

## **Exemplary—Indiana Middle and Secondary School Business Programs**

Two of Indiana’s outstanding educational programs are the Middle and Secondary School Business programs. This document provides a brief overview of the following:

- The composition of Indiana business programs (middle and secondary school), including goals and accountability mechanisms
- The licensure standards that business teachers must meet
- The nature and importance of the “structure” that has been responsible for the outstanding accomplishments of Indiana’s business teachers/programs

This information is presented in the context of Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett’s “game plan.” In his inaugural address, Dr. Bennett outlined his “game plan” for Indiana classrooms and schools. His plan included:

- Setting lofty goals
- Having teachers who represent the top-level of talent—recruiting, training, and treating teachers befitting the noble profession of teaching
- Having structures for schools to put Indiana students at the top of the class in state, national, and world competition
- Celebrating student success

This “game plan” is not new to Indiana’s Business teachers. The quality of the business curriculum, the qualifications, expertise, and dedication of the business teachers, and the procedures (structure) that have built and maintained the program attest to the adherence to this plan. However, the Indiana Business Education Association is concerned about the loss of leadership for business and marketing education at the state level. As noted later in this paper, the structure/leadership provided by the program specialist is integral to keeping this program current and strong.

### **Business Curriculum**

Lofty goals that fit student needs begin at the middle school level for the business program. The Indiana Business and Information Technology Middle School Curriculum focuses on concepts and applications that facilitate the development of competencies required for success in all academic areas and in real-world contexts. This curriculum relates closely to understandings and competencies students will need as their world expands and as they develop career interests. The four broad areas included in this curriculum are:

- Technology
- Personal Finance
- Entrepreneurship
- Career Exploration

The instructional strategies and measurable performance proficiencies for each area provide many opportunities to engage students in learning and applying technology as a tool and to determine the extent to which students have achieved the goals. Business teachers provide the

critical information technology knowledge and skills needed by students both at the middle and secondary school levels. For example, evidence of the need for **personal finance** knowledge and skills continues to mount as documented by increases in home mortgage foreclosures, personal (and business) bankruptcies, and credit card debt, among other factors. Also, students learn the efficient, effective use of software applications to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate situations and solve problems. Please see the standards and related student proficiencies for the business middle school program at

<http://www.doe.in.gov/octe/bme/curriculum/pdf/BusinessMiddleSchoolStandards.pdf>

Goals are achieved through a variety of instructional strategies including project-based learning. Also, this curriculum supports many of the goals of the Indiana academic core. Specific standards for the Business Middle School program and corresponding standards for the middle school academic core have been matched to help business teachers contribute to the achievement of the academic core goals. This comparison can be seen at <http://www.doe.in.gov/octe/bme/curriculum/pdf/K-8CurriculumGuidelines.pdf> , pages G-43 through G-57. Middle school business teachers work closely with teachers in the academic core courses to provide students with “just-in-time” learning as they complete projects for which software applications are an important tool.

High goals accompanied by accountability measures are at the core of secondary school business courses. These course offerings are both rigorous and comprehensive. The content standards and performance expectations for these courses address many of the areas in which understanding is critical for student success in other academic areas, personal business affairs, employment, and higher education. Now more than ever, an understanding of American and international business, personal finance, business law, entrepreneurship, etc., are vital for making informed decisions in all aspects of life. Business courses can provide important preparation for college.

The importance of these courses cannot be overstated. A variety of instructional strategies, including project-based learning, are used to make these courses relevant and interesting. A list of the secondary school-level business courses (which include Accounting, Business Management, Computer Applications, Computer Programming, Global Economics, Marketing, Business Law, Business Foundations, Business Math, International Business, Entrepreneurship, Personal Finance, opportunities for AP courses and college credit and career and technical education (CTE) business and information technology labs and academies) along with course content standards and performance expectations are available at <http://www.doe.in.gov/octe/bme/curriculum/contentstandards.htm>

The standards for business courses have been developed with input from experienced, highly competent business teachers, representatives from business, standards from professional groups such as the National Business Education Association and standards implemented by other states. Project-based learning and a variety of other strategies are used to help students achieve these standards. Objectives for each of the courses in the business curriculum have been compared with the objectives for the courses in the academic core. The results of this comparison are available to business teachers on the Web site above. Business teachers take advantage of opportunities to contribute to and reinforce student learning in relevant academic core areas.

## Business Teacher Standards

Since business teachers focus on business content and applications, they are required to have a solid background in business. Please see Licensing Rules 2002: Standards for the Teacher of Business (<http://www.doe.in.gov/dps/standards/BusinessContStds.html>). Each of these 10 standards includes Knowledge essentials, Disposition attributes, and Performance behaviors. These standards are achieved by programs of study that provide business teaching majors with depth and breadth in business, information technology, and education expertise. In all areas of study, these programs include appropriate experiential activities.

Indiana universities offering business teacher programs require students to take the same core of business courses/content that all other business majors take. **This core includes economics, accounting, statistics, business law, finance, management information systems, operations management, marketing, business report writing, and a senior business capstone experience.** Also, courses that provide additional business content, teaching methodology, educational psychology, and other aspects of working successfully in the classroom are included. Student teaching is the capstone experience in the preparation of the business teacher.

