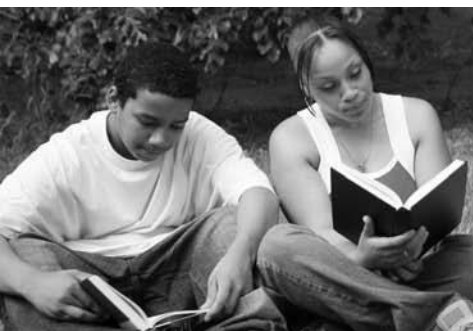


Personal Curriculum



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Supplement to the Personal Curriculum Parent and Educator Guide

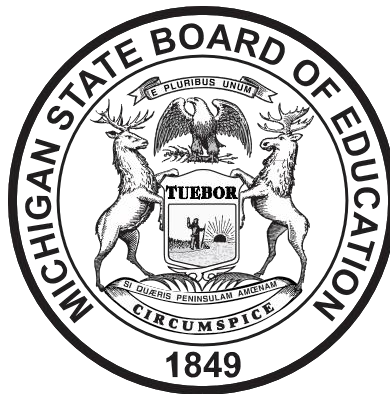
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Frequently Asked Questions

Personal Curriculum Suggested Roles and Responsibilities



Updated January 2015



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The Personal Curriculum

A Tool for Modifying the Michigan Merit Curriculum

Background Information

The Michigan Merit law 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 9th 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.¹

Research suggests that:²

- 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 7 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.

Section 380.1278a of the Revised School Code regarding the Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements for a high school diploma may be accessed and read online at:

[www.legislature.mi.gov/\(hzka3q2cfmj4r0vc4mdmp055\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-380-1278a.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(hzka3q2cfmj4r0vc4mdmp055)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-380-1278a.pdf)

Section 380.1278b of the Revised School Code regarding the Michigan Merit Curriculum and personal curriculum may be accessed and read online at:

[www.legislature.mi.gov/\(hzka3q2cfmj4r0vc4mdmp055\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-380-1278b.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(hzka3q2cfmj4r0vc4mdmp055)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-380-1278b.pdf)

¹ Improving High School Graduation Requirements Michigan Merit Curriculum – Research Says That...v.2.07.06
² Ibid.

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A Tool for Modifying the Michigan Merit Curriculum

Background Information *continued*

In August 2006, Education Commission of the States researcher, Jennifer Dounay, reported the following about student and parent aspirations and expectations for completing a college degree:³

- 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 ten parents—62 percent—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 ten respondents said it was a “very” (63 percent) or “somewhat” (27 percent) serious problem when told only 29 percent 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 postsecondary 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 his or her 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.⁴ 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.⁵

Further studies show health education and social skills programs improve school and test performance, attendance, and school connectedness.⁶ Physical education, structured physical activity, and higher fitness levels also directly impact a student’s ability to achieve academically.

3 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

4 Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development. Arts Education Partnership. 2002.

5 Howard Gardner, *Disciplined Mind: Beyond Facts Standardized Tests K 12 education that Every Child Deserves*, 2000.

6 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.

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A Tool for Modifying the Michigan Merit Curriculum

Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC)

Subject Area Credit Requirements	Personal Curriculum (PC) Modifications (Sequence and delivery up to district; support courses can count for credit regardless of year)
<p>4 English Language Arts (ELA) Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proficiency in State Content Standards for ELA (4 credits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No modification except for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and for transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school
<p>4 Mathematics Credits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proficiency in State Content Standards for Mathematics (3 credits) Proficiency in district-approved 4th mathematics credit options (1 credit) Students must have a math experience in their final year of high school 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"> ✓ 1 credit of Algebra II may be modified to ½ credit Algebra II, statistics, or functions and data analysis ✓ A department-approved formal career and technical program that embeds the same content as 1 semester of Algebra II can meet the ½ credit requirement ✓ 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"> Proficiency in State Content Standards for Science (3 credits); or beginning with the class of 2015: Proficiency in some State Content Standards for Science (2 credits) and completion of a department-approved formal career and technical education program (1 credit) 	<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"> Proficiency in State Content Standards for Social Studies (3 credits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No modification of Civics 1 social studies credit (other than Civics) can be exchanged for an additional English language arts, math, science, or world languages credit, or department-approved formal career and technical education program ✓ Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school
<p>1 Physical Education and Health Credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proficiency in State Content Standards for Physical Education and Health (1 credit); or Proficiency with State Content Standards for Health (1/2 credit) and district-approved extra-curricular activities involving physical activities (1/2 credit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Credit can be exchanged for an additional English language arts, math, science, or world languages credit, or department-approved formal career and technical education program ✓ 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"> Proficiency in State Content Standards for Visual, Performing and Applied Arts (1 credit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Credit can be exchanged for an additional English language arts, math, science, or world languages credit, or department-approved formal career and technical education program ✓ Additional modifications allowed for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school

