



September

ZHS Graduation Requirements and the Michigan Merit Curriculum **- An Overview**



Back in 2007, the State of Michigan enacted a set of statewide graduation requirements, known as the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). In order to graduate from Zeeland East or West High School, a student must accumulate 22 credits. One semester class is equivalent to a half credit. Simply put, this “allows” for a total of four semester class failures in a student’s high school career (please keep in mind that colleges review a student’s record and class failures will not be looked up favorably). Classes required for graduation include:

- 4 years of English
- 4 years of Math (Geometry, Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and a math-related class in the senior year)
- 3 years of Social Studies (Civics/Economics, United States History and World History)
- 3 years of Science (Biology, either Chemistry or Physics, and a science elective)
- 1 year of Physical Education/Health
- 1 year of Applied, Performing, or Visual Art
- 2 years of World Language

Students who do not pass the above graduation requirements will be off track to graduate and may be required to take credit recovery courses outside of the normal school day. Please keep in mind that there are financial costs involved with taking these courses.

There are limited modifications that can be made to the above required curriculum. Through a personal curriculum (PC), students may choose to forego their P.E. elective (this does not include P.E. 9/Health) or their Performing, Visual, or Applied Arts requirement if they take a 3rd year of a world language or an additional English, math, or science credit (full year).

Also, students may opt to waive their 2nd year World Language requirement by taking an additional credit of Applied, Performing, or Visual Art. Please see your counselor for more information.

Practical Tips to Help Your Student Get Organized for School Success

One of the biggest challenges students will face during their high school years is learning how to manage their time and stay organized.

In high school, students are faced with having multiple teachers, each with their own set of assignments and expectations. Juggling these academic relationships (not to mention their extracurricular activities and social lives) can be overwhelming for some kids. Helping children learn to keep track of their commitments will save them a lot frustration and will put them on the road to success.

Here are some practical ideas for parents on how to help kids learn to organize their time and their school work:

- **Recommend they use a planner.** With the implementation of the iPads, students have easy access to their “calendar” and can add assignments and due dates. Students can also sync their iPads with

calendars that teachers prepare. For students who need to write things down on paper, planners can be purchased at most office supply stores.

- **Have them use a three-ring binder to organize their papers.** Children should use one, two or as many binders as they need with individual sections for each subject. With everything stored in notebooks, students will more likely have their notes with them once they get home.
- **Have them create a homework folder** where they can put all their handouts, assignments, and school correspondence they receive during the day. This can be as simple as a folder that contains two pockets. Label the left pocket “in,” and label the right pocket “out.” All of the homework assignments that students must complete that night can be placed in the “in” pocket upon receipt of the assignment, and after students have completed the assignments, they can be placed in the “out” pocket to be turned in at school the next day. Once graded, the assignments can then be stored in the three-ring binder.
- **Encourage them to set aside time to get organized.** Teach them to empty their backpacks and homework folders after school and place items where they belong. Once papers have been sorted by subject, children can file them in the appropriate section of the binder. Papers that require a parent’s attention can be placed in your "in-basket." Parents can help their children get into the habit of making this a regular practice by sitting with them as they weed through their papers, especially in the beginning of the school year.
- **Create a homework supply box.** An inexpensive storage container with a lid is great for keeping homework supplies together. Make your kids responsible for letting you know when supplies are running low. A homework kit might include paper (loose-leaf, unlined and graph paper), sticky notes, index cards, black and blue pens, pencils, erasers, highlighters, white-out, ruler, calculator, stapler, scissors, glue stick, and a three-hole punch.
- **Help your children decide on a regular location to do homework.** Some kids need a very structured and quiet space. Others do fine with a little background noise or in the company of a friend or sibling. By settling on an acceptable location in advance, you’ll minimize daily fights over who sits where and whether or not it’s okay to have the television on "just this time."
- **Set up a daily homework schedule.** Some students want to get through their assignments as soon as they get home; others need a little time to rest and unwind. Regardless, encourage them to set aside a specific block of time each day to complete homework – and then stick to it! This daily routine will teach them how to plan for homework and fit in other activities.
- **Consider a weekly family planning meeting.** With kids involved in so many activities these days, trying to synchronize every family member’s commitments can be a big headache. A family planning meeting on a Sunday afternoon or evening might help everyone "regroup" and get organized for the coming week. Have everyone come together and take turns plotting out their plans on a master calendar.



