

**Determining Course of Study
for a Student with an IEP
Diploma vs. Certificate of
Completion?**

Lapeer County Intermediate School District

Fall 2018

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These administrative guidelines and supporting forms are written in accordance with LCISD policy and guidelines provided by Neola and pertaining to Course of Study, including:

Policy #5450 – Completion Certificates

Local Districts wishing to utilize this document should consult their Board Policy and Guidelines and update accordingly.

This document and related forms may be accessed electronically by visiting the website: www.lapeerisd.org

Introduction

While the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) guarantees Free and Appropriate Public Education, it does not guarantee that a student with an IEP is entitled to a diploma.

Lapeer County ISD strongly supports the local districts use of a ***Personal Curriculum*** to assist students with IEPs to receive a high school diploma.

There is significant value in recognizing students' attendance and accomplishments when awarded a non-diploma certificate through a graduation ceremony. This is a rite of passage for all students regardless of their abilities or limitations. The use of the present "certificate of completion", that is essentially a certificate of attendance, under-describes many students' exiting skills and also poses the risk of lowering exit expectations once it is selected as the outcome of the course of study. Therefore, the LCISD has identified a Certificate of Educational Achievement as an additional option to highlight the completion of a prescribed course of study and/or fulfillment of their transition related goals prior to the age of 26.

For a student whose course of study is not high school diploma, a local board of education may choose to award a Certificate of Educational Achievement to students with an IEP who do not meet the requirements for a diploma, but have met the criteria outlined in these guidelines for a Certificate of Educational Achievement (once approved by local Board of Education).

For an IEP team, determining course of study is a very important decision that often lacks the proper consideration. A guidance document does not exist to assist IEP teams through the process. Determining course of study should not be automatic if a student has a certain eligibility label, is enrolled in a specific program, or based on the recommended state assessment. Those may be factors considered when using a more comprehensive process that is provided through this document.

It is the intent that this document will help guide IEP teams in determining the appropriate course of study based on a review of student data. In addition, it will provide different options that local boards of education may consider for a student with an IEP exiting public school that will prepare them for the world of work and adult living.

School Completion Options

What IDEA says about high expectations in the Purposes section of the law:

“Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by having **high expectations** for such children and ensuring their **access to the general education curriculum** in the regular education classroom, to the maximum extent possible...” 20 U.S.C.1400 (c)(5) in order for the student to - “meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the **challenging expectations that have been established for all children; and** "be prepared to lead productive and independent lives, to the **maximum** extent possible.

High School Completion Rates for Students with Disabilities

Using the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leaver Rate, of the 402,038 special education students who left high school in the 50 states and District of Columbia in 2010–11, just 64 percent left with a standard high school diploma. This same year, nationally, 14 percent of students with disabilities exited with a certificate of attendance or other alternative type of diploma. Many students with disabilities dropped out of high school, leaving with either a standard diploma nor a certificate. In 2010–11, 20 percent of all special education students ages 14–21 who exited school did so by dropping out. This percentage is estimated to be about twice the dropout rate of students without disabilities. Dropping out of school may negatively impact access to college and other postsecondary education opportunities, future employment, and other adult life pursuits; these negative outcomes are even more pronounced for students with disabilities. For example, employment and postsecondary education participation rates are lower for students with disabilities who dropped out of school compared to students without disabilities who did not complete high school.

School Completion Options - High School Diploma

A student with a disability receives a "regular" high school diploma, with the term "regular" meaning a diploma identical to that students without disabilities are eligible for, upon meeting state and school district graduation requirements. 34 CFR 300.102(a)(3)(i). Note that the term "regular high school diploma" does not include an alternative degree that is not fully aligned with the state's academic standards, such as a certificate or a general educational development credential. 34 CFR 300.102(a)(3)(iv).

Section 380.1278a of the Revised School Code defines the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) requirements for a high school diploma. All students who earn a diploma, at a minimum, have demonstrated proficiency with the content outlined by the state academic standards or guidelines. Since districts are responsible for awarding diplomas so too are they responsible for providing all students the opportunity to learn the content outlined by the standards. As the learning skills for college and the workplace have merged, the MMC, if properly implemented, will prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in our global economy and workplace. It supports the need for personalization, acceleration, and innovation in an atmosphere of high expectations and include sufficient support for students.

Under the MMC legislation local school districts retain responsibility to issue diplomas, align curriculum, determine what constitutes a credit, establish a credit award system, identify assessments, set school calendars, select and purchase textbooks, etc. Local school boards and districts have the responsibility to determine "how" to implement the graduation requirements outlined by the MMC and when students have earned the credits. The MMC gives districts the flexibility to develop scheduling systems, curricula, and courses to meet the individual needs and desires of each district. Local boards of education can establish additional graduation requirements beyond those in the MMC and the total number of credits required for graduation. However, a district cannot establish lesser requirements.

With the implementation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), there is now a set of secondary curriculum standards set forth in the core academic areas that all students must meet in order to be awarded a high school diploma. The MMC diploma is the only diploma recognized by the Michigan Department of Education.

High School Content Expectations and Course/Credit Content Expectations and Guidelines are available on the Michigan Department of Education's High school webpage at www.mi.gov/highschool.

