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To LEA Curriculum and Instructional Directors
LEA NC WISE Directors

COURSE CODING

We are aware that many of you have questions or concerns about the current practice of course coding. Over the past several years, course coding has been complicated by the increasing availability of online courses, articulation agreements with universities and community colleges, and crosswalks created by the staff at NCDPI. We have asked the Academic Services Staff to be responsive to your need for answers, especially during the time of year when you are registering students for the 2009-10 school year.

To that end, we are sharing a document with you that contains responses to some of the recently asked questions regarding NC WISE and course coding. One LEA submitted these questions to the NC WISE staff, and we are guessing that many of you may have these questions in your LEAs as well.

We are continuing to work to resolve course coding issues as NC WISE is fully deployed across the state. Stand by for more information as we address more of these issues. It is our hope that the attached document will shed some clarity on current coding practices. Please share this information with your NC WISE and instructional staff. If there are questions related to NC WISE, please contact John Gilmore, NC WISE Business Services Manager, at jgilmore@dpi.state.nc.us. You may contact Dr. Belinda Black, Chief of Staff, at bblack@dpi.state.nc.us with questions related to courses or instruction.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Rebecca Garland in cursive.

Rebecca Garland
Chief Academic Officer

Handwritten signature of John R. Wetsch in cursive.

John R. Wetsch, Ph.D.
IT Director, Academic Services

ACADEMIC SERVICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

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NC WISE Course Code Recently Asked Questions

1. As we "clean up", what should we do when we find errors on the state course code list?

Please report any errors on the state list to the NC WISE service desk

2. How should we handle courses that we will not use anymore if the courses have been copied and scheduled in the next couple of months? Will there be further adjustments that will cause schools to have to drop scheduled courses to use the "correct" course/course number?

Currently the system will allow you to copy courses to the next scheduling year when the end date for the course is at the end of the current year. Any courses ending before the current year end will not be copied. We recommend that after the school copies their courses to the next school year in NC WISE, they should carefully review and delete any courses that will not be valid for the next school year. This should be completed before they start entering in course selections for students.

3. Will there be a lockdown? If so, what fields will be locked down?

There is currently no course code lockdown in place. The planned lockdown (described in the December 5, 2007 memo from Robert Logan) was never implemented. However, we are requiring NC WISE coordinators and curriculum supervisors to closely monitor the use of course codes to ensure accuracy and consistent use across the state.

4. If we lose the ability to change the long name, what does NCDPI suggest we do about the local course descriptions that LEAs have been using? There are lots of changes in the descriptions...should we adjust our names to match?

Currently we are not aware of the LEAs losing the ability to change the long name in NC WISE for the next school year. It is suggested that the number and/or name of the special topics, special interest, community college, university or online course be placed in the long title so that it will show up on the transcript.

5. What can we expect to happen with the community college/university courses?

A proposed work around for identifying community college courses in eSIS for reporting purposes:

- a. LEAs identify a naming convention for the internal course code. One or any combination of the 6th through 8th characters may be used.
- b. LEA coordinators create a unique internal course code to use for each community college course by using the additional 3 characters available in eSIS.
- c. The external course code and the internal course code first 4 characters must match exactly. The 5th character in the external course code should be X for high schools.

If a community college course already exists with a unique internal course code, LEA coordinators should follow these guidelines:

- a. update the description of an existing course code to reflect the community college course code, followed by the course title, to appear on the student transcript;
- b. Push the course code down to all schools that have the existing course code in Course Maintenance and have course sections associated with the course, and

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- create a Heat Ticket with the NC WISE Service desk for all courses which need to be pushed down.
- c. select the course from the List Add button(if the school does not have the course code in Course Maintenance). There is no need for these courses to be pushed down.
 - d. delete the course from Course Maintenance and then re-add it using the List Add button (if the course exists but has no course sections attached). There is no need for these courses to be pushed down.
 - e. update the Short Name of the course on the Course Maintenance screen to reflect the course name that should print on the report card.

Instructions for adding new community college courses are located at http://www.ncwise.org/documents/sims_ncwise_conversion/WISE_CRS_WorkAround_CommunityCollege.pdf.

6. Time is very important. If changes are coming for the next school year, we should be informed so that we can plan accordingly. (Scheduling, Course Selection Guides, local courses, etc.)

We understand the need for information to be disseminated in a timely manner. However, questions come to NCDPI almost daily regarding the use of the current coding structure. In an effort to resolve some of the ongoing issues surrounding coding and the increasing innovations that require consideration (NC Virtual Public Schools' courses, for example) a Course Issue Team will be starting its work in March 2009. When this team begins its work, it is possible that there may be resolutions regarding course coding problems that will be disseminated during the remainder of the 2008-09 school year. NCDPI will make every effort to ensure that dissemination of information is timely and that expectations are realistic.

7. There is a new 2009-2010 Course Code Structure document on-line. Is this the guide we should be using? It seems that the state is going to be using the 6th and 7th digit - what should we do within our districts if we currently use the 6th, 7th and 8th digit locally?

The course coding list entitled "Active Course Coding List" is located at <http://www.ncwise.org/conversioninfo.html> and is the definitive course coding list. It should be consulted to see all the iterations of each course code. This list is the current and correct list of course codes available from the Department of Public Instruction.

NCDPI recently expanded the internal course code numbers in NC WISE from six characters to eight. This action increases the number of course codes available to current NC WISE LEAs and charter schools. It also makes it easier for larger LEAs to convert to NC WISE.

Previously, with the six-digit course code, the first five numbers were reserved for the NC WISE standard course list and the last number was available to the LEAs and charter schools for local course definition. Now, LEAs and charter schools will have three digits instead of one for local course definition. LEAs and charter schools have the option of

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using the additional two characters. There is no need to make use of the additional two digits if an LEA or school does not choose to do so.

Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, middle schools were allowed to offer selected courses that carry high school credit and satisfy credit high school graduation requirements. Middle schools have the option to offer the high school version of second language courses or the “regular” middle school version. Schools can offer both the high school and middle school versions if they choose. Because this course will have different settings than the high school equivalent, the 6th digit must be used to differentiate these numbers from the standard high school course. A 6th digit of K, L, and Z will be used to designate these courses in the standard course list.