

**THE REVISED SCHOOL CODE (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 451 of 1976**

**380.1278b Award of high school diploma; credit requirements; personal curriculum; annual report.**

Sec. 1278b. (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section or section 1278a, beginning with pupils entering grade 8 in 2006, as part of the requirements under section 1278a 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 all of the following credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard before graduating from high school:

(a) At least 4 credits in English language arts that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under this section.

(b) At least 3 credits in science that are aligned with subject area content expectations developed by the department and approved by the state board under this section, including completion of at least biology and either chemistry, physics, anatomy, or agricultural science, or successfully completing a program or curriculum that provides the same content as the chemistry or physics benchmarks, as determined by the department. A student may fulfill the requirement for the third science credit by completing a department-approved computer science program or curriculum or formal career and technical education program or curriculum. The legislature strongly encourages pupils to complete a fourth credit in science, such as forensics, astronomy, Earth science, agricultural science, environmental science, geology, physics, chemistry, physiology, or microbiology.

(c) The credit requirements specified in section 1278a(1)(a)(i) to (iv).

(2) If a pupil successfully completes 1 or more of the high school credits required under subsection (1) or under section 1278a(1) before entering high school, the pupil shall be given high school credit for that credit.

(3) For the purposes of this section and section 1278a, the department shall do all of the following:

(a) Develop subject area content expectations that apply to the credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard that are required under subsection (1)(a) and (b) and section 1278a(1)(a)(i) and (ii) and develop guidelines for the remaining credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard that are required under this section and section 1278a(1)(a), for the online course or learning experience required under section 1278a(1)(b), and for the requirements for a language other than English under section 1278a(2). All of the following apply to these subject area content expectations and guidelines:

(i) All subject area content expectations shall be consistent with the state board recommended model core academic curriculum content standards under section 1278. Subject area content expectations or guidelines shall not include attitudes, beliefs, or value systems that are not essential in the legal, economic, and social structure of our society and to the personal and social responsibility of citizens of our society. The subject area content expectations shall require pupils to demonstrate critical thinking skills.

(ii) The subject area content expectations and the guidelines must be approved by the state board under subsection (4).

(iii) The subject area content expectations shall state in clear and measurable terms what pupils are expected to know upon completion of each credit.

(iv) The department shall complete the development of the subject area content expectations that apply to algebra I and the guidelines for the online course or learning experience under section 1278a(1)(b) not later than August 1, 2006.

(v) The department shall complete development of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to each of the other credits required in the Michigan merit standard under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1)(a) not later than 1 year before the beginning of the school year in which a pupil entering high school in 2007 would normally be expected to complete the credit.

(vi) If the department has not completed development of the subject area content expectations that apply to a particular credit required in the Michigan merit standard under subsection (1) or section 1278a(1)(a) by the date required under this subdivision, a school district or public school academy may align the content of the credit with locally adopted standards.

(vii) Until all of the subject area content expectations and guidelines have been developed by the department and approved by the state board, the department shall submit a report at least every 6 months to the senate and house standing committees responsible for education legislation on the status of the development of the subject area content expectations and guidelines. The report shall detail any failure by the department to meet a deadline established under subparagraph (iv) or (v) and the reasons for that failure.

(b) Develop and implement a process for developing the subject area content expectations and guidelines required under this section. This process shall provide for all of the following:

