
Key terms

Michigan Merit Exam The Michigan Merit Exam tests English, Mathematics, Science, U.S. History, Government, World History, and Geography in the 11th grade, including the ACT Test that is used by colleges for admission purposes. The required curriculum is designed so that students will have taken the appropriate courses in preparation for this test.

Modification Modifications to a student’s curriculum do not allow for an “opt out” of any requirement. However, in certain instances, modifications can be made to adjust the curriculum in Mathematics, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education, and Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts. **NO** modifications are allowed in meeting the English, Science, World Languages, and Online requirements, except for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and for transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school.

Modification allowances must be made as part of a Personal Curriculum requested by the parent/guardian or staff member.

Personal Curriculum (PC) The parent/guardian of a student or staff member may request a personal curriculum for the student that modifies certain of the MMC standard requirements. If all of the requirements for a personal curriculum are met, then the board of a school district may award a high school diploma to a student who successfully completes his or her personal curriculum, even if it does not meet the requirements of the MMC standard.

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

- A student wishes to modify the mathematics requirement.
- A student wishes to go beyond the academic credit requirements by adding more math, science, English language arts, or world languages credits.
- A student with a disability needs to modify the credit requirements based on his or her disability.
- A student transferring to a district from out of state or from a nonpublic school.

Testing Out High school students may “test out” or be given credit for a high school course that they are not enrolled in by exhibiting a certain level of mastery in the course. The student must receive a grade of not less than a C+ on a final exam, or other means of basic assessment, in order to receive credit.

World Languages Any language other than English, including American Sign Language.

What you need to know about Michigan’s

High School Graduation requirements

Introduction

The Class of 2011 will be the first of Michigan’s graduates to complete high school having met the graduation requirements set forth in Michigan’s Merit Curriculum (MMC). Introduced by the State Board of Education in 2005 and signed into law by the Governor in 2006, the MMC became mandated requirements for all high school students.

The state’s requirements are among the most rigorous in the nation and are a cornerstone for high school reform in Michigan. In satisfying these requirements, graduates will meet and often surpass the most stringent entry requirements for all colleges and universities in the state and will provide the academic and applied learning skills business and industry leaders state they need in their workforce.

The MMC sets the number of credits in each subject, and, in many cases, determines the specific courses to be taken in English, mathematics, science, social studies, health/physical education, the arts (visual, performing, and applied), world languages (required in the class of 2016), and online learning. Local districts can establish additional requirements for the students graduating from their schools. It is essential that you fully understand all the state and local requirements so you can guide your child in making sound academic decisions as s/he moves toward high school graduation.

This parent guide outlines the current MMC requirements and provides basic information. **However, the issue of high school graduation requirements is complex and there have already**

been several changes since the requirements were enacted. The Michigan Department of Education continues to address the most recent changes.

As updates occur, you will be able to find the new information on the MISD’s website, www.misd.net. Under Quick Links, click on High School Graduation Requirements.

For questions specific to your child or further information, contact your school district’s curriculum administrator or assistant superintendent of instruction, your building principal, or call MISD at 586.228.3471.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Information is subject to change.

For the most current information, go to www.misd.net. Under Quick Links, click on High School Graduation Requirements.

Key terms

Equivalent Learning Experience Content expectations and guidelines provide a useful framework for designing curriculum, assessments, scheduling instructional models, and relevant learning experiences that will allow the student to attain the level necessary to earn the required credits.

Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE) The standards and benchmarks that K–8th grade students are expected to know and be able to do by the satisfactory completion of a course of study. The expectations provide a framework for designing curriculum, assessments, and relevant learning experiences for the student.

High School Content Expectations (HSCE) Content expectations were developed to provide a description of what 9th–12th grade students should know and be able to do by the end of high school for postsecondary success — college, careers, and community. The expectations provide a foundation for curriculum and assessment development that represents rigorous and relevant learning for all high school students.

Highly Qualified Teacher To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have: 1) Bachelor’s degree, 2) Full state certification or licensure, and 3) Proof that they know each subject that they teach.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) A document created by an IEP team for special education eligible students identifying what programs and services they need to progress in the curriculum. The IEP document is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

International Baccalaureate (IB) The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is designed as an academically challenging and balanced program of education with final examinations that prepare students for success at university and life beyond. The International Academy of Macomb (IAM) and the Utica Academy for International Studies (UAIS) are authorized IB World Schools and offer a full-day IB curriculum.