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<p>2 World Languages Credits (Effective beginning with students graduating in 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal coursework OR an equivalent learning experience in grades K-12 (2 credits); or• Formal coursework or an equivalent learning experience in grades K-12 (1 credit) and completion of a department-approved formal career and technical education program or an additional visual, performing and applied arts credit (1 credit)	<p>✓ No modification except for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school</p>
<p>Online Learning Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course, Learning or Integrated Learning Experience	<p>✓ No modification except for students with an IEP and transfer students who have completed 2 years of high school</p>

Michigan Academic Standards Page http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753_64839_65510---,00.html

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- 44. Can a PC be created that includes extended time in high school beyond four years?
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- 46. Are additional resources that support the implementation of the PC process available for use by districts and schools?

The Personal Curriculum

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

Part I: Definitions

1. Q: What is a personal curriculum (PC)?

A: A PC is a tool that is provided for in Michigan law (Revised School Code 380.1278b) that allows specific modifications to be made to certain requirements of the MMC in order to individualize the rigor and relevance of the educational experience. While the law specifies the areas in which modifications may be made for specific groups of students, the PC is intended to help make the MMC accessible to all students while maintaining the academic rigor required to uphold the integrity of the high school diploma.

Allowable modifications to the MMC through the use of a PC are outlined in the table on pp. 5-6.

2. Q: Who is eligible to receive a PC?

A: A PC may be developed to address the needs of an individual student for one of four reasons:

- A student demonstrates need for modification of the Algebra II content within the MMC.
- A student with an IEP demonstrates need for modification to the MMC within the area(s) of his/her disability.
- A student who transfers from a school outside of Michigan or from a non-public school to a public high school after completing the equivalent of two years of high school demonstrates need for modification to the MMC based on previous academic experience.
- A student demonstrates need to modify Social Studies, Health/Physical Education, and/or Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts in order to take a department-approved formal career and technical education program, or credits beyond those required in the areas of Math, English Language Arts, Science, or World Language. The student must earn 2 credits in Social Studies, including .5 credit in Civics before requesting a PC to modify the Social Studies requirement.

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

3. Q: What modifications are allowable through a PC?

A: See table entitled *Michigan Merit Curriculum*.

4. Q: How is the need for a PC determined?

A: The need for, and potential effectiveness of, a PC must be determined on a student-by-student basis. A student's Educational Development Plan (EDP), inclusive of postsecondary goals, and Individualized Education Program, or IEP, (for students with disabilities only) should be examined in addition to the student's prior and current academic performance. There are many instructional and structural interventions available to a student that may help him or her access the full MMC successfully without a PC.

For example, a student who wants to take more English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Language courses may be able to find space in his or her class schedule to take these courses in lieu of electives rather than modify the MMC credit requirements. A student who is struggling in math may benefit from simultaneous enrollment in a regular Algebra II class and a math support class rather than modify the MMC with a PC. A student with a disability who is failing his or her science course due to disengagement, boredom, or the need for an alternate instructional strategy may benefit from completing the credit through online learning rather than modifying the MMC with a personal curriculum.

5. Q: Is a PC necessary for an alternative education program?

A: No. A PC is not 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 modifications to the MMC. However, a PC is not a vehicle to track all alternative education students into a curriculum that is not consistent with the MMC.

