

Michigan Merit Curriculum
Frequently Asked Questions - 09/17

Michigan Merit Curriculum

High School Graduation Requirements

Updated September 2017



This document is intended to provide general guidance. Due to the complexity of the law, policies and guidance will continue to evolve. For specific information regarding the law, please refer to [MCL 380.1278a](#) and [MCL 380.1278b](#).

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Introduction

The Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) is crafted around the philosophical belief that all students will need post-secondary learning opportunities beyond high school. It is not a curriculum in the traditional sense in that it doesn't describe instructional materials and approaches. Instead it specifies that all students who earn a diploma, at a minimum, have demonstrated proficiency with the content outlined by the state academic standards or guidelines. Since districts are responsible for awarding diplomas so too are they responsible for providing all students the opportunity to learn the content outlined by the standards. As the learning skills for college and the workplace have merged, the MMC, if properly implemented, will prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in our global economy and an emerging workforce. The MMC supports the need for personalization, acceleration, and innovation in an atmosphere of high expectations and high support for students earning a diploma in Michigan.

Michigan High School Graduation Requirements (18 Credits)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) – 4 Credits

- Proficiency in State Content Standards for ELA (4 credits)

MATHEMATICS – 4 Credits

- Proficiency in State Content Standards for Mathematics (3 credits); and
- Proficiency in district-approved 4th Mathematics credit options (1 credit) (Students MUST have a Math experience in their final year of high school.)

ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- Course, Learning, or Integrated Learning Experience.

PERSONAL FINANCE – ½ Credit (Effective with students entering 8th grade in 2024)

- Proficiency in State Content Standards for Personal Finance.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH – 1 Credit

- 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).

SCIENCE – 3 Credits

- 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 (CTE) program (1 credit).

SOCIAL STUDIES – 3 Credits

- Proficiency in State Content Standards for Social Studies (3 credits).

VISUAL, PERFORMING, AND APPLIED ARTS – 1 Credit

- Proficiency in State Content Standards for Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts (1 credit).

WORLD LANGUAGE – 2 Credits (Effective with students entering 3rd Grade in 2006)

- 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).

General Overview

1. How does the Michigan Merit Curriculum impact local school district decisions?

The MMC gives districts the flexibility to develop courses, curricula, and systems, which meet the individual needs and desires of each district. Local school boards, in collaboration district administration, have the responsibility to determine "how" to implement the graduation requirements outlined by the MMC and when students have earned the appropriate credits.

Local boards of education can establish additional graduation requirements beyond those in the MMC and the total number of credits required for graduation. However, a district cannot establish lesser requirements. [See also [Earning Credit](#)]

2. Which students must meet the requirements of the MMC to receive a diploma?

Districts must ensure that any student who entered 8th Grade in 2006 year and wishes to receive a high school diploma from a public school must meet the requirements of the MMC. This includes alternative and adult education students. Modifications can be made to the MMC based on student needs (see Personal Curriculum Options).

Students seeking a General Educational Development (GED) are not subject to the MMC requirements since the GED is an equivalency diploma issued by the U. S. government and is subject to its own criteria. Except for the one-semester credit requirement in Civics/Government, non-public and home schools can set their own graduation criteria and are not required to ensure that students have met the requirements of the MMC.

3. What is an Educational Development Plan (EDP)?

The Michigan Merit Curriculum legislation *380.1278b (11)* states:

The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall provide the opportunity for each pupil to develop an educational development plan during 7th Grade and shall ensure that each pupil reviews his or her educational development plan during 8th Grade and revises it as appropriate before he or she begins high school. An educational development plan shall be developed, reviewed, and revised by the pupil under the supervision of the pupil's school counselor or

*another designee qualified to act in a counseling role under Section 1233 or 1233a selected by the school principal and shall be based on high school readiness scores and a career pathways program or similar career exploration program. An educational development plan shall be designed to assist pupils to identify career development goals as they relate to academic requirements. During the process of developing and reviewing a pupil's educational development plan, the pupil shall be advised that many of the curricular requirements of this Section and Section 1278a may be fulfilled through **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**.*

It is up to the district to determine processes and timelines for implementing this requirement. The Department has developed guidelines for the use of EDPs at the following link: <http://bit.ly/2xLVgnH> [See also [Personal Curriculum Options](#)]

Earning Credit

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

380.1278(a) (4)(a) A pupil is considered to have completed a credit if the pupil successfully completes the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the Department that apply to the credit. For a Career and Technical Education (CTE) credit, a school district or public school academy may supplement those content expectations and guidelines with additional guidelines developed by the school district or public school academy.

