



## March 2010

In this issue:

Michigan's Merit Curriculum

Student Registration

New Plans for Academic Recognition

Determination of Senior Scholars

### March Madness!

Just as March is a transitional month between winter and spring it has also become a time of transition between one school year and the next. Budgeting, curricular planning, student scheduling, and preparations for a myriad of other educational activities which will occur during the 2010/2011 school year are already well underway this month.

This newsletter will focus upon some of the most significant transitional issues which parents will want to understand and consider as they collaborate with our school staff in preparing their children for the coming school year.

### Michigan's Merit Curriculum

When the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) was adopted in March of 2006 it ushered in a period of transition intended to bridge the gaps existing between the educational needs of an agricultural/industrial society and the educational needs required for our students to compete in a global economy. The MMC, which applies to the Class of 2011 and all classes following, significantly increased the degrees of rigor and depth associated with our state's curricular expectations and made them applicable to *all students*. Earning a diploma from any Michigan high school now requires - at the minimum - that students earn four credits of English, three credits of science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), three credits in the social studies (Civics, Economics, US and World History), and four credits in mathematics (Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and an additional math credit to be earned during the senior year). These requirements were formerly considered *the college prep curriculum*. Now they represent the knowledge and skills required for a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. It is extremely important for parents to understand the impact that this educational transition is having and will continue to have for their children – as they find themselves right in the middle of this transitional process. The following implications of the MMC are critically significant factors for schools and parents to address as we jointly plan for the education of our children:

- **Graduation**

The increased rigor associated with MMC graduation requirements applies to all students. Students who have struggled academically in the past may require significant support to attain the MMC graduation standards. Earning credit in Algebra 2, Chemistry, Physics and World History may prove challenging for many. Mere high school attendance with minimal effort will no longer lead to the acquisition of a diploma from any Michigan high school.

- **Consequences for Failing Courses**

The increased graduation requirements leave little room for schedule flexibility for students who fail required courses. Opportunities to participate in off site vocational/technical programming or other elective options in music, art, business and various computer applications diminish when students must repeat courses. In some cases more than the traditional four years may be required for graduation for some students.

- **Importance of Strong Parent/School Relationships**

The educational support that will need to be in place for many students to achieve academic success under the MMC requires that parents, teachers and administrators work more closely together than ever before. We share an educational partnership and mutual responsibilities to support one another as pivotal factors in the education of our students. The achievement of increased academic expectations demands no less.

- **Curricular Interventions and Instructional Differentiation**

To address the variety of learning styles and skill levels of our students we have developed differentiated curriculum designed to offer the instructional flexibility for all students to succeed. We have modified course content and class placement for students whenever possible to provide appropriate learning environments based upon student learning levels. Our trimester schedule provides us the opportunity to offer core academic courses over two, three and even four terms when additional instructional time is necessary. Special needs students are placed in classes which are co-taught allowing for personal educational support while still offering exposure to the Merit Curriculum. Additionally, some students will take advantage of on-line courses offered during and after the regular school day to recapture credit for failed required courses.

## Calendar Dates

### April 2-April 9

Spring Break

### April 22, 2010

Parent/Teacher

Conference 4-8 p.m.

### May 4 - May 13

AP Testing

### May 12, 2010

Grades 9-11 Honors

### May 15, 2010

Prom

### May 25, 2010

Senior Scholars Tea &  
Senior Honors Night

### May 28, 2010

Seniors Last Day

### June 6, 2010

Commencement

### June 7-9, 2010

Exams - 1/2 days

Eaton Rapids High School  
800 State Street  
Eaton Rapids, MI 48827  
Tel: 517 663 2231  
Fax: 517 663 5727  
[www.ersk12.org](http://www.ersk12.org)

Eaton Rapids High School

## • MDE Personal Curriculum Option

The Michigan Department of Education allows students, parents and schools to request *modification* of certain MMC standard requirements after more traditional educational options have been attempted by the student. The Personal Curriculum option is available for students:

- who wish to go beyond the MMC academic credit requirements by adding more math, science, English or foreign language
- who may require modification of the math requirement\*
- under Individualized Educational Plans who may require modification of some credit requirements
- who have transferred to Michigan high schools from other states after completing two years of high school

At ERHS we have attempted to organize and structure curriculum and course sequences in each of our core areas to create instructional options for students that mirror curricular modifications available under a personal curriculum. Parents seeking more information about the availability of personal curriculum modifications for their students may wish to visit [www.actpoint.com/mi](http://www.actpoint.com/mi) for a complete explanation of the allowable modifications.

\*a student may request a personal curriculum to modify the Algebra 2 math requirement from 1.0 credit to 0.5 credit after completing 1.5 of the MMC required mathematics credits.

## Student Registration for 2010/11 Courses

Within the next few weeks students will begin the process of registering for their classes for the 2010/11 school year. As always, great care will be taken to insure that students are placed in the classes that they will need to satisfy their career goals, Educational Development Plans and the requirements of the MMC. This year parents will find course placement recommendations for each required course on the student's registration form. This has been done to insure that students have been placed in the appropriate courses and levels as determined on the basis of their previous academic achievement. Students will continue to have significant latitude in the selection of elective courses subject to required prerequisites and the school's ability to offer the elective courses based upon the number of student requests.

## New Plans for Academic Recognition

This spring marks a transitional time in the manner and procedures we will follow to acknowledge and recognize the academic achievements of our graduating seniors. Historically, Eaton Rapids High School (and most other area high schools) has recognized ten seniors each spring based solely upon grade point averages without consideration of the courses taken and the rigor required for high levels of achievement. This procedure has often led to the omission of several academically talented students who have chosen to take our most rigorous courses in favor of other students who may have opted for different academic paths. This recognition procedure also limited our ability to recognize more than 10 students each spring – however academically talented class members numbered 11, 12 and 13....may be in comparison to their classmates and the classes that have preceded them. Upon moving to the trimester schedule 4 years ago a new senior recognition model was adopted to remedy these situations. The Class of 2010 becomes the first class to recognize academic achievement on the basis of a Senior Scholars Model patterned on the procedures that have been used to determine students for Academic All State recognition.

## Determination of Senior Scholars

Beginning with the Class of 2010 Senior Scholars will be determined on the basis of cumulative grade point average – as has been done in the past - while adding the cumulative score achieved by taking the ACT test. To standardize the selection criteria for equity from year to year a grade point average of 3.7 and an ACT composite score of at least 27 will be used to determine the identification of our Senior Scholars. This year we are pleased to announce that 19 seniors met these qualifications. The class valedictorian and salutatorian will be the two Senior Scholars with the highest combined grade point averages and ACT scores.

In addition to recognition of Senior Scholars we have also adopted procedures allowing for the recognition of seniors as graduating Magna Cum Laude if they have achieved grade point averages of 3.5 to 3.79 and Summa Cum Laude if they have attained grade point averages of 3.8 to 4.0. We are proud to announce that the Class of 2010 will have 49 seniors who have met these requirements.