6. Q: How does the educational development plan (EDP) impact the PC?

A: Michigan law 380.1278b(11) requires that all students be given the opportunity to develop an EDP in the 7th grade, and that all students review and revise the EDP as appropriate before entering high school. This means that every student in the State of Michigan enters high school with a plan in place that outlines the student's individual career goals, postsecondary education and/or training goals, and the plan of action the student needs to follow in high school to achieve these goals.

When considering the PC as an option for any student, the content of his or her EDP must be taken into account in order to determine how or if the PC modifications will impact the goals outlined in the EDP. The need for, and benefit of, the PC modifications must then be weighed against the potential impact on the student's goals as outlined in the EDP. The implementation of a PC should in no way work against the intent of the MMC to provide all students with a rigorous high school curriculum that prepares them to meet their postsecondary goals.

The Personal Curriculum

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

7. Q: What does “practicable” mean in developing appropriate modifications within a PC?

A: Practicable is an inclusive term meaning as much of the subject area content expectations as possible during high school instruction. Practicable means that the student can reasonably achieve the expectations set forth by the modification while maintaining academic rigor and challenge for that student. Great professional judgment and integrity are required in deciding what is practicable for an individual student in that one must locate the appropriate intersection of challenge and ability, keeping in mind that when expectations are set high, students tend to rise to meet them.

Part II: Requesting and Approving a Personal Curriculum

8. Q: Who can request a PC?

A: Michigan law states that “the parent or legal guardian of a pupil”, a teacher who is currently teaching the pupil, who currently teaches in or whose expertise is in a subject area proposed to be modified by the personal curriculum, or who is determined by the principal to have qualifications otherwise relevant to developing a personal curriculum, or a school counselor or school employee qualified to act in a counseling role under section 1233 or 1233 may request a personal curriculum....” An emancipated student may request a PC on his or her own behalf. Regardless of who initiates the PC process, the parent/legal guardian (or emancipated student) and the superintendent (or designee) must agree to the PC that is developed by the committee in order for it to take effect.

9. Q: When can a PC be requested?

A: Michigan law states that a PC may be requested for a student who has completed grade 9.

A request for modification(s) for a student with a disability may be made at any time, but the modification(s) cannot take effect until the student begins high school.

A request for modification to the Social Studies credit requirement in order to earn additional credits in English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Languages may be made after earning 2 Social Studies credits, including 0.5 credit in Civics.

A request for modification(s) for a transfer student may be made upon enrollment in a Michigan public high school after an assessment of previous credits earned determines that the student has completed the equivalent of two years of high school.

The Personal Curriculum

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

10. Q: By what process is a PC developed?

A: Michigan law states that “The personal curriculum shall be developed by a group that includes at least the pupil, at least 1 of the pupil’s parents or legal guardian, and teacher described in this subdivision (380.1278b[5][a]) or the pupil’s high school counselor or another designee 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.” This committee is charged with convening to examine the student’s request in light of the student’s EDP, past and current academic performance, supports and interventions, IEP (if applicable), and any other supporting documents deemed necessary by the committee. The committee develops a proposed PC plan based on the needs of the student, using his or her EDP, which must incorporate as much of the MMC content expectations as is practicable for the student, establish measurable goals, and include a method of evaluation to determine whether or not these goals are met while the PC is in effect.

11. Q: When does a PC take effect?

A: A PC takes effect when it is agreed to by the pupil, the pupil’s parent or legal guardian, and the superintendent of the school district or chief executive of the public school academy or his or her designee. If either party refuses agreement, the PC will not be in effect for the student.

If revisions are made to the PC after it has been put into effect, the revisions must also be agreed to by both parties in order to take effect.

A PC may not take effect until a student is enrolled in high school.

12. Q: Is there an appeals process for students and/or parents if the request for a PC is denied?

A: Legislation addressing the PC does not require the establishment of an appeals process for students whose PC is not agreed to, and request consequently denied. School districts may find that establishing such an appeals process before the need arises will support fairness and integrity in the PC process.

13. Q: Can a PC be developed for a student to culminate in the completion of high school without a diploma if everyone on the committee, including the student and his or her parent(s), agrees to it?

