

PERSONAL CURRICULUM

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

380.1278b(5) The parent or legal guardian of a pupil may request a personal curriculum for the pupil that modifies certain of the Michigan merit standard requirements under subsection (1) or section 1278a(1)(a). If all of the requirements under this subsection for a personal curriculum are met, then the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy may award a high school diploma to a pupil who successfully completes his or her personal curriculum even if it does not meet the requirements of the Michigan merit standard required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1)(a). All of the following apply to a personal curriculum:

(a) The personal curriculum shall be developed by a group that includes at least the pupil, at least 1 of the pupil's parents or the pupil's legal guardian, and the pupil's high school counselor or another designee qualified to act in a counseling role under section 1233 or 1233a selected by the high school principal. In addition, for a pupil who receives special education services, a school psychologist should also be included in this group.

(b) The personal curriculum shall incorporate as much of the subject area content expectations of the Michigan merit standard required under subsection (1) and section 380.1278a(1)(a) as is practicable for the pupil; shall establish measurable goals that the pupil must achieve while enrolled in high school and shall provide a method to evaluate whether the pupil achieved these goals; and shall be aligned with the pupil's educational development plan developed under subsection (11).

(c) Before it takes effect, the personal curriculum must be agreed to by the pupil's parent or legal guardian and by the superintendent of the school district or chief executive of the public school academy or his or her designee.

(d) The pupil's parent or legal guardian shall be in communication with each of the pupil's teachers at least once each calendar quarter to monitor the pupil's progress toward the goals contained in the pupil's personal curriculum.

(e) Revisions may be made in the personal curriculum if the revisions are developed and agreed to in the same manner as the original personal curriculum.

(f) The English language arts credit requirements of subsection (1)(a) and the science credit requirements of subsection (1)(b) are not subject to modification as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection.

(g) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, the mathematics credit requirements of section 1278a(1)(a)(i) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only after the pupil has successfully completed at least 2-1/2 credits of the mathematics credits required under that section and only if the pupil successfully completes at least 3-1/2 total credits of the mathematics credits required under that section before completing high school. The requirement under that section that a pupil must successfully complete at least 1 mathematics course during his or her final year of high school enrollment is not subject to modification as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection. The algebra II credit required under that section may be modified as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection only if the pupil has successfully completed at least 2 credits of the mathematics credits required under section 1278a(1)(a)(i) and meets 1 or more of the following:

(i) Has successfully completed the same content as 1 semester of algebra II, as determined by the department.

(ii) Elects to complete the same content as algebra II over 2 years, with a credit awarded for each of those 2 years, and successfully completes that content.

(iii) Enrolls in a formal career and technical education program or curriculum and in that program or curriculum successfully completes the same content as 1 semester of algebra II, as determined by the department.

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says (continued)

(h) The social science credit requirements of section 1278a(1)(a)(ii) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if all of the following are met:

(i) The pupil has successfully completed 2 credits of the social science credits required under section 1278a(1), including the civics course described in section 1166(2).

(ii) The modification requires the pupil to complete 1 additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or 1 additional credit in a language other than English. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1) or under section 1278a(2).

(i) The health and physical education credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(iii) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the modification requires the pupil to complete 1 additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or 1 additional credit in a language other than English. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1) or under section 1278a(2).

(j) The visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(iv) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the modification requires the pupil to complete 1 additional credit in English language arts, mathematics, or science or 1 additional credit in a language other than English. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1) or under section 1278a(2).

(k) If the parent or legal guardian of a pupil requests as part of the pupil's personal curriculum a modification of the Michigan merit standard requirements that would not otherwise be allowed under this section and demonstrates that the modification is necessary because the pupil is a child with a disability, the school district or public school academy may allow that additional modification to the extent necessary because of the pupil's disability if the group under subdivision (a) determines that the modification is consistent with both the pupil's educational development plan under subsection (11) and the pupil's individualized education program. If the superintendent of public instruction has reason to believe that a school district or a public school academy is allowing modifications inconsistent with the requirements of this subdivision, the superintendent of public instruction shall monitor the school district or public school academy to ensure that the school district's or public school academy's policies, procedures, and practices are in compliance with the requirements for additional modifications under this subdivision. As used in this subdivision, "child with a disability" means that term as defined in 20 USC 1401.

(l) If a pupil transfers to a school district or public school academy from out of state or from a nonpublic school, the pupil's parent or legal guardian may request, as part of the pupil's personal curriculum, a modification of the Michigan merit standard requirements that would not otherwise be allowed under this section. The school district or public school academy may allow this additional modification for a transfer pupil if all of the following are met:

(i) The transfer pupil has successfully completed at least the equivalent of 2 years of high school credit out of state or at a nonpublic school. The school district or public school academy may use appropriate assessment examinations to determine what credits, if any, the pupil has earned out of state or at a nonpublic school that may be used to satisfy the curricular requirements of the Michigan merit standard and this subdivision.

(ii) The transfer pupil's personal curriculum incorporates as much of the subject area content expectations of the Michigan merit standard as is practicable for the pupil.

(iii) The transfer pupil's personal curriculum requires the pupil to successfully complete at least 1 mathematics course during his or her final year of high school enrollment. In addition, if the transfer pupil is enrolled in the school district or public school academy for at least 1 full school year, both of the following apply:

(A) The transfer pupil's personal curriculum shall require that this mathematics course is at least algebra I.

(B) If the transfer pupil demonstrates that he or she has mastered the content of algebra I, the transfer pupil's personal curriculum shall require that this mathematics course is a course normally taken after completing algebra I.

(iv) The transfer pupil's personal curriculum includes the civics course described in section 1166(2).

(m) If a pupil is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the pupil may act on his or her own behalf under this subsection.

(n) This subsection does not apply to a pupil enrolled in a high school that is designated as a specialty school under section 1278a(5), and that is exempt under that section from the English language arts requirement under subsection (1)(a) and the social science credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(ii).

