

Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Science Education Report

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Introduction

Public education is the foundation of economic security in Wisconsin in an increasingly competitive global economy. Ensuring our high school students are ready for the workplace, college, and citizenship are 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 engage in advanced science, technology, and mathematics 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 are not limited. One instructional method does not suit all learning styles.

Science knowledge can come from many sources. The state superintendent first established a task force that recommended to the department that equivalent science credit be given for certain agriculture courses.¹ Then a task force was formed to develop equivalency options for technology education courses, Project Lead the Way courses, and science courses; with similar results.²

Family and Consumer Education and Science Background

Following the practices established by the two previous task forces, a work group was formed to study possible science equivalency for family and consumer sciences education courses. The work group consisted of licensed family and consumer science education teachers, including several who have taught food science courses. Licensed science education teachers were also involved, including the president of both the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers (WSST) and Wisconsin Association of Physics Teachers (WAPT). Also included were higher education faculty, some 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.” To determine possible equivalency, the work group was given the charge to examine the family and consumer sciences standards and food science courses for science content.

Equivalency Recommendations

The work group strongly recommended that equivalency credit in science be given to students enrolled in certain family and consumer science course. This recommendation is firmly grounded in Section PI 18.02, Wis. Admin. Code, the Wisconsin model academic standards for family and

¹ The agriculture and science task force report at <http://dpi.wi.gov/ag/asec.html>.

² The technology education and science task force report at <http://dpi.wi.gov/te/terp.html>.

consumer education, and the national family and consumer sciences standards, and the state science standards. The recommendation is further described and next:

- Because many family and consumer education courses contain science content, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) should establish an equivalency process for family and consumer sciences education courses similar to the process recognized by agriculture and science equivalency and the technology education and science equivalency.
- Because *Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Science*, *Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Family and Consumer Education*, and the *National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education* provide a foundation for the course equivalency process, a crosswalk of the science and family and consumer sciences education standards, both state and national, should be completed. This crosswalk will then become the basis for districts to document specific science content found in the proposed family and consumer sciences education equivalent course.
- Because acceptance of science equivalency credit for family and consumer sciences education courses by state colleges and universities is critical, the DPI should work collaboratively with the University of Wisconsin System Administration, WAICU (Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges), and WTCS (Wisconsin Technical System) for support in acceptance of approved equivalency courses as fulfilling certain science requirements for college admission.

Recommendations to Districts

Family and consumer sciences education courses, and in particular food science courses, are evolving into courses with 21st century science concepts as a foundation. Because of this, the work group strongly recommended that:

- Reports should show evidence of quality science content in the crosswalk submission. Of note, not all science content standards must be met in a single family and consumer sciences course to be considered for science equivalency.
- The equivalent science credit should be considered as a third credit in science.
- Student career pathways are foundational in family and consumer sciences and should be noted in the crosswalk during the equivalency process.
- Professional development should be provided to family and consumer sciences education and science teachers about the equivalency process.
- Equivalent courses are to be noted on the high school transcript.

Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Science Education Work Group Members

Family and Consumer Sciences Education Teachers and District Personnel:	Science Education Teachers and District Personnel:
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