

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

Universal Education

Inclusion Student-Centered
Together ProblemSolving Adaptability
Meaningful ALL Communication
Capable Teachers Initiative
Participation Apps Curiosity Building Friends Learning
Imagination Students Civil Aids Choice Right
School Children Partnership Parents Rights Community Education Expectations
Relationships Instruction
Collaboration Benefits People Change
Administrators Disabilities Technology Support
Neighbors Information

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Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is a 21-member body appointed by the Governor to advocate for a better quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities. The Council's mission is to support people with developmental disabilities to achieve life dreams.

The Council's Individual, Family Support, Education and Advocacy (IFSEA) Workgroup provides support to people with developmental disabilities and families throughout their lifespan by:

1. Educating people with disabilities and their families on supports, services and advocacy opportunities;
2. Providing all students with access to supports, services and resources that will facilitate their self-determination and academic success;
3. Supporting innovations in postsecondary education for all students, including those with intellectual disabilities.

The workgroup has several partners including: Michigan Family Voices, Muskegon, Ottawa, Kent, Allegan (MOKA), The Esther Coalition, DB Central, The Arc Michigan, and Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services. Together, these agencies are advocating for Universal Education across Michigan. This booklet was designed to introduce you to the principles of Universal Education. We hope that, in time, you too will join us in promoting these principles. Full implementation of Universal Education will result in better outcomes for all students, which in turn, will benefit all Michigan communities.

Next Steps:

Parents - Review this booklet and the additional universal education resources. Talk with your local school administration, with other parents, your local Parent Advisory Council and legislators on the benefits of Universal Education.

School Administrators and Personnel – Discuss this issue with your staff, students, parents and legislators. Hold meetings with community members and staff to discuss implementation of the principles in your local school district.

Legislators – Talk about Universal Education at town halls and coffee hours. Meet with special education teachers and parents to talk about inclusion. Look at adopting universal education as a standard across Michigan schools.

Advocates and interested others – Advocate for the implementation of Universal Education in your local community.

We'd like to hear your thoughts on the principles and implementation possibilities. Please visit the IFSEA webpage at www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil and complete a short survey.

For more information, please contact Tedra Jackson or Tracy Vincent via email at jacksont7@michigan.gov or vincentt1@michigan.gov or via phone at 517-335-3158.



What is **Universal Education?**

BY LIZ BAUER

Universal Education honors the rights of all students to learn together in an environment that assures access to resources and provides supports to all students.



Universal Education: A Framework for Educational Policy Development in Michigan

The principles of Universal Education reflect the belief that each person deserves and needs a concerned, accepting educational community that values diversity and provides a comprehensive system of individual supports from birth to adulthood. In October, 2005, The State Board of Education approved a statement of vision and principles that is to serve as the framework and foundation for policy development in Michigan. As we seek more inclusive educational environments, we must prepare educators to teach all learners, we must develop instructional models that provide multiple, flexible methods of presentation of content; designing the same to meet the unique needs and abilities of each student. We must provide options in the ways that students can express what they know as well as options in the ways that students are motivated and engaged. Emerging educational technologies can support new approaches to teaching and learning.

Universal Education: Vision and Principles is the outcome of decades of advocacy on the part of people with disabilities, English language learners, and other marginalized populations who have encountered barriers to their access to, experience with, and progress in public education. The statement affirms the benefits of giving ALL students equal access to public education, setting high standards, and holding high expectations for their performance. The referent group that developed the document was charged to identify the challenges and barriers to education faced by diverse populations. Its membership included leaders from the fields of education (all areas including policy-makers, general and special educators, higher education faculty, and related service providers), public health, mental health juvenile justice, social services, parents, recent graduates, and the community at large.

What they learned about the needs of individuals, both those enrolled in public education and those unable to access it or optimally benefit from their experience, was stunning. The group discovered many dimensions of diversity to which our public education system was not responding. They saw too that focus was needed on the **Learning Community**, including a broad base of stakeholders in addition to families, students and educators.

The **Learning Environment** had to assure access to resources, support for teachers and students and result in a culture of safety, support, and acceptance – honoring the right of all students to learn together. There also had to be a commitment to **Adult and Student Learning** ensuring effective educator pre-service and on-going professional development among other elements.

Continued....

Now well into the 21st Century, we know the skills needed for successful participation include: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Collaboration, Agility and Adaptability, Initiative and Entrepreneurship, Effective Oral and Written Communication (including sign and alternative communication technologies), Accessing and Analyzing Information, and Curiosity and Imagination. Given these expectations, old ways of instruction will not move students from their edge of competence forward. Universal Education supports new ways of teaching and learning. It removes barriers, provides flexible and responsive supports, and facilitates life-long learning for all.

Resources:

1 Universal Education: Vision and Principles, October 2005

2 21st Century Schools, 2010



Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council's

Position on Universal Education

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council believes that schools should be organized according to the State Board of Education's framework and foundation which was established in their document: Universal Education: Vision and Principles (approved October, 2005). Further, we hold policymakers, legislators, and other government officials responsible for removing legal, attitudinal and practical barriers in all schools. Additionally, the Council believes and advocates the following:

- all children have a right to education;
- all children are capable of learning;
- the right of children with disabilities to an education in which they are included with their peers is a civil right, not just a "special education" issue;
- children are more successful in school when their parents are actively involved in their education and