- (i) Soliciting input from all of the following groups:
- (A) Recognized experts in the relevant subject areas.
  - (B) Representatives from 4-year colleges or universities, community colleges, and other postsecondary institutions.
  - (C) Teachers, administrators, and school personnel who have specialized knowledge of the subject area.
  - (D) Representatives from the business community.
  - (E) Representatives from vocational and career and technical education providers.
  - (F) Government officials, including officials from the legislature.
  - (G) Parents of public school pupils.
- (ii) A review of the subject area content expectations or guidelines by national experts.
- (iii) An opportunity for the public to review and provide input on the proposed subject area content expectations or guidelines before they are submitted to the state board for approval. The time period allowed for this review and input shall be at least 15 business days.
- (c) Determine the basic level of technology and internet access required for pupils to complete the online course or learning experience requirement of section 1278a(1)(b), and submit that determination to the state board for approval.
- (d) Develop and make available material to assist school districts and public school academies in implementing the requirements of this section and section 1278a. This shall include developing guidelines for alternative instructional delivery methods as described in subsection (7).
- (4) The state board shall approve subject area content expectations and guidelines developed by the department under subsection (3) before those subject area content expectations and guidelines may take effect. The state board also shall approve the basic level of technology and internet access required for pupils to complete the online course or learning experience requirement of section 1278a(1)(b).
- (5) The parent or legal guardian of a pupil who has completed grade 9, a teacher who is currently teaching the pupil, who currently teaches in or whose expertise is in a subject area proposed to be modified by the personal curriculum, or who is determined by the principal to have qualifications otherwise relevant to developing a personal curriculum, or a school counselor or school employee qualified to act in a counseling role under section 1233 or 1233a may request a personal curriculum under this subsection for the pupil that modifies certain of the Michigan merit standard requirements under subsection (1) or section 1278a(1)(a). If the request for a personal curriculum is made by the pupil's parent or legal guardian or, if the pupil is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor, by the pupil, the school district or public school academy shall develop a personal curriculum for the pupil. A teacher, school counselor, or school employee qualified to act in a counseling role under section 1233 or 1233a may contact a pupil's parent or legal guardian to discuss the possibility and potential benefits of a personal curriculum under this subsection for the pupil. If all of the requirements under this subsection for completing a personal curriculum are met, then the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy may award a high school diploma to a pupil who successfully completes his or her personal curriculum even if it does not meet the requirements of the Michigan merit standard required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1)(a). All of the following apply to a personal curriculum:
- (a) The personal curriculum shall be developed by a group that includes at least the pupil, at least 1 of the pupil's parents or the pupil's legal guardian, and a teacher described in this subdivision or the pupil's high school counselor or another designee qualified to act in a counseling role under section 1233 or 1233a selected by the high school principal. In addition, for a pupil who receives special education services, a school psychologist should also be included in this group. The teacher included in the group developing the personal curriculum shall be a teacher who is currently teaching the pupil, who currently teaches in or whose expertise is in a subject area being modified by the personal curriculum, or who is determined by the principal to have qualifications otherwise relevant to the group. This subdivision does not require an in-person meeting of the group.
  - (b) The personal curriculum shall incorporate as much of the subject area content expectations of the Michigan merit standard required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1)(a) as is practicable for the pupil; shall establish measurable goals that the pupil must achieve while enrolled in high school and shall provide a method to evaluate whether the pupil achieved these goals; and shall be aligned with the pupil's educational development plan developed under subsection (11).
  - (c) Before it takes effect, the personal curriculum must be agreed to by the pupil's parent or legal guardian and by the superintendent of the school district or chief executive of the public school academy or his or her designee.
  - (d) The pupil's parent or legal guardian shall be in communication with each of the pupil's teachers to monitor the pupil's progress toward the goals contained in the pupil's personal curriculum.

(e) Revisions may be made in the personal curriculum if the revisions are developed and agreed to in the same manner as the original personal curriculum.

(f) The English language arts credit requirements of subsection (1)(a) and the science credit requirements of subsection (1)(b) are not subject to modification as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection.

(g) The mathematics credit requirements of section 1278a(1)(a)(i) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum if the pupil successfully completes at least 3-1/2 total credits of the mathematics credits required under that section before completing high school, including algebra I and geometry, and successfully completes at least 1 mathematics credit during his or her final 2 years of high school. The algebra II credit required under that section may be modified as part of a personal curriculum under this subsection if the pupil meets 1 or more of the following:

(i) Successfully completes the same content as 1 semester of algebra II, as determined by the department.

(ii) Elects to complete the same content as algebra II over 2 years, with a credit awarded for each of those 2 years, and successfully completes that content.

(iii) Enrolls in a formal career and technical education program or curriculum and in that program or curriculum successfully completes the same content as the algebra II benchmarks assessed on the department-prescribed state high school assessment, as determined by the department.

(iv) Successfully completes 1 semester of statistics, functions and data analysis, or technical mathematics.

(h) The social science credit requirements of section 1278a(1)(a)(ii) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if all of the following are met:

(i) The pupil has successfully completed 2 credits of the social science credits required under section 1278a(1), including the civics course described in section 1166(2).

(ii) 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, or requires the pupil to complete a formal career and technical education program. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1) or under section 1278a(2).

(i) The health and physical education credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(iii) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if 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, or requires the pupil to complete a formal career and technical education program. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1) or under section 1278a(2).

(j) The visual arts, performing arts, or applied arts credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(iv) may be modified as part of a personal curriculum only if 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, or requires the pupil to complete a formal career and technical education program. This additional credit must be in addition to the number of those credits otherwise required under subsection (1) and section 1278a(1) or under section 1278a(2).