Section 380.1278a of the Revised School Code regarding the Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements for a high school diploma may be accessed and read online at:

[www.legislature.mi.gov/\(hzka3q2cfmj4r0vc4mdmp055\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-380-1278a.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(hzka3q2cfmj4r0vc4mdmp055)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-380-1278a.pdf)

School Completion Options - High School Diploma with Personal Curriculum

The Michigan Merit Curriculum identifies a state-wide curriculum intended to provide Michigan students with a more rigorous preparation for post-secondary pursuits in an increasingly competitive world economy. In alignment with companion High School Content Expectations (HSCEs) adopted by the Michigan Department of Education, school districts choose instructional approaches and design learning environments so that all students, including alternative and at-risk students, are provided the opportunity to benefit from the increased rigor of the MMC. The research is clear—all learners achieve to a higher standard when given the opportunity to learn in a challenging curriculum. While the MMC is intended to be a rigorous platform for all students, it is not meant to be a barrier to the desired career pathways for individual students. Thus flexibility is built into the MMC framework by way of the Personal Curriculum (PC) option.

The legislative intent of the PC is to individualize the rigor and relevance of the educational experience by modifying the bar of content expectations to be mastered to a level that is practicable for the student, and by permitting certain credit modifications. In this context, “practicable” is an inclusive term meaning as much of the subject area content expectations as possible during the student’s high school instruction. Students with an IEP are permitted somewhat broader latitude for MMC modification, as long as the modifications are necessitated by their disability, are consistent with their IEP and EDP, and do not exceed district decision rules as to what exceeds curriculum modification and instead constitutes the creation of an alternate curriculum. Transfer students from out of state or from a nonpublic school also have the right to request broader MMC modifications, provided certain prerequisites are met.

The PC is an option any student or family can explore as a way to modify certain graduation requirements and still earn a regular high school diploma. The purpose of secondary education is to prepare students for life after high school. Any modification to a student’s graduation requirements needs to be consistent with this purpose. The high school diploma is documentation that the student has met the expectations and possesses the knowledge and skills necessary for postsecondary success. Students who are not pursuing a diploma or students who are unable to meet modified MMC requirements do not need a personal curriculum.

The purpose of the PC is to modify specific credit requirements and/or content expectations based on the individual learning needs of a student. It is designed to serve students who want to accelerate or go beyond the MMC requirements and students who need to individualize learning requirements to meet the MMC requirements.

The PC option allows the board of a school district or public school academy to award a regular

high school diploma provided the student completes the requirements of the PC, including as many of the content expectations of the MMC as practicable.

Lapeer County ISD Personal Curriculum Guidelines and forms are available on the [lapeerisd.org](http://www.lapeerisd.org) website:

http://www.lcisd.k12.mi.us/departments/instructional_services/personal_curriculum

Section 380.1278b of the Revised School Code regarding the Michigan Merit Curriculum and personal curriculum may be accessed and read online at:

[www.legislature.mi.gov/\(hzka3q2cfmj4r0vc4mdmp055\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-380-1278b.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(hzka3q2cfmj4r0vc4mdmp055)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-380-1278b.pdf)

State law and school district policy establish diploma requirements. A school district is not required to award a regular high school diploma to a student with a disability who has not met the requirements for a regular high school diploma, even if the student has met his IEP goals.

[Special Sch. Dist. of St. Louis County \(MO\), 16 IDELR 307 \(OCR 1989\)](#).

School Completion Options - Certificate

A student with a disability could also exit the special education system through receipt of a certificate of completion, modified diploma, fulfillment of an IEP, or some similar mechanism. See 34 CFR 300.102(a)(3)(ii).

NOTE: Currently Michigan does not offer a modified diploma

Certificate of Completion - Aging out of Special Education

Even if a student with a disability cannot meet the requirements for a regular high school diploma or a modified diploma (or similar certification, as identified above), he will exit the educational system when he reaches the maximum age for receipt of special education services. 34 CFR 300.102(a)(2)(i).

In Michigan, a "Student with a disability" means a person who has been evaluated according to the individuals with disabilities education act and these rules, and is determined by an individualized education program team, an individualized family service plan team, or an administrative law judge to have 1 or more of the impairments specified in this part that necessitates special education or related services, or both, who is not more than 25 years of age as of September 1 of the school year of enrollment, and who has not graduated from high school.

Certificate of Educational Achievement

One of the exit options that local districts may offer to students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), is a Certificate of Educational Achievement (CEA). This certificate recognizes the accomplishments of students who have completed a district prescribed course of study outside of the Michigan Merit Curriculum and achieved transition goals outlined in the student's IEP that promote post-secondary independence to the degree that meets the individual student's capabilities. The CEA course of study should emphasize functional academics, life management, social skills development and vocational training. See Certificate of Educational Achievement section in this document for more information.

Determining Course of Study

What can districts offer to support working towards a diploma?

Prior to determining a course of study other than a high school diploma, the IEP team and the district need to consider all possible supports to assist the student in achieving a diploma.

The requirement of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) must be adhered to by all Local Education Agencies (LEA) and Public School Academies (PSA). The IEP may modify content and instruction to achieve the desired outcomes for a student. Students may need specific programs, services, accommodations, or other supports that assist them. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004) ensures that all students with disabilities have a right to access, participate and perform in the general education curriculum. We have an obligation to support a student in their effort to work toward a high school diploma.