380.1278(a) (4)(b) A school district or public school academy shall base its determination of whether a student has successfully completed the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the Department that apply to a credit at least in part on the student's performance on the assessments developed or selected by the Department or on one or more assessments developed or selected 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.

380.1278(a) (4)(c) A school district or public school academy shall also grant a pupil a credit if the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the Department, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area by the Department under Section 1278b or the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the school district or public school academy, on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

380.1278(b) (2) If a pupil successfully completes one or more of the high school credits required under Subsection (1) or under Section 1278a(1) before entering high school, the pupil shall be given high school credit for that credit.

380.1278(b) (7) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy that operates a high school shall ensure that each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary for the pupil to meet the curricular requirements of this Section and Section 1278a. The board or board of directors may provide this curriculum by providing the credits specified in this Section and Section 1278a, by using alternative instructional delivery methods such as alternative course work, humanities course sequences, CTE, industrial technology courses, or vocational education, or by a combination of these. School districts and public school academies that operate CTE programs are encouraged to integrate the credit requirements of this Section and Section 1278a into those programs.

380.1278(b) (14) This Section and Section 1278a do not prohibit a pupil from satisfying or exceeding the credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard under this Section and Section 1278a through advanced studies such as accelerated course placement, advanced placement, dual enrollment in a postsecondary institution, or participation in the international baccalaureate program or an early college/middle college program.

1. What counts as a credit under the Michigan Merit Curriculum?

The MMC requires that credit be awarded based on a student's demonstration that he or she has successfully met the content expectations for the credit area, not by the commonly used Carnegie unit, which is based on seat time. The [subject area standards, expectations, or guidelines](#) outline the content required for earning the total credit in each content area as specified in the legislation. Districts determine the credit pathway options. A district may choose to assign a full subject area credit to a course, or they may choose to design courses and learning experiences for students that provide opportunities for students to earn partial credit in one or more content areas.

2. How can students earn credit?

Students may earn credit if they successfully demonstrate mastery of the [subject area content standards, expectations, or guidelines](#) for the credit. The assignment of credit must be based, at least in part, on student performance on assessments designed to measure the extent to which they meet the standards, expectations, and guidelines. Assessments and criteria for success are determined by local districts. Beyond earning credit through a traditional course setting, a student may earn a credit in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

Work-based Learning Programs,

- [Integrated Sequences](#),
- Project-based Learning,
- Independent Teacher-guided Study, or

- [Testing out.](#)

In addition, the district may allow students to satisfy credit requirements through:

- [Career and Technical Education,](#)
- [College Coursework,](#)
- [Early College,](#)
- [Advanced Placement Courses,](#)
- [International Baccalaureate Courses,](#) or
- [On-line classes.](#)

3. How do the NCAA rules impact district-level course decisions?

Because courses utilizing flexible learning options are designed and delivered locally, the NCAA suggests that those considering such visit the NCAA Eligibility Center and read the [Non-traditional Course FAQ](#). If districts feel that the non-traditional course being offered students meets the requirements listed, districts may call (877) 622-2321 for review.

4. Will colleges accept students who earn credit through non-traditional classes, such as integrated Mathematics or project-based learning?

Colleges and universities see a variety of transcripts from multiple states and countries that vary in course name and format of reporting. Individual institutes of higher education make the ultimate determination in accepting students. Districts may want to contact the institutes for clarification on their application requirements. More information regarding transcripts can be found [here](#).

5. Do we have to worry about “double-dipping”; in other words, can a course count towards credit in more than one content area?

Yes, courses can be used to grant more than one credit. Since credit is based on student proficiency with the content, how and where they learn the content has no bearing on credit as long as students satisfactorily demonstrate proficiency on district-determined measures. For instance, a student who takes a class that addresses both physics and mathematics concepts should be able to earn partial, or full, credit in both subjects once they demonstrate knowledge of the content.