(6) If a pupil receives special education services, the pupil's individualized education program, in accordance with the individuals with disabilities education act, title VI of Public Law 91-230, shall identify the appropriate course or courses of study and identify the supports, accommodations, and modifications necessary to allow the pupil to progress in the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a, or in a personal curriculum as provided under subsection (5), and meet the requirements for a high school diploma.

Background Information

The Michigan Merit law outlined above allows a parent or legal guardian of a student to request certain modifications to the state high school graduation requirements under limited conditions to ensure all students are effectively and consistently engaged in school regardless of need or disability.

According to the American College Test (ACT) report *Crisis at the Core: Preparing All Students for College and Work*, only 32 percent of U.S. students entering ninth grade graduate prepared for college. For African Americans, the number is 20 percent; for Latinos, it is 16 percent. In fact, most high school graduates readily admit they were not significantly challenged in school or ready for employment or college. Forty percent say they wished they had worked harder, especially in math, science and English. Employers and college leaders say high school graduates need to master higher-level mathematics and communications skills. The key to students succeeding in college or the workplace is taking advanced high school courses in English, science and math beyond Algebra II.ⁱ

Research suggests that:ⁱⁱ

- The quality of courses completed in high school is a greater predictor of college success than test scores, class rank, or grade point average.
- Students are more likely to pass high-level courses than low-level courses. Thus, the research suggests that increasing access by all students to advanced academic course work will improve student academic achievement.
- Those who enter high school with test scores in the lowest quartile learn more in academically rigorous courses than they do in either the low-level vocational or general courses in which they are traditionally enrolled. Moreover, students enrolled in lower-level courses were more likely to earn a “D” or “F” in those courses despite their level of ability.
- When minority students are required to take rigorous college preparatory curricula, they rise to the challenge:
 - For example, the San Jose Unified School District in California recently showed dramatic results after it required all students to take the A–G curriculum required for admission to the University of California system. Between 1998 and 2002, test scores of African American 11th graders increased nearly seven times as much as those of African American students across the state.
 - What’s more, the more rigorous requirements have not resulted in the increase in dropout rates that some had predicted.
 - Taking a rigorous high school curriculum that includes math, at least through Algebra II, cuts in half the gap in college completion rates between white students and African American and Latino students.

In August 2006, Education Commission of the States researcher, Jennifer Dounay, reported the following about students and parents aspiration and expectations for completing a college degree: ⁱⁱⁱ

- Most high school students today (and their parents) believe they should – and will – graduate from high school and complete some form of postsecondary education.
- Six out of 10 parents – 62% - say a college education is “absolutely necessary” for their child.
- Sixty five percent of Hispanic parents say a college education “is the one thing that can most help young people succeed.”
- Nine out of 10 respondents said it was a “very” (63%) or “somewhat” (27%) serious problem when told only 29% of graduates who start high school will eventually graduate from college.
- Ninety percent of Latino and African American high school students in Chicago hoped to attend a four-year college.
- Students (and their parents) are misinformed about what it takes to prepare for college.
- Students whose parents did not go to college need the most assistance in setting goals and choosing high school courses for graduation and post secondary education.

- Research confirms that not all students are able to learn successfully at the same pace, with the same approach, in the same environment, on the same path, and in the same style and manner. Research confirms that every individual assimilates information according to their own unique learning style, need, and interest. Learning styles vary. Some students are visual learners, others learn by auditory means, others kinesthetically. Some students learn at a faster pace, others need more time. Some students are distracted when trying to learn in a noisy environment with 30+ other kids. Some students feel intimidated or unsafe in a large classroom environment.
- Research shows high school students who study the arts earn better grades and scores; are less likely to drop out of school; watch fewer hours of television; are less likely to report boredom in school; have a more positive self-concept; and are more involved in community service.^{iv} Studies show that many students who have difficulty learning through traditional methods can benefit from teaching strategies that include learning in and through the arts.^v

Further studies show health education and social skills programs improve school and test performance, attendance, and school connectedness.^{vi} Physical education, structured physical activity and higher fitness levels also directly impact a student's ability to achieve academically.

Michigan Merit Curriculum Personal Curriculum Modification Options

Subject Area Credit Requirements	Personal Curriculum (PC) Modification Required
<p>All requirements may be fulfilled in a variety of ways, including: traditional courses; Career and Technical Education; integrated sequence of instruction of the required High School Content Expectations (HSCE); online learning; Advanced Placement and college credit courses; work based learning; project based learning, etc.,</p>	
4 English Language Arts Credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ü No modification except for students with disabilities
4 Mathematics Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 credits: Geometry, Algebra I, Algebra II; or an integrated sequence of instruction of the required High School Content Expectations (HSCE) for mathematics. 1 additional math or math-related course • Math or math-related high school level credit in the final year 	<p>To qualify for a PC math modification, students must have completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ü 2 MMC math credit requirements (Geometry and Algebra I or equivalent) and would like a modification to complete Algebra II over two years with credit given for each year OR ü 2.5 MMC math credit requirements (Geometry, Algebra I and .5 credit of Algebra II or equivalent) and have a minimum of 4 credits including math in their final year <p>To graduate, students must complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ü A minimum of 4 math or math-related credits up through an equivalent of .5 of Algebra II and math in their final year <p>Additional modifications may be available for students with disabilities</p>
3 Science Credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 credits: Biology, Chemistry or Physics; or an integrated sequence of instruction of the required HSCE for science from the above courses • 1 additional high school level science credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ü No modification except for students with disabilities
3 Social Studies Credits (no sequence required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .5 Civics • .5 Economics • US History and Geography • World History and Geography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ü No modification of Civics ü 2 credits must be earned ü Modified only if student takes additional credit(s) beyond the required credits in English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Languages
1 Physical Education and Health Credit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How this credit is offered is a local district decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ü Modification allowed only if student takes additional credit(s) beyond the required credits in English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Languages
1 Visual, Performing, Applied Arts Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ü Modification allowed only if student takes additional credit(s) beyond the required credits in English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Languages
Online Learning Experience or Credit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online course or learning experience OR • Online experience is incorporated into each of the required credits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ü No modification except for students with disabilities
2 World Language Credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ü No modification except for students with disabilities

Questions & Answers (New & Revised 10/07)

1. Q: When should a student's Michigan Merit graduation requirements be modified with a personal curriculum?

A: The use of a personal curriculum (PC) modification is allowed by state statute for only three reasons:

- A student wishes to modify the mathematics requirement in Algebra II
- A student wishes to go beyond the academic credit requirements by adding more math, science, English language arts, or World Language credits
- A student with a disability needs to modify the credit requirements based on his or her disability and Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The legislative intent of the Personal Curriculum (PC) is to increase the rigor and relevance of the educational experience. While a PC can be requested at any time during a student's high school experience, with the exception of math and social studies, it should be used in limited circumstances after students have had the opportunity to succeed in the Michigan Merit Curriculum and have exhausted their elective options. There are no set time lines in state statute aside from the mathematics and social studies requirements.