Some of the supports to consider prior to determining a course of study other than diploma include:

- Education Development Plan
- Transition Plan
- Personal Curriculum
- Intervention programs available in district or out of district
- Online Learning
- Credit Recovery
- Dropout prevention efforts (beginning middle school)
- Summer and night school
- Tutoring (before/after school)
- Mentor or Links programs
- Progress monitoring to track patterns and trends
- Authentic Assessment
- Accommodations/Supplemental Services in the IEP

It is important to ensure that students with disabilities have ways to demonstrate their knowledge and skills regardless of their specific disabilities. The use of universal design for instruction and assessment is one example of this.

Education Development Plan

What is an Educational Development Plan (EDP)?

The Educational Development Plan (EDP) is a general education document afforded to all students. Its purpose is to outline the student's educational pathway including the course of study that will enable them to be successful in their desired post-school activities. It is necessary these two documents be aligned. The intersections between the EDP and IEP should use common language and have the ability to be lifted from one document to another.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a special education document that describes the services, additional supports, accommodations, and transition activities that when implemented will enable a student with a disability to be successful in the general curriculum as well as the educational pathway they have identified.

- The IEP should refer to the EDP when addressing a student's course of study.
- Both documents use similar language to specify a student's post-secondary goals.
- Both documents provide a similar "snapshot" of the student using current assessment information including academic and functional skills, as well as a student's strengths, preferences, and interests.

An EDP is an ongoing process in which a learner identifies both career goals and a plan of action to achieve them. The EDP does not take the place of either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Personal Curriculum (PC) modification.

The link between the EDP and the transition IEP may be more clearly understood by thinking about universal elements of quality planning:

1. Development of postsecondary goals in education, training, employment, and when appropriate adult living.
2. Identification of student preferences, interests, strengths, and needs.
3. Review of academic performance, learning style, and effective support strategies for students in grades K-8.
4. Identification and coordination of course(s) and support and possible consideration of a Personal Curriculum (PC).
5. Reviewed annually.

IEP/EDP Alignment:

Transition:

The passage of the Michigan Merit Curriculum in April of 2006 established a requirement for schools to assist students with the development of an EDP in Grades 7 and 8. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students eligible for special education

programs and services have an IEP. Additionally, transition services must be in place for students with disabilities who are over the age of 16. The EDP and the IEP are distinct documents; however, as students move into high school, the documents share a common goal of improved postsecondary outcomes for students. The guidelines for developing the EDP outlined in this document align with and complement many of the IEP requirements stated by the IDEA.

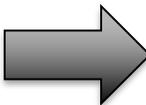
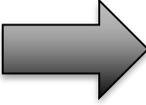
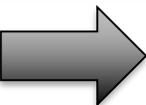
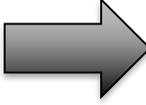
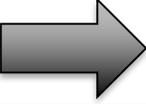
IEP - EDP Alignment (Rubric developed with Career Cruising)			
5 Step Process	EDP Elements	Should Align with	IEP Components
Post Secondary Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Matchmaker Results • Pathway Recommendations • Chosen Career Pathway • Careers that interest me • Schools that interest me • Long term goal 		Student's post – secondary interests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career/ Employment • Post-Secondary Education/ Training • Adult Life • Community Participation
Present Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and Abilities • Extracurricular Activities • Work Experience • Voluntary Experiences • Awards and Certificates • Assessment Results 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance • Assessment Information: Academic, Functional, Transition, Strengths and Needs
Course of Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course of Study
Transition Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Plans and Preparation • Post-Secondary Plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needed Transition Services Chart
Measurable Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term Goals 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Goals and Short Term Objectives

Chart developed by St. Clair County RESA

Another factor to consider in the analysis of Course of Study, are the student's postsecondary goals. Depending on the vision, goals, and needs of the student, consideration must be given to the postsecondary education that may be required in order to achieve them. This is done through the transition section of the IEP Process. Below are just some of the options that may be considered, thus playing a role in the determination of Course of Study:

- Employment goals: competitive/paid, customized, supported, sheltered, unpaid, service learning, volunteer, other
- Postsecondary Education goals: 4-year college or university, technical school, 2-year college, military, etc.
- Postsecondary Training goals: specific vocational or career field, independent living skill training, vocational training program, apprenticeship, On the job training, military, Job Corps, etc.
- Independent living skills goals – adult living, daily living, independent living, financial, transportation, etc.

The IEP team must determine what instruction and educational experiences will assist the child to prepare for the transition from secondary education to post-secondary life. Courses of study should focus on all courses and educational experiences; how the educational program can be planned and relate directly to the child's goals beyond secondary education; and, show how those courses are linked to those goals. The course of study must be reviewed and updated annually. The process for developing the courses of study should assist students and their family in selecting courses that are meaningful and motivate students to complete their education.

Personal Curriculum

LCISD strongly encourages local districts to consider a personal curriculum prior to determining a course of study other than a regular high school diploma. While the MMC is intended to be a rigorous platform for all students, it is not meant to be a barrier to the desired career pathways for individual students. Thus flexibility is built into the MMC framework by way of the Personal Curriculum (PC) option.

A personal curriculum (PC) is a mechanism that can modify specific MMC credits and/or content expectations based on the individual learning needs of a student. The intent of the PC option is to assure the relevance of the student's course of study and facilitate the achievement of postsecondary goals.