A: No. As defined in 1278b, the PC “modifies certain of the Michigan Merit standard requirements” in order that a local district “may award a high school diploma to a pupil who successfully completes his or her personal curriculum.” The intent of the law is that:

- 1) The MMC is the foundation for the PC, both of which are meant to provide a rigorous academic program for all students.
- 2) A PC is meant to modify only as much of the MMC as is necessary to make it accessible to and achievable for an individual student.

The intent of the law is not to allow a pathway for schools and/or students and their parents to create a less rigorous course of study for students.

The Personal Curriculum

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

The PC offers an individualized approach to helping students meet the requirements of the MMC and earn a diploma. It is an option for students and schools to use to modify the means by which they achieve the defined end: a diploma. It is not an option to be used to change the end goal itself.

Part III: Roles and Responsibilities

14. Q: What are the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the PC process?

A: See the table on pp. 24-25 that summarizes these roles as well as additional responsibilities related to ensuring student academic success through the PC process.

15. Q: Will MDE provide specific forms and procedures for districts to use in implementing the PC option?

A: No. Local districts and their governing boards reserve the power to develop policies, forms, and procedures for use in their districts. The MDE will, however, continue to provide guidance on the PC, including the development of accessible shared spaces, such as the PC Ning network (located at <http://personalcurriculum.ning.com>) for districts to share their work across the state so that ideas may be exchanged and discussed.

16. Q: Are local districts required to offer the PC option to students?

A: Yes. Because Michigan law 380.1278b gives parents (and legal guardians) the power to request a PC, districts and schools are obligated to respond to such requests through the committee described in 1278b(5)(a).

Part IV: Implementing the Personal Curriculum

17. Q: Does the PC lead to a diploma?

A: The PC should be designed to lead to a diploma, incorporating as much of the MMC as is practicable for the individual student while maintaining the rigor of the MMC and the integrity of the diploma.

Should a student fail to meet the requirements of the PC, the PC will be considered null and void, and the student will be responsible for meeting all standard requirements of the MMC in order to receive a diploma.

The Personal Curriculum

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

18. Q: How does a district uphold the rigor of the MMC and the integrity of the high school diploma while offering the PC option?

A: One underlying assumption of the MMC is that all students can learn and achieve at high levels. This does not mean, however, that all students learn in the same way or on the same timeline. The PC acknowledges that while we must maintain high expectations of all students, we cannot have a one-size-fits-all approach to ensuring that all students meet these high expectations.

There are many instructional strategies that can and should be utilized to differentiate and individualize instruction for students within the MMC. The intent of the PC is that students are provided yet one more way of individualizing the rigor and relevance of the educational experience so that they can access and achieve the standards and expectations set by the MMC. The limited scope of allowable modifications under the PC serves to support students in their ability to complete the MMC rather than undermine its integrity.

Part V: Students with an IEP

19. Q: Does an IEP supersede the MMC?

A: No. The MMC legislation establishes state requirements for a diploma. The IEP is a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). While the two documents are distinct in the purposes, the IEP provides for the child's involvement in and access to the general education curriculum. (See section 300.320 of the IDEA for a more complete definition of the IEP.) Together, the MMC credit requirements and content standards define the general education curriculum for each pupil in the state. The IEP as a separate document provides specific supports to help the student make progress and achieve in the MMC.

20. Q: Does a student with an IEP automatically receive a PC?

A: No. Every effort must be made to provide students with an IEP full access to the MMC before making modifications. The majority of students receiving special education services will not need a PC, as differentiated instructional strategies and interventions do not require a PC. When it is determined that a student with an IEP needs a PC, the modifications contained therein should be specific and targeted and NOT based solely on eligibility. It must be the student's disability and not the instructional environment that creates the barrier to access or proficiency. If additional instructional supports and interventions, flexibility in demonstrating proficiency, and additional instructional time will allow the student to meet the expectations, these supports and accommodations should be implemented before resorting to a PC.

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21. Q: How do a student's IEP, EDP, and PC work together to support academic achievement?

