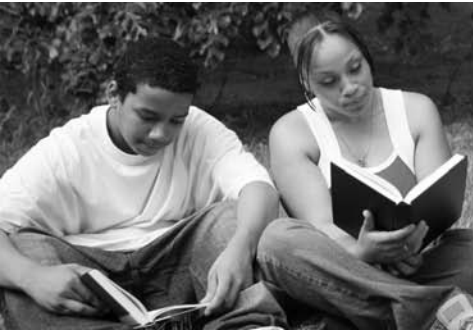


Personal Curriculum



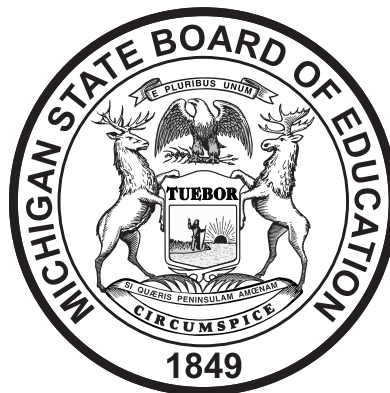
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Supplement to the Personal Curriculum Parent and Educator Guide

Background Information

Frequently Asked Questions

Personal Curriculum Suggested Roles and Responsibilities



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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 ninth grade graduate prepared for college. For African Americans, the number is 20 percent; for Latinos, it is 16 percent. In fact, most high school graduates readily admit they were not significantly challenged in school or ready for employment or college. Forty percent say they wished they had worked harder, especially in math, science and English. Employers and college leaders say high school graduates need to master higher-level mathematics and communications skills. The key to students succeeding in college or the workplace is taking advanced high school courses in English, science, and math beyond Algebra II.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 seven times as much as those of African American students across the state.
 - ◇ What’s more, the more rigorous requirements have not resulted in the increase in dropout rates that some had predicted.
 - ◇ Taking a rigorous high school curriculum that includes math, at least through Algebra II, cuts in half the gap in college completion rates between white students and African American and Latino students.

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