All students in grade 9-12 are eligible for a personal curriculum consideration. Students with a documented disability and Individualized Education Program (IEP) are eligible, if appropriate, to modify the MMC to a greater extent than their non-disabled peers.

More information is available on the LCISD website in the document, "LCISD Personal Curriculum for students with IEPs administrative guidelines and forms."

When should course of Study be determined?



The discussion typically begins as part of the IEP process prior to entering high school. It is recommended that prior to enrolling a high school student in any courses that are not aligned with the Michigan Merit Curriculum this process needs to be completed and recommend a Certificate (with Notice in the IEP). Otherwise, the course of study is determined during the transition IEP, beginning when the student is turning 16. It is also acceptable to keep a student on diploma track until their 3rd or 4th year of high school. Occasionally, a special education student who functions in elementary academic ranges and has demonstrated very little growth may start in a diploma track but even with Special Education services, a Personal Curriculum, and accommodations and/or modifications, is unable to meet the requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum. The IEP team may recommend a shift to a Certificate of Educational Achievement track for that student at that time.

Determining a course of study other than high school diploma will alter the courses selected for high school, and thus will make it a challenge to change from certificate to diploma if ever determined more appropriate. Teams should consider delaying a decision other than a diploma until all other supports and a continuum of services have been exhausted.

If the IEP team has considered other options for course of study as documented in IEP notice, the team should complete a course of study review for subsequent IEPs until a final decision is made and no other options are considered.

Special education students with more intensive learning challenges may not be able to complete the Michigan Merit High School Curriculum, even with supports or use of a personal curriculum. These students typically follow an alternative pathway to high school completion based on a more functional curriculum. These students typically do not participate in statewide assessments that are required for the majority of high school students. These students typically participate in alternative assessment, such as MI Access. An IEP (Individual Education Plan) will be developed based on the student's EDP (Educational Development Plan) and transition goals that would articulate this pathway toward high school

completion. Students will have opportunities to participate in the general education curriculum as needed and will be required to complete the same amount of credits as their same age peers to complete their high school program. However, the student with more intensive learning challenges may benefit more from experiencing a variety of life skills and vocational skills to prepare for life as an adult. They will receive a Certificate of Educational Achievement or Certificate of Completion upon exiting special education services. Upon exiting from special education services, students will be referred to other appropriate community agencies for support.

It should also be noted that awarding a diploma to a student who did not meet the requirements under MMC is a denial of FAPE under IDEA. A student has the right to receive special education services until they have earned a high school diploma, or reached maximum age.

LEAs must ensure that parents of students selected to be assessed using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic standards that participation in such assessments may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma.

IDEA §300.160 Participation in assessments

NOTE: *This may begin the course of study discussion as early as 3rd grade.*

Process for Determining Course of Study



How does a district determine the appropriate course of study for a student?

It is recommended that the IEP Team use the IEP Invitation and IEP form to document that one purpose of the IEPT meeting is to determine Course of Study. The district should provide notice at the conclusion of the IEP when Course of Study other than diploma is considered/discussed to reflect the discussion and determination (i.e. when selecting high school courses). See Appendix for Notice Sample Language.

The IEP team should conduct a data review prior to changing a course of study from diploma track.

Data Review

When determining whether a student has the potential to earn a diploma with or without a personal curriculum, the District will consider the nature and severity of the student's disability. The District will document the reasons why certain students are not being considered for diplomas through IEP Notice.

A High School Diploma provides honor and dignity to a student exiting high school. It is a concrete symbol of entry into the adult world. There are many aspects that need to be considered when determining which path is appropriate for individual students. The IEP team considers each student's academic ability, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and goals for adulthood. The more a student's instruction is modified the farther the student is from satisfying diploma requirements.

As a professional standard and consideration, low motivation, attendance, health, should not be the determining factors considered for Course of Study leading to a Certificate.

See Appendix for Course of Study Review Worksheet

Course of Study Review Worksheet			
Student:		Date: click here to enter a date.	
School:		District:	
Participants:			
The purpose of this document is to guide IEP teams in analyzing information to assist in making a recommendation to the IEP regarding course of study. Course of study options include high school diploma or certificate.			
Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance			
Reading			
Math			
Academic Modification History. Modified or Alternate Curriculum utilized for the following subjects:			
<input type="checkbox"/> ELA <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies			
Academic Level of Complexity (overall)			
HIGH LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY Mi-Access Participation Level May be able to differentiate a number from another object or letter. May recognize name and familiar pictures.	MEDIUM LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY Mi-Access Supported Independence Level Able to learn daily routines Able to learn basic health and safety skills Reading/Math ability at a K-2 level. Decodes functional words in their community. Math skills limited to adding coins up to \$1, basic exchange of money for merchandise	LOW LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY Mi-Access Functional Independence Level Attains reading and/or math skills up to grade levels 3rd to 6th	NO COMPLEXITY General State Assessment with/without accommodations Reading and Math comparable to peers within 2-3 grade levels
Is the student continuing to make academic gains/growth? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
<i>If Low or No Level of Complexity and continuing to make academic growth, recommend diploma track and complete new review if needed</i>			
Is the student making progress on goals and objectives? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
<i>If no, consider changes to the IEP (programs/services/supplemental aids) before course of study is determined</i>			
Has a personal curriculum been requested? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
<i>If Low or No level of complexity and no PC requested, a certificate course of study cannot be a recommendation</i>			

IMPLICATIONS OF CERTIFICATE VS. DIPLOMA

What are the implications for a district when issuing some type of certificate that signifies completion other than a high school diploma?

