



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Career & Technical Education Course Equivalencies

2021

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.300.236](#)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Career and technical education (CTE) course equivalencies are courses that provide students the opportunity to meet standard in core subject areas through CTE courses. Each year, school districts must report the annual number of students participating in state-approved equivalency courses and the annual number of state-approved equivalency credit courses offered (Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 28A.300.236). The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must then summarize the school district information and submit a report to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature.

This report reflects the data collected during the 2020–21 school year. All data should be considered baseline and preliminary. The number of high school state and local equivalency courses offered, and the number of students enrolled in approved equivalency courses, continued to increase during the 2020–21 school year. Future opportunities include identifying goals with educational partners in higher education, industry partners, and the K–12 education system. By expanding existing CTE courses into statewide equivalencies, student access to equivalencies should increase in the coming years.

Inconsistency in completion of submitted data suggests further technical assistance to school districts and skill centers is needed to aid in accurate reporting. On an annual basis, school districts correct and adjust submitted data. OSPI, who provides the ability to review and evaluate the new data reported, uses the information to advise policy and practice recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

School districts have been able to adopt local career and technical education (CTE) equivalencies in all graduation requirement areas for more than 20 years, with statewide equivalencies first made available prior to the 2015–16 school year. OSPI supports school district efforts to adopt course equivalencies for CTE courses. The use of CTE equivalencies to achieve required graduation credit supports students' flexibility and choice while they are on their path to obtain a meaningful diploma. OSPI has created an approval and development process for state equivalencies that invites stakeholders to suggest development of additional course frameworks.

Development and Approval Process

Stakeholders may access the [State Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Course Equivalency Frameworks Request Form](#) online to submit any course for consideration for development. Participants in the development process may vary dependent upon need; however, content experts in the content area, CTE, and industry-occupation aligned areas are invited in the development and/or review of the course framework as technical working group members. Refined draft frameworks are shared broadly for feedback and review and are posted on the OSPI website for public comment prior to being considered for final approval. Once approved by the State Superintendent, the framework document is posted on the website.

The [CTE Course State Equivalency Frameworks Process and Frameworks document](#) released in March 2021 describes the most recently approved frameworks. It is notable that the authority to approve statewide equivalencies moved from the State Board of Education (SBE) to OSPI in 2018, and SBE approved 40 of the equivalency framework options reflected in this report. OSPI has since approved a total of 11 equivalency framework courses.

Statewide equivalency courses, as with all CTE courses, require approval by OSPI through the course approval process prior to implementation at the local school district level. This process requires school districts to clarify the course's mandatory extended leadership (Career and Technical Student Organization [CTSO] or equivalency program of work), provide course and program level information, document the skills gap through employment demand data and approval of the course by the local advisory committee, and provide the course framework.

Data Reporting Methodology

School districts are required to submit equivalency data monthly and are able to update daily within their Student Information Systems (SIS). This information is reflected in the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) and reflects what has been reported by districts. The equivalency data report for the 2020–21 school year, run September 2021, would contain complete Course Catalog courses for 2020–21. The CEDARS manual may be found in [Appendix B](#), which includes the data descriptors related to CTE Equivalency (Elements D12/D13).

UPDATE STATUS

Previously approved Statewide Equivalency Frameworks continued to be reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to reflect updated industry standard alignment, and to ensure correct alignment to updated academic standards, when applicable. Selection and development of the newly developed course frameworks and in-process frameworks has been an intentional process aimed to:

- Ensure options for both comprehensive high schools and skill centers across the six CTE programs areas, and
- Provide equivalency options for all content area credits required for graduation.

The newest approved frameworks included Classification of Instructional Programs code (CIP):

- CIP 470616: Core Plus Maritime
- CIP 011201: Soil Chemistry
- CIP 030198: Climate Science Engineering and Technology
- CIP 110201: Advanced Placement (AP) Computer Science Principles
- CIP 130101: Careers in Education/Teacher Academy
- CIP 270301: Applied Geometry

These frameworks were built with content and CTE educator experts, as well as key industry and postsecondary partners. State Superintendent Chris Reykdal approved these six courses on March 16, 2021.

Legislative Changes

The 2019 Legislature required school districts to provide access to a statewide equivalency from a list of approved courses and to transcribe those courses as meeting academic credit and fulfilling a graduation requirement. Until September 1, 2021, districts were required to provide high school students with the opportunity to access at least one CTE course that is considered a statewide equivalency course. Starting September 2021, any statewide equivalency course offered by the district or assessed at a skill center must be offered for academic credit and count toward a student's credit requirements for graduation. OSPI will continue to review data to look for opportunities to support district implementation of these adoption requirements.

