

Michigan Merit Curriculum

On April 20, 2006, the standards for a high school diploma in Michigan were changed. [MCL 380.1278a](#), [MCL 380.1278b](#). The new standards are designed to better prepare students for employment and/or post-secondary education. The **Michigan Merit Curriculum** lists the number of credits a student must have in basic subjects in order to graduate with a diploma. It also gives options for students who want or need another way to meet these standards.

The requirements now include sixteen credits*,

- ◆ Four credits in English language arts.
- ◆ Four credits in math, including Geometry and Algebra I and II. At least one math course must be taken during the student's senior year**
- ◆ Three credits in science, with use of labs, including biology and chemistry or physics
- ◆ Three credits in social sciences including U.S. History & Geography, World History & Geography, .5 Civics, .5 Economics
- ◆ One credit in Visual, Performing and Applied Arts
- ◆ One credit in Physical Education and Health
- ◆ All high school students must also participate in an online course or learning experience

* NOTE: Effective for the class of 2016, the credit requirement increases to 18 credits, to include two credits in world languages. Students may receive credit if they have had a similar learning experience in grades K-12.

** NOTE: The math credit requirements were later amended and may be modified as part of a personal curriculum if the student successfully completes at least 3.5 total credits of math listed under 1278a(1)(a)(i), including Algebra I and Geometry, and successfully completes at least one math course during the final year of high school. For further information, see the legislation [MCL 380.1278b](#) and/or [A Parent's Guide to Personal Curriculum: Focus on Algebra II](#).

Terms used in the Michigan Merit Curriculum:

Educational Development Plan (EDP)

An Educational Development Plan (EDP) is the first step all students have in developing an individualized approach to learning. An EDP is developed by the student under the supervision of the student's school counselor or another designee selected by the principal. It is based on a career pathways program or similar career exploration program. There is no specific form or format for an EDP. A school can design an EDP any way it wants, but the EDP must include: personal information, career goal(s), educational/training goal(s), assessment results, plan(s) of action, and parent consultation/endorsement.

Every student is required to develop an EDP before going into high school, and it should be reviewed yearly. An EDP should be developed no later than Grade 8, though the law specifies Grade 7.

The EDP does not take the place of an IEP or PC, but can provide support and documentation for a PC modification.

Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes give students the opportunity to apply academic content in real-world situations. CTE classes that incorporate the high school content can be an alternative way for the students to demonstrate class mastery, and a way to earn high school credits.

A student must complete all of the high school credit requirements at the same level of performance as required of all Michigan students. Credit must be based, in part, on the student's performance on an assessment. CTE students must also meet the technical standards and certification requirements of their chosen field of technical study.

More information is available at [Guidelines for Awarding Credit in Career and Technical Education \(CTE\), Humanities, and Other Delivery Models](#) .

Personal Curriculum (PC)

The use of a personal curriculum (PC) modification is allowed by state law in several instances. One type of personal curriculum can be set up when a student with a disability needs to modify the credit requirements based on his or her disability and Individualized Education Program (IEP).

A Personal Curriculum allows for additional credit substitution or content modification in limited instances, if the changes are based on the student's disability and IEP. The PC is developed by the pupil, one or more of the student's parents or legal guardians, and his or her high school counselor or other designee selected by the high school principal. A school psychologist should also be involved. The PC must be approved by the school district superintendent or his/her designee.

Parents can request a PC at any time during a student's high school experience, with the exception of math and social studies. A student with an IEP can request a PC for math or social studies at any time.

For more information, see [Focus on Students with an IEP](#) .

Michigan Merit Curriculum and Special Education

The IEP is the program of additional supports that, when implemented, will allow a student with a disability to be successful in the educational pathway he or she has chosen. The IEP does not determine the graduation requirements for a student with a disability. The IEP does not change the general education classes the student is to take. It does identify the "course or courses of study" and the accommodations or modifications needed by the student in the general education setting.

The EDP outlines a student's educational pathway including the course of study that will enable success in desired post school activities (work, community, and continuing learning). A well written EDP is transition planning in that it may contain a course of study (the MMC or PC) and education/training and employment goals to meet the student's needs.

The supports in the IEP and the educational pathway in the EDP can be referenced in either document or lifted directly from one document to the other. Some students may need additional support (modifications, accommodations, supports, and services) or more specific postsecondary goals that will be written in the IEP. The intent of these documents is to capture the educational experiences and systems of supports that will enable the student to be successful once high school is over.

The PC must be consistent with both the EDP and the IEP.

MCL 380.1278b(5)(k) applies only to students with an IEP. It does not apply to students with a 504 plan, but the accommodations written in the 504 Plan must still be provided in all the student's classes.

Tips for the Personal Curriculum Meeting

- ◆ A planning meeting should be scheduled upon the school's receipt of a written request by a parent.
- ◆ This meeting should review the Michigan Merit High School Graduation Requirements, the intent of a Personal Curriculum and guidelines, and requirements.
- ◆ It should ensure that the Personal Curriculum planning meeting has value for the student and family by assuring that both the family and student have a clear picture of the relevance of high school coursework.
- ◆ The course of study should be aligned with the student's education and/or employment goals as identified in the Educational Development Plan (EDP) and/or the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for a student eligible for special education.

You should bring your copies of the following:

1. Current Educational Development Plan (EDP)
2. Individualized Education Program (IEP)
3. All current and relevant assessment information
4. Attendance, disciplinary, and grading records

This is a summary of the current laws. It is not a substitute for legal advice. For more information, see [Frequently Asked Questions: Supplement to the Personal Curriculum Parent and Educator Guide](#), talk with your lawyer or call Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc. at 1-800-288-5923 toll free or 0-517-487-1755 collect.

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