



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** June 4, 2020

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

**FROM:** Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent   
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

**SUBJECT:** Reminder of Graduation Requirements Flexibility for Current Year Seniors

As the school year nears completion, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has received many questions from stakeholders about ensuring that students receive the appropriate support to graduate during this unique time. While we recognize that many schools have already ended coursework for seniors, we also know that schools and districts will still work with students through the summer to help them obtain the appropriate credits to graduate. This memo reminds districts of some of the key flexibilities offered by Executive Order [2020-65](#).

For those students not on track to pass a class as of March 11, 2020, districts must, "to extent feasible," provide opportunities for these students to demonstrate that they know content and award credit accordingly. Furthermore, the executive order drops the civics course requirement and the hands-on portion of the CPR requirement for seniors who, as March 11, 2020, had not completed those requirements. MDE urges districts to work closely and carefully with all seniors who have not yet graduated, with the recognition that not all students are engaged to the same extent in the school community. Some students may require additional outreach and supports to be able to use the flexibility in the executive order and attain graduation.

The executive order provides districts with the flexibility to remove barriers to graduation due to COVID-19 school closures. This flexibility is especially important for those students most affected by the school closures, including students experiencing foster care or homelessness, as well as English learners. In addition to the learning disruptions caused by COVID-19 school closures for all students, home placements have significantly increased, meaning there are more students than usual experiencing foster care. Students experiencing homelessness have also experienced additional displacements due to shelters closing or doubling up situations that were no longer available. English learners may have additional barriers to accessing information due to the communication challenges of the current context. They will need assistance navigating the graduation

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requirements and the options for flexibility. Similarly, students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) may have lost the supports they needed to successfully complete the school year.

The flexibility options outlined under Executive Order 2020-65 allow consideration for these contexts and help ensure all students in grade 12 can graduate with their cohort and move forward with their postsecondary plans. Local education agencies are urged to carefully review their grade 12 students' transcripts with these flexibilities in mind to ensure all achieved credits are considered and awarded to allow on-time graduation.

For students in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, MDE amended the State Approved CTE Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) completer definition for the 2019-20 school year:

- For 2019-20 school year, a pupil also may partially or fully fulfill the algebra II requirement through enrollment in and receipt of a passing grade in a state approved CTE program.
- For 2019-20 school year, a pupil may fulfill the CTE MMC flexibility options, including 4<sup>th</sup> year math related, 3<sup>rd</sup> science, 2<sup>nd</sup> foreign language and/or the visual, performing and applied arts (VPAA) requirements through enrollment in, and receipt of, a passing grade in a state-approved CTE program.

The following MDE staff are available for additional guidance and to answer questions:

Michigan Merit Curriculum/graduation requirements general information  
Ruth Anne Hodges, manager of curriculum and instruction  
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cc: Michigan Education Alliance  
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