Revisions to a Personal Curriculum may be made if they are developed and agreed to in the same manner as the original Personal Curriculum. The parent or guardian must be in communication with each of the student's teachers at least once each calendar quarter to monitor the student's progress toward the goals in his or her Personal Curriculum.

2. Q: When is a Personal Curriculum Modification not needed?

A: A personal curriculum is not needed if:

- A student wants to pursue a standard curriculum and can fulfill the Michigan Merit graduation requirements
- A student wants to pursue career and technical education courses, humanities courses, industrial education or applied arts
- A student wants to take accelerated courses through dual enrollment, advanced placement, or International Baccalaureate
- A student wants to enroll in alternative education programs
- A student wants to change the Educational Development Plan

Students participating in these programs are expected to meet the MMC credit requirements and use effective planning and scheduling to meet these needs.

The MMC does not prevent the district from serving at-risk students or alternative education students according to district policy. The PC is not intended to track all at-risk students and alternative education students into an alternative curriculum that does not align with the high school content expectations. Local schools must not erect barriers or limit a student's opportunity to take a challenging curriculum. The research is clear - low performing students do better when given the opportunity to learn a challenging curriculum.

A district has unlimited possibilities to vary instructional strategies to help students meet the MMC. The district has the option of creating integrated courses that meet student needs as long as the courses demonstrate proficiency on the high school content expectations. For example, districts can combine technical or humanities credit with academic credit to enhance relevance for students and increase student achievement or combine a stage lighting Career and Technical Education (CTE) class with a dual enrollment physics credit in a community college demonstrating the science of light. The key here is identifying the appropriate content expectations that are being addressed and ensuring the student is proficient. A personal curriculum is not needed to exercise these options. The MMC has not eliminated any of these options.

While the PC option is available to any student, the legislative intent is that districts will make curriculum modifications only when it is clear that a modification is necessary for the student to achieve graduation requirements. For example, students in alternative education settings, at-risk students and students with a qualifying disability under the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act may request and be granted a personal curriculum modification only if there is documented evidence that the student may not meet the graduation requirements.

3. Q: Do you need a Personal Curriculum (PC) to offer an alternative education program?

A: No. A PC is not necessarily needed to offer an alternative education program. If a student in an alternative education program is at risk of not meeting graduation requirements or dropping out of school, a parent or guardian may request a PC to make allowable modification to the MMC. A PC is not a vehicle to track all alternative education students in a curriculum that is not consistent with the MMC.

4. Q: How should a student request a Personal Curriculum (PC)?

A: A Personal Curriculum must be requested:

- By a parent or guardian or an emancipated (18 years old) minor who can act on his or her own behalf under these provisions.
- By a parent of a student with a disability to modify the MMC that is not, otherwise allowable if the student has a disability as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA 2004). This allows for additional credit substitution or content modification if the changes are based on the student's disability and Individualized Education Program (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. For students with a disability, a school psychologist should also be involved. The PC:

- Should incorporate as much of the subject area content expectations as practicable.
- Should establish measurable goals the student must achieve while enrolled in high school.
- Should align with a student's Educational Development Plan, and Individualize Education Program for students with a disability.
- Must be agreed upon by a pupil's parent or legal guardian and the superintendent of the school district or chief executive of a public school academy or his or her designee.
- Must be monitored quarterly to ensure students meet the state high school graduation requirements.

If the student does not fulfill the approved Personal Curriculum, the PC is null and void, the student is obligated to make up the class(es) that were waived by the Personal Curriculum in order to be eligible to graduate.

5. Q: Does the personal curriculum apply equally as an option for students who want to take courses that are more rigorous?

A: Yes. The Personal Curriculum modification is allowed by state statute for a student who wishes to go beyond the academic credit requirements by adding more math, science, English language arts, or world languages.

6. Q: Do the classes substituted for Michigan Merit requirements (beyond those required) need to have a written set of state High School Content Expectations?

A: No. For a student requesting a Personal Curriculum for purposes of taking classes beyond those required in the Michigan Merit Curriculum there is no need to have written state expectations, but those classes should have local district expectations.

7. Q: Can a district establish local graduation requirements in addition to the state requirements? Can a district require students to take credits that are allowable modifications with a personal curriculum?

A: Yes. The state graduation requirements were established as the floor, not the ceiling. Districts continue to be able to establish requirements in addition to state requirements. In addition, districts may require students to take, for example, a ½ or full credit of Physical Education, which would eliminate a student's ability to modify the state requirement under a personal curriculum.

8. Q: How much of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) requirements can be modified for a special education student to ensure a quality education?

A: A majority of students receiving special education services will not need a Personal Curriculum. In addition, not all students with disabilities receive special education services. Some students receive educational accommodations under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. It is important to note that the provisions in the MMC that allows for the consideration of modifications beyond what the personal curriculum stipulates are not available to students with 504 accommodations as they do not meet the federal IDEA 2004 definition of a student with a disability. Section K of Michigan Curriculum Law 380.1278b applies only to students with an IEP.

Every effort must be made to provide students with disabilities full access to the MMC before making modifications. Modifications to state standards may affect a student's opportunity to achieve a diploma.

