

WIC revises woods class to meet state math rules

Written by Peter Nocerini

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IRON RIVER—To comply with revised state graduation requirements and also to better meet the needs of vocational students, the West Iron County School Board has voted to change its woods classes to qualify for the state's fourth year math credit, starting in 2013-14.

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The vote took place during the board's May 20 regular meeting.

Math skills will be added to the woods 1, 2 and 3 classes so students can meet the new state requirement that they take a math class during their senior year. The classes will also qualify for the visual/performing arts credit.

As High School/Middle School Principal Mike Berutti told the board, the students in the woods classes will be learning skills that will help them in their future jobs.

Algebra 1 and 2 and geometry are graduation requirements for all students—they are usually taken during the freshman, sophomore and junior years.

West Iron already has several classes that qualify for the fourth year math credit: pre-calc, calculus, accounting 1 and 2, website design, multimedia, desktop publishing and publications, physics and marketing and building trades.

Of them, building trades is the only vocational class. Since building trades is a three-or four-hour block, many students can't take the class and still need a one-hour voc class.

West Iron used to offer architectural drafting, mechanical drafting and CAD-CAM classes. But when Mike Erkkila left, it went from three to two full-time voc positions "We lost a lot of our classes in the vocational area that counted as a fourth year math classes," Berutti said.

The woods class is being revised so it will qualify. Among the math skills that students will learn are converting decimals to fractions, numerical expressions, geometric concepts, formulas to determine the surface area of three-dimensional objects, measuring and calculating angles.

Overall, a total of 28 skills will be taught.

"It's more like daily math," Berutti said. "For instance, they'll figure out board-foot and then figure out what the cost is per board-foot, so they know how to pay for the projects they make."

Because of state requirements, he noted, the fourth year math class has to be taken during a student's senior year. If they took woods 1 as a freshman, for instance, it wouldn't count.

Berutti said of the 55 students in this year's senior class, 15 took calculus, five took pre-calc, 20 were in multimedia and desktop publishing, 11 took building trades, and others chose marketing and accounting.

"We need to give our students the opportunity to take a fourth year math class that they are interested in, that they can use for the future and that will mean something to them."

West Iron earlier added a physics class. ("There's a lot of math in physics.") Berutti said there will be more changes in fourth year math in the future.

"We don't foresee bringing CAD back in the near future, but it's still on the list. Mr. Swenski taught an energy class that was extremely popular. Hopefully someday we can have those classes again—the kids really enjoy those and get a lot out of it."

Berutti told the board that some curriculum decisions have not been finalized by the Legislature, "But they don't expect the Michigan Merit Curriculum to change. There's too much pressure."

• Bids were due at the meeting for converting the Stambaugh Elementary locker rooms, but Superintendent Chris Thomson said the only bidder did not comply with the district's requirements—it submitted a combined bid for the entire project, when the district asked for

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separate bids for demolition and refinishing the space. The project will be rebid.

- Berutti reported the West Iron County schools has received recognition from U.S. News and World Report. "It says we were also named one of the top schools in the country." The Norway school district also has been recognized.

"That's based on not only on test scores but on the socio-economic of our students. Another accolade for our students and for our staff doing a great job."

- After a long discussion, the board agreed to hold a "garage sale" of old computers and related equipment on Thursday, June 6. Old desktops will be sold for \$5, and old laptops go for \$10.

All the computers are over eight years old, and anybody who buys one will have to wipe the hard drive and reconfigure them. No support, old software.

Board Member Gary Pisoni said the Windsor Center could use four or five of the better computers for its lab. He talked about making the computers available to veterans and their families so they can email those deployed overseas.

If any computers are left over after the garage sale, they will go to Tru Recycling. Technology director Brian Rippey said he would donate \$75 for the machines for the Windsor Center.

- In other business, the board:

- Approved the 2013-014 academic calendar. Thomson said it is very similar to the 2012-13 calendar.

- Agreed to the summer tax collection this summer.

- Nominated Tom Kniivila for a new term on the Dickinson-Iron ISD Board, with Board Member Gary Pisoni as an alternate. Board President Roy Polich said Kniivila is hoping to step down from the ISD Board when West Iron finds a replacement, and he thanked Kniivila for volunteering his time.

- Voted to accept the DIISD 2013-14 budget.

- Took no action on a request by Integrys to review the district's energy consumption. West Iron already has a contract with a downstate firm for natural gas.