

Business & Information Technology, Marketing, Management & Entrepreneurship, and Social Studies Report

**Tim Fandek, Education Consultant
Marketing, Management and Entrepreneurship
Career & Technical Education Team**

**Kristen McDaniel, Education Consultant
Social Studies
Content & Learning Team**

**Jennifer Wegner, Education Consultant
Business & Information Technology
Career & Technical Education Team**

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Introduction

Public education is the foundation of economic security in Wisconsin and in an increasingly competitive global economy. Ensuring our high school students are ready for the career, college, and citizenship is important to the well-being and financial competitiveness of our state. In the 21st century, our high school graduates need rigorous coursework to gain the knowledge and skills to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, innovators, and effective communicators. Our students must also engage in advanced, relevant coursework.

A high school education that has meaning for today requires united efforts to engage all students in learning to ensure academic achievement and a strong foundation for success. Equally important, education options and pathways to success cannot be limited. One instructional method does not suit all learning styles.

Equivalency Work Group Understandings

Knowledge in many areas can be generated from multiple sources and through various courses at the secondary level and this conversation has begun in earnest in a number of areas. At its beginning, the state superintendent first established a work group that recommended to the department that equivalent science credit be given for certain agriculture courses.¹ A workgroup was then formed to develop equivalency options for technology education courses, Project Lead the Way courses, and science courses; with similar results.² Most recently, a work group was convened to review business and information technology courses for English/language arts equivalency.³

Following the practices established by the previous equivalency work groups, a work group was formed to study possible equivalency of business and information technology education courses and marketing education courses for social studies credit. The work group consisted of licensed business and information technology education teachers, licensed marketing education teachers, along with licensed social studies education teachers, including those with particular experience in economics. Also included were higher education faculty, all of whom are involved in preservice education for each of the disciplines.

The work group grounded its work in Section PI 18.02, Wis. Admin. Code, which defines “equivalent graduation policy” as “a board policy which meets the credit requirements specified 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.”

Equivalency Process

To determine possible equivalency, the work group was charged to examine the business and information technology and marketing education standards and courses for social studies and economics content. One virtual and one face-to-face meeting were held. Foundational context and previous equivalency processes were examined during the virtual meeting of the group.

¹ The agriculture and science work group report is housed at <http://dpi.wi.gov/ag/asec.html>.

² The technology education and science work group report can be found at dpi.wi.gov/te/terp.html

³ The business and information technology and English/language arts work group report can be found at dpi.wi.gov/bit/equivalency.html

The agenda of the face-to-face meeting of this group included reviewing a crosswalk of the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for Social Studies, Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for Business, and the National Business Education Standards, as well as the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for Marketing and MBAResearch National Standards.

Next, the work group carefully reviewed sample curriculum from Wisconsin schools to determine if course content would, in fact, meet secondary and post-secondary expectations for content to be deemed “equivalent for social studies”. Courses reviewed include the following:

- Business Law
- Business Economics
- Personal Finance with strong Economics emphasis
- Introduction to Business & Marketing

The work group did not determine it was necessary to limit the business and information technology or marketing courses that districts may wish to pursue for Social Studies (SS) equivalency. However, the work group recommends that courses similar to the above be considered as a one-to-one match for equivalency.

Although personal financial literacy coursework can be taught by both social studies teacher with economics licensure and business and information technology educators, this workgroup took a particular interest in discussing the possible equivalency of this course. In some districts that either offer or require a personal financial literacy type course, the person teaching it may vary from year to year depending on course loads, etc. If one year, a social studies/economics teacher teaches the course and it is then considered a social studies credit, this equivalency workgroup felt it important that equivalency credit be considered. When this equivalency exists, in another year, if the business teacher taught the same course, the course can again be counted as an equivalent social studies course even though it is not taught under the social studies department.

Equivalency Recommendations

Wisconsin has a long tradition of quality education and the recommendations from this work group reinforce our commitment to serve all students. The work group recommendation to develop a process to award social studies equivalency credit for business and information technology and marketing education classes is firmly in line with the 2006 State High Superintendent’s High School Workgroup Report recommendations. These recommendations will allow our students to full access to rigorous classes and the abilities to pursue multiple pathways to achieve academic success.

The work group strongly recommends that one-for-one equivalency credit in Social Studies be an option for students enrolled in certain business, marketing and information technology education courses. This recommendation is firmly grounded in Section PI 18.02, Wis. Admin. Code, the Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies, the Model Academic Standards for Business Education and Marketing, the MBAResearch Standards, and the National Business Education Standards.

Based on this recommendation, the work group further encourages the following:

- The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) should establish an equivalency process similar to the process recognized by previous equivalency efforts. However, this process should include information from each district as to how students earn or receive other social studies credits.
- The Crosswalk of Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for Social Studies and both state and national business education, along with marketing state and national standards, should become the basis for districts to document specific social studies content found in business and information technology education and marketing courses.
- Acceptance of these equivalency credits by state colleges and universities is critical. DPI should work collaboratively with the University of Wisconsin System Administration, the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges (WAICU), and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) for support in acceptance of approved equivalency courses as fulfilling social studies/economics requirements for college admission.
- A letter from the state superintendent should be sent to each district in the state outlining the new equivalency process and sharing best practice documents developed by this work group.

Business & Information Technology, Marketing Education, and Social Studies Work Group Members

Angie Bazan

Social Studies
Deerfield School District
Edgewood College

Justin Bestor

Social Studies
School District of Mishicot

Phil Brueggemann

Marketing
Elkhorn School District

Mark Cywinski

Social Studies
Brown Deer Schools

Steve Doell

Business & Information Technology
Wrightstown School District

Tina Flood

Director, Social Studies Programs
Milwaukee Public Schools

Kelly Hoyland

Business & Marketing
Menomonie School District

Mahshid Jalilvand

Economics
UW-Stout

Sean Kelly

Business & Information Technology
Denmark Public Schools

Christie Klun

Business & Information Technology
Arrowhead School District

Sara Kreibich

Social Studies
Somerset School District

Tammy Krug-Pickart

Business & Marketing
Fond du Lac School District

Mikki Maddox

Social Studies
Necedah School District

Scott Niederjohn

Social Studies/Economics
Lakeland College

Stacey Ryan

Business & Information Technology
Waunakee School District

John Smith

Business & Marketing Teacher Education
UW-Whitewater

Sara Van Berkum

Business & Marketing
Janesville School District

John Zimmerman

Marketing
Janesville School District

Sara Baird, Consultant

Career Pathways
Career & Technical Education Team

Tim Fandek, Consultant

Marketing Education
Career & Technical Education Team

Kristen McDaniel, Consultant

Social Studies/Content & Learning Team

Rebecca Vail, Director

Content & Learning Team

Jennifer Wegner, Consultant

Business & Information Technology
Career & Technical Education Team

Sharon Wendt, Director

Career & Technical Education Team