For a student eligible for special education services, the personal curriculum modifications must:

- Incorporate as much of the subject area content expectation as practicable for the student
- Identify appropriate courses of study, as well as, supports and accommodations necessary to allow the pupil to progress
- Be consistent with the Educational Development Plan (EDP)
- Modify components of the content expectations within each credit requirement

Additionally, the personal curriculum modifications should:

- Reasonably enable the achievement of post-secondary goals
- Facilitate progress along the student's career pathway and the achievement of postsecondary goals
- Enhance the relevance of the student's educational experience
- Provide full access to statewide assessments
- Provide a gateway to employment and productive adult living
- Maintain the integrity of the diploma

9. Q: Does the IEP of a Student with a Disability override the Michigan Merit Curriculum?

A: No, the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) does not override the MMC but rather supports achievement in the curriculum. It is the responsibility of the school's Personal Curriculum committee, comprised of a parent/guardian, school principal or designee, school counselor, and a school psychologist to recommend approval of a Personal Curriculum. The Personal Curriculum (PC) must be approved by the school district superintendent or his/her designee. While the law says that this committee should take into account the IEP and Educational Development Plan (EDP), it does not require that it be ruled by them. In other words, the IEP does not determine the graduation requirements for a student with a disability. It is the responsibility of the PC committee.

The intent of the inclusion of the school psychologist is to assure that someone involved in the student's IEP provided input relative to the student's abilities and needs. This role may be served by including another member of the Individualized Education Program Team, so long as the person can provide the

needed input. The decision of the superintendent to grant or deny a PC may be reviewed through the district's typical review or appeal process permitted by board policy.

The IEP does not set forth the general education classes the student is to take, but rather sets forth the "course or courses of study" and the accommodations or modifications needed by the student in the general education setting. The PC must be consistent with both the EDP and the IEP.

10. Q: What needs to be in the Educational Development Plan (EDP)?

A. No specific form or format for an EDP is required, so a school can custom design the form or format that works best for the local needs. However, there are some essential elements to include in any EDP.

1. Personal Information – This usually includes the student's name, date of birth, and grade level in school. The school could use a personal identification number for each student to maintain confidentiality when sharing information among staff or publishing information online. The EDP is a student record and should be maintained with the same policies governing other student records, as required in the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
2. Career Goal(s) – Each student should identify a career pathway or career goal. These may be more general in middle school and become more specific as the student progresses through high school.
3. Educational/Training Goal(s) – Each student should identify the level of educational preparation that will be needed to meet the career goal. This encourages students to think beyond high school graduation and set long-range goals. Options include on-the-job training, military service, certificate programs, two year associate degree programs, apprenticeship programs, trade or technical education, four-year university programs, and advanced university degree or professional preparation programs.
4. Assessment Results – The student may summarize the results of various assessments, highlighting information that is relevant to making career decisions. Assessment data may include formal and informal data such as: career interest surveys, aptitude testing, informal observations, student projects or hobbies, academic achievement, and extra curricular activities. From this information, students will be able to identify individual interests and strengths. They may also set improvement goals. Over time, students will be able to use this information to confirm career decisions or adjust goals.
5. Plan(s) of Action – The student can plan career awareness or exploration activities, work-based activities, and course selections that will prepare her/him for greater understanding of career options and achievement of career goals. Activities may include volunteer or work-related experiences including job shadowing, mentorship programs in community businesses, or part-time employment in areas related to the career goal(s).

Students may also investigate educational programs available within the school or college curriculum that will provide opportunities to become more aware and skilled in a career pathway, e.g., an internship in a community agency, intensive project-based learning in a particular course. The student should also take the time to explore the opportunities for earning college credit while still in high school through Advanced Placement Courses, dual enrollment, International Baccalaureate, and other programs. The action plan should include high school course selections, projected completion date, desired degree, certificate or other credential, timeline for college application, financial assistance deadlines, and employment opportunities.

The plan may also identify special resources and support needed for the student's success in the Personal Curriculum. For example, an EDP might contain a personal literacy plan to aid students who are struggling readers, or a prevention plan for students who have been identified as at risk of dropping out.

6. Parent Consultation/Endorsement – Parents/guardians should have the opportunity to review and endorse their child's EDP. This will give parents access to information about emerging careers and employment trends so they can help their children to prepare for the future. Parents/guardians may also need to discuss assessment results or have assistance interpreting them. Students should be encouraged to discuss career-related issues with their parents and share their goals and action plans.

11. Q: How do the EDP, PC, and transition IEP work together to support student achievement?

A: The first planning tool for a student preparing for high school is the Educational Development Plan (EDP). At the simplest level, the EDP should always be considered when developing an Individualized Educational Program (IEP). 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 sufficient to meet the student's needs. These could be referenced by the IEP 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 stipulated in the IEP. The EDP outlines the students' educational pathway including the course of study that will enable them to be successful in their desired post school activities (work, community, and continuing learning). The IEP is the program of additional supports that when implemented, will enable a student with a disability to be successful in the educational pathway they have identified. 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.

12. Q: What support is the state prepared to make available to students who need additional time and support to meet the new requirements?

A: High school redesign is an opportunity to restructure high schools to ensure all students become proficient in the High School Content Expectations and Course Content Expectations. Every student is entitled, through existing resources, to a free and appropriate public education. Districts have the opportunity to realign resources appropriately to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve the MMC requirements.

13. Q: Is the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) going to develop additional guidance on allowable modifications outlined in Section K?

A: No. MDE will rely on special education associations and local districts to develop additional guidance based on actual application of the Personal Curriculum (PC) for actual situations. The department will collect and track how the PC is being applied and share sample plans from districts.

14. Q: Can a Student with Disabilities (SWD) receive a Personal Curriculum (PC) as early as 8th grade?

A: While a personal curriculum can be requested at any time, it cannot go into effect until the student is in high school. The PC is a provision in the MMC law to help students achieve as much of the high school content expectations as possible. Districts have the option to offer high school credit acquired in the 8th grade as long as that credit is based on proficiency with the high school content expectations.