A: The first planning tool for a student preparing for high school is the EDP. The EDP outlines the educational pathway, including the course of study that provides access to the learning experiences necessary for preparation for success in postsecondary activities (work, community, and continuing learning). The PC is a documented and agreed-upon change to the requirements of the MMC. The PC modification must align with the EDP. The EDP and the PC are the educational plan that outlines the requirements for a diploma. Once a student has established the plan for achieving a diploma, the IEP should support the learning of the requirements necessary for the achievement of a diploma.

22. Q: Can a student with an IEP receive a PC in the 8th grade in anticipation of starting high school?

A: A student with an IEP may request a PC at any time, but it cannot take effect until the student begins high school. A PC allows the modification of Michigan's high school graduation requirements. It cannot be used to modify learning requirements at the elementary or middle school levels.

With the exception of a very small percentage, students with an IEP are required to take the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), which assesses the content covered in the MMC. Students who do not get access to the content of the MMC are unlikely to demonstrate proficiency in that content. If students are denied access to content assessed on the MME, their chances of earning scholarships or demonstrating college readiness are diminished. Therefore, assumptions about a student's capabilities should be carefully considered given the possible negative impact modifications could have on equitable access to the curriculum and postsecondary outcomes.

With targeted interventions and supports, students may surpass the expectations stated in a PC developed in middle school. It is imperative that student progress is monitored to allow students to meet as much of the MMC content as practicable in preparation for success beyond high school.

23. Q: How much of the MMC requirements can be modified for a student with an IEP?

A: Based on current evidence and research, a majority of students receiving special education services will not need a PC. They will be able to meet the graduation requirements if provided with appropriate supports and instructional interventions.

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

Every effort must be made to provide students with an IEP full access to the MMC before making modifications. Modifications to state standards and expectations may affect a student's preparation for postsecondary success, ability to perform well on the MME, achieve a college ready score on the ACT, and opportunity to earn a diploma.

For a student with an IEP, the PC modifications must:

- a. Incorporate as much of the subject area content expectation as practicable for the student.
- b. Align with the EDP and be consistent with the IEP.
- c. Be based on the impact the student's disability has on accessing or demonstrating proficiency in meeting the expectations.

The modification is allowable if it is determined to be based on the student's disability and how that disability affects performance in the general curriculum.

- d. Translation – it is the student's disability and not the instructional environment that creates the barrier to access or proficiency. The student's response to supports and interventions needs to be taken into account when determining the appropriateness of any modification.

Modifications are limited to the extent made necessary by the disability.

- e. Translation – modifications should be specific and targeted and not based solely on eligibility.

Additionally, the PC modifications should:

- f. Facilitate progress along the student's career pathway and the achievement of postsecondary goals.
- g. Enhance the relevance of the student's educational experience.
- h. Provide access to MMC content knowledge, processes, and skills.
- i. Provide full access to statewide assessments.
- j. Provide a gateway to employment and productive adult living.
- k. Maintain the integrity of the diploma.

24. Q: Does a student with a 504 plan qualify for the same modifications within a PC as a student with an IEP?

A: No. The provisions in the MMC that allow for the consideration of modifications beyond what the PC allows for general education students are not available to students with 504 accommodations, as they do not meet the federal IDEA 2004 definition of a student with a disability. A student with a 504 plan may, however, request a PC for Algebra II or to take additional courses in English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Languages; or to complete a department-approved formal career and technical education program as allowed for all students.

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

25. Q: What is meant by “modification not otherwise allowed”?

A: It means that exceptions to the limitations on the PC stated in the law (e.g., no modifications of ELA, Science, online, etc.) may be allowable for a student with an IEP. 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, decisions regarding performance standards for earning MMC credit (i.e., the definition of proficiency in meeting the content expectations that define required MMC credits) and determination of the credit associated with each course, are local district/board decisions.

26. Q: What modifications are appropriate for a student with an emotional impairment?

A: The committee convened to develop the student’s PC is responsible for making that determination.

