

What's In a Diploma?

Examining the New MMC Graduation Standards & How They Compare to Bird Lake Bible School Requirements

On April 20, 2006, Governor Granholm signed into law a rigorous set of high school graduation requirements called the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). These standards are intended to ensure that high school diplomas earned in Michigan indicate mastery of reading, writing, and math skills required for success in the workplace and in postsecondary education. By instituting the MMC, Michigan is implementing some of the most rigorous academic standards in the United States (Shakrani, 2006).

Dr. Shakrani of the Education Policy Center notes that these new graduation requirements are significantly higher than the requirements previously set up by most school districts in the state (2006). Statistics leading up to the passing of the MMC showed that less than one-third of the state's school districts required Algebra I to earn a high school diploma. Only a little over a third required students to pass any type of Biology course (Shakrani, 2006).

Statistics like these make it very clear that all education is not created equal. That's why it is important to know what kind of an education your child is receiving. In 2000, six years before the state legislature passed the new education requirements, the administration of Bird Lake Bible School implemented some of the very standards now put in place by the MMC. Every student who entered 9th grade at Bird Lake Bible School was challenged to complete an educational track very similar to the MMC.

Since then, we've raised our school standards even higher. Our most common high school academic track of study now requires our students to exceed MMC requirements. Obviously not every student will be able to complete such a rigorous curriculum, but most can—especially when it's expected of them.

The full measures of the MMC are scheduled to be implemented by the end of 2010-2011 school year. By that time, Bird Lake Bible School will have been implementing similar measures for 10 years.

Note the two charts: the one below outlines the MMC requirements of the core subjects of Math, English, Science, and Social Studies, and the chart to the right shows the statistics for BLBS graduates since 2006. The right column of this chart shows the percentage of students completing the indicated subject material.

Remember, not all education programs are created equal. Many public and even Christian schools are regularly graduating students with very little high school credit in core subjects. The number one priority of Bird Lake Bible School is providing a *Christian* education. But that doesn't mean quality needs to suffer in the slightest. We exist to train Christian leaders, and to do so, we offer our students an education that surpasses the MMC: the program lauded by educators as one of the most rigorous in the United States.

	BLBS
Math	
Algebra I	100%
Algebra II	80%
Geometry	100%
Advanced Math	60%
<i>Average Math Credits:</i>	3.3
English & Language Arts	
Composition	100%
Grammar	100%
Literature	100%
Speech	100%
Etymology	100%
<i>Average English/LA Credits</i>	6.6
Science	
Biology	100%
Physical Science	100%
Chemistry	80%
Physics	80%
<i>Average Science Credits</i>	3.6
Social Studies	
American History	100%
World History	100%
Geography	100%
Civics	80%
Economics	80%
<i>Average S.S. Credits</i>	4.3

MMC	Math:	4 Credits (including Algebra I, Geometry, & Algebra II)
	English:	4 Credits
	Science:	3 Credits (including Biology & Physics OR Chemistry)
	Social Studies:	3 Credits (including U.S. History & Geography, World History & Geography, Civics, & Economics)