Content Standards and Guidelines

English Language Arts (ELA)

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

Sec. 1278b (1) Except as otherwise provided in this Section or Section 1278a, beginning with pupils entering 8th Grade in 2006, as part of the requirements under Section 1278a the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed all of the following credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard before graduating from high school:

- (a) At least 4 credits in English Language Arts that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the Department and approved by the State Board under this Section.*

Sec. 1278b (5)(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.

1. What are the required courses for ELA?

There are no required courses. Students must earn at least 4 credits in ELA that are aligned with subject area [standards for the English Language Arts](#). Students may earn this credit in traditional reading and writing courses, but they may also earn credit through courses that integrate in the ELA standards. For more information see the [ELA Credit Guidelines](#). ELA credit requirements cannot be modified with a personal curriculum.

Mathematics

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

Sec 1278a (1)(a)(i) At least 4 credits in Mathematics that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the Department and approved by the State Board under Section 1278b, including completion of at least Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II, or an integrated sequence of this course content that consists of 3 credits, and an additional Mathematics credit, such as Trigonometry, Statistics, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Applied Math, Accounting, Business Math, a retake of Algebra II, or a course in Financial Literacy as described in Section 1165. A pupil may complete Algebra II over 2 years with 2 credits awarded or over 1.5 years with 1.5 credits awarded for the purposes of this Section and Section 1278b. A pupil also may partially or fully fulfill the algebra II requirement by completing a Department-approved formal Career and Technical Education (CTE) program or curriculum, that has appropriate embedded Mathematics content, such as a program or

curriculum in Electronics, Machining, Construction, Welding, Engineering, Computer Science, or Renewable Energy and in that program or curriculum successfully completing the same content as the Algebra II benchmarks assessed on the Department-prescribed state high school assessment, as determined by the Department. Each pupil must successfully complete at least 1 Mathematics course during his or her final year of high school enrollment. This subparagraph does not require completion of Mathematics courses in any particular sequence.

Sec. 1278b 5(g) The Mathematics credit requirements of Section 1278a (1)(a)(i) may be modified as part of a [personal curriculum](#) if the pupil successfully completes at least 3-1/2 total credits of the Mathematics credits required under that section before completing high school, including Algebra I and Geometry, and successfully completes at least 1 Mathematics credit during his or her final 2 years of high school. The Algebra II credit required under that section may be modified as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection if the pupil meets 1 or more of the following:

- (i) Successfully completes 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 CTE program or curriculum and in that program or curriculum successfully completes the same content as 1 semester of the Algebra II benchmarks assessed on the Department- prescribed state high school assessment, as determined by the Department.
- (iv) Successfully completes 1 semester of Statistics, or Functions and Data Analysis, or Technical Mathematics.

1. What are the required courses for mathematics?

There are no required courses. Students must earn at least 3 credits in mathematics that are aligned with [subject area standards approved by the State Board](#). Each pupil must successfully complete at least one mathematics or mathematics-related credit during his or her final year of high school enrollment. This credit can be earned through any course or experience where students are applying mathematics. For more information see the [Mathematics Credit Guidelines](#).

2. Does mathematics have to be taught in a traditional course sequence?

No. The law specifically states that the standards can be taught in an integrated sequence (see legislation cited above). Furthermore, [380.1278\(b\) \(7\)](#) states "The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy that

operates a high school ... may provide this curriculum by providing the credits specified in this section and Section 1278a, by using alternative instructional delivery methods such as alternative course work, Humanities course sequences, Career and Technical Education (CTE), Industrial Technology courses, or Vocational Education, or by a combination of these. School districts and public school academies that operate CTE programs are encouraged to integrate the credit requirements of this Section and Section 1278a into those programs.”

3. What is the difference between the 4th mathematics credit and the final year mathematics course requirement?

In many cases the 4th mathematics credit and the final year mathematics requirement are one and the same. For instance, students who complete the required mathematics content standards by the end of their junior year will probably complete their 4th credit in their senior year. Similarly, traditional course-taking students electing to take Algebra II over 2 years for 2 credits will probably take the 2nd year of Algebra II in their senior year.

