SSB 5617 Career and Technical Education Courses

Statutory and/or Budget Language

$51,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2024 and $36,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2025 are provided solely for implementation of Substitute Senate Bill No. 5617 (career and technical education courses).

Purpose

This initiative expands the delivery of state and local equivalencies with three primary actions:

1. That an interdistrict cooperative agreement for skill center participation in state and local equivalencies shall:
   a. Require participating school districts to honor and accept state and local equivalency courses approved and offered by the host district as equivalent courses within districts aligned with the skill center; and
   b. Mandate public school districts serving students in grades 9–12 to publish approved state and local equivalencies annually.
2. OSPI must conduct a review of equivalency implementation requirements and provide technical assistance to districts to ensure state course equivalencies are being consistently offered for academic credit for students at high schools and skill centers; and
3. That a standardized system shall be established to:
   a. Validate and adapt new statewide equivalency courses that align technology-based competitive student activities with traditional academic high school standards; and
   b. Develop an equivalency crosswalk creating alternative pathways for fulfilling academic requirements through technology-focused extracurricular participation linked to career interests.

Description of Services Provided

Alignment between Skill Centers and Host Districts and Notification Requirements

OSPI worked with the Washington State Skill Center Association (WSSCA) to support common understanding and language expectations to support the updating of local administrative agreements as required by legislation. Many skill centers expressed that the language was present in their existing agreements. Skill centers and local districts reflect the equivalency status of their CTE courses, inclusive of both locally developed and state adopted courses.

Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

OSPI Evaluation of CTE Equivalency Implementation

OSPI staff continue to provide technical support for course adoption, implementation, and statewide evaluation. Efforts to support districts with relevant workshops at the 2023 Washington Association of Career and Technical Education (WA-ACTE) summer and 2024 fall statewide CTE conferences and the Washington Association of Career and Technical Administrators (WACTA) conference. These engagements provided opportunities to connect districts and skill centers with key requirements of SSB 5617, existing course equivalency requirements, and professional development for implementation.

The OSPI CTE Equivalency Program Supervisor provides technical assistance as needed to skill centers and local districts through virtual meetings, workshops, emails, and phone calls.

The following resources are posted on the [OSPI Statewide Course Equivalencies](#) webpage:

- CTE Course Equivalency Framework Application Form to request the development of a new statewide equivalency framework.
- State Equivalency Certificate Template for documentation of application of CTE equivalencies to meet core academic content credits.
- CTE Statewide Course Equivalency Framework list, including both the corresponding CTE program area and equivalent core content area.

School districts and skill centers report participation through CEDARS, which is monitored by the OSPI CTE Equivalency Program Supervisor. Our required program evaluation continues to be improved through data collection technical assistance and increased district monitoring.

Statewide Equivalency Courses that Align Technology-based Competitive Student Activities

In coordination with the Washington State Scholastic Esports Association, a diverse technical working group was established, bringing together educators with expertise in technology-based competitive student activities, career technical education business and information technology courses, and core academic standards. Selected participants demonstrated proficiency in technical gaming programs, equity-based pedagogy, universal design for learning, and maintain affiliations with Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) offering technology-based competitions. The group represents a geographic cross-section of Washington state educators actively involved in coaching Esports clubs.

Criteria for Receiving Services and/or Grants

Course equivalency technical assistance is provided to all school districts, schools, state and tribal education compacts, and skill centers. While funding was not used to support the outcomes identified in this report, beneficiaries reflect districts supported in course equivalency implementation and reporting, the number of students reported as enrolled in equivalency courses, and the number of educators involved with the technical working group. For the purposes of calculating beneficiaries of services there were 17 Skill Centers supported in updating administrative agreements, 196 school district reported offering equivalency coursework, 498,842 enrolled students in either state or local equivalencies, and 6 educators that took part in the technical work group.

Beneficiaries in the 2023-24 School Year

Number of School Districts	196
Number of Schools	17 Skill Centers
Number of Students	498,842
Number of Educators	6
Other	

Are Federal or Other Funds Contingent on State Funding?

No

State Funding History

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
2024	$51,000	$0

Number of Beneficiaries Per Fiscal Year (e.g. School Districts, Schools, Students, Educators, Other)

Fiscal Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2024	499,061

Programmatic Changes Since Inception (If Any)

None.

