



Tuscola Intermediate School District

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION VS DIPLOMA

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A certificate of completion, unlike a high school diploma is not an academic credential. A high school diploma is awarded to students that have met the Michigan Merit Curriculum graduation requirements. A certificate of completion might be given to students with an individual education plan (IEP) that are being taught an alternate curriculum and taking the MI-Access alternate state assessment.

A personal curriculum (PC) is a general education tool that allows certain modifications to be made to the requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). While the law gives the areas in which modifications may be made for certain groups of students, the personal curriculum is there to help make the MMC available to all students. The personal curriculum option lets the board of a school district award a regular high school diploma if the student completes the requirements of the PC.

Link to Personal

Curriculum: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/PC_FAQs_5_12_09_277981_7.pdf

Link to Michigan Merit Curriculum: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/FAQ_-_Entire_Document_12.07_217841_7.pdf

More Information on Certificate vs. Diploma

- Federal law allows special education services until age 21.
- Michigan law allows special education services until age 26.
- A certificate of completion does not end entitlement to special education services. Only a regular high school diploma or reaching the age of 26 years old can end special education entitlement.
- The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) does not recognize a "certificate of completion". The MDE recognizes only the Michigan Merit Diploma. It is a local district decision regarding whether to offer some type of certificate, also what to call the certificate, and what the criteria is for awarding a certificate.
- A student being assessed with the MI-Access is not likely to be working on a diploma based on the Michigan Merit Curriculum.
- Parents should be thinking about their child's curriculum and high school completion goal as early as possible, even at elementary level.
- A student can still get into a community college with a certificate of completion. However, a certification of completion will affect the student's ability to receive financial aid should they decide to enroll in a community college or vocational training program.
- A Certificate of Completion will affect the student's ability to enlist in the US military.
- A Certificate of Completion may affect the student's ability to gain employment where a diploma is a job requirement.
- The student's IEP team determines if he/she will receive a diploma or a certificate of completion.

	High School Diploma	High School Certificate
What it means	A student has met all the requirements for graduation.	A student has completed high school, but didn't meet all the requirements for graduation.
What are the graduation requirements	<p>To earn a diploma, a student typically must pass grade-level English, math, social studies, science and other classes. The number and type of class credits required vary by state.</p> <p>Some states also require a student to pass a high school exit exam to get a diploma.</p>	It depends on the state and school. Unlike a diploma, the requirements are often flexible and can be tied to a student's IEP goals .
Accommodations allowed	Yes	Yes
Curriculum modifications allowed	Maybe. By changing what she learns, modifications can hurt a student's ability to earn a high school diploma.	Yes
Accepted by the military	Yes	No
Accepted by colleges	Yes	Maybe. It depends on the college.

	High School Diploma	High School Certificate
Eligible for federal student aid for college	Yes	No
Accepted by employers	Yes	Maybe. It depends on the employer and the job qualifications.
Similar high school credentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GED certificate: This isn't the same as a high school diploma. However, a GED is usually accepted by the military, colleges and employers, in place of a high school diploma. • Vocational diploma: A diploma for a student who achieved the required technical skills for a certain job. • Honors diploma: A special high school diploma for a student who achieved a high academic level. This usually means earning a high grade-point average or passing advanced tests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEP or special education diploma: This kind of diploma is available for a student with an IEP (though many students with IEPs earn regular diplomas). It has the same impact on a student's future as a high school certificate. • Certificate of Attendance, Certificate of Completion or Certificate of Achievement: Different names for a certificate.