However, the 4th mathematics credit is not necessarily synonymous with the final year math credit. The intent of the final year math credit is that students are doing some sort of mathematics in their senior year regardless of whether they have already met the 4 credit requirement.

4. Does the 4th credit/final year mathematics course need to be an actual mathematics course?

No. The law provides local districts with the flexibility to determine what counts for the 4th/final year mathematics credit, including the content and duration. It does not need to be aligned with the mathematics standards because those are covered in the other 3 credits. The credit could be in a basic or an applied math area, such as Business Math, Accounting, Pre-algebra, etc. The course could also be an advanced mathematics course such as Pre-calculus, or college-level courses through dual enrollment or early middle college programs. Non-mathematics courses or experiences where students apply mathematics can also counts as the 4th credit/Senior year mathematics course such as computer programming, science or art courses; Career and Technical Education (CTE), work study program, or practicum where the students are using the mathematics they have already learned.

5. What is considered the “final year” in the context of the mathematics credit for students in Early Middle College?

Early middle college students must take a mathematics or math-related course in their 5th year.

6. What is technical mathematics?

Districts determine content, structure, and delivery of mathematics courses. In addition, districts are responsible for ensuring that students demonstrate proficiency in Michigan's Mathematics Standards. Therefore, districts decide what mathematics to include in a technical mathematics course, just as they do with any other mathematics course.

7. In order to replace a mathematics credit with Department-approved formal Career and Technical Education (CTE) program or curriculum, how do districts determine what mathematics content needs to be embedded so that the content is the same as the "Algebra II benchmarks assessed on the Department-prescribed state high school assessment?"

There are no specified "Algebra II benchmarks" on the state high school assessment. The current Department-prescribed state high school assessment is the SAT, administered in the spring of students' junior year, which does not specify the standards assessed by courses.

Because of the specificity in the legislation regarding the exchange of Algebra II with a formal CTE program, there is no difference between exchanging the Algebra II credit and earning Algebra II credit through the integration of the Mathematics into a CTE program or class. Districts are encouraged to use the [Mathematics Credit Guidelines](#) to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn all of the Mathematics standards before they graduate whether they are enrolled in a formal CTE program or not.

Online Learning Experience

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

1278b (1)(b) Meets the online course or learning experience requirement of this Subsection. A school district or public school academy shall provide the basic level of technology and internet access required by the State Board to complete the online course or learning experience. For a pupil to meet this requirement, the pupil shall meet either of the following, as determined by the school district or public school academy:

- (i) Has successfully completed at least 1 course or learning experience that is presented online, as defined by the Department.
- (ii) The pupil's school district or public school academy has integrated an online experience throughout the high school curriculum by ensuring that each teacher of each course that provides the required credits of the Michigan merit curriculum has integrated an online experience into the course.

This document is intended to provide general guidance. Due to the complexity of the law, policies and guidance will continue to evolve. For specific information regarding the law, please refer to [MCL 380.1278a](#) and [MCL 380.1278b](#).

1. What are the specific requirements for online learning and courses?

Students must successfully complete at least 1 online course or learning experience. The Michigan Department of Education has developed [Online Learning Guidelines](#) that describe in more detail the options for fulfilling this requirement.

2. Can the online learning requirement be met prior to 9th Grade?

Yes, the requirement may be satisfied by an online experience at the middle school level, but students are encouraged to continue with online learning throughout high school.

3. Does the online learning experience need to go on a transcript?

While districts will need to assure students complete this requirement, the law does not mandate that a student be given credit for this experience or this experience be recorded on a transcript.

4. Can a student taking a class, which the district has determined meets the online learning requirements, test out of both the class and the online requirement?

No. While a student may test out of a subject or course required by the Michigan High School Graduation Requirements, the law does not mention testing out of the online requirement. The online requirement is unlike the other graduation requirements in that it is more about process than content. It is about the process of pursuing learning in an online environment and not about computer skills or additional content. It is unlikely that any kind of testing-out assessment (like an end-of-course exam) could truly "test" the process that occurs when a student engages with content, other students, and a teacher online.