NOTE: Successful completion of IB classes counts toward meeting the high school graduation requirements.

Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) The official title for the current high school graduation requirements is the Michigan Merit Curriculum. To earn a high school diploma from a Michigan high school, students must successfully complete all the elements in the Michigan Merit Curriculum. The curriculum is shown in full on pages 2–3.

Key terms

Advanced Placement (AP) Advanced placement classes are accelerated classes that, when successfully completed in high school, help determine placement in college. Although a student would not get college credit for the class, by passing the class the student would not have to take that class in college, but could move ahead to the next required class.

NOTE: Successful completion of certain AP classes counts toward meeting the high school graduation requirements.

Career Pathways Broad groupings of careers that share similar characteristics and whose employment requirements call for many common interests, strengths, and competencies. Students opting for Career and Technical Education elective courses will most likely choose courses that fit the career pathway they have chosen as a general area of interest they wish to pursue.

NOTE: Some of these courses, if taught by a teacher meeting the highly qualified standards set by the federal No Child Left Behind initiative, can be applied toward the high school graduation requirements.

CTE Career and Technical Education

Dual Enrollment When a high school student successfully completes a course as part of dual enrollment through a college or university, the student will get credit for that class at either the high school or higher education level or, in some cases, both.

NOTE: Successful completion of certain dual enrollment classes counts toward meeting the high school graduation requirements.

Educational Development Plan (EDP) An educational development plan documents an ongoing process in which a learner identifies both career goals and a plan of action to achieve them. Every seventh grade student must have an opportunity to develop an EDP and one must be on file before high school. The EDP should be periodically revised, throughout the secondary educational experience, to reflect the student's career interests and options.

ELA English Language Arts

Key concepts

to help you understand the high school graduation requirements

Listed below are ten key concepts to help you understand the high school graduation requirements. This is the lens through which to focus on the requirements and understand how to help all children succeed in school.

Terms that are in **bold type** throughout this booklet can be found in a glossary at the back of this guide.

1. These requirements apply to all students in public schools. Special education students must satisfy these same standards to receive a high school diploma with the **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** and **Personal Curriculum (PC)** determining the appropriate course or courses of study.
2. Local boards of education may add to the requirements, but cannot reduce them. Local boards determine the total number of individual district requirements.
3. While, in very limited cases, **modifications** through a personal curriculum can be made to some class selections, there is no “opt out” provision.
4. Students can meet the requirements in any type of school day schedule set by the district (i.e., six-period day, seven-period day, block schedule, trimesters).
5. There is room left in your child's high school schedule for electives.
6. Accelerated, honors, **advanced placement** and **International Baccalaureate** classes will count toward meeting the graduation requirements if the content matches the **Michigan Merit Curriculum** course expectations.

7. Students struggling with or failing required classes can get help to succeed. Parents are encouraged to check with the school about support opportunities available for students (i.e., intervention strategies, credit recovery and tutoring).
8. After the student has completed grade 9 and all other options have been earnestly attempted, parents, the student or a teacher may request a meeting to determine if a **Personal Curriculum (PC)** is necessary. However, Personal Curriculums have strict guidelines and may not be available for all students or in all situations.
9. As of June 2006, all public school teachers in their designated content areas were required to meet the *No Child Left Behind* federal certification and degree standards for **highly qualified teachers**.
10. Your child should be prepared to take the classes for these requirements. All Macomb districts have a comprehensive plan for K–12 curriculum that is based on **Grade Level Content Expectations (K-8)** and **High School Content Expectations (9-12)**. These may be viewed online at www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on Curriculum & Instruction on the left; then, under **Curriculum and Standards**, click on [Michigan K–8 Grade Level Content Expectations](#) and [High School Course/Credit Content Expectations and Guidelines](#). In June 2010, the State Board of Education adopted the National Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Full implementation of these Standards is expected in 2012.

What you need to know about an

Educational Development Plan

- An **Educational Development Plan (EDP)** is now required to be completed by all students before they enter high school, which would include discussions about **Career Pathways**.
- It is in the best interest of a student to use an EDP to focus and plan in order to successfully complete the graduation requirements, and prepare for the transition to the world of work. Since parental guidance is critical, check with your school to determine the procedure for reviewing your child’s EDP.

