

COURSE/CREDIT CONTENT GUIDELINES

The Michigan Department of Education has developed and the State Board of Education has approved *High School Content Expectations (HSCE)* that outline what students should know and be able to do in English language arts, mathematics and science. Content Expectations for social studies are currently in the development process. These expectations serve as the foundation for the development of more specific Course/Credit Content Expectations that outline what students should know and be able to do for each credit required in the Michigan Merit Curriculum.

The Michigan Merit Curriculum Course/Credit Content Expectations and Guidelines will assist school districts and teachers to align their current curriculum, guide what is taught and assessed to earn credit, and provide parents with a tool to gauge student progress. These expectations also will serve as the basis to develop various questions included in the Michigan Merit Exam.

In the future, the Michigan Department of Education will be developing a variety of companion documents to support the implementation of these credits.

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

Sec. 1278a(2) Beginning with pupils entering grade 3 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 9 to 12 at least 2 credits, as determined by the Michigan Department of Education, in a language other than English, or the pupil has successfully completed at any time during grades K to 12 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. Schools must consider American Sign Language to be a language other than English. A student may meet all or part of this requirement with online course work.

What Research Says

Students who learn a second language benefit in practical ways. They are better able to communicate with native speakers in this country and in other nations; they have a better understanding of other cultures; and they are better prepared for potential careers. Moreover, students' learning skills in general are enhanced through foreign language study.

Students who study two years of a language other than English score significantly higher on the SAT verbal and math test than students who do not complete two years of a language. Higher wages are also linked to students who studying a language other than English for two years. In Michigan, 85% of school districts currently do not require a world language credit.

Questions & Answers

1. **Q: Has the Michigan World Language Association been included in the development of guidelines for the languages other than English requirement?**

A: Yes

2. **Q: If a student is fluent in two or more languages, does he or she still need two credits for graduation?**

A: The guidelines currently under development will address this issue.

3. **Q: If we currently offer world language to juniors and seniors via Michigan Virtual High School, can this course count for both of the world language and the online requirement?**

A: Yes.