Often, a student with an emotional impairment may benefit from an instructional setting or delivery that is different from the traditional classroom. Keep in mind that schools have flexibility within the MMC to vary the method or setting of instructional delivery without impacting the student’s least restrictive environment (LRE) as defined in their IEP. For example, the student may be able to earn a number of credits toward the MMC through a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program or online learning, and these alternatives may be offered without a PC.

27. Q: Will a PC allow a student with a cognitive impairment to earn a diploma?

A: The PC only modifies the MMC. If a student with a cognitive impairment has an IEP that identifies the MMC as his or her course of study, then it would be possible for him or her to have a PC in place that, like all PCs, should be developed with the intent that it lead to a diploma. If, however, the student’s IEP identifies a course of study other than the MMC, a PC would not be applicable.

28. Q: Can a student with an IEP develop a PC that exempts him or her from Algebra II altogether?

A: A student with an IEP may have a PC that modifies Algebra II beyond the standard 0.5 credit modification allowable with a PC for general education students. The student’s PC may reduce the number of Algebra II content expectations on which the student must demonstrate proficiency.

It is the responsibility of the PC committee to determine what is practicable for the student, while maintaining the rigor of Algebra II and the MMC. Using information about the student’s current ability in the area as well as limitations determined by the disability, and other information in the EDP and IEP, the committee must determine which, if any, of the Algebra II

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standards the student can reasonably be expected to master if provided appropriate and targeted supports and interventions.

The PC committee is also responsible for determining the course placement that will best offer the opportunities for meeting as many of the expectations or as much of the content as practicable. For some students, the practicable Algebra II content (e.g., the equivalent of less than half of the Algebra II content) may be best accessed through other courses (e.g., statistics, a special support class, or in a CTE program). The PC should indicate how/where the reduced number of Algebra II expectations will be met and should provide rationale for how the placement supports postsecondary goals.

29. Q: Can local boards of education establish separate diploma 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. A certificate of completion, however, has no legal standing as a substitute for a diploma. For students with a disability, only a diploma ends the entitlement to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Further, the PC option is not meant to be used as a convenient escape door for schools to shy away from providing access to the general curriculum for students who are more difficult to reach and teach.

30. Q: What are the implications of completing high school without earning a diploma?

A: The significance of completing high school without earning a diploma depends on career choice, future employment requirements, and plans for education beyond high school. For example, students who complete high school without earning a diploma may enter trade schools, community colleges, and the armed forces. A student may not enroll in a four-year college or university without a diploma, however, and eligibility for scholarship programs may be compromised. Further, a certificate of completion has no legal standing and does not end a student's right to a FAPE.

Part VI: Transfer Students

31. Q: Can a previously home-schooled student request a PC upon enrolling in a public high school?

A: Yes – as long as the student has completed the equivalent of two years of high school credit before enrolling in a Michigan public high school or public school academy. This school or district may use "appropriate assessment examinations to determine what credits, if any, the pupil has earned."

32. Q: Does a PC follow a student if he or she moves to a new public school or district within Michigan while in high school?

A: No. Because the law states that the superintendent of the district must agree to the PC, a PC cannot automatically transfer from one district to another. The student may, however,

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

request a PC upon entering the new district, and the PC from the previous district will be a valuable planning tool in developing the PC for the student in the new district.

33. Q: How does a school or district determine a transfer student's earned credits toward the MMC?

A: It is up to the local school district to determine the criteria by which it will assess credits already earned by the transfer student. For example, if a student transfers from an accredited public high school in another state, the district may choose to transfer credits as comparably as possible based on the student's transcript and corresponding courses of the MMC and/or district graduation requirements. For a student transferring from an unaccredited non-public school within Michigan, the district may choose to require the student to take end-of-course assessments or assessments used for "testing out" purposes, to determine credits earned toward the MMC and/or district graduation requirements. Or the district may base placement and credit transfer on the student's transcript and ability to function effectively in the new course placement.

34. Q: Can a migrant student be considered a transfer student for the purpose of providing a PC?

A: Yes. The student may be considered a transfer student if he or she has transferred from another state or non-public education program.

Part VII: Math Modifications

35. Q: What can be done for a general education student who is struggling to earn the prerequisite math credits necessary to qualify him or her for a PC modification of Algebra II?