(k) If the parent or legal guardian of a pupil requests as part of the pupil's personal curriculum a modification of the Michigan merit standard requirements that would not otherwise be allowed under this section and demonstrates that the modification is necessary because the pupil is a child with a disability, the school district or public school academy may allow that additional modification to the extent necessary because of the pupil's disability if the group under subdivision (a) determines that the modification is consistent with both the pupil's educational development plan under subsection (11) and the pupil's individualized education program. If the superintendent of public instruction has reason to believe that a school district or a public school academy is allowing modifications inconsistent with the requirements of this subdivision, the superintendent of public instruction shall monitor the school district or public school academy to ensure that the school district's or public school academy's policies, procedures, and practices are in compliance with the requirements for additional modifications under this subdivision. As used in this subdivision, "child with a disability" means that term as defined in 20 USC 1401.

(l) If a pupil transfers to a school district or public school academy from out of state or from a nonpublic school, the pupil's parent or legal guardian may request, as part of the pupil's personal curriculum, a modification of the Michigan merit standard requirements that would not otherwise be allowed under this section. The school district or public school academy may allow this additional modification for a transfer pupil if all of the following are met:

(i) The transfer pupil has successfully completed at least the equivalent of 2 years of high school credit out of state or at a nonpublic school. The school district or public school academy may use appropriate assessment examinations to determine what credits, if any, the pupil has earned out of state or at a nonpublic

school that may be used to satisfy the curricular requirements of the Michigan merit standard and this subdivision.

(ii) The transfer pupil's personal curriculum incorporates as much of the subject area content expectations of the Michigan merit standard as is practicable for the pupil.

(iii) The transfer pupil's personal curriculum requires the pupil to successfully complete at least 1 mathematics course during his or her final year of high school enrollment. In addition, if the transfer pupil is enrolled in the school district or public school academy for at least 1 full school year, both of the following apply:

(A) The transfer pupil's personal curriculum shall require that this mathematics course is at least algebra I.

(B) If the transfer pupil demonstrates that he or she has mastered the content of algebra I, the transfer pupil's personal curriculum shall require that this mathematics course is a course normally taken after completing algebra I.

(iv) The transfer pupil's personal curriculum includes the civics course described in section 1166(2).

(m) If a pupil is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the pupil may act on his or her own behalf under this subsection.

(n) This subsection does not apply to a pupil enrolled in a high school that is designated as a specialty school under section 1278a(5) and that is exempt under that section from the English language arts requirement under subsection (1)(a) and the social science credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(ii).

(o) The department or a school district or public school academy shall not limit or discourage the number of pupils with a personal curriculum on any basis other than the best interests of each individual pupil.

(p) A school district or public school academy annually shall notify each of its pupils and a parent or legal guardian of each of its pupils that all pupils are entitled to a personal curriculum under this subsection. The annual notice shall include an explanation of what a personal curriculum is and state that if a personal curriculum is requested, the public school or public school academy will grant that request. The school district or public school academy shall provide this annual notice to parents and legal guardians by sending a written notice to each pupil's home or by including the notice in a newsletter, student handbook, or similar communication that is sent to a pupil's home, and also shall post the notice on the school district's or public school academy's website.

(6) If a pupil receives special education services, the pupil's individualized education program, in accordance with the individuals with disabilities education act, title VI of Public Law 91-230, shall identify the appropriate course or courses of study and identify the supports, accommodations, and modifications necessary to allow the pupil to progress in the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a, or in a personal curriculum as provided under subsection (5), and meet the requirements for a high school diploma.

(7) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy that operates a high school shall ensure that each pupil is offered the curriculum necessary for the pupil to meet the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a. The board or board of directors may provide this curriculum by providing the credits specified in this section and section 1278a, by using alternative instructional delivery methods such as alternative course work, humanities course sequences, career and technical education, industrial technology courses, or vocational education, or by a combination of these. School districts and public school academies that operate career and technical education programs are encouraged to integrate the credit requirements of this section and section 1278a into those programs.

(8) If the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy wants its high school to be accredited under section 1280, the board or board of directors shall ensure that all elements of the curriculum required under this section and section 1278a are made available to all affected pupils. If a school district or public school academy does not offer all of the required credits, the board of the school district or board of directors of the public school academy shall ensure that the pupil has access to the required credits by another means, such as enrollment in a postsecondary course under the postsecondary enrollment options act, 1996 PA 160, MCL 388.511 to 388.524; enrollment in an online course; a cooperative arrangement with a neighboring school district or with a public school academy; or granting approval under section 6(6) of the state school aid act of 1979, MCL 388.1606, for the pupil to be counted in membership in another school district.