Physical Education and Health

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

MCL 380.1278a (iii) At least 1 credit in subject matter that includes both Health and Physical Education aligned with guidelines developed by the Department and approved by the State Board under Section 1278b [or at least 1/2 credit in Health aligned with guidelines developed by the Department and approved by the State Board under Section 1278b and at least 1/2 credit awarded by the school district or public school academy for approved participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity].

MCL 380.1278b (5)(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, or requires the pupil to complete a formal Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program. 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).

1. Do the requirements give the option for students to take just physical education OR health?

No. One credit that includes both physical education AND health must be earned by high school students for graduation. The requirement could be met in 2 separate courses each earning 1/2 credits. The 1/2 credit for Physical Education may also be awarded by the school district or public school academy for approved participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity. Please note, however, that this pertains only to the [physical education credit guidelines](#) of the MMC, not the [health education credit guidelines](#).

2. What extra-curricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity are allowed to fulfill the 1/2 credit of physical education?

A district may determine what extracurricular activities involving physical activity may be used as credit toward the physical education requirement. The Department strongly recommends the local school board develop its own policy outlining what is acceptable for the credit as to be clear to students and parents and consistent in implementation.

3. Can a student required to take the MMC modify or waive the state's physical education or health credit requirement for any reason?

Yes, under certain conditions. The Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) 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](#).

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, on one or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a student's proficiency in the content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

Science

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

Sec. 1278b (1)(b) At least 3 credits in Science that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the Department and approved by the State Board under this Section, including completion of at least Biology and either Chemistry, Physics, Anatomy, or Agricultural Science, or successfully completing a program or curriculum that provides the same content as the Chemistry or Physics benchmarks, as determined by the Department. A student may fulfill the requirement for the 3rd Science credit by completing a Department-approved Computer Science program or curriculum or formal Career and Technical Education (CTE) program or curriculum. The legislature strongly encourages pupils to complete a 4th credit in Science, such as Forensics, Astronomy, Earth Science, Agricultural Science, Environmental Science, Geology, Physics, Chemistry, Physiology, or Microbiology.

380.1278b (5)(f) The Science credit requirements of Subsection (1)(b) are not subject to modification as part of a personal curriculum under this Subsection.

1. What are the required number of science credits?

At least 3 credits in science that are aligned with subject area content standards approved by the State Board. A student may fulfill the requirement for the 3rd Science credit by completing a [formal CTE program or curriculum](#).

2. What course(s) may serve as a student's 3rd Science credit?

Districts determine content, structure, and delivery of Science courses. The standards themselves represent 3 science credits. Districts are responsible for ensuring that students have an opportunity to learn the content outlined by the [Michigan Science Standards](#) since these will be tested on the 11th grade [Michigan Merit Exam](#). More information can be found in the [Science Credit Guidelines](#) document.

3. Can a student take a CTE class for the 3rd Science credit?

Any course or program, including CTE, which integrates Science content may count as the 3rd science credit. If the 3rd Science credit is *exchanged* for a [formal CTE program or curriculum](#) then science content does not need to be integrated. However, districts are responsible for ensuring that students have an opportunity to learn the content as outlined in the [Michigan Science Standards](#) since these will be tested on the 11th grade [Michigan Merit Exam](#).

4. Can a student take a computer science class for the 3rd Science credit?

Any course or program, including a computer science course, which integrates science content may count as the 3rd Science credit. Currently there is not a department-approved computer science program or curriculum that can be exchanged for the 3rd science credit.

5. Do districts have to provide the courses specified in the legislation (see above)?

No. [380.1278\(b\) \(7\)](#) states "The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy that operates a high school ... may provide this curriculum by providing the credits specified in this Section and Section 1278a, by using alternative instructional delivery methods such as alternative course work, humanities course sequences, CTE, industrial technology courses, or vocational education, or by a combination of these. School districts and public school academies that operate CTE programs are encouraged to integrate the credit requirements of this Section and Section 1278a into those programs."