15. Q: What is meant by modified further?

A: It means that the limitations on the Personal Curriculum (PC) stated in the law (e.g. no modifications of ELA, Science, on-line, etc.) may be modified further for a Student With a Disability (SWD). However, it is not permissible to create an alternative pathway to graduation. Modifications that erect barriers to progress along the student's career pathway or jeopardize the achievement of postsecondary goals need to be carefully considered. Ultimately, the decision regarding how much of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) Course Content Expectations equal credit in a subject area is a local board decision.

While it is conceivable under the language of the statute that the content of the PC may be modified to a grade level much lower than the high school content expectations, this was not the intent or expectation of the Department. Rather, the expectation is that the PC will include as much of the grade level expectations in the particular subject matter as possible, though possibly presented in a modified manner (e.g., multiple classes, extended time, through Career and Technical Education (CTE), etc.). The law allows a school district to modify instructional strategies or approaches to help the student achieve the content expectations. However, you do not need a personal curriculum to modify instructional strategies or approaches (e.g., multiple classes, extended time, through CTE, universal design, etc.).

16. Q: Can you have a Personal Curriculum (PC) if you are entering the 9th grade and have a completed Educational Development Plan (EDP)?

A: The legislation states that you must complete a minimum of 2 credits in mathematics before you can request a PC to modify the math requirement. The legislation states that you have to complete 2 credits of social studies before you can request a modification in social studies. Parents of students entering 9th grade who request a PC in order to have their students exempted from Physical Education, Health or Visual, Performing and Applied Arts so that their students, later on in high school, can use the exemption in order to take additional classes in ELA, math, science, or world language, must provide a written four-year plan that clearly shows the additional credits a student intends to take in place of the required credits. If the student does not fulfill the PC and does not take the additional credits, the PC is null and void and the student would be required to take the PE/Health/VPAA credits.

17. Q: Can Local Boards of Education establish a separate diploma and requirements?

A: No. The legislation clearly stipulates that a diploma shall not be awarded unless the pupil successfully completes all of the credit requirements in MCL 380.1278a and 380.1278b. This does not prevent districts from issuing alternative certificates such as a GED or certificate of completion for students who do not meet all of the requirements of the MMC. For students with a disability, only a diploma ends the entitlement to a free and appropriate public education.

18. Q: What are the essential skills needed by staff to complete the Personal Curriculum documents? Will training be provided?

A: In general, staff will need to be skilled in helping students develop postsecondary goals including assessment methods that aid in the identification of the goals and the planning skills that will align educational experiences with the desired outcomes. The skills needed by staff that sit on a personal curriculum committee must be consistent with their current certification requirements, i.e. counselor, school psychologist, certified teachers, etc.

19. Q: What does the Personal Curriculum mean for a General Education Student?

A: A General Education student can request a personal curriculum to make allowable modifications to the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) requirements the same as any student. The MMC is for all students regardless of circumstances or barriers to learning. The requirements and curriculum are the constant. What varies is how students are engaged to achieve proficiency of the content expectations. The PC for a General Education student makes it possible for students to attend specialized postsecondary programs to access relevant content in place of content that may be less relevant to a desired specific post school outcome and receive MMC credit for the work.

20. Q: The MMC does not take into consideration the hundreds of students who fall in the below average range of intelligence. Instead of offering classes that allow NO CHILD to be left behind, we are making them take classes that they will surely fail.

A: The prevailing notion that nearly all intelligence is inherited might be a credible argument if IQ tests really measure ability. IQ tests measure acquired information. While IQ tests are designed to predict success in school, they do not predict ability or basic intelligence. Many assessments and tests used in many areas of school are not about ability or intelligence, they are about an acquired knowledge base; if the parents are educated, chances are their children will have a higher acquired knowledge base. A better approach to achievement is to look at the teaching and learning. Reuven Feuerstein looked at poor disenfranchised youth and found that an important element to learning is mediation between an environmental stimulus and response, i.e. the interventions of an adult. Mediation builds cognitive strategies and gives students the ability to plan and systematically go through data, etc. The fact that many youth succeed in school despite below average intelligence tests suggests that learning is more a function of motivation, effort, and good teaching.

21. Q: Will the Michigan Merit requirements cause the drop out rate to increase?

A: Over the past few years, the Michigan Department of Education and educators, parents, business representatives, and others have developed Grade Level Content Expectations designed to ensure students receive the learning foundation they need in each grade to successfully transition into the next grade and harder subjects.

While many believe students leave school because it is too hard, numerous studies show most students say they dropped out because: they weren't learning anything they thought important; they hated their school; had personal problems, and said teachers didn't care. Only 13% say they left because school was too hard. In fact, what most students have said is, they want to be challenged, expect us to have high expectations and if needed, offer the support they need to achieve their dreams.

Drop out rates involving Students With Disabilities in Michigan have been falling steadily since 1999 and currently sit at 25.2% for students with disabilities. This marks tremendous progress that needs to be celebrated. However, over the last three years, the rate of progress has begun to level off suggesting that new strategies and interventions will need to be implemented if progress is to continue. We actually lose more students with learning disabilities identified as not having an intellectual impairment, than students with significant cognitive challenges.

The biggest factor in student success is quality teaching.

22. Q: What will happen to the Career Centers that save MANY students from dropping out?

A: Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are seen as an essential and integral part of the educational experience for many students. Many of these programs offer alternative learning opportunities that provide students with real world experiences. The MMC does not eliminate these programs but encourages districts to provide not only CTE programs, but other opportunities to help ensure the curriculum is relevant for all students.

Guidelines on Awarding Academic Credit have been developed that examine curriculum to determine the amount of academic credit to award in a CTE program, a humanities or other integrated sequence, or in a project based curriculum. The document was developed by MDE staff, Office of Career and Technical Preparation staff, and representatives from CTE programs. The Guidelines are posted on the MDE website.

23. Q: Does the new Michigan Merit Exam (MME) curriculum that begins with fall 2007 freshmen apply to all students?

A: Yes.