(9) If a pupil is not successfully completing a credit required for graduation under this section and section 1278a, or is identified as being at risk of withdrawing from high school, then the pupil's school district or public school academy shall notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian or, if the pupil is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the pupil, of the availability of tutoring or other supplemental educational support and counseling services that may be available to the pupil under existing state or federal programs, such as those programs or services available under section 31a of the state school aid act of 1979, MCL 388.1631a, or under the no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110.



(10) To the extent required by the no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110, the board of a school district or public school academy shall ensure that all components of the curricular requirements under this section and section 1278a are taught by highly qualified teachers. If a school district or public school academy demonstrates to the department that the school district or public school academy is unable to meet the requirements of this section because the school district or public school academy is unable to hire enough highly qualified teachers, the department shall work with the school district or public school academy to develop a plan to allow the school district or public school academy to hire enough highly qualified teachers to meet the requirements of this section.

(11) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall provide the opportunity for each pupil to develop an educational development plan during grade 7, and shall ensure that each pupil reviews his or her educational development plan during grade 8 and revises it as appropriate before he or she begins high school. An educational development plan shall be developed, reviewed, and revised by the pupil under the supervision of the pupil's school counselor or another designee qualified to act in a counseling role under section 1233 or 1233a selected by the school principal and shall be based on high school readiness scores and a career pathways program or similar career exploration program. An educational development plan shall be designed to assist pupils to identify career development goals as they relate to academic requirements. During the process of developing and reviewing a pupil's educational development plan, the pupil shall be advised that many of the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a may be fulfilled through career and technical education.

(12) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, if a school district or public school academy is unable to implement all of the curricular requirements of this section and section 1278a for pupils entering grade 9 in 2007 or is unable to implement another requirement of this section or section 1278a, the school district or public school academy may apply to the department for permission to phase in 1 or more of the requirements of this section or section 1278a. To apply, the school district or public school academy shall submit a proposed phase-in plan to the department. The department shall approve a phase-in plan if the department determines that the plan will result in the school district or public school academy making satisfactory progress toward full implementation of the requirements of this section and section 1278a. If the department disapproves a proposed phase-in plan, the department shall work with the school district or public school academy to develop a satisfactory plan that may be approved. However, if legislation is enacted that adds section 1290 to allow school districts and public school academies to apply for a contract that waives certain state or federal requirements, then this subsection does not apply but a school district or public school academy may take action as described in subsection (13). This subsection does not apply to a high school that is designated as a specialty school under section 1278a(5) and that is exempt under that section from the English language arts requirement under subsection (1)(a) and the social science credit requirement under section 1278a(1)(a)(ii).

(13) If a school district or public school academy does not offer all of the required credits or provide options to have access to the required credits as provided under subsection (8) and if legislation is enacted that adds section 1290 to allow school districts and public school academies to apply for a contract that waives certain state or federal requirements, then the school district or public school academy is encouraged to apply for a contract under section 1290. The purpose of a contract described in this subsection is to improve pupil performance.

(14) This section and section 1278a do not prohibit a pupil from satisfying or exceeding the credit requirements of the Michigan merit standard under this section and section 1278a through advanced studies such as accelerated course placement, advanced placement, dual enrollment in a postsecondary institution, or participation in the international baccalaureate program or an early college/middle college program.

(15) Not later than April 1 of each year, the department shall submit an annual report to the legislature that evaluates the overall success of the curriculum required under this section and section 1278a, the rigor and relevance of the course work required by the curriculum, the ability of public schools to implement the curriculum and the required course work, and the impact of the curriculum on pupil success, and that details any activities the department has undertaken to implement this section and section 1278a or to assist public schools in implementing the requirements of this section and section 1278a.

**History:** Add. 2006, Act 123, Imd. Eff. Apr. 20, 2006;—Am. 2006, Act 623, Imd. Eff. Jan. 3, 2007;—Am. 2007, Act 141, Imd. Eff. Nov. 14, 2007;—Am. 2009, Act 204, Imd. Eff. Jan. 4, 2010;—Am. 2010, Act 80, Eff. July 1, 2011;—Am. 2014, Act 209, Eff. Mar. 31, 2015.

**Compiler's note:** Former MCL 380.1278b, which pertained to academic performance standards committee, was repealed by Act 289 of 1995, Eff. July 1, 1996.

**Popular name:** Act 451