What you need to know about

How credit is granted

- A student is considered to have completed a credit if the student successfully completes the **high school content expectations** or guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Education. Credit can be granted in a variety of ways (e.g., end-of-course exams; dual enrollment; **testing out**; accelerated, honors, **advanced placement (AP)**, and/or **International Baccalaureate (IB)** courses; summer school make-up classes).
- A student will be given graduation credit for a requirement that is successfully completed prior to high school, as long as it is of the same level of content and rigor associated with the corresponding high school required course. Taking qualifying classes before high school will make room in the student’s schedule to take more electives.
- If a student fails a required course for graduation, no credit is granted and the class must be made up. Since there is little room in a student’s schedule each year for make-up classes, the failed credit can be recovered in various ways, such as summer school or online.

Career and Technical Education opportunities

- Districts will continue to offer Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. However, some courses may be taught in a manner that will allow credit to be granted for both CTE and the specified content area. For example, a pupil also may partially or fully fulfill the Algebra II requirement by completing a department-approved formal Career and Technical Education program or curriculum that has appropriate embedded mathematics content, such as a program or curriculum in electronics, machining, construction, welding, engineering, or renewable energy. MDE staff are working to align the CTE career cluster curriculum with the high school content expectations to identify the level of credit that can be awarded in each cluster for each core curriculum area.
- Eligible students, as determined by local districts, may be able to participate in a co-op, internship, or externship experience.
- CTE classes are electives. They are generally taken in a specific sequence and should be considered early in a student’s educational career.
- Graduation requirements taken in the 8th grade, such as Algebra I, will allow more opportunity for CTE classes/electives during the high school experience.
- Co-teaching or collaborative teaching is not required for CTE courses that qualify to satisfy either the math-related credit or the visual, performing, and applied arts credit. The local school district is responsible for awarding credit in both of these areas.

* The High School Credit **Guidelines** can be viewed online at: www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on the High School Graduation Requirements picture on the top row and then click on *CTE - Guidelines on Awarding Academic Credit in Career and Technical Education, Humanities, and Other Delivery Models* under **Curriculum**.

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Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC)

Personal Curriculum (PC) Modifications (Sequence and delivery up to district; support courses can count for credit regardless of year)


Subject Area Credit Requirements	Personal Curriculum (PC) Modifications
<p>4 English Language Arts (ELA) Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 credit in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades All credits aligned to state content expectations <p>4 Mathematics Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 credits aligned with the required state content expectations (i.e., Geometry, Algebra I, and Algebra II) 1 math or math-related credit (not required to be aligned with state content expectations) 1 math or math-related course required in the final year which could include any of the 4 credits described above or may be an additional district credit NOTE: Students may earn 2 math credits for Algebra II when the credit is earned over 2 years, or 1.5 credits over 1.5 years, without requesting a personal curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No modification except for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and for transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school 1 credit of Algebra II may be modified to 1/2 credit Algebra II, Statistics, or Functions and Data Analysis Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school
<p>3 Science Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Biology credit 1 Chemistry or Physics credit 1 additional science credit All credits aligned to state content expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No modification except for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school
<p>3 Social Studies Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/2 Civics credit 1/2 Economics credit 1 U.S. History and Geography credit 1 World History and Geography credit All credits aligned to state content expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No modification of Civics Minimum of 2 social studies credits prior to modification 1 social studies credit (other than Civics) can be exchanged for an additional English language arts, math, science, or world languages credit Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school

What you need to know about the

Online Experience requirements



Requirement	Specifics
Online Learning Experience	Credit may be earned in an online course, online learning experience, OR integrated online learning
<p>Personal Curriculum Modification - if applicable</p> <p>No modification allowed except for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school out-of-state or at a non-public school.</p>	

- Students must take an online course or learning experience, or have the online experience incorporated into one or more of the required credits of the Michigan Merit Curriculum.
 - Every student will have meaningful technology-enabled learning opportunities based on research and best practice that include virtual learning experiences.
 - As technology quickly advances, there will be expanded opportunities for districts to meet this online learning requirement.
 - The online experience requirement will not go into effect until the district is able to provide the technology necessary to make achievement of the requirement possible.
 - Online learning is defined as “a structured learning activity that utilizes technology with intranet/internet-based tools and resources as the delivery method for instruction, research, assessment, and communication.”
-  The High School Credit **Guidelines** can be viewed online at: www.michigan.gov/mdc. Click on the High School Graduation Requirements picture on the top row, scroll down to **Curriculum**, click on *Online Experience*, and then click on *Online Learning Guidelines* under **Resources**.


