



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Career & Technical Education Course Equivalencies 2025

Authorizing Legislation: RCW 28A.300.236

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Career and Technical Education (CTE) course equivalencies connect industry-based learning with core academics, allowing students to earn graduation credit through applied, career-focused coursework. In accordance with [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 28A.300.236](#), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required each year to report on:

- The annual number of students participating in state-approved equivalency courses
- The annual number of state-approved equivalency credit courses offered in school districts and skill centers
- The list of equivalent CTE courses and their curriculum frameworks approved by OSPI under [RCW 28A.700.070](#).

This report presents data on CTE equivalency courses collected during the 2024–25 school year. All data should be considered baseline and preliminary. During this period, both the number of state and local equivalency courses offered, and the number of students enrolled in approved high school equivalency courses continued to grow. Looking ahead, OSPI aims to strengthen CTE course alignment through partnerships with higher education, industry, and the K–12 education system. Expanding statewide equivalencies is expected to further increase student access in future years.

Despite this progress, inconsistencies in the submission of equivalency course data highlight the need for additional technical assistance to support accurate reporting by school districts and skill centers. Districts routinely revise and update their data throughout the year. To improve accuracy, the CTE Course Equivalency Program Supervisor has proposed a biannual data compilation process, giving districts additional opportunities to review and correct submissions. OSPI staff will continue to evaluate and refine these data collections to enhance data quality and inform policy and program recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

For more than two decades, school districts have had the authority to locally adopt CTE course equivalencies across all subject areas required for high school graduation. Statewide equivalencies were introduced in the 2015–16 school year, expanding opportunities for consistency and access across Washington. OSPI continues to support districts in developing and adopting CTE course equivalencies that align with graduation requirements.

The use of CTE course equivalencies enhances student flexibility and choice by allowing core academic requirements to be met through applied, career-connected learning experiences. To further advance this work, OSPI has implemented a structured process for developing statewide equivalencies. This process engages education and industry stakeholders in identifying new course frameworks that respond to student interests and regional workforce needs. These partners also collaborate in the creation and review of course frameworks to ensure rigorous alignment between academic content and current industry standards.

Development and Approval Process

School districts, industry representatives, and education partners are encouraged to submit requests for consideration of new statewide CTE course equivalencies. Any CTE course is eligible for statewide adoption. Requests may be submitted to OSPI through the online [State CTE Course Equivalency Frameworks Request Form](#). Submissions are reviewed and evaluated based on their alignment with academic standards and the potential to meet graduation credit requirements.

The technical work groups responsible for developing course frameworks typically include subject-matter experts, CTE educators, and industry-aligned professionals. The composition of these groups may vary depending on the content area and specific expertise required. Together, these stakeholders develop new frameworks and review existing ones to identify opportunities for additional statewide CTE equivalencies.

Once approved by OSPI, statewide CTE equivalency frameworks are published and made available on the OSPI website. Approved frameworks are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in academic learning standards and evolving industry expectations.

It is important to note that the authority to approve statewide CTE equivalencies transitioned from the State Board of Education (SBE) to OSPI in 2018. Prior to this transition, the SBE approved 40 statewide equivalency framework options. Since assuming this responsibility, OSPI has approved an additional 39 statewide CTE course equivalencies, expanding access and opportunity for students across Washington.

Statewide course equivalency adoption requires submission through OSPI's course approval process, consistent with all CTE courses, before they are approved at the local district level.

This process requires school districts to:

- Confirm the course's mandatory extended leadership via the inclusion of either a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) or equivalent program of work.
- Document the skills gap through employment demand data and approval of the course by the local advisory committee.
- Provide course information, program level information, and the curriculum framework for each course.

Data Reporting Methodology

School districts are required to submit course equivalency data monthly and can update data daily within their Student Information Systems (SIS). This information is shown in the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) and reflects what has been reported by districts. The equivalency data report for the 2024–25 school year, which was collected in September 2025, would contain complete Course Catalog courses for 2024–25. The CEDARS manual may be found in [Appendix B](#), which includes the data descriptors related to CTE Equivalency (Elements D12/D13).

BACKGROUND

Since 2008, OSPI has played a central role in supporting school districts with the implementation of CTE course equivalencies under RCW 28A.230.097. What began as locally driven efforts to align CTE courses with academic standards has steadily evolved through successive legislative actions into a comprehensive statewide system designed to ensure equitable access to high-quality, career-connected learning opportunities.

In 2014, the Washington State Legislature directed OSPI to develop CTE curriculum frameworks that meet mathematics and science graduation requirements. The legislation also required each school district to offer at least one CTE course that qualifies for equivalency credit, ensuring that students across the state could access CTE options aligned with academic standards.

Subsequent legislative action in 2018 expanded statewide equivalencies to include all academic subject areas, strengthening the connection between CTE programs, graduation pathways, and postsecondary goals. This broadened scope advanced the state's vision of integrating academic rigor with real-world, industry-aligned learning experiences.

In 2019, the legislature further required school districts to provide access to at least one statewide equivalency course from OSPI's approved list and to transcribe these courses as meeting academic credit toward graduation requirements. Until September 1, 2021, districts were obligated to provide high school students with the opportunity to take at least one CTE course designated as statewide equivalency. Beginning in September 2021, any statewide equivalency course offered by a district or assessed at a skills center must be recognized for the corresponding academic credit and count toward a student's credit requirements for graduation. OSPI continues to monitor district implementation and analyze data to identify opportunities for additional support and technical assistance in meeting these adoption requirements.

Most recently, in 2023, new legislation required districts in cooperative agreements to recognize one another's approved equivalency courses, improving regional access and consistency for students statewide. The same legislation also directed OSPI to develop a crosswalk identifying technology-based competitions, such as Video Game Design and Development, that may qualify for equivalency credit.