The following are factors that districts might want to consider when issuing some type of non-diploma certificate:

- Special education entitlement ends only with a regular high school diploma or reaching age 26.
- Certificates of completion may affect the graduation rate, but would not count toward dropout rate. Proper coding in Michigan Student Data System is important.
- Districts may want to develop post-secondary educational options for students that do not earn a diploma. For example, a 5th or 6th year high school student could carry a flex schedule option with a part or full time day schedule having an on-line or vocational programming component. Or a district may want to explore the possibility of a high school consortium option with neighboring districts or with community/vocational training centers.
- Typically, the high school diploma is recognized by employers, vocational training programs, community colleges, universities, and the military.
- Local district certificates may not be recognized by any of the above. It is important for parents, students, and districts to further investigate the possibilities. For example, there is a possibility that some community colleges, vocational training programs, and military branches will accept students without a high school diploma.

What are the implications for the student with a diploma vs. Certificate?

For students without a high school diploma, there are some potential implications for such things as attending a university, receiving federal financial aid and scholarships for tuition, or entering certain branches of armed services.

For more information, visit MDE Personal Curriculum website and the document, “Personal Curriculum Additional Resources” guide (see Appendix).

CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Definition

- ***Certificate of Educational Achievement - LEA***
 - One of the graduation options that local districts may offer to students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), is a Certificate of Educational Achievement (CEA). This certificate recognizes the accomplishments of students who have completed a district prescribed course of study outside of the Michigan Merit Curriculum, attended high school for a minimum of 4 years, and fulfilled their transition related goals as outlined in the IEP. This course of study should take into consideration not only academic classes, but also coordinated activities that promote post-secondary independence to the degree that meets the individual student's capabilities. The CEA course of study should emphasize functional academics, life management, social skills development and vocational training.

- ***Certificate of Educational Achievement – Center Program***
 - The LCISD Center Program also offers a Certificate of Educational Achievement as a completion option. Students who attended high school for 4 or more years working under the CEA course of study in a local district, but attend LCISD postsecondary programming* to continue progress on transition related goals, may also be eligible for a Certificate of Educational Achievement through fulfillment of CEA exit plan prior to the age of 26.

 - Students attending the LCISD Center Program who have not attended high school may also be eligible for a Certificate of Educational Achievement through fulfillment of their CEA exit plan prior to the age of 26.

 - *NOTE: Students participating in the LCISD transition programs demonstrate abilities within the moderate to severe cognitively impaired range (see *LCISD Center Program Guidelines*). Consideration for participation in LCISD Center Program should be reflected in a student's transition plan by the end of 11th grade.

Local District Board Policy recommended language

The Board shall award a certificate of educational achievement to a student on a non-diploma course of study as determined by that student's Individualized Education Program, and who completes the Certificate of Educational Achievement Exit Plan.

Exit Plan Criteria

- ***Certificate of Educational Achievement - LEA***

- Student receives credits outlined in the course of study determined by the local school district
- Student completes the same number of credits required of all students
- Student completes a minimum of 4 years of high school
- Student achieves all transition goals outlined in his/her IEP (including independent living, employment and postsecondary education/training)
- Student completes resume and/or employment portfolio
- Student participates in at least 1 year of work experience
- Student has *not* reached maximum age of 26

- ***Certificate of Educational Achievement – Center Program***

- Student achieves all transition goals outlined in his/her IEP (including independent living, employment and postsecondary education/training)
- Transition assessment competency of 70% in all areas
- Completed Employment Portfolio
- Achieved 80% on Employability Skills Checklist through B.E.S.T. placement
- Student may or may not have reached maximum age of 26

Exiting a Student from Special Education

Graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma or Certificate constitutes a change in placement that requires prior written notice that meets the requirements of §300.503 of the regulations.

An Exit Notice is available in Edplan under the documents tab.

Language for Exit Notice:

Student exiting with local district Certificate of Educational Achievement.

The student has met requirements for receiving a non-diploma certificate from (name of district) on (date) pending completion of the Certificate of Educational Achievement Exit Plan

Student exiting due to exceeding the age limit for special education:

The student will turn age 26 on (date) and will be exiting (name of district) special education programs and services as of (date).

How does a district code a “certificate “student in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS)?

Exit Code	Description
Code 20 Special education - Received certificate of educational achievement and exited the K-12 system	Certificate of Educational Achievement - If a district chooses to award a certificate of some type for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who are exiting public education prior to maximum age, and if a given student meets whatever local criteria exist for that Certificate (Note: Student must be identified as a special education participant with a Program Eligibility Participation characteristic in the Program Participation component.)” Student may re-enroll at a later date prior to age 26.
Code 21 Certificate of Completion	Reaches maximum age and exits K-12.
Code 08 – Enrolled in another Public School District in Michigan	Certificate of Attendance – Leaving LEA to attend LCISD transition programs. If a district awards a certificate of attendance after 4 years of high school, and the student is leaving the local district and receiving transition programming in another district.