24. Q: Does the MMC eliminate the Cognitively Impaired population from getting a diploma?

A: The MDE understands that under the graduation requirements outlined in the Michigan Merit Curriculum there will be some students who do not earn a diploma. It is not the opinion of the department that the graduation requirements automatically eliminate categories of students from the potential to earn a diploma. The graduation requirements will require educators in local systems to examine the needs of the student, the student's desired post-school options, alternate instructional and assessment methods, and alternate criteria for demonstration of mastery, among other things, to craft truly individualized learning plans for the more challenged learners (not all of whom have cognitive impairments). However, we must understand and recognize that while IDEA 2004 establishes a right to a free and appropriate public education, it does not establish an entitlement to a diploma.

25. Q: What flexibility do local districts have with approving personal curriculums?

A: General guidance, developed to provide interpretation and clarification of the personal curriculum, in no way defines every situation in which a personal curriculum may be applicable. Local districts retain control within the limits imposed by the law. As long as the Personal Curriculum option meets the minimum credit requirements, is comprised of the content expectations from the required subject areas that make up credit, measures progress and helps students achieve, “the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy *may* award a high school diploma to a pupil who successfully completes his or her personal curriculum even if it does not meet the requirements of the MMC.” Flexibility is initially guided by the student’s learning needs. The personal curriculum option is available for any student and outlines specific modifications that are intended to increase the rigor and/or relevance of the educational experience for the student. This option is further guided by subsection (k) which allows for modification based specifically on a student’s disability.

26. Q: What will be the extent of modifications practicable under subsection (k)?

A: Modifications are dependent upon a number of factors.

1. The modification must be necessary because the pupil is a student with a disability
2. The modification is permitted only to the extent necessary
3. The modification must be consistent with both the student’s Educational Development Plan (EDP) and Individualized Educational Program (IEP)
4. The appropriateness of the modification must be determined by the same group of people responsible for developing and approving a PC for any pupil (student/parent/guardian, counselor or designee), and should include a school psychologist
5. Acceptable modifications might include:
 - a. Additional credit swapping within the MMC
 - b. Modification of math before completing 2 credits
 - c. Modification to the method of assessing mastery
 - d. Modification to the criteria for determining mastery

In general, modifications should *facilitate* progress along the student’s career pathway (as identified in their EDP) and the achievement of annual and post secondary goals (as identified in the student’s IEP). Any modification that would erect a barrier to progress or achievement should be carefully considered by all parties involved as it may have long reaching detrimental effects for the individual student.

27. Q: Do courses taken as “substitutes” in the personal curriculum for students with disabilities require a set of written content expectations?

A: Yes. The Personal Curriculum is based on the same set of content expectations described in the Course Credit Requirements and must offer as much of the content expectations as is “practicable.” For a student with disabilities, the Personal Curriculum must address as many of the content expectations as is reasonable based on the student’s disability. The Personal Curriculum for any student must specify the content expectations that will be covered.

28. Q: Does a student with a personal curriculum receive a high school diploma after 4 years of high school?

A: As long as the Personal Curriculum option meets the minimum credit requirements, is comprised of the content expectations from the required subject areas that make up credit, measures progress and helps students achieve, "the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy *may* award a high school diploma to a pupil who successfully completes his or her personal curriculum even if it does not meet the requirements of the MMC." Flexibility is initially guided by the student's learning needs. The personal curriculum option is available for any student and outlines specific modifications that are intended to increase the rigor and/or relevance of the educational experience for the student. This option is further guided by subsection (k) which allows for modification based specifically on a student's disability and the IEP.

If a student has a personal curriculum and has successfully completed all or nearly all of the content expectations for all state required credits, although modified, a student is eligible to receive a regular high school diploma. The local board of education is responsible for establishing criteria for content mastery, allowable modifications, and what constitutes credit for specific courses.

If a student cannot meet most of the Michigan Merit content expectations, such as a student with severe cognitive impairments, he or she would be eligible for a certificate of completion or other form of recognition as developed at the local level.

29. Q: What does it mean to modify graduation requirements and content expectations based on a student's disability? Are modifications for students with a disability limited to the identified disability area?

A: The parent of a student with a disability may request a modification to the MMC that is not *otherwise* allowable if the student has a disability as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA 2004). This allows for additional credit substitution or content modification if the changes are based on the student's disability. This does not suggest that all of the MMC needs to be modified; only the areas that are specific to the student's disability.

IDEA 2004 specifies that an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for a student with a disability shall identify appropriate courses of study as well as; supports, accommodations, and modifications necessary to allow the pupil to progress in the requirements of the MMC or in the Personal Curriculum. Federal law requires the IEP to identify the course or courses of study that allow the student to achieve IEP goals and objectives, not to specify individual classes or curriculum.

NCLB and IDEA 2004 hold State and Public Agencies accountable for the performance of students with disabilities within a structure of state standards. While it is allowable to account for growth and performance for some of these students on alternative achievement standards, it is not appropriate to create a different path to graduation.

Section 300.102(a)(3), regarding exceptions to Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), clarifies that a regular high school diploma does not include an alternative degree that is not fully aligned with the State's academic standards, such as a certificate of completion or a general educational development credential (GED).

Neither the Michigan Department Education, local or intermediate school districts have the authority to override the accountability framework that NCLB and IDEA created.

30. Q: What types of modifications to the academic requirements might be appropriate for a student with an emotional impairment, where the disability itself would not impair the student's ability to perform academically, but rather impacts the student's behavior?

A: It depends on what the PC team decides. If the student is unable to complete the typical MMC expectations because of the disability, the team may modify the expectations through the PC. In extreme cases, this could even include waiving certain requirements. Say, for example, that the student has already completed 4 years of high school and yet has not completed the last credit in math, and the team decides that continuing for another year is just not possible because the student will not be able to handle it emotionally. The PC team, with the agreement of the superintendent, may agree to have the student earn the credit in another way; like through a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, or online independent study at home, or eliminate the requirement for this student if the student has met Educational Development Plan (EDP) and Individualized Educational Program (IEP) goals. However, this would result in the student not meeting all MMC requirements and not being eligible for a diploma.

