

White Paper: Michigan Youth Challenge Academy (Executive Summary)

Since 1999 the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy (MYCA) has graduated over 3,500 Cadets. The 17-month program (five month residential) is designed to intervene and assist 16-18 year old high school dropouts in reclaiming their lives. The program is free to applicants, has an educational and life skills component, is administered by the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (Michigan National Guard) and funded through a Federal (75%) / State (25%) cost share program. The MYCA is located at the VA Medical Center in Battle Creek, Michigan, and leads, trains, and mentors at-risk youth so they may become productive, employed, and law-abiding citizens. This program has been recognized as one of the state's most effective for targeting youth who are at the greatest risk for delinquency, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and criminal involvement.

Program Information

- Phase one of the MYCA consists of a five month residential program in a quasi-military environment focusing on eight core components that includes: Academic Excellence (seven Marshall High School & 19 Kellogg Community College credits), Life Coping Skills, Job Skills, Health and Hygiene, Responsible Citizenship, Service to the Community, Leadership, and Physical Fitness.
- Phase two of the MYCA consists of a Post-Residential mentoring program that tracks graduates as they utilize newly learned life skills, academic excellence, vocational skills, community service awareness, and employment preparedness. Graduates are required to seek placement or completion of one of the following during the 12-month phase:
 - Return to community high school for diploma completion
 - Credit recovery for awarding of high school diploma
 - GED completion
 - Enrollment in two or four-year degree producing college/university
 - Enrollment in vocational tech / trades licensing program
 - Small business development (entrepreneurial)
 - Employment
 - Military induction
 - Acceptance to the Michigan Job Challenge Program
- According to a 2012 MDRC Youth Challenge study: 59% of Challenge graduates earned a GED or high school diploma, 45% joined the workforce, 41% continued their education, and 7% joined the military.
- The National Guard Youth Challenge Program is recognized by the National Governors' Association, State Legislatures, and the National Guard Association of the United States; all of which have acknowledged the youth challenge programs nationally with legislative resolutions supporting their efforts.

Graduate Demographic

- 16-18 year old Michigan resident (male & female)
- At-risk student: a student who requires temporary or ongoing intervention in order to develop life-skills and academic success
- Individuals committed to changing their lives
- Non-traditional learners
- Academically capable of achieving Michigan Merit Curriculum Standards or GED
- Students from all socioeconomic backgrounds
- Applicants from all ten Michigan Economic Development Regions
- Students with Individualized Education Program (IEP) - will accept up to 25 individuals per class
- Will evaluate and accept applicants on a case-by-case basis that have exhibited the following behavior: running away, self-harm or violent tendencies - normally will not accept severe cases of these or those that have all three traits
- Those with an interest in the military
- Ability to pass drug screening

What the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy is not able to accommodate:

- Applicants needing a mental wellness treatment facility
- Not a detention center – cannot accept applicants that are awaiting sentencing, indictment, or conviction of a felony charge or on probation (will accept some non-felony juvenile offenses & non-reporting probation)
- Not resourced to accept some Cognitively Impaired (CI) applicants (applications evaluated individually prior to acceptance)
- Not resourced to accept some Emotionally Impaired (EI) applicants (applications evaluated individually prior to acceptance)

To Parents, Guardians and Mentors:

The Michigan Youth Challenge Academy offers young people an opportunity to change their lives and make a future for them. MYCA is a 22-week residential program. The program incorporates classroom instruction provided by the Marshall Public Schools to prepare cadets for the G.E.D. exam. Many of the G.E.D. standards also correlate to Michigan Merit Curriculum Standards completed in an integrated approach. The cadets also participate in vocational/technical courses through the Calhoun Area Career Center. Students will also receive articulated credits from Kellogg Community College.

There are eight Core Components which include: academic excellence, job skills, physical fitness, leadership/followership, health/nutrition, life coping skills, responsible citizenship, and service to the community. These components are designed to develop the cadets into well-rounded and responsible members of society.

Marshall Public Schools grants credit for the following MPS/MYCA Core courses completed during the school day:

- .5 Integrated Math
- .5 English
- .5 Integrated Science
- .5 Integrated Social Studies
- .5 CIS (Keyboarding/Microsoft)
- 1.5 Calhoun Area Career Center specific program

High School Credit is also granted for the following courses completed during the school day as well as outside of the school day. Courses are offered as a part of the 8 Core Components provided by both MYCA teachers and MYCA staff.

- .5 Experiential Credit/SERV 200
- .5 General Physical Education/WPE102
- .5 Health and Hygiene/WPE101
- .5 Independent Physical Training/WPE253
- .5 Job Skills/100
- .5 Prin. Fitness and Health/WPE101

MPS/MYCA also provides Kellogg Community College credits through an articulation agreement for the 8 Core Component courses. The courses and Kellogg Community College credits are as follows:

- 4.0 CIS Microsoft Office/OIT 160
- 2.0 Principles of Fitness and Health/PEHL 140
- 2.0 Health and Hygiene/PEP 293
- 2.0 Independent Physical Training/PEP 296
- 2.0 General Physical Education/PE 189
- 3.0 Job Skills/BUAD 100
- 3.0 Experiential Credit/SERV 200

With successful completion of all courses, a student will earn **four (4)** high school core course credits, **three (3)** 8 Core Component high school credits and up to **eighteen (18)** KCC articulated college credits.

All classes are based on Michigan Merit Curriculum.

It is up to the enrolling high school to determine how the credits will be used toward graduation. The percentage of time spent in each area is approximated below.

English - Reasoning through Language Arts addressed both the reading and writing as a combined approach.

- Reading
 - 75% Informational Text
 - 25% Literature
- Writing
 - 15% Organization
 - 30% Sentence Structure
 - 30% Usage
 - 25% Mechanics

Math – Mathematical Reasoning (number operations, measurement and Geometry, data analysis, statistics, probability, algebra)

- 45% Quantitative problem solving
- 55% Algebraic problem solving

Science – (textual analysis and understanding data representation and inference skills, as well as, problem solving with science content)

- 40% Physics
- 40% Chemistry
- 20% Biology

Social Studies – (applying social studies reasoning skills, inference skills, analyzing source documents, and interpreting data)

- 50% Civics and Government
- 20% US History
- 15% Economics
- 15% Geography and the world