

Improving the Quality of Course Data

Course Data

Course data, or data about which courses students take, are used to understand statewide course-taking patterns, develop targeted supports, and draw conclusions about student learning, educator equity, and more. Course data are also used by postsecondary institutions to understand a student's transcript; they are shared when a student transfers from one school to another; and they are used to align teacher credentials with courses, ensuring that school districts, State-Tribal Education Compacts (STEC) and charter schools are in compliance with state and federal requirements. OSPI would like to use course data even more extensively to understand and improve teaching and learning.

What does “Course Data” mean?

When it comes to reporting course data, three fields are most essential. **Course ID** and **Course Title** are established locally. For each **Course ID** and **Course Title**, districts, STECs and charters report a **State Course Code** that best aligns with the content of a course.¹ Here are some examples:

Course ID	Course Title	State Course Code
Course ID used by the district or school to represent the unique course number	Course title given to the course in this school and district	Course code used by the State to represent the unique course
MTH052	Algebra I	02052
ENG001	9 TH Grade English	01001
WL052	WL Spanish 1	24052

Assigning State Course Codes

Districts, STECs and charters determine which State Course Code is most appropriate for each course, often called *mapping*. When State Course Codes are assigned by someone unfamiliar with instruction, they may make a best guess and unintentionally map courses incorrectly, introducing poor data quality. When the mapping is done in collaboration with those close to instruction, mapped courses may better align with content. Districts, STECs and charters have shared several strategies for mapping course codes –

- Map course data in collaboration, with subject matter experts weighing in and discussing this with data-reporting experts.
- Use a request process, where new courses are mapped to state course codes at their creation or on a regular basis.
- Prioritize mapping one area at a time: for example, math courses; by grade; or specials/electives.

¹ State Course Codes are listed in [Appendix V](#). Many are based on [School Courses for the Exchange of Data \(SCED\)](#), a classification widely used to compare course information, maintain data about students' coursework, and efficiently exchange course-taking records. Contact Student.Information@k12.wa.us to propose a change to SCED.



Committing to High Quality Course Data

If there are gaps and inconsistencies in course data reporting, data quality may be impacted. With high-quality data, districts/STECs, schools and OSPI can target supports to improve student learning.

Managing Changes to Data

Before implementing changes, OSPI recommends that all key stakeholders are involved in reviewing and considering how a change may impact data quality and other outcomes.