Collectively, these legislative milestones reflect Washington state's continued commitment to expanding access to rigorous, relevant CTE courses that support both academic achievement and career readiness. OSPI's ongoing work in developing, approving, and supporting statewide equivalencies ensures that students are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in postsecondary education and the workforce.

UPDATE STATUS

OSPI continued to review and update previously approved statewide equivalencies to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to reflect updated industry standard alignment, and to align correctly to updated academic standards, when applicable. Selection and development of the newly developed course frameworks and in-process frameworks have been an intentional process aimed at:

- Ensuring more options for both comprehensive high schools and skills centers across the six CTE programs areas
- Providing equivalency course options for all content area credits required for graduation

The newest approved frameworks included CTE courses with the following Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes:

- 030506 Advanced Forest Management
- 030201 Advanced Restoration Ecology
- 010303 Introduction to Aquaculture and Fisheries
- 010303 Advanced Aquaculture and Fisheries
- 030501 Introduction to Urban and Community Forestry
- 030508 Advanced Urban and Community Forestry
- 480508 Welding Technology I
- 480508 Welding Technology II
- 110701 AI Literacy for Civic Engagement
- 110204 Video Game Analysis
- 110803 Video Game Design & Development

These frameworks were developed with content and CTE educator experts, as well as key industry and postsecondary partners. State Superintendent Chris Reykdal approved these eleven courses on August 25, 2025.

In addition, several frameworks were updated in CTE courses with the following Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes:

- 260103 Biomedical Human System
- 261202 Biotechnology
- 510601 Dental Assisting
- 512699 Home Care Aid
- 511614 Nursing Assistant
- 510913 Sports Medicine I
- 510913 Sports Medicine II
- 512208 Systems Medicine

- 270301 Applied Algebra I
- 270301 Applied Geometry

CTE Equivalency Courses and Curriculum Frameworks

Table 1 lists the number of statewide frameworks available in all academic areas. Table 2 identifies the number of frameworks available by CTE program area, as administered and defined by OSPI.

Table 1: Statewide Equivalency Frameworks Available by Credit Type in 2024–25

Type of Equivalency Credits	Number of Frameworks
Math	
Algebra 1	4
Algebra 2	1
Geometry	4
Credit Beyond Geometry	1
Statistics	1
3rd Year Math	3
Integrated Math	1
Science	
Biology or Lab Science	5
Lab Science	25
Life Science or Lab Science	3
Physics or Lab Science	1
Science	4
English Language Arts	
English	6
Health	

Type of Equivalency Credits	Number of Frameworks
Health	2
Art	
Art	3
Social Studies	
Social Studies Elective	2
Combination	
3rd Year Math and Science	1
English and Math	1
English and Science	1
English, 3rd Year Math, and Science	4
Lab Science and Physical Education	1
English and Art	1
Lab Science, Math	4
Total	79

Source: [CTE Statewide Course Equivalencies](#) (updated October 2025).

Table 2: Number of Frameworks Available by CTE Program Area in 2024–25

Program Area	Number of Frameworks
Agriculture Education	26
Business & Marketing	9
Family & Consumer Sciences	9
Health Sciences	8
Skilled & Technical Sciences	19
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)	8
Total	79

Source: [CTE Statewide Course Equivalencies](#) (updated October 2025).

Course Offerings and Student Participation

Table 3 summarizes the current statewide equivalency course data as reported by school districts in the CEDARS system. There was an increase in the reported number of state equivalency courses offered by high schools and skills centers along with an increase in the number of students who received the option of equivalency credits.

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	1,734	55	37,001
2020–21	1,863	78	39,555

School Year	High School Courses Offered	Skill Center Courses Offered	Number of Students
2021–22	2,059	79	44,764
2022–23	2,170	84	49,992
2023–24	2,752	124	54,163
2024–25	2,813	154	61,614

Data Note: Course and student counts differ from previous reports due to changes in data collection methodology, now using "Most Recent Records" from CEDARS files instead of "All Records."

Data Limitations

This report represents the eighth year of available data and acknowledges an anticipated margin of error associated with the reporting of data elements, which have been expanded to differentiate between state and local equivalency courses. OSPI again identified a limited number of skills centers and districts that did not report statewide equivalencies in the CEDARS system. As reported by districts, factors contributing to these data gaps include staff turnover at the district or building level, updates to student information system (SIS) software, and capacity constraints. OSPI's CTE and Student Information departments remain committed to providing targeted technical assistance to strengthen data accuracy and quality.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

Course equivalency implementation and student enrollment continue to grow as opportunities expand for students to earn academic credit toward graduation requirements. The Superintendent's approval of "AI Literacy for Civic Engagement" reflects the state's commitment to innovation and integration of emerging fields such as artificial intelligence (AI). In collaboration with education and industry partners, OSPI will continue to develop new statewide frameworks and revise existing ones to align with updated academic and industry standards, thereby enhancing local implementation of the Washington State Learning Standards. OSPI will also continue to provide professional learning opportunities related to the instruction of equivalent courses and offer resources to assist staff in communicating the benefits of expanded course equivalencies to students and families. Furthermore, OSPI remains steadfast in its commitment to improving data quality through ongoing partnerships with school districts, administrators, educators, and industry partners.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Current Statewide Equivalency Frameworks

A full list of the statewide [CTE frameworks](#) and associated equivalency credits is available for districts seeking to explore and/or adopt the frameworks currently developed.

Appendix B: CEDARS Manual

The current [CEDARS Manual](#), including data element descriptors, is available to support further expansion of CTE course equivalencies (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 [Statewide Course Equivalencies](#) webpage.

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 statewide course equivalency courses.

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, which states, "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 both templates are available on the OSPI [Statewide Course Equivalencies](#) webpage.

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