31. Q: What is the message to parents of students with disabilities if we want all students to achieve at higher levels?

A: The message regarding the MMC is the same for all parents and students. All students need to have the opportunity and have access to a challenging curriculum. Only when there is a documented need every effort has been made to help the student achieve, and the student is at risk of dropping out of high school are modifications considered. The modifications for any student including a student with a disability, must address as many of the graduation requirements and the content expectations as possible. The key issue is providing the educational experience that will best enable the student to achieve their career pathway goals and/or postsecondary goals as identified in the Educational Development Plan (EDP) or Individual Educational Program (IEP).

32. Q: Who is responsible for developing the PC for a student with a disability? How can special educators help general education colleagues?

A: The development of the PC for students with a disability is the same process that would be used for any student requesting a personal curriculum. Special educators can assist general education colleagues by supporting the development of a PC as the adults in the education setting who best know the student's strengths and abilities. Additionally, special educators can assist with the individualized or differentiated instruction that provides multiple means of access to the content and competency or mastery.

33. Q: What math modifications are allowed for general education students?

A: While a Personal Curriculum (PC) modification may be requested at any time, to qualify the law requires students to complete a certain number of credits depending on the math modification.

For a PC to allow the Algebra II content to be taken over two years, the law requires a student to successfully complete 2 math credits including the equivalent of Geometry and Algebra I. The credit for the first year of Algebra II, however, may not be recorded as an Algebra II credit since the student has not yet completed the content expectations for Algebra II. A student gets the Algebra II credit when they have demonstrated proficiency with the required content expectations for Algebra II. A PC is not needed for students taking Pre-Algebra II for credit and Algebra II for credit.

All other modifications require students to complete a minimum of 2.5 math credits including Geometry, Algebra I and $\frac{1}{2}$ credit of Algebra II, or the equivalent of these credit requirements in an integrated math or Career and Technical Education program. Once this requirement has been met, a modification may allow a student to take the remaining 1.5 credits in a math or math related course.

Allowable Mathematics Modifications

	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit	Total Credits
MMC without PC	Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry (no sequence required)			Final year math or math-related credit	4
Modification after successful completion of 2 math credits allowing Algebra II to be taken over two years	Algebra I and Geometry (no sequence required)		Algebra II		4
Modification after successful completion of minimum of 2.5 math credits	Students required to take Geometry and Algebra I		Algebra II ½ credit	Math or math-related credit	4
Modification after successful completion of 2 math credits	Algebra I and Geometry (no sequence required)		Algebra II content in CTE	Math or math related credit	4

34. Q: Is a personal curriculum required if a student takes Algebra II over two years? Can a student receive a credit for each year?

A: Yes. A personal curriculum would be necessary if a student requests to take Algebra II over 2 years or requests to be exempted from the second semester of Algebra II.

35. Q: Do math related courses for the 4th credit developed for the personal curriculum need to meet the same high school content expectations as MMC required courses?

A: No modification for the 4th credit is required. A personal curriculum can only modify the Algebra II requirements. The 4th credit must be math related but does not need to meet any of the high school content expectations. However, for student with disabilities taking as much content as possible, all four credits must be based on the high school content expectations.

36. Q: The law authorizing the Michigan high school graduation requirements clearly states that a diploma shall not be granted unless the student achieves all of the state required credits. If a student chooses to modify Algebra II and only completes .5 credits, are they required to make up the remaining .5 credit in math?

A: Yes. If a student is in his or her final year of high school and chooses to modify Algebra II by only completing .5 credits instead of 1 full credit, the additional half credit must be made up of additional math content. Students not in their final year must take a minimum of .5 credits in Algebra II and a full math credit in their final year.

37. Q: What additional types of modifications in Mathematics are allowed for a student with a disability?

A: All of the math requirements in the Merit Curriculum would be subject to modification...again, with the caveat that a student should not just be blank-exempted from even attempting Algebra I, II, or Geometry. but should be engaged in an instructional program in math that covers as many of the content expectations as is practicable/possible, given the student's disability. Because the IDEA 2004 states that the school cannot offer an alternative curriculum or diploma, the modifications may not lead to a diploma. The student should complete a minimum of 4 mathematics credits based on as much of the content expectations as needed to meet the graduation requirement.

38. Q: For students earning credits through CTE or other classes which may be math-related courses (such as accounting), does the teacher assigning the grade need to be "highly qualified" under NCLB, and if so, how can districts address this where the CTE or other teacher is not highly qualified in math?

A: The teacher assigning the grade must be "highly qualified" in math in order for the credit to be granted in math. The department is working on guidance for districts modeled after the New York state "Collaborative Teaching" model. This is where the Career and Technical Education (CTE) or other teacher meets with a highly qualified teacher in math to align the content expectations between the two courses and collaborate on how the content expectation will be addressed. By having the teachers collaborate in the content and method of delivering instruction, the student may receive a credit in a math related subject and the district will meet the highly qualified requirements. The department is looking at modeling its approach after the system in New York since it has already been reviewed and approved by the US DOE.

39. Q: How will the schools change to assist a large number of students who are not proficient in Mathematics?

A: The state is currently supporting a Math AYP initiative through the State Improvement Grant (SIG). This information can be accessed at <http://michiganmathematics.org>. The state has also engaged multiple national technical assistance centers to assist high schools in the state to learn about model practices. Schools may change almost any operating or instructional practice to help students meet the graduation requirements of the MMC.

40. Q: Can a student required to take the Michigan Merit Curriculum waive the state's Physical Education or health credit requirement for any reason?

A: Yes. The new Michigan Merit Curriculum (MCL) 380.1278b, allows a student to substitute one physical education and health credit to acquire extra English language arts, mathematics, science, or world language credits if a student has an approved personal curriculum. Please see the Personal Curriculum Frequently Asked Questions document for guidance.

In addition, students may test out of any state required graduation credit if the student earns: 1) a qualifying score, as determined by the department, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area by the department; OR, 2) the student earns a qualifying score, as determined by the school district or public school academy that measure a student's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit. Please see the Testing Out Frequently Asked Questions document for guidance.