### Structure

Fortunately, the wheels of well-developed programs and highly qualified teachers do not spin in place. Courses, goals, instructional strategies, assessment procedures, etc., are not static. Teachers are not once and for all time qualified. If a structure for continuously revising, modifying, and updating all aspects of the curriculum were not in place, an antiquated curriculum that would deny students an important component of their education would exist soon. The structure that has kept the business curriculum and teachers on the cutting edge is the Indiana Department of Education's Program Specialist. The most recent Program Specialist, Barb Beadle, has put in place many procedures and provided leadership in many ways. Some of these procedures/activities are outlined below to demonstrate the importance of the role of the Program Specialist in the effective functioning of Indiana middle and secondary school business programs.

- **Facilitating curriculum development.** Because change is a constant in education, on a continuing basis, Barb brings together small groups of outstanding Indiana business teachers to revise business courses and to develop new courses. For both new and revised courses, she directs these groups in developing content standards, performance expectations, and instructional and assessment strategies. Business and university personnel are asked to review and provide input for curriculum development. Standards and input from other professional groups; for example, the National Business Education Association, are drawn upon. The standards are cross-referenced with the Indiana Academic Standards (standards for courses required for graduation); many business courses reinforce and provide practical application of the academic standards. The standards for business courses are made available on the Web site Barb provides through the Indiana Department of Education.

- **Providing “Monday Update.”** The Monday Update is a weekly electronic publication made available to business teachers through Barb’s listserv; this update includes resources, ideas and information from a variety of sources, employment information, etc. Barb has a middle school listserv where business middle school teachers can exchange information and teaching ideas.
- **Providing professional development opportunities for business teachers.** Barb provides a variety of professional development workshops for Indiana business teachers. Many of these three-to-five-day workshops are offered in the summer and enable teachers to update their knowledge and teaching methodology in technology, entrepreneurship, marketing, communication, and other topics. Also, she plans and conducts a two-day conference each November that brings together hundreds of Indiana business teachers and many presenters from education and business. This conference covers a variety of topics, and includes publisher and technology exhibitors.
- **Interacting on behalf of Indiana with the National Business Education Association and related professional organizations.** This area has included working on the National Standards for Business Education and serving on many other committees and projects; she maintains membership and participates in such professional organizations connected to business education as the North Central Business Education Association (NCBEA), Indiana Business Education Association (IBEA), National Association of Supervisors of Business Education (NASBE), Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), Indiana Association for Career and Technical Education (IACTE), Marketing Education Association (MEA), Indiana Marketing Education Association (IMEA), Delta Pi Epsilon, DECA, Business Professionals of America (BPA), MarkED, and Society of Government Meeting Planners.
- **Assisting with teacher preparation.** Barb presents information important for new teachers in business teacher methods classes at State universities; she serves on the Business Education Advisory Committee at Indiana State University.
- **Working with the Indiana Business Education Association.** Barb’s concern about business teacher qualifications is an important reason that Indiana has licensure requirements that produce business teachers who have achieved high standards in the discipline of business as well as in pedagogical concepts, instructional strategies, and related technology. She works with IBEA in other areas to help maintain continuity of focus and accomplishment of important goals.
- **Developing resources.** During the summer, Barb brings together teachers to develop project-based learning activities for business and marketing classes. Currently there are more than 475 projects that are aligned with the National Business Education Association standards and Indiana standards. These projects are put on CDs and distributed at the November conference she coordinates.
- **Cultivating business support and input for business curriculum.** Barb works with the business community in getting reviewers for curriculum changes,

determining proficiency levels, gathering career information, and obtaining speakers for conference programs. She works with business and industry to gain support for the student organizations Business Professional of America and DECA (marketing).

- **University articulation.** Barb has been instrumental in establishing the CITIDOE program with IUPUI. This is an amazing opportunity for high school students to take high school courses and receive college credit when enrolling in IUPUI for courses such as computer applications.
- **Being on duty 24/7.** One of Barb's greatest contributions to business teachers and students is that she is ready and willing to find answers to questions and address concerns at any time. Through her cell phone, land phone, e-mail, and business phone, she is available to teachers whenever they wish to contact her.
- **Promoting student success.** Through all of the above, plus much, much more, Barb Beadle is a prime factor in the accomplishments of Indiana's business students. Much of what she does contributes to the opportunities business teachers have to showcase the accomplishments of their students.

Estimates based on 2007-2008 DOE figures indicate Indiana has approximately 1,400 (F.T.E.) secondary school business teachers, CTE marketing, and CTE Business and Information Technology teachers. The estimate for middle school business teachers is about 200. These teachers are serving approximately 86,552 secondary school students and 36,841 middle school students (based on 2007-2008 DOE data).

To provide leadership and direction to these students and teachers, a business program specialist or supervisor is critical. Among many other things, this person's direct involvement in establishing and maintaining the relevance of the courses/curriculum/standards, providing cutting-edge professional development for business teachers, and coordinating activities/programs is essential to preparing students to be productive, economically astute employees and citizens, capable managers of their personal finances, and knowledgeable about and prepared for post-secondary educational opportunities.

Business and marketing teachers of Indiana believe that the position of State Specialist for Business and Marketing Education has been a key factor in maintaining strong business programs and strengthening new courses and programs in Indiana middle schools and high schools. We believe that the absence of this level of leadership will negatively impact our ability to provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to prepare them to contribute to the current and future economic success of Indiana (and beyond). Today's well prepared students will contribute as good personal business managers, productive employees, informed decision makers about postsecondary education and entrepreneurial opportunities, etc. Students who are not prepared will contribute to the economic woes of our state and nation.

***It is essential that the role of business and marketing program specialist be filled by someone who has a degree and experience in business education and a desire to provide the leadership and coordination needed for an effective business program that will contribute to the current and future economic success of Indiana.***