Summary of Performance

§ 300.305(e)(3) Additional requirements for evaluations and reevaluations.

If the student's eligibility was terminated due to receiving a high school diploma, or exceeding the age eligibility, a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations to assist the student in meeting the student's postsecondary goals, is completed. The Summary of Performance should be completed during the student's final year of education.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Course of Study discussions should start early and often
- The IEP that determines the course of study should include this meeting purpose on the IEP invitation
- Alternate assessments and modified curriculums start to determine the pathway to a certificate v. a diploma
- Supports for high school diploma completion, especially Personal Curriculum, should be considered prior to determining a certificate of completion
- Districts should consider an alternate certificate (Certificate of Educational Achievement) to provide students with employability goals/targets and a set program to work toward completion.

Appendix

- A. IEP Notice Sample Language – Course of Study
- B. Certificate of Educational Achievement – LEA Sample
- C. Certificate of Educational Achievement – Center Program Sample
- D. Course of Study Review Worksheet
- E. Links to Other Supporting Documents

A. IEP Notice Sample Language for Course of Study

Options Considered	
Option(s) and Other Factors Considered but Not Selected	Reason(s) Not Selected
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; min-height: 40px;"> Course of Study - Certificate of Completion </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; min-height: 40px;"> The IEP team followed the LCISD course of study guidelines and conducted a data review on (date) to assist in the determination of course of study. At this time, the IEP team determined a course of study of High School diploma based on </div>
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; min-height: 40px;"> Course of Study - High School Diploma </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; min-height: 40px;"> The IEP team followed the LCISD course of study guidelines and conducted a data review on (date) to assist in the determination of course of study. At this time, the IEP team determined a course of study of Certificate of Completion based on </div>
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; min-height: 40px;"> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; min-height: 40px;"> </div>

B. Certificate of Educational Achievement – LEA Example #1

Sample Community Schools Certificate of Achievement Program

(These courses do not meet the Michigan Merit Curriculum)

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fundamental Language Arts or VISTA •Fundamental Math or VISTA •Life Science •Academic Skills/I.S/Workskills •Adaptative Physical Education •Health or Health Issues •Computer skills •Other Electives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •General Ed. Physical Edu. •Choir •Intro to Art •Food Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fundamental Language Arts or VISTA •Fundamental Math or VISTA •Earth Science/Physical •Academic Skills/I.S/Workskills •US History •Other Electives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Food Skills •Pottery •General Ed Physical Edu. •Adapt. Physical Edu. •Computer Life Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fundamental Language Arts or VISTA •Fundamental Math or VISTA •Fundamental of Government •Academic Skills/I.S/Workskills •Employment Skills •Other Electives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1/2 day Skill Center •Food Skills •Pottery •B/W Photo •Auto •Adapt. Physical Edu. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fundamental Language Arts or VISTA •Fundamental Math or VISTA or Basic Math •World History •Academic Skills/I.S/Workskills •Other Electives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •1/2 day skill center •Food Skills •Creative Foods •Parenting •Any General Ed Elective

B. Certificate of Educational Achievement – LEA Example #2

Certificate of Educational Achievement		
Course Requirements	Trimesters	Credits
MATHEMATICS - 4 Credits		
Math for Life 9-11 (Integrated Online Learning)	6	3
Transition Math 12*	2	1
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS – 4 Credits		
ELA for Life 9-11 (Integrated Online Learning)	6	3
Transition ELA 12*	2	1
SCIENCE - 2 Credits		
Science for Life 9-11 (Integrated Online Learning)	4	2
SOCIAL STUDIES - 2 Credits		
Social Studies/Current Events 9-11(Integrated Online)	4	2
COMPUTER SCIENCE – 1 Credit		
GE Computer courses or Computing Today*	2	1
PHYSICAL EDUCATION – 1 Credit		
MMC PE or Leisure Education – PE	2	1
LIFE MANAGEMENT – 2 Credit		
Personal Health Management*	1	.5
Social Skills for Life*	2	1
Independent Living*	1	.5
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION – 9 Credits		
Career Discovery*	2	1
Workplace Essentials* (½ credit)	1	.5
Career Employability (½ credit)	1	1.5
GE Vocational courses or Career Avenue* (credits)	12	6
ELECTIVES – 3 credits any combination		
MMC/ Vocational/ Special Education Courses	6	3

C. Certificate of Educational Achievement – Center Program Example



STRIVE Transition PROGRAM



Skills and Training for Reaching Independent Living, Vocational Skills and Employment

Student Exit Plan

The length of a student's participation in the STRIVE program is individualized and may vary, with a maximum of age 26. The plan below specifies goals to be accomplished to indicate readiness for exit including 1.) Achieved all activities outlined in transition plan; 2.) Achieved competency in all areas of transition assessment; 3.) Participated successfully in at least 2 work experiences with established resume and portfolio. When all of these components have been achieved, the student will have completed the STRIVE Program and will receive a Certificate of Educational Achievement.