The Revised School Code MCL 380.1169, requires school districts to instruct students in dangerous communicable diseases such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection and Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus Infection (AIDS). While the law does not require this instruction to take place in high school, the Michigan Department of Education has encouraged that this important instruction be taught to students in elementary, middle, and high school.

41. Q: Can districts still choose to replace extracurricular activities (e.g. marching band and sports) for the physical education requirement? What about health?

A: Under the Revised School Code, *380.1502(1) Health and physical education for pupils of both sexes shall be established and provided in all public schools of this state. Subject to subsection (2), each pupil attending public school in this state who is physically fit and capable of doing so shall take the course in physical education.*

380.1502(2) A school may credit a student's participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity as meeting the physical education requirement for the student under subsection (1).

This law is still in effect as well as the new Michigan Merit high school graduation requirements. Therefore, a district may still determine that extracurricular activities involving physical activity may be used as credit toward the physical education requirement. If a district does decide to use extracurricular physical activities to meet the physical education requirement, the student must still demonstrate proficiency in the physical education credit guidelines beginning with students entering 8th grade in 2006 (Class of 2011). Please see the Testing Out Frequently Asked Questions for further guidance.

Please note, however, that this pertains only to the physical education credit guidelines of the Michigan Merit Curriculum, not the health education credit guidelines.

42. Q: Can a modification for Health and Physical Education occur at any time?

A: Beginning with students entering 8th grade in 2006 (Class of 2011), a modification to either the health or physical education Michigan Merit Curriculum's 1 credit in health/physical education requirement could occur at any point in a student's high school career. The student should be required, before applying for a personal curriculum to:

- Develop an Educational Development Plan (EDP) that clearly indicates the additional credit the student proposes to earn in order to waive credit(s).
- Create an agreement that includes written understanding that if at some point in the future the student fails to follow through on the plan that justified the personal curriculum, the personal curriculum would become null and void and the student, in order to graduate, would be required to successfully complete waived credit(s).

43. Q: Can a district reduce the 3 credit requirement to 2 credits for social studies with a personal curriculum?

A: No. A district cannot arbitrarily reduce the social studies credit requirement to 2 credits. A parent may request a personal curriculum to substituting credit requirements for one social studies credit for students who have successfully completed two required social studies credits (which must include Civics), to acquire additional credits in English language arts, mathematics, science, or world languages.

44. Q: Can a student opt out of biology or chemistry?

A: No. The law regarding the Personal Curriculum does not allow any modifications to the MMC science requirements unless it is for a student with disabilities. Students are required to take Biology, and either Chemistry or Physics.

45. Q: Can a student who has taken two credits of world languages prior to 2016 request a personal curriculum to take additional credit in world languages?

A: Yes, a student can request a personal curriculum to acquire additional credit in world languages providing the request is not inconsistent with district graduation requirements or the world languages guidelines requiring the two credits in the same world language, and the student wants to substitute credit for health and physical education or visual, performing and applied arts, or social studies.

46. Q: In looking at the chart on MDE's site for the Personal Curriculum under the column "Modification," it currently shows no modifications in ELA or science. Does the law now allow students with a disability to modify both subject areas, and if so, what would they look like?

A: Yes. The basic rule mentioned in the law is that the PC for a student with a disability should include as many of the subject area expectations "as practicable." What this means is that a student with a disability shouldn't just be permitted to waive Biology but should be instructed in some program of science that includes as much of the Biology High School Content Expectation's as possible. What this alternate program of science would look like could vary and depends on a documented need because of a disability. Eligibility for special education services does not presume that a modification of the curriculum is necessary. However, the science program may not necessarily qualify for a biology credit that leads to a diploma.

Resources

Flanagan says HS MEAP Scores Shows Need for Tougher Requirements
<http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140--147256--,.00.html>

Video Clips of Superintendent Flanagan speaking on Michigan's new high school graduation requirements.
<http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-38924-143681--,.00.html>

Preparing Michigan Students for Work and College Success
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hs_research_doc_149897_7.pdf

MMC FAQ Document (PDF)
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/111706-finalhsfaq_178578_7.pdf
<http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140--152784--,.00.html>

National award-winning High Standards and Student Achievement Brochure for parents/educators
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final_High_Standards_Brochure_7-18-01_11238_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education – Office of School Improvement
http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_30334---,.00.html

Michigan Department of Education – Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services
http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_6598---,.00.html

Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Literacy Support Initiative
<http://www.cenmi.org/miblsi>

International Center for Leadership in Education
<http://www.leadered.com>

National Drop Out Prevention Center
<http://www.dropoutprevention.org>

Michigan IDEA Partnership – Reach and Teach for Learning
<http://www.cenmi.org/ideapartner>

Michigan's Integrated Technology Supports
<http://www.cenmi.org/mits/Default.asp>

CAST – Center for Applied Special Technology
<http://www.cast.org>

State Improvement Grant: Mathematics AYP
<http://michiganmathematics.org>

Michigan Transition Resources
<http://www.cenmi.org/tspmi>

Important Links

New High School Graduation Requirements Pay First Dividends for Michigan Students
<http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140--147284--00.html>

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- i Improving High School Graduation Requirements Michigan Merit Curriculum – Research Says That...v.2.07.06
 - ii Improving High School Graduation Requirements Michigan Merit Curriculum – Research Says That...v.2.07.06
 - iii Jennifer Dounay, "Involving Families in High School and College Expectations," High School Policy Brief, Education Commission of the States, Denver, CO, August 2006. www.ecs.org
 - iv Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development. Arts Education Partnership, 2002.
 - v Howard Gardner, *Disciplined Mind: Beyond Facts Standardized Tests K 12 education that Every Child Deserves*, 2000.
 - vi Connell, D., Turner, R., and Mason, E. (1985). Summary of findings of the school health education evaluation: health promotion effectiveness, implementation, and costs. *Journal of School Health*, 55(8), 316-321.