6. Can Earth Science still be offered for high school credit in 8th grade?

Any high school credit offered in middle school must be based on the high school standards. Middle school students must have an opportunity to learn the 6th-8th grade science standards in order to be prepared for high school science so care should be taken to ensure that any middle school earth science class contains both the middle school and high school content. More information can be found in the [Science Credit Guidelines](#) and at www.michigan.gov/Science. [See also [Earning Credit](#) and [Career/Technical Education](#)]

Social Studies

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

Sec. 1278a (ii) At least 3 credits in Social Science that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the Department and approved by the State Board under Section 1278b, including completion of at least 1 credit in U.S. History and Geography, 1 credit in World History and Geography, 1/2 credit in Economics, and the Civics course described in Section 1166(2). The 1/2-credit Economics requirement may be satisfied by completion of at least a 1/2-credit course in Personal Economics that includes a Financial Literacy component as described in Section 1165, if that course covers the subject area content expectations for Economics developed by the Department and approved by the State Board under Section 1278b.

Sec. 1278b (5)(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)

1166(2) The course shall include the form and functions of the federal, state, and local governments and shall stress the rights and responsibilities of citizens. A diploma shall not be issued by a high school to a pupil who has not successfully completed this course. This course requirement is not a graduation requirement for a high school pupil who has enlisted or been inducted into military service.

1. What are the required number of Social Studies credits?

Three credits of Social Studies aligned with the subject area content expectations developed by the Department to include 1 credit in U.S. History and Geography, 1 credit in World History and Geography, 1/2 credit in Economics, and 1/2 credit in Civics/Government. More information can be found in the [Social Studies Credit Guidance](#) document.

2. Where will educators find the Social Studies content standards?

Content standards and other guidelines can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards.

3. How does the legislation change regarding personal finance impact my Economics curriculum? Don't we already have personal Economics content expectations in our Social Studies standards?

Legislation states that a personal economics course that includes a Financial Literacy component also cover the Economic standards. There is little change except to increase emphasis on Personal Economics. The current content expectations for Economics include E4 Personal Finance which has 6 content expectations on Personal Economics.

4. Can we replace a Economics course with a "Personal Finance" or "Personal Economics" class?

Legislation requires districts to provide students with opportunities to learn all the Social Studies content expectations, including those addressing economics, regardless of course names. Districts can develop personal finance or personal economic courses that meet their students' learning needs that do not include the Economic content expectations as long as students have opportunities to learn the

economic content elsewhere. More information can be found in the [Social Studies Credit Guidance](#) document.

- 5. Recent legislation requires “that the high school social studies content standards developed by the Michigan Department of Education include the content covered by the federal naturalization test.” What do we need to do at the local level to make sure this content is addressed?**

MDE completed a crosswalk of the 100 Citizenship questions and the Social Studies Content Expectations. 79 of the citizenship questions are already included in the Social Studies Content Expectations. The other 21 questions are either rote memorization, have different answers in different parts of the state, or change over time. Schools and teachers addressing the Social Studies Content Expectations with appropriate detail will address all content on the Citizenship test.

- 6. Recent legislation requires “that Michigan's social studies curriculum and statewide assessment program include instruction and testing about genocides, including the Holocaust.” What changes in the Social Studies Content Expectations will MDE make to address this concern?**

Michigan’s current Social Studies Content Expectations already include the Holocaust, “the genocides of Armenians, Romas (Gypsies), and Jews, and the mass exterminations of Ukrainians and Chinese,” and “ -causes of and responses to ethnic cleansing/genocide/mass extermination (e.g., Darfur, Rwanda, Cambodia, Bosnia,). Schools and teachers addressing the Social Studies Content Expectations with appropriate detail will address content on the genocides including the Holocaust.

Visual, Performing and Applied Arts

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

Sec. 1278a (1)(iv) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed at least 1 credit in Visual Arts, Performing Arts, or Applied Arts, that is aligned with guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Education.

Sec. 1278a (2)For pupils who graduate from high school in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021 ONLY, a pupil may partially or fully fulfill 1 credit of [a world language] by completing a Department-approved formal Career and Technical Education (CTE) program

or curriculum or by completing visual or performing arts instruction that is in addition to the requirements under Subsection (1) (a)(iv).

Sec. 1278b (5)(g)(j)(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, or requires the pupil to 1 complete a formal CTE program. 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).

