



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

August 28, 2008

Dear Colleague:

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, Wis. Admin. Code, *High School Graduation Standards*.

Chapter PI 18.02, Wis. Admin. Code, defines “equivalent graduation policy” as “a board 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 technology and engineering education, including Project Lead the Way (PLTW), and science course equivalency is new for Wisconsin.

Last year, State Superintendent Burmaster convened a task force with a charge to examine the technology education standards and Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses for science content and possible equivalency; additionally, the task force addressed PLTW courses and teacher licensing. The enclosed report outlines task force recommendations for establishing local science equivalency credit to technology education and PLTW classes.

A relevant question is whether or not an equivalent course meets established university or college entrance requirements. University of Wisconsin 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.”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 the original course designation does not change; that is, a technology and engineering education or PLTW course that is approved as equivalent to a science course will remain listed on the transcript as a technology and engineering course. The district will, however, need to designate the technology and engineering course as being a science equivalent on the student’s transcript.

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

Similarly, the required license for the teacher does not change. A technology and engineering course approved as equivalent to a science course would have to be taught by a teacher who holds a technology education license (#220).

The following process should be used to seek DPI approval for designating a technology and engineering/PLTW course as equivalent to a science course:

1. Form a committee of district personnel that includes both technology and engineering and science educators. Review the knowledge and skills of the technology and engineering course for which the district is seeking equivalency 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 crosswalk² document between *Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Technology Education* and *Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Science*. This crosswalk is to be completed during the review process.
2. Request school board approval for the equivalency course.
3. Submit all documentation to DPI using Form PI-1803-TE or PI-1803-TE PLTW. 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 other pertinent information can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/te/terp.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 Brent Kindred, technology education consultant, at brent.kindred@dpi.wi.gov or 608-266-2683; or Shelley Lee, science education consultant, at shelley.lee@dpi.wi.gov or 608-266-3319, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent

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Enclosure

² Technology and Engineering Education/Science Crosswalk found at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/te/terp.html>.