A: A student may request a PC to modify Algebra II, but this does not exempt him or her from earning credit in Algebra I and Geometry. Therefore, a PC should not be considered a first step in intervention for struggling students. There are a myriad of interventions and strategies, both instructional and structural that can and should be attempted to support students who are struggling to master Algebra I, Geometry, and/or any content expectations within the MMC. It is vital that these strategies and interventions be implemented in a directed and efficient manner, so that strategies are matched to specific student needs, and support acceleration and mastery rather than repeated failure. Approaches may range from differentiation strategies at the daily lesson level, to Response to Intervention at the course level, to offering the student a daily support class or extended class block to accommodate learning differences. With these same levels of support in middle school mathematics instruction, more students will be prepared for meeting the MMC requirements in high school.

36. Q: Is a PC required for a student to take Algebra II over two years for two credits?

A: No. A student may take Algebra II over 2 years for 2 credits, or over 1.5 years for 1.5 credits, without a PC.

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

- 37. Q: If a student plans to take Algebra II over two years for two credits, but then completes only the first year of Algebra II and takes another math course the next year, will he or she have earned one credit in Algebra II?**

A: No. The MMC requires students to demonstrate proficiency of content in order to earn credit rather than requiring a specific amount of seat time to earn credit. Lawmakers intended the specific Algebra II revision, allowing students to earn two credits over two years, to be a unique exception to this rule and to allow students more time to master the content of Algebra II. Therefore, if a student intends to take Algebra II over two years for two credits, but then completes just one of the two years, he or she has only been provided the opportunity to demonstrate mastery in half of the Algebra II content and should be awarded only 0.5 credit in Algebra II.

- 38. Q: Can Geometry or Algebra I be taken over two years for two credits with a PC?**

A: No. This is not an allowable PC modification of the MMC for general education students. Alternate strategies for addressing the needs of students who may be struggling with these courses are briefly described in a previous question. Algebra I and Geometry credits are earned when the content expectations that define the credits are met, regardless of the time involved in earning the credit. Students may take Algebra I or Geometry over two years and earn 0.5 credit for each year.

Part VIII: Enrichment

- 39. Q: Can a modification for Health/Physical Education be implemented at any time?**

A: A modification of Health/Physical Education (PE) may be implemented at any time, provided the local district allows the Health/PE requirements to be modified by a PC. While PC legislation allows for modification to be made to the Health/PE requirement, Michigan statute also requires that all students take PE (380.1502) and receive instruction on HIV/AIDS (380.1169). Because of these conflicting laws, local districts must decide whether or not to allow PC modification to the Health/PE requirement. Should a district determine that modifications are allowable, a student requesting a Health/PE modification or Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts modification in order to earn additional credits in English Language Arts, Math, Science, or World Languages may request a PC as early as 9th grade, but must provide a written 4-year plan that clearly shows the additional credits the student intends to take in place of the required credits.

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

- 40. Q: Can a student who completes Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus and all prerequisites before the 12th grade develop a PC to remove the MMC requirement that the student complete a math course in his or her final year of high school?**

A: No. All students are required to successfully complete a math or math-related credit in their final year of high school. The student may explore options unavailable at his or her high school through dual enrollment or online coursework.

Part IX: Miscellaneous Questions

- 41. Q: What if a student does not meet the requirements established in his or her PC?**

A: If a student fails to meet the requirements of the PC, then the PC is considered null and void, and the student is responsible for meeting all requirements of the MMC in order to graduate with a diploma. If quarterly communication is maintained as required, then the likelihood that a student does not fulfill the requirements should be significantly reduced.

- 42. Q: Will English Language Learners need a PC to forego the World Languages requirement of the MMC (starting with the class of 2016)?**

A: No. The MMC requires 2 credits in World Languages earned in grades 9-12 OR an "equivalent learning experience in grades K-12." Demonstrated proficiency in the student's native language may count as an "equivalent learning experience."

