

COURSE/CREDIT CONTENT EXPECTATIONS

Since the passage of the new state high school graduation requirements commonly referred to as the Michigan Merit Curriculum, the Michigan Department of Education has worked with hundreds of educators and representatives from professional organizations and higher education to develop documents and materials that outline what students should know and be able to do in required courses/credits during their high school experience.

Two main sets of documents called *High School Content Expectations (HSCE)* and specific *Course/Credit Content Expectations* and Guidelines provide educators with the tools needed to align their curriculum and instruction and provide parents with meaningful information to gauge student progress. These expectations also serve as the basis to determine student proficiency, grant high school credit, and develop various questions for the Michigan Merit Exam.

The Michigan Merit requirements are based on what research shows will provide students with the educational foundation to be successful as they move beyond high school into college and the workplace.

SOCIAL STUDIES

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

Sec. 1278a(ii) 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 3 credits in social science that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the Michigan Department of Education and approved by the Michigan State Board of Education, including completion of at least 1 credit in United States history and geography, 1 credit in world history and geography, ½ credit in economics, and ½ credit of civics.

Sec. 1278b(5)(h) The social science credit requirements may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if the pupil has successfully completed 2 credits of the required social science credits including the civics course. 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.

Background Information

High School Content Expectations for Social Studies were approved by the State Board of Education on October 1, 2007. The Social Studies HSCE define what students should know and be able to do by the end of high school.

What Research Says

Studies show students taking more social studies coursework have higher ACT reading test scores, knowledge of basic concepts of democracy and government and the basic foundation necessary to be responsible citizens. In Michigan, 87 percent of districts currently require students to complete three or more credits of social studies.

Questions & Answers

1. Q: Why is the GLCE document marked DRAFT.

A: On October 1, 2007, the State Board of Education requested the Grade 4 Content Expectations document be changed to include history expectations that address Michigan history beyond statehood. The draft expectations are being reviewed currently in a Zoomerang survey online at michigan.gov/glce and will remain open for feedback until October 31st. The GLCE for Grades K-8 will be finalized in mid-November 2007.

2. Q: Is a high school social studies teacher with an RX (social studies) certification, considered to be *highly qualified* to teach the new World History and Geography and United States History and Geography Courses?

A: Yes. Teachers **without** RX (social studies) certification, but with certification in history or geography may also teach the new courses, but will have to work towards qualifying themselves to remain qualified to teach these courses in the future.

A committee has been formed to work on what additional requirements teachers not holding RX (social studies) certification will need to become highly qualified to teach World History and Geography and United States History and Geography.

3. Q: Do all students in high school need to take civics/government course to graduate?

A: Every student must show they are proficient in the required content expectations for civics/government. While most students will accomplish proficiency by taking a "Civics' Course," "Government Course," other options such as testing out, integrating Civics into others courses or programs including Career and Technical Education courses are also viable options. In other words, how students acquire the knowledge and become proficient, as well as how proficiency is measured are local school district decisions.

4. Q: When will the social studies requirements be put into place?

A: School districts have one year following state approval of each Michigan Merit Curriculum Course/Credit Expectations to align courses and assessments. Therefore, during the 2007-2008 school year, districts may use their current high school curriculum to assign credit.

The Michigan Department of Education plans to work with Michigan educators in Summer 2008 to develop items for the Michigan Merit Exam that are aligned to the new social studies high school content expectations. Items aligned to the new expectations are expected to be ready for operational use by Spring 2010."