1. What are the required number of credits for the Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts?

Students must complete 1 credit aligned with the guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Education. See information the [Personal Curriculum Options](#) and [Career and Technical Education](#).

2. Where will educators find the Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts guidelines?

Content standards and guidelines can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards.

3. Can a student exchange a World Language credit for a Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts credit?

Yes. Starting with the graduating class of 2016 a student has the option to reduce the number of World Language credits to one and increase the Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts credits to two. If a student entered 3rd Grade before 2006 they are exempt from the world language requirement under the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), even if they graduate in 2016 or later.

World Language

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

Sec. 1278a (2) In addition to the requirements under Subsection (1), beginning with pupils entering 3rd Grade in 2006, the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall not award a high school diploma to a pupil unless the pupil has successfully completed during Grades K to 12 at least 2 credits that are grade-appropriate in a language other than English or course work or other learning experiences that are substantially equivalent to 2 credits in a language other than English, based on guidelines developed by the Department.

For pupils who graduate from high school in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021 ONLY, a pupil may partially or fully fulfill one credit of this requirement by completing a Department-approved formal Career and Technical Education (CTE) program or curriculum or by completing visual or performing arts instruction that is in addition to the requirements under Subsection (1)(a)(iv). The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy is strongly encouraged to ensure that all pupils complete at least one credit in a language other than English in Grades K to 6. For the purposes of this Subsection, all of the following apply:

- (a) American Sign Language is considered to be a language other than English.
- (b) The pupil may meet all or part of this requirement with online course work.

1. What, and for whom, are the credit requirements for a language other than English?

Beginning with the graduating class of 2016, students need to complete, during Grades K-12, the equivalent of 2 grade appropriate credits in a language other than English or have course work or other learning experience that are substantially equivalent to 2 credits. If a student entered 3rd Grade before 2006 they are exempt from the world language requirement under the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), even if they graduate in 2016 or later. However, districts can, as with any other subject, impose their own World Language requirements that go beyond the requirements of the MMC.

2. How can students meet the requirement?

Students can meet the world language requirement in the following ways:

- By completing the equivalent of 2 credits in a language other than English during Grades K-12.
- Through learning beyond the K-12 classroom: formal study abroad, study abroad programs, college coursework, home or heritage languages, online courses, or other life experiences as determined by the district.
- Students who are graduating from high school in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021, only may partially or fully fulfil 1 credit of the World Language requirement by completing a Department approved formal CTE program or by completing Visual, Performing, or Applied Arts instruction that is in addition to the Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts requirement.
- More information and guidelines on meeting the credit requirements for learning a language other than English can be found at www.michigan.gov/academicstandards.

Career/Technical Education (CTE)

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says:

Earning Credit

380.1278(b) (7) *The board or board of directors may provide this curriculum by providing the credits specified in this Section and Section 1278a, by using alternative instructional delivery methods such as ...* **Career and Technical Education (CTE).**

Mathematics

Sec 1278a (1)(a)(i) *...A pupil may partially or fully fulfill the algebra II requirement by completing a **Department- approved formal CTE program or curriculum**, that has appropriate embedded Mathematics content, such as a program or curriculum in Electronics, Machining, Construction, Welding, Engineering, Computer Science, or Renewable Energy, and in that program or curriculum successfully completing the same content as the Algebra II benchmarks assessed on the Department-prescribed state high school assessment, as determined by the Department.*

Science

380.1278b (1)(b) *...A student may fulfill the requirement for the 3rd Science credit by completing a **Department- approved formal CTE program or curriculum**...*

World Language

Sec. 1278a (2) (2)... *For pupils who graduate from high school in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021 ONLY, a pupil may partially or fully fulfill 1 credit of this requirement by completing a **Department-approved formal CTE program or curriculum**...*

1. What is a “Department-approved formal Career and Technical Education (CTE) program”?

This is defined in the [Michigan Administrative Code](#). According to R 395.241, Rule 11, a “Department-approved formal CTE program or curriculum” consists of:

- A coherent sequence of courses so that students gain academic, technical, and work behavior skills.
- Instruction that includes classroom, laboratory, work based learning, and leadership opportunities.
- Instruction that is supervised, directed, or coordinated by an appropriately certificated CTE teacher.
- Consists of standards approved by the State Board (R395.243, Rule 13).
- Must receive approval from MDE/OCTE through an application process (R 395.244, Rule 14).