Student Name:		Entrance Date:	
Review Dates:			
Exit Date:			
Transition Plan			
Instruction:	No progress Achieved	Some Progress	Near Completion
Community Experiences:	No progress Achieved	Some Progress	Near Completion
Development of Employment:	No progress Achieved	Some Progress	Near Completion
Other Post-School Adult Living Objectives:	No progress Achieved	Some Progress	Near Completion
Acquisition of Daily Living Skills:	No progress Achieved	Some Progress	Near Completion
Curriculum Competency: Transition Assessment (70% = Competent)			
Daily Living skills	Baseline:	Current Performance:	
Employment/Occupational Guidance and Preparation	Baseline:	Current Performance:	
Community Participation/Personal Social Skills	Baseline:	Current Performance:	
Health & Sexuality	Baseline:	Current Performance:	
B.E.S.T. Participation (80% = Competent Employability Skills Checklist)			
Site:	Site:		
Dates:	Dates:		
Employability Score:	Employability Score:		
Site:	Site:		
Dates:	Dates:		
Employability Score:	Employability Score:		
Employment portfolio complete?	Yes	No	
Resume complete?	Yes	No	

My signature below indicates that I have reviewed and understand the goals and process for exiting the STRIVE Transition Program.

Student:
School:
Participants:

Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)
District:

The purpose of this document is the guide IEP teams in analyzing information to assist in making a recommendation to the IEP regarding course of study. Course of study options include high school diploma or certificate.

Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

Reading			
Math			
Academic Modification History. Modified or Alternate Curriculum utilized for the following subjects:			
<input type="checkbox"/> ELA <input type="checkbox"/> Math <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies			
Is the student continuing to make academic gains/growth? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
How <u>much</u> academic growth in reading and math has the student made in the last 3 years?			
<i>If Low or No Level of Complexity and continuing to make academic growth, recommend diploma track and complete new review if needed</i>			
Academic Level of Complexity (overall)			
HIGH LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY MI-Access Participation Level May be able to differentiate a number from another object or letter. May recognize name and familiar pictures.	MEDIUM LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY MI-Access Supported Independence Level Able to learn daily routines Able to learn basic health and safety skills Reading/Math ability at a K-2 level. Decodes functional words in their community. Math skills limited to adding coins up to \$1, basic exchange of money for merchandise	LOW LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY MI-Access Functional Independence Level Attains reading and/or math skills up to grade levels 3rd to 6th	NO COMPLEXITY General State Assessment with/without accommodations Reading and Math comparable to peers within 2-3 grade levels
Is the student making progress on goals and objectives? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
<i>If no, consider changes to the IEP (programs/services/supplemental aids) before course of study is determined</i>			

Has a personal curriculum been requested? Yes No

If Low or No level of complexity and no PC requested, a certificate course of study cannot be a recommendation

Communication (Level of Complexity)

HIGH LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	MEDIUM LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	LOW LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	NO COMPLEXITY
<p>Non-verbal with no effective method to communicate basic needs. Only primary caregivers can understand communication of basic needs</p> <p>Complex communication needs</p> <p>Not easily understood by others (i.e., only primary caregivers)</p> <p>Utilizes one or two communicative functions (e.g., request, protest, etc)</p> <p>Cannot repair communication breakdowns</p> <p>Follows one step directions, but requires multiple repetitions or prompts; or cannot follow one step directions</p>	<p>Complex communication needs - utilizes total communication to express wants, needs, and ideas</p> <p>Understood by familiar people, may be difficult to be understood by new people</p> <p>Expresses a few communicative functions (e.g., request, protest, comment)</p> <p>Has difficulty repairing communication breakdowns; may require multiple prompts</p> <p>Follows one or two step directions; requires at least one repetition or prompt to complete</p>	<p>Understood by most others, may have some decreased speech intelligibility</p> <p>Proficient in expressing a variety of communicative functions (e.g., request, protest, comment, ask questions, etc)</p> <p>Can repair communication breakdowns independently or with a prompt</p> <p>Follows multiple step directions, may require a repetition or prompt</p>	<p>Effectively Communicates basic wants and needs</p> <p>Easily understood by others</p>

For medium or high level of complexity, Has Assistive Technology been considered? Yes No

Attendance/Suspension

Number of Absences this school year

Previous School year

If more than 10 absences per year, are they related to the disability? Yes No

Comments

Number of Suspension days this school year

Previous School year

If more than 10 days of suspension, are they related to the disability? Yes No

Were FAPE services provided to enable the student to continue to progress in the general curriculum?

Yes No Comments

Were Absences from school one of the primary reasons for lack of progress in the general education curriculum? Yes No *If yes, cannot recommend Certificate course of study*

Could the student potentially complete high school diploma requirements by age 26? Yes No

Behavioral (Level of Complexity)

HIGH LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	MEDIUM LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	LOW LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	NO COMPLEXITY
<p>Interventions necessary to support behavior cannot be implemented in the general education environment while still maintaining the student's dignity</p> <p>Behavior so unsafe that student is segregated within the school setting</p> <p>At least 1:1 or more adult support required in a segregated location for 75% or more of the day</p>	<p>Behavior is interfering with access to instruction to the extent the student is not making progress on IEP goals and objectives</p> <p>Emergency Intervention Plan/Crisis Plan</p> <p>Functions safely with 1:2 or 1:3 staff to student ratio</p> <p>Behavior is occurring multiple times per week</p> <p>Intensity of behavior is moderate</p> <p>Spends 50% or more of their day away from instruction</p>	<p>Require Functional Behavior Assessment, Behavior Intervention Plan that may require frequent revisions</p> <p>Functions safely in the environment with a 1:4 staff to student ratio or greater</p> <p>Behavior is occurring 1-2 times per week or less</p> <p>Intensity of behavior is mild</p> <p>Spends 25% or more of their day away from instruction</p>	<p>Benefits from Tier One Schoolwide PBIS supports</p>

Behavior – If High, Medium or Low indicated above, check if the following are in place:

Functional Behavior Assessment Behavior Intervention Plan

Based on behavior reflected in PLAAFP in IEP, is behavior significantly impacting progress in general curriculum? Yes No

If yes, and behavior is the primary and/or only reason student is not progressing in the curriculum, course of study recommendation should be high school diploma.

