowledge of marketing mix and its evolution
- Ability to genuinely align brand to mission
- Ability to identify and build relationships with business partners who can help strengthen and improve brand
- Ability to understand all aspects of the business
- Manage personal brand effectively

# Education Building Blocks

## BLOCK 6: TECHNICAL SKILLS- ESSENTIAL TECHNICAL SKILLS

### Greater emphasis on employee engagement

- Ability to view employees through the “customer lens”
- Ability to assess what types of employee engagement hold value for employees and companies
- Ability to build trust between employees and leadership
- Ability to evaluate engagement levels and methods based on different generations in a workplace environment

## THE STATE ENDORSED PATHWAY OUTLINE

LINK TO [STATE PATHWAY MAP](#)– Comprehensive Business Administrative Pathway

- [Business Management Outline](#)
- [Finance Outline](#)
- [Marketing Outline](#)

# Education Building Blocks

## APPENDIX A– EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

### Wisconsin Employability Skill Standards

1. Develops positive relationships with others.
2. Communicates effectively with others.
3. Collaborates with others.
4. Maintains composure under pressure.
5. Demonstrates integrity.
6. Performs quality work.
7. Provides quality goods or service (internal and external).
8. Shows initiative and self-direction.
9. Adapts to change.
10. Demonstrates safety and security regulations and practices.
11. Applies job-related technology, information, and media.
12. Sets personal goals for improvement.



### Innovation Learning Outcomes

#### Art of Entrepreneurship– Critical Thinking

1. Information discovery
2. Interpretation and analysis
3. Reasoning
4. Problem Solving/Solution Finding
5. Constructing arguments

#### Art of Entrepreneurship– Communication

1. Engaging in conversations & discussions
2. Using 21st century communication tools
3. Listening
4. Delivering oral presentations

#### Art of Entrepreneurship– Collaboration

1. Leadership & initiative
2. Cooperation
3. Openness
4. Responsibility & productivity
5. Use if Tech Tools for collaboration
6. Responsiveness

#### Art of Entrepreneurship– Creativity

1. Idea generation
2. Idea design & refinement
3. Openness & courage to explore
4. Work creatively with others
5. Creative production & innovation

#### Attitude of Entrepreneurship

1. Adaptability & openness to change
2. Curiosity & imagination
3. Risk taking & being opportunistic
4. Optimism & persistence; Resilience
5. Focus; Goal-Oriented

#### Science of Entrepreneurship

1. Who is your customer?
2. What can you do for your customer?
3. How can you acquire your customer?

[Student Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program](#). The Commons, 2016.

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## APPENDIX B– DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS

### Wisconsin Standards for Information and Technology Literacy

#### Empowered Learner

1. Students leverage digital tools and strategies to take an active role in choosing and achieving their learning goals.
2. Students understand the fundamental concepts of technology operations and demonstrate the ability to choose, use, and troubleshoot current technologies.
3. Students are able to transfer knowledge to explore emerging technologies.

#### Digital Citizen

1. Students recognize the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of living, learning, and working in an interconnected digital world.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.

#### Knowledge Constructor

1. Students critically curate a variety of digital tools and diverse resources.
2. - Students produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences from curated knowledge for themselves and others.

#### Innovative Designer

1. Students use a variety of digital tools and resources to identify and solve authentic problems using design thinking.
2. Students use a variety of technologies within a design process to create new, useful, and imaginative solutions.

#### Computational Thinker

1. Students develop and employ strategies for understanding and solving problems.

#### Creative Communicator

1. Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats, and digital media appropriate to their goals.
2. Students publish and present content customized for their audience(s), purpose, and task.

#### Global Collaborator

1. Students use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and enrich their learning with culturally responsive practices by collaborating and working effectively with local and global teams.
2. Students use digital tools to connect with a global network of learners and engage with issues that impact local and global communities.



[Complete Standards set](#) by grade band. November 2017.

# Education Building Blocks

## APPENDIX C – STATE PARTNERS

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and J.P. Morgan Chase New Skills for Grant project, Pathways Wisconsin, thank the following partners for contributing to the development of this secondary Career Pathway.

### Employer Partners.

Michol Banes, Senior Marketing Manager, Baker-Tilly  
Michael Barfuss, Chief Financial Officer, ACS Group  
Wendy Boe, Office Operations Manager, Miller Public Adjusters  
Derek Brigham, Co-Founder and COO, Clearcover Insurance Company  
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Jamie Schramm, Community Outreach Manager, Kohler Credit Union  
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Bruce Russell, Former Principal  
Stacey Ryan, Teacher & Former WEBIT President, Waunakee School District  
Karla Saeger, Professor- Business Education, UW-Whitewater  
John Smith, Instructor-Marketing Education, UW-Whitewater  
Debbie Stanislawski, Program Director- MBE, UW-Stout: Business Education  
David Thomas, Business & IT Consultant, WI Department of Public Instruction  
Heidi Warren, WI Marketing Educators Association (WMEA)  
Todd Williams, WEBIT Representative, Plymouth School District

### **Public Agency Partners.**

Mike Bress, Chief Financial Officer, State of Wisconsin Investment Board  
Darla Burton, Youth Apprenticeship, WI Department of Workforce Development  
Amy Phillips, State Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator, WI Department of Workforce Development  
Nicole Rice, Workforce Services Coordinator, Northcentral WI Workforce Development Board

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Holly Atha & Rick Mangini, MBA Research and Curriculum Center, <https://www.mbaresearch.org/>