According to R 395.243, Rule 13 “Successful Completion” means

- Complete coursework covering all state program standards, and/or
- Take any required technical assessment.

For state and federal funding purposes, a new CTE instructional program must submit an application to operate which must be approved by the MDE CTE office. The number of courses covering the standards in a CTE program is determined by the district and submitted in its application. The district may design one or two year programs. Not all high school students in CTE instructional programs can complete the requirements for certificates. Some industry certificates/licensures can only be received once a student turns 18 years old or after they have completed additional postsecondary coursework.

2. What is the difference between replacing a MMC credit requirement and earning a MMC credit requirement through a CTE program?

The law is explicit in stating that a credit may only be replaced by a “Department-approved formal CTE program,” as described above and in the [Michigan Administrative Code](#). By replacing a course with formal CTE program, the program does not need to embed the content standards from the content area being replaced. On the other hand, students may earn credit in a variety of ways, including integrating academic content into CTE instruction. (See also [Earning Credit](#)).

3. Which MMC credit requirements may be replaced with a CTE program?

The following credits may be replaced only with a Department-approved formal CTE program as defined in [administrative code](#) for students *without* a personal curriculum:

- 1 credit of a [world language](#); and/or
- 1 [Science credit](#).

Completion of a Department approved formal CTE program may be used to replace one or both of these credits.

Through a personal curriculum, students have options for replacing one MMC credit in Social Studies, physical education/health, and/or visual, performing and applied arts with a Department-approved formal CTE program. More information is available on the [Personal Curriculum webpage](#). One Department-approved formal CTE program may be used to replace up to three of these credits.

4. Can the CTE content be modified under a personal curriculum?

Only the content outlined by the content standards and required by the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) can be modified with personal curriculum. If MMC content is embedded within the CTE program it is assumed that it is content integral to success with the skills and knowledge needed for successful completion of the CTE program. Therefore it is not recommended that students in a CTE program of study use a personal curriculum to modify content.

5. In order to replace a Mathematics credit with Department-approved formal CTE program or curriculum, how do districts determine what Mathematics content needs to be embedded so that the content is the same as the “Algebra II benchmarks assessed on the Department-prescribed state high school assessment?”

There are no specified “Algebra II benchmarks” on the state high school assessment.

Because of the specificity in the legislation regarding the exchange of Algebra II with a formal CTE program, there is no difference between exchanging the Algebra II credit and earning Algebra II credit through the integration of the Mathematics into a CTE program or class. Districts are encouraged to use the [Mathematics Credit Guidelines](#) to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn all of the Mathematics standards before they graduate whether they are enrolled in formal CTE program or not.

6. Which MMC credit requirements can be earned through a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program?

CTE programs may be used to help students partially or fully earn the necessary credits in a variety of required credit areas. For example, a district may allow a student to receive credit for Mathematics in building trades classes, if the district determines that the building trades program covers the required high school content expectations for those subjects. It is also possible for CTE courses to be used to help students in, for instance, an electronics class earn credit for the "one additional Math or Math-related" credit required in the MMC. The amount of academic credit granted for CTE Programs is a local decision.

[Guidelines for Awarding Academic Credit in CTE, Humanities and Other Delivery Models](#) provide a format for using teacher work teams in each local district to examine the CTE curriculum and determine the amount of academic credit to award based on a crosswalk with the content expectations. Local districts are encouraged to use the guidelines for awarding academic credit in ways other than CTE as well.

7. Can a student take a CTE class for the 3rd Science credit?

Yes, any course, including CTE programs, that integrates Science may count as a Science credit. If the 3rd Science credit is *exchanged* for a [formal CTE program or curriculum](#) then Science content does not need to be integrated. However, districts are responsible for ensuring that students have an opportunity to learn the standards for Science as outlined in the [Michigan Science Standards](#) since these will be tested on the 1th Grade Science exam. [See also [Earning Credit](#) and [Career/Technical Education](#)]