Program Evaluation or Evaluation of Major Findings

Alignment between Skill Centers and Host Districts and Notification Requirements
Communication through the WSSCA was successful, and Skill Centers were able to implement the necessary changes to administrative agreements. Skill Centers continue to work in collaboration with their member school districts to ensure communication is consistent and

available for students and families to make informed decisions about course taking opportunities. The requirement for participating school districts to honor and accept state and local equivalency courses approved and offered by the host district as equivalent courses within districts aligned with the skill center supports increased opportunity for students and families to utilize local and state equivalencies as an option for meeting high school graduation requirements. OSPI absorbed costs within existing resources to accomplish this work.

OSPI Evaluation of CTE Equivalency Implementation
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, first in mathematics and science but expanding to all credit areas. OSPI continues 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 also continues to engage in technical assistance, professional learning and development, and improvement in data quality while partnering with local skill centers' and school districts' administrators, teachers, and industry partners to streamline implementation and communication. OSPI continues to review submitted data to inform technical assistance plans in support of district reporting requirements.

Statewide Equivalency Courses that Align Technology-based Competitive Student Activities
In spring 2024, the technical working group developed a crosswalk aligning technology-based competitive student activities with core academic standards. The group identified potential career technical education courses, associated Industry Recognized Credentials, and prospective statewide academic equivalencies, aiming to broaden student engagement in STEM and business fields relevant to competitive gaming and business industries. This group worked online due to constraints, resulting in lack of funding use.

In the summer of 2024, the technical working group drafted a statewide equivalency framework using CIP code 110803, Video Game Design & Development, and aligned the course with mathematics standards with the hope of adoption in the 2024–25 school year.

Major Challenges Faced by the Program

The previous vacancy in the Equivalency Program Supervisor position, along with staff transitions to new roles within the agency and the hiring of new personnel, have collectively contributed to a substantial reduction in the use of this proviso for the 2023–24 fiscal year.

Additionally, work groups encountered several challenges to formation. In-person meetings were difficult due to staffing and budget constraints, resulting in reduced travel expenses.

E-Sports is an example of an extended learning opportunity; an associated extension from a CTE class. Equivalency courses are built based upon in-class learning opportunities, and while E-Sports may have some aligned instructional connections, the development of the course is

different than the opportunity for a district to grant credit for learning activities that occur outside of the scheduled school day or school year as part of the E-Sports program.

High school programs integrating E-Sports courses could face several interconnected challenges, including: preparation and training of qualified instructors; acquisition and equitable distribution of necessary technological infrastructure; securing stakeholder buy-in from administrators, educators, and policymakers; allocation of funding amidst competing educational priorities; establishment of vital industry partnerships; and integration with existing Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and career clusters. The complexity and interdependence of these challenges necessitate a coordinated, strategic approach to ensure successful integration of Esports courses while maintaining educational rigor and workforce relevance.

Future Opportunities

With continued alignment of state and local equivalency courses approved and offered by the host district as equivalent courses within districts aligned with the skill center, students and their families can leverage these courses to meet academic credit and fulfill a graduation requirement. OSPI will continue to review data to look for opportunities to support district and skill center implementation of the adoption requirements and assist skill centers with communicating to participating districts the approved course equivalencies and supporting partner districts with updating their courses in their student information system to ensure accuracy with SSB 5617.

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

Statewide Equivalency Courses that Align Technology-based Competitive Student Activities
Further creation and adoption of E-Sports themed statewide equivalencies and related career technical education courses may create multiple opportunities. These include the creation of diverse career pathways in the expanding E-Sports industry with transferable business skills, enhancement of STEM education through practical application of technology and analytical skills, and development of essential 21st Century Skills such as teamwork, communication, and leadership. The implementation of E-Sports programs may foster inclusive participation, potentially increasing engagement from underrepresented groups in STEM fields and creating

new social networks within schools. Such programs may justify investments in advanced technology infrastructure and facilitate valuable industry partnerships, potentially leading to internships, mentorships, and sponsored events. Academic engagement may improve through increased school connectedness, while cross-disciplinary learning opportunities may arise by integrating E-Sports themes into various subjects. Furthermore, E-Sports initiatives may contribute to community building through new Career Student Technical Organizations and inter-school competitions, as well as provide opportunities for educational research and data-driven curriculum improvements.

Other Relevant Information

OSPI provides an annual report to the state legislature that identifies the number of students accessing equivalency coursework, and the number of courses being offered as state and local equivalencies.

Schools/Districts Receiving Assistance

Click here to see a list of all OSPI grant recipients in the 2024 Fiscal Year.

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