Frequently Asked Questions



Question: I have a question for my child’s teacher. How do I contact him/her?

Answer: Parents can contact their son/daughter’s teachers via e-mail or phone. Contact information is located on the school’s website – <http://www.zps.org>. Otherwise, one can call the main office. Zeeland East’s phone number is 748-3100 and West is 748-4500.

Question: Who is my child’s counselor?

Answer: Counselor assignments are determined by alphabet, based on a student’s last name.

East Counselors

Kim Petroelje – last names A-E kpetroel@zps.org
Melissa Drnek – last names F-L mdrnek@zps.org
Andrea Campo – last names M-Z acampo@zps.org

West Counselors

Jason Maynard – last names A-K jmaynard@zps.org
Dawn Collins – last names L-Z dcollins@zps.org

Question: My student is a Zeeland East student. Does that mean that all of his/her classes will be held at East?

Answer: Just because a student is a Zeeland East or Zeeland West student does not mean that his/her classes will all be held at his/her home school. Some classes are offered in specific locations depending on facilities available and teacher certification and expertise. For instance, all of the Engineering Department classes are held at Zeeland West, while all Performing Arts classes take place at East.

Question: My son/daughter's schedule switches at the semester. Is this a problem?

Answer: No, it is normal to have different hours and different teachers each semester. As long as each student has the required graduation classes on his/her schedule, this is not a problem.

Question: Can I make requests for teachers?

Answer: The counseling department does not field teacher requests.

Question: I'd like to make an appointment to see my student's counselor. How do I go about doing so?

Answer: Because the counselors' schedules vary each day, it is best to contact the counselor ahead of time and schedule an appointment. It is best to e-mail each counselor directly at the address provided above.

Counseling Office Website and Facebook Page

Please visit <http://counseling.zps.org> to explore the counseling office website. There is a wealth of information concerning your student's high school experience as well as post-high planning. We also post pertinent information on our Facebook page. Search for "Zeeland High School Counseling Office" and like us!

Four Year Plan

The last page of this newsletter contains a 4-Year Plan that students can use to map out courses for their high school career. Feel free to read through the Curriculum Guide, which provides a wealth of information concerning class descriptions, special programs, and other opportunities. The Curriculum Guide can be found on our website at <http://counseling.zps.org>.

College Representative Visits to ZHS

Each fall, representatives from universities, colleges, and the military visit both Zeeland East and West High Schools. Click [here](#) to see a complete list of visits and to sign up (please check back regularly, as the list is continuously added to). The form is also available from our counseling office website under the “College and Careers” tab. Students of all grades are welcome and encouraged to attend! This is a great way to learn more about a multitude of post-secondary options without having to leave the high school campus!

FOUR YEAR PLAN

9th Grade

1. English 9 []
2. Geometry (or above) []
3. Biology or Honors Biology []
4. Civics/Economics [.5] [.5]
5. PE 9 and Health [.5] / One Semester Elective _____
6. Elective _____

10th Grade

1. English 10 []
2. Algebra 1 or Honors Algebra 1 (or above) []
3. Chemistry, Honors Chemistry, or Physics []
4. US History or AP US History []
5. Elective _____
6. Elective _____

11th Grade

1. English 11 or AP English Language []
2. Algebra 2 or Honors Algebra 2 (or above) []
3. Science Elective []
4. World History or AP World History []
5. Elective _____
6. Elective _____

12th Grade

1. English 12 or AP English Literature []
2. Math elective _____ []

or

a Math related class _____

3. Elective _____
4. Elective _____
5. Elective _____
6. Elective _____

Additional requirements that must be met sometime during the course of high school:

- 1 credit of an Applied, Performing, or Visual Arts class (taken at any time) []
- .5 credit of P.E. (one additional semester taken at any time) []
- 2 credits of Foreign Language []

*Limited modifications may be made to the Art, PE elective, and World Language requirements. Students should meet with their counselor for more information.