- 43. Q: Could a student who transfers in during the final year of high school, but who has only earned math credits equivalent to pre-Algebra, receive a PC to exempt him or her from one or more math courses in order to graduate on time with a diploma?**

A: It is possible, depending on the decision of the PC committee and the proficiency guidelines set by the local school district. The PC is intended to allow students to make modifications that provide access to the MMC while upholding its rigor and the integrity of the diploma. It is the role of the local school district to determine the proficiency levels below which the integrity of the diploma is undermined. If the transfer student is enrolled in the district for one full year, the final year of mathematics must be the equivalent of Algebra I or higher. A student who transfers during the senior year should be supported in meeting at least the Algebra I expectations. District policy may determine a higher level of mathematics proficiency.

- 44. Q: Can a PC be created that includes extended time in high school beyond four years?**

A: It is not the role of the PC to create an extended timeline for completion of the MMC. Rather, a PC is intended to allow certain modifications that may be needed by certain students to access and demonstrate proficiency on the MMC. An extended timeline falls outside of the scope of PC, but may be available as an option for students receiving additional support services.

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Frequently Asked Questions *continued*

45. Q: Can a PC be created that incorporates the fourth MMC math or math-related credit into CTE?

A: A PC is not necessary to earn a math or math-related credit in a CTE program. Students may earn a mathematics credit in a CTE program if the CTE program is fully aligned with the mathematics expectations that define the credit. Students may earn math-related credit in CTE programs that apply high school mathematics concepts.

46. Q: Are additional resources that support the implementation of the PC process available for use by districts and schools?

A: A number of new and revised guidance documents and tools are available at the MDE Office of Improvement and Innovation website (www.michigan.gov/highschool). A Ning network (<http://personalcurriculum.ning.com>) has also been created to facilitate the sharing of work done by local districts and ISDs as they support the development of local policies and procedures.

Personal Curriculum Suggested Roles and Responsibilities

	Before a Personal Curriculum is Requested	Requesting and Developing a Personal Curriculum	Implementing and Monitoring a Personal Curriculum
Local Board of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine policy for personal curriculum process. • Align course curricula with content expectations. • Determine the credit associated with each course. • Determine proficiency levels for content mastery for credit. • Determine assessments to measure mastery and proficiency levels. • Commit to preparing all students for success beyond high school. 		
School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the protocol for participation on the PC Committee. • Develop a PC agreement, including forms and procedures, that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Alignment with EDP (and IEP, if applicable). ◊ Measurable goals. ◊ Method of evaluation. ◊ As many of Career and College Ready Standards as is practicable for the student. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent must agree to the personal curriculum developed. • Collect data on personal curricula implemented in the district. • Determine that personal curriculum meets district policy in awarding diploma.
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum aligned with Career and College Ready Standards. • Provide challenging goals and effective feedback to all students. • Facilitate parent and community involvement. • Establish and maintain a safe and orderly environment. • Maintain collegiality and professionalism among faculty and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School personnel may initiate the personal curriculum process on a student's behalf. 	
Personal Curriculum Committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review student academic and behavior records. • Determine what is practicable for the student. • Establish goals and performance measures. • Develop the PC to align with EDP and IEP (if applicable). • Include school psychologist if available for student with a disability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene to revise PC as needed.
Counselor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide counseling and education and career guidance services to students. • Collaborate with staff to plan instructional interventions, curriculum, and behavior management plans. • Consult and collaborate with students, families, school personnel, and other agencies regarding behavior and education concerns. • Assess students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A counselor and/or teacher must participate on the PC committee (or designee). • May request a PC. 	
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan instruction based on standards that is designed to help student master content and achieve proficiency. • Manage the classroom to ensure an environment that is conducive to high levels of learning. • Maintain rigor and relevance of instruction and establish relationships with students to facilitate the learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A counselor and/or teacher must participate on the PC committee. • May request a PC. 	
Parent/Guardian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a home environment that is conducive to supporting learning, study skills, and completion of assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May request a PC. • Must participate on the PC committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must agree to the personal curriculum developed.

Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish an Educational Development Plan to share postsecondary education and career goals and direct high school course selection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May request a personal curriculum if emancipated minor or over age of 18.• Must participate on the PC committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate proficiency on content included in PC.
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