



A Parent’s Guide to Personal Curriculum: Focus on Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

The purpose of this parent guide is to provide a description of the Personal Curriculum (PC) and the options that the personal curriculum may offer your student to modify the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) credit requirements. The MMC requirements have been in place since 2006 and specify that all students who earn a diploma, at a minimum, have demonstrated proficiency with the content outlined by the state academic standards. The MMC consists of 18 credits, each aligned to specific academic standards in areas such as math, English language arts, social studies, and science. Students earn MMC credits within these standards when they demonstrate mastery of these required academic standards. The PC makes credit modifications to the MMC possible and allows students to individualize the rigor and relevance of their educational experience with their potential. Understanding this option will help make informed decisions about your child’s high school experience and support a path to earning a high school diploma.

Helping All Students Succeed

All students must have a plan for the future.

Students need opportunities to investigate career pathways, discover their interests, and identify options for meeting their potential. This is addressed through the development of and continuous updating of an Educational Development Plan (EDP), which documents the student’s career pathway and postsecondary goals. The EDP also outlines the high school coursework that students will need to achieve their postsecondary goals. The EDP must contain the MMC requirements to ensure that the student gains the required content knowledge to earn a diploma as he/she/they is/are meeting EDP goals.

For students with an IEP, the IEP is used to document special education services necessary for the student to access and make progress in the general curriculum that results in achieving the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) and a diploma. The IEP further addresses a student’s postsecondary goals through the development of a transition plan. A PC can be used to modify MMC standards and credits for a student with an IEP, if needed, to access and earn a diploma.

The PC modifications must be consistent with the student’s EDP, transition plan, and IEP and also maintain as many MMC standards and credits as practicable for the student.

The MMC can be modified.

The PC will not be necessary for all students with an IEP but can be a valuable tool for some students to help earn a diploma. A modification to the MMC through the use of a PC starts with a request by a parent or legal guardian, emancipated student, or school personnel. The request is followed by a thorough review of relevant student information by a PC team.

The PC Team, at a minimum, must include the student; parent/legal guardian; counselor and/or teacher(s), and when appropriate, a school psychologist. The school psychologist is suggested for the PC team when the student has an IEP. A PC for a student with an IEP allows a district to consider modifications to any area of the MMC.

MMC content may be modified to the extent necessary because of the student's disability if the PC team determines the modifications are consistent with the student's (1) educational development plan; and (2) IEP, including a transition plan. The PC plan must be agreed to by both the parent or legal guardian (or emancipated student) and the superintendent or designee before implementation. Upon completing the MMC, as modified by the PC, the student receives a high school diploma.

For questions about personal curricula, please contact Rashell Bowerman at bowermanr1@michigan.gov or 517-335-3062. For special education questions, please contact the Office of Special Education Information Line at 833-633-5788 or mde-ose@michigan.gov.

Basic Steps to a PC

Step 1: The parent, school personnel, student age 18 or older, or emancipated student requests a PC.

Step 2: The PC team meets (student, parent, school psychologist, counselor, and/or teacher who currently teaches the student or has expertise in the content being modified). The PC team reviews student information, performance data, and supports—including the EDP—and develops a PC. The PC must incorporate as much of the subject area content expectations of the MMC as practicable for the student.

Step 3: The PC team writes the agreement and gets sign-off from the superintendent or chief executive and the parent or legal guardian (or emancipated student).

Step 4: The PC modifications are implemented. The student's schedule and course of study reflect the PC modifications.

Step 5: The district monitors the student's progress toward meeting the MMC and earning a diploma. If revisions to the PC are needed, the PC team reconvenes and makes revisions using the same process.

Step 6: The student is awarded a diploma upon completing the MMC with PC credit modifications. Once a student completes the requirements for a high school diploma, eligibility ends for special education programs and services.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can request a Personal Curriculum?

The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a student or an emancipated student may request a PC. School personnel may also request a PC or recommend that a student and a parent or legal guardian consider the PC option. Interested parents or legal guardians should contact the high school counselor or principal to begin the process. The process will involve an agreement among the parent or legal guardian, the student, and the district superintendent or designee.

Why would I request a Personal Curriculum?

For some students, a PC may offer the best opportunity to succeed in high school and achieve postsecondary goals. A parent or legal guardian may want to consider this option if their child struggled with the middle school curriculum and will require extensive support to meet all high school requirements or requirements in a specific content area or is currently having difficulty meeting high school requirements.

When should I request a Personal Curriculum?

Parents or legal guardians of students with an IEP can begin to explore the PC option as early as 7th or 8th grade when the EDP is being developed. If granted, the PC goes into effect when the student enters high school. Parents or legal guardians of students with an IEP may also request a PC at any point during the student's high school career.

Does the district have to approve a PC?

The school has the discretion to deny a personal curriculum once it has been developed. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a student, or an emancipated student, must also approve PC modifications before they are implemented.

How do the IEP, EDP, and PC work together to support my student?

All three documents work together to support the student in becoming career, college, and life ready. The student's IEP must identify the appropriate courses of study, the supplementary aids and services, and supports necessary to allow the student to progress within the credit requirements of the MMC. The IEP team must first consider the use of supplementary aids and services as well as specially designed instruction to ensure the student's access to the MMC. The EDP identifies post-secondary goals and the actions necessary to fulfill those goals, including high school courses and experiences. The IEP team must first consider the use of supplementary aids and services as well as specially designed instruction to ensure the student's access to the MMC. The PC team will consider MMC modifications and develop a PC consistent with both the IEP and EDP.

What are the essential elements of the Personal Curriculum?

The PC must be consistent with the EDP and IEP, including the student's goals and supports. The PC must include as much of the MMC as possible and as necessary to meet post-secondary goals.