Adaptive/Independent living (level of complexity)

HIGH LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	MEDIUM LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	LOW LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY	NO COMPLEXITY
<p>Adaptive Behavior Scale Functioning below SS= 40</p> <p>Requires adult assistance and supervision for all ADLs</p> <p>Require round-the-clock support and care. Depend on others for all aspects of day-to-day life</p> <p>Cannot successfully live an independent life and will need to live in a group home setting or with full supervision</p>	<p>Adaptive Behavior Scale Functioning below SS= 55</p> <p>Usually follows learned routines and demonstrates independent living skills</p> <p>Can complete most self-care activities</p> <p>Can travel alone to nearby, familiar places</p> <p>Can care for themselves, but might need more instruction and support than nondisabled peers</p>	<p>Adaptive Behavior Scale Functioning between 55-70</p> <p>Capable of meeting their own needs and living successfully in their communities with little to no support from others</p>	<p>Adaptive Behavior Functioning above SS=70</p>

Cognitive (level of complexity)			
<p>HIGH LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY</p> <p>Development at a rate of 4 ½ or more Standard Deviations below the mean (IQ below SS=40)</p> <p>Considerable delays in development</p> <p>May understand some speech, but demonstrates little ability to communicate. May learn very simple self-care.</p> <p>Requires close supervision and support.</p> <p>Not capable of independent living</p>	<p>MEDIUM LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY</p> <p>Development at a rate of 3 - 4 ½ Standard Deviations below the mean demonstrates (IQ SS=40 - 55)</p> <p>Noticeable developmental delays (i.e. speech, motor skills)</p> <p>May have physical signs of impairment (i.e. thick tongue)</p> <p>.</p> <p>Can live in semi-independent situations, with some still needing the support of a group home</p>	<p>LOW LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY</p> <p>Development at a rate of 2-3 Standard Deviations below the mean (IQ SS=55 - 70)</p> <p>Slower than typical in all developmental areas</p> <p>No unusual physical characteristics</p> <p>Able to learn practical life skills Functions in daily life</p>	<p>NO COMPLEXITY</p> <p>Development at a rate of less than 3 Standard Deviations below the mean (IQ above SS=70)</p>

Transition/Vocational/Employability	
Assessment Name	Date Administered
Education/Training Score	
Employment score	
Independent Living score	
Postsecondary Goals/Vision	
Education/Training	
Employment	
Independent Living (as needed)	
Are these Postsecondary Goals in alignment with the Education Development Plan (EDP)?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do Postsecondary goals in education/training and employment require a high school diploma?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If yes, course of study recommendation is High School Diploma</i>	
Additional Data needed prior to making a recommendation (include timeline)	

Summary

Was Behavior primary reason for lack of progress in General Curriculum?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Was Attendance primary reason for lack of progress in General Curriculum?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do Postsecondary goals require a high school diploma?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is student continuing to make academic progress and in no/low level of complexity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

If you answered yes to any of the above statements, the course of study recommendation should be High School Diploma

Area	Level of Complexity			
Academic	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Behavioral	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Adaptive/Independent Living	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Cognitive	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> None

Likely supportive of a course of study recommendation of Certificate

- 3 or more levels of complexity in the high range
- 4 or more levels of complexity in the medium range

Likely supportive of a course of study recommendation of High School Diploma

- All areas in low or none range

Recommendation*

Does the data support that accommodations, in conjunction with specialized instruction and/or a Personal Curriculum, provide a meaningful opportunity for the student to demonstrate sufficient mastery of the MMC to attain a regular high school diploma and achievement of Postsecondary Goals?

- Yes The team should consider a course of study of High School Diploma
- No The team should consider a course of study of Certificate
- Unsure The data does not reveal a definite path. The student will continue with a course of study leading to a high school diploma.

**Note: Course of Study is an IEP team decision including participation from all required IEP members. This review is used to assist with a recommendation to the IEP team.*

Links to other supporting documents

Kent Intermediate School District Joint Final Report and Recommendations June 26, 2014
<https://goo.gl/s6yXKZ>

Michigan Department of Education – Personal Curriculum <https://goo.gl/4Ep3qx>

Michigan Department of Education – Michigan Merit Curriculum High School Graduation Requirements <https://goo.gl/9qVfYd>

Wayne RESA Quick Guide to High School Completion for Students with Disabilities
<http://www.resa.net/specialeducation/studentexit/>

Personal Curriculum Guidelines for Students with IEPs LCISD Website
http://www.lcisd.k12.mi.us/departments/special_education/guidelines/personal_curriculum/