



## Policy Brief



Date: Dec. 3, 2019

# Michigan Merit Curriculum

**Bill Number:** Senate Bill 600 (S-2)

**Status:** Senate Floor

**MASB Position:** **Neutral, with concerns**

**What does it do?** [Senate Bill 600](#) would make changes to the Michigan Merit Curriculum, the state requirements for high school graduation. The goal of the bill is to reduce the number of specific required courses and provide more flexibility for both students and districts. To graduate, the state would require a student to complete four credits in English language arts, four credits in math, three credits in science, three credits in social studies and four credits of electives (as determined by the district). The only specifically required courses would be algebra I, geometry and civics. In addition, each seventh grade student would be required to complete an Educational Development Plan based on their career goals. This plan would have to be reviewed and updated each year and serve as the basis for deciding which courses to take in their remaining school years. Finally, the bill eliminates the ability for a district to create modified personal curriculums for students.

**How does it affect public schools?** SB 600 would have the most effect on high schools and the courses that they require and offer. Districts would still be allowed to require credits or specific courses above and beyond the state-mandated credits. This would both allow them flexibility, but also increases the board's responsibility to determine the demands of their district. One additional effect these changes may have is on how well students perform on state testing. Students would no longer be required to take courses that may contain material that appears on the standardized tests. This could lead to lower test scores, impacting how districts are rated on performance and teacher evaluations, as well as student's postsecondary options based on SAT scores.

**Why is MASB Neutral?** While MASB believes the current law could be updated to allow districts more control and flexibility, there are troubling details in this bill. Specifically, we are concerned with the elimination of the required health credit as there are certain things generally taught in health class that are still required by law such as opioid education and CPR. We also have concerns with removing any arts requirements and think the personal curriculum for all students should remain as an option.

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