



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors
Curriculum Directors

FROM: Sally Vaughn, Ph.D., *Sally*
Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer

SUBJECT: Personal Curriculum Guidance Update

In October 2007, the Michigan Department of Education released personal curriculum guidelines to support and clarify the use of this option. The personal curriculum, as established in section 380.1278b of the Revised School Code, allows specific modifications to be made to requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum under certain conditions in order to individualize the rigor and relevance of the educational experience. While the law specifies the areas in which modifications may be made for specific groups of students, the personal curriculum is intended to help make the Michigan Merit Curriculum accessible to all students while maintaining the academic rigor required to uphold the integrity of the high school diploma. A personal curriculum may be requested and implemented for four reasons:

- To go beyond the academic credit requirements by adding more math, science, English language arts, or world languages credits
- To modify the Algebra II mathematics requirement
- To modify credit requirements based on the disability of a student with an Individualized Education Plan
- To modify credit requirements for a transfer student from out of state or from a nonpublic school who has completed the equivalent of two years of high school and is unable to meet the Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements

In December 2008, Public Act 316 (Senate Bill 834) was signed into law, detailing several changes to the original Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements. This bill, combined with additional clarification of certain sections of the original legislation (380.1278b) regarding the personal curriculum, has necessitated some revisions to the original Michigan Department of Education personal curriculum guidelines.

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These revisions include:

- School personnel may initiate a request for a personal curriculum for a specific student. The parent must still agree to the personal curriculum in order for it to take effect. A school may not implement a personal curriculum for a student without his or her parent's consent.
- Algebra II may be taken over two years for two credits *without* a personal curriculum.
- Districts must offer the personal curriculum option to students. The law states that parents have the option to request a personal curriculum for their child, and districts must have the capacity to respond. A district is not, however, obligated to approve all requests for a personal curriculum.
- A principal has the authority to determine the "counselor designee qualified to act in a counseling role" under section 1233 or 1233a of the school code.
- The intent of the legislation is that the personal curriculum is a pathway to a diploma. The personal curriculum is a tool to individualize the Michigan Merit Curriculum in order to make it accessible and achievable for all students without undermining the rigor of the Michigan Merit Curriculum or the integrity of the diploma.

The Michigan Department of Education will release revised Personal Curriculum Guidance Documents in the spring of 2009. Additional information can also be found at www.michigan.gov/highschool and www.mdepersonalcurriculum.wikispaces.com.

Questions should be directed to Mary Head at headm1@michigan.gov.