CTE Equivalency Courses and Curriculum Frameworks

Table 1 lists the number of frameworks available in math, science, and English language arts; and Table 2 identifies the number of frameworks available by CTE program area, as administered and defined by OSPI.

Table 1: Number of Statewide Equivalency Frameworks Available by Credit Type during the 2020–21 School Year

Type of Equivalency Credit	Number of Frameworks
Math	
Algebra 1	4
Algebra 2	1
Geometry	4
Credit Beyond Geometry	1
Statistics	1
3rd Year Math	2
Science	
Biology or Lab Science	5
Lab Science	17
Life Science or Lab Science	3
Physics or Lab Science	1
Science	4
English Language Arts	
English	2
Combination	
3rd Year Math and Science	1
English and Math	1
English and Science	1
English, 3rd Year Math and Science	3
TOTAL	51

Source: [CTE Statewide Course Equivalencies](#) (updated April 2021).

Table 2: Number of Frameworks Available by CTE Program Area during the 2019–20 School Year

Program Area	Number of Frameworks
Agriculture	15
Business & Marketing	5
Family & Consumer Science	5
Health Sciences	5
Skilled & Technical Sciences	14
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)	7
TOTAL	51

Source: [CTE Statewide Course Equivalencies](#) (updated April 2021).

Course Offerings and Student Participation

Table 3 summarizes the current statewide equivalency course data as reported by school districts in the CEDARS system.

Table 3: Statewide Equivalency Course Data Reported by School Districts

School Year	High School Courses Offered	Skill Center Courses Offered	Number of Students
2016–17	1,689	125	30,658
2017–18	1,347	104	30,422
2018–19	1,601	67	36,742
2019–20	1,708	52	39,423
2020–21	1,840	78	42,060

Source: OSPI CEDARS CTE Equivalency Report.

There was an increase in the reported number of state equivalency courses offered by high schools and skill centers along with an increase of the number of students who received the option of equivalency credits.

Data Limitations

This report reflects the fifth year of available data, and there is an expected margin of error in reporting data elements, which have expanded to differentiate between state and local equivalency courses. OSPI again identified a few skill centers and districts that did not report statewide equivalencies in the CEDARS system. As described by districts, reasons for the gap in data reporting include district or building staff turnover, updates to SIS software, or capacity impacts due to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Targeted technical assistance to address data quality will be provided through OSPI’s CTE and Student Information departments.

CONCLUSION

Though the COVID-19 pandemic and workload for educators and industry partners impacted the ability to provide in-person workgroups and training, educators and industry partners were able to work together virtually to increase course equivalency access to students. There continues to be an increase in both the number of state equivalency courses offered and number of students enrolled in those courses, which can be attributed to the policy change requiring districts must provide high school students with the opportunity to access at least one CTE course that is considered a statewide equivalency course. The increase of additional state equivalency course options should continue to support growth in enrollment and course offerings.

OSPI will continue to revise approved frameworks to correspond with updated academic and industry standards and refine frameworks to better support local implementation of the Washington State Learning Standards. OSPI will also continue to engage in new framework development, professional learning and development, and improvement in data quality while partnering with local school districts' administrators, teachers, and industry partners.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Current Statewide Equivalency Frameworks

The [CTE frameworks](#) and associated equivalency credit are available on the OSPI website.

Appendix B: CEDARS Manual

The current [CEDARS Manual](#), including data element descriptors, is available on the OSPI website (CTE Equivalency [Elements D12/D13]).

Appendix C: CTE Course Equivalencies Frameworks Request Form

The current [form to request consideration of statewide equivalency development](#) is available on the OSPI website.

Appendix D: CTE Course Equivalency Waiver

The current [form to request consideration of a waiver](#) from the provisions of RCW 28A.230.015, requiring districts to provide high school students the opportunity to access state career and technical education statewide course equivalency courses is available on the OSPI website.

Appendix E: CTE Course Equivalency Certificate Templates

The current CTE [Course Equivalency Certificate](#) and [State Equivalency Certificate](#) templates support the provisions of RCW 28A.230.097 (the high school or school district shall also issue and keep record of course completion certificates that demonstrate that the career and technical courses were successfully completed as needed for industry certification, college credit, or pre-apprenticeship, as applicable). The certificate shall be part of the student's High School and Beyond Plan and is available on the OSPI website.

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