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Michigan builders and contractors applaud Governor Snyder signing Merit Curriculum improvements into law

Macomb, Mich. - Michigan high school students can now get a jump start in rewarding careers while in high school, thanks to legislation signed into law today by Governor Rick Snyder.

The improved standards, which incorporate [House Bill 4465](#) sponsored by Rep. Ed McBroom (R-Vulcan) and [House Bill 4466](#) sponsored by Rep. Joel Johnson (R-Clare), result in greater flexibility for Michigan students to take classes that prepare them for technical and skilled trades careers. Leading Michigan industries like construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and technology, which rely on skilled workers, also benefit with this greater emphasis on flexibility for students to choose in high school if they could benefit from relevant vocational skills.

“We know how important career-technical education classes can be to providing students with valuable skills that they can build upon for good jobs,” Gov. Snyder said. “These bills allow districts to have flexibility in the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) requirements, so schools can weave material from algebra 2 and some other high-level, required classes into career tech programs. The goal is to incorporate real-life applications to some of these courses while maintaining the necessary rigor.”

“Michigan’s students need to have the opportunity to pursue rigorous job training and vocational skills while they are in high school,” said Chris Fisher, president and CEO of ABC of Michigan. “Strengthening Michigan high school graduation requirements by allowing greater access to vocational education and CTE opportunities in high school prepares kids for rewarding skilled trades careers that are in high demand.”

Rep. McBroom commented: “It is great to see recognition of and action on a fact that many teachers, students, parents, and employers around the state have long maintained about the MMC – it has been too rigid, with only one supposedly-perfect curriculum for all students. These changes will hopefully lead to a complete recognition that the value of a class must take into account the passions and interests of the student coupled with the real world opportunities they wish to pursue. Whether it is a doctorate in astrophysics; or training and certification in plumbing and pipe-fitting; or a four-year music education degree, students need the flexibility to maximize their limited credit hours during their four years in high school.”

“With state mandates as they were, students have not had the time available in their schedules to pursue rigorous trades programs,” said Rep. Johnson. “This legislation will open numerous doors so that young people can consider all possible options in planning for their future careers.”

Fisher noted that “the revisions signed today improve the Michigan Merit Curriculum by rightly affirming that the four-year college path doesn’t have a monopoly on rigorous standards or relevance. When they take effect, Michigan will have a twenty-first century high school curriculum that prepares kids for four-year universities, as well as for technical and trade schools.”

The State of Michigan and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics both expect skilled and technical careers in industries like construction to be in high demand over the next decade. The state of Michigan alone predicts [that demand for skilled trades jobs will be increasing by at least 7.4 percent by the end of the current decade](#). For many skilled trade industries the demand is much higher: construction (25.3 percent), transportation (54.5 percent) and production (17.3 percent). The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) predicts fast growth in the number of skilled trades jobs over the next decade as well – with the construction industry anticipated to grow at more than twice the national average growth rate.

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ABC of Michigan is a statewide trade association representing the commercial and industrial construction industries. Dedicated to open competition, equal opportunity and accountability in construction, ABC members develop people, win work and deliver that work safely, ethically, profitably and for the betterment of the communities in which ABC and its members work.