What you need to know about the

World Languages requirements



Requirement	Specifics
2 credits	Effective 3rd grade 2006 (Class of 2016): 2 credits in grades 9–12 OR equivalent learning experiences grades K–12
Personal Curriculum Modification - if applicable	
No modification allowed except for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school out-of-state or at a non-public school.	

- This requirement does not go into effect until the Class of 2016—students entering 3rd grade in the 2006–2007 school year.
- American Sign Language will satisfy this requirement.

 The High School Credit **Guidelines** can be viewed online at: www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on the High School Graduation Requirements picture on the top row, scroll down to **Curriculum**, click on *World Languages* and then click on *World Languages Credit/Experience Guidelines* above **What's New**.

<p>1 Physical Education and Health Credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit aligned to state guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Credit can be exchanged for an additional English language arts, math, science, or world languages credit ✓ Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school
<p>1 Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts Credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit aligned to state guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Credit can be exchanged for an additional English language arts, math, science, or world languages credit ✓ Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school
<p>2 World Languages Credits (Begins with Class of 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credits earned in grades 9–12 <i>or</i> an equivalent learning experience in grades K–12 • Credits aligned to state guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No modification except for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school
<p>Online Learning Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online course, learning experience, or experience is incorporated into one or more required credits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No modification except for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school

Source: Michigan Department of Education

NOTES:

- The Class of 2011 (students who were 8th graders in the 2006–07 school year) will need 16 credits in these areas: mathematics, English language arts, science, social studies, health/physical education, the arts (visual, performing, and applied), and online.
- The Class of 2016 (students who were 3rd graders in the 2006–07 school year) will need 18 credits that include the original 16 required credits **plus** 2 credits of world languages.
- Special Education students: The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) shall identify the appropriate course or courses of study and the supports, accommodations, and modifications necessary to allow the pupil to progress in the curricular requirements or in a Personal Curriculum (PC), and meet the requirements for a high school diploma. A personal curriculum must incorporate as much of the high school content expectations as is practicable for the pupil and is consistent with the pupil's educational development plan (EDP) and IEP.

What you need to know about
the

Mathematics

requirements



Requirement	Specifics
4 credits	1 credit – Algebra I 3 credits – 1 credit – Geometry OR Integrated Sequence with 1 credit – Algebra II same course content 1 additional credit, such as: Trigonometry, Statistics, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Applied Math, Accounting, Business Math, Financial Literacy, Functions and Data Analysis 1 credit must be in final year

Personal Curriculum Modification - if applicable

All pupils must complete a minimum of 3.5 credits (including 1 credit in final year)
After completion of 9th grade, a pupil may modify his/her Algebra II requirement **IF**:

- Successfully completes one-half (0.5) credit of Algebra II, Statistics, or Functions and Data Analysis **OR**
- Successfully completes one-half (0.5) credit in Integrated III math sequence **OR**
- Successfully completes the same content of 1 semester of Algebra II in CTE course as part of a formal CTE program.
- Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school out-of-state or at a non-public school.

- A mathematics course must be taken in the final year, with no exceptions. Taking four credits of mathematics prior to the final year, including 8th grade, does not satisfy the requirement of having to take a mathematics course in the final year.
- It will satisfy the requirement if a student takes a mathematics course in the final year through **dual enrollment** at a college.
- The 4th credit in Mathematics may be earned in a math-related class as determined by the local district. Examples might include: Business Mathematics, Accounting, Engineering, Medical Careers, Construction Trades or Math Support Class.
- Please Note: As enacted, Public Act 80 is effective July 1, 2011. Guidance from the Michigan Department of Education acknowledges that local boards of education may offer the new mathematics options (Statistics and Functions and Data Analysis) during the 2010–2011 school year if the local board determines that early implementation would be in the best interest of students.

✦ The **High School Content Expectations (HSCE)** for the required courses can be viewed online at: www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on the High School Graduation Requirements picture on the top row, scroll down to **Curriculum**, click on *Mathematics*, and then click on *Algebra I*, *Algebra II*, and *Geometry* under **Course/Credit Requirements**.

What you need to know about
the

Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts

requirements



Requirement	Specifics
1 credit	1 credit in any one category of arts

Personal Curriculum Modification - if applicable

- May substitute with:
1 additional credit in ELA, Mathematics, Science, or World Languages
- Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school out-of-state or at a non-public school.

- Students will have room in their schedules to take electives in the visual, performing, and applied arts.

✦ The High School Credit **Guidelines** can be viewed online at: www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on the High School Graduation Requirements picture on the top row, scroll down to **Curriculum**, click on *Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts*, and then click on *High School Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts Content Guidelines* under **Resources**.

What you need to know about
the

Health and Physical Education requirements



Requirement	Specifics
1 credit	.5 credit – Health .5 credit – Physical Education
Personal Curriculum Modification - if applicable	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ May substitute with: 1 additional credit in ELA, Mathematics, Science, or World Languages ■ Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school out-of-state or at a non-public school. 	

- The state mandate allows a modification for the Health and Physical Education requirements. However, local boards of education may still require students to take classes in Health and Physical Education.
- Consideration: A previous law remains in effect requiring students who are physically fit and capable to take a physical education course (*MCL 380.1502, Sec. 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.*)
- Districts may credit a student’s participation in athletics and other extracurricular activities involving physical activity as meeting the physical education requirement.
- * The High School Credit **Guidelines** for the required courses can be viewed online at: www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on the High School Graduation Requirements picture on the top row, scroll down to **Curriculum**, click on *Health – Physical Education*, and then click on *Approved Revised Michigan Merit High School Credit Guidelines for Physical Education, Companion Documents, and PowerPoints and Merit Curriculum Credit Guidelines for Health Education approved by the Michigan State Board of Education February 13, 2007* under **What’s New**.

What you need to know about
the

English Language Arts requirements



Requirement	Specifics
4 credits	Aligned with high school content expectations developed by the Michigan Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education. English 9, 10, 11, and 12 courses should include opportunities for students to meet the 91 expectations included in the 14 standards and four strands toward the grade-designated disposition.
Personal Curriculum Modification - if applicable	
No modification allowed except for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school out-of-state or at a non-public school.	

- An English Language Arts (ELA) class can include writing, speaking, representing, viewing, literature, and culture and language.
- English courses can use the grade-level HSCE model units of instruction described in the Michigan Merit Curriculum booklets provided on the www.michigan.gov website (see below).
- Literature units of instruction can be checked for rigor and relevance with the grade-level ELA HSCE Unit Matrix Genre Record found on the www.michigan.gov website.
- The Grammar and Rhetoric Module provided on the www.michigan.gov website can be used to support appropriate grammar and rhetoric instruction at each grade level.
- * The **High School Content Expectations (HSCE)** for the required courses can be viewed online at: www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on the High School Graduation Requirements picture on the top row, scroll down to **Curriculum**, click on *English Language Arts*, and then click on *English Grade 9, English Grade 10, English Grade 11, and English Grade 12* under **Course/Credit Requirements**.

What you need to know about
the

Science

requirements



Requirement	Specifics
3 credits	1 credit – Biology 1 credit – Chemistry or Physics 1 additional credit, such as: Physics or Chemistry, Forensics, Astronomy, Earth Science, Geology, Agricultural Science, Environmental Science, Physiology, Microbiology
Personal Curriculum Modification - if applicable No modification allowed except for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school out-of-state or at a non-public school.	

- The required science classes—Biology and Chemistry or Physics—may be offered by the district in any order and taken by the student in any sequence.
- The science courses are specified because they are most often the prerequisite courses for additional study in science, mathematics, or engineering.
- Colleges strongly encourage 4 credits.

* The **High School Content Expectations (HSCE)** for the required courses can be viewed online at: www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on the High School Graduation Requirements picture on the top row, scroll down to **Curriculum**, click on *Science*, and then click on *Biology*, *Chemistry*, and *Physics* above **What's New**.

What you need to know about
the

Social Studies

requirements



Requirement	Specifics
3 credits	1 credit – U.S. History & Geography 1 credit – World History & Geography .5 credit – Economics .5 credit – Civics
Personal Curriculum Modification - if applicable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ After 2 credits, including Civics, may substitute with: 1 additional credit in ELA, Mathematics, Science, or World Languages ■ Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school out-of-state or at a non-public school. 	

- The Civics requirement cannot be modified.

* The **High School Content Expectations (HSCE)** for the required courses can be viewed online at: www.michigan.gov/mde. Click on the High School Graduation Requirements picture on the top row, scroll down to **Curriculum**, click on *Social Studies*, and then click on *Social Studies High School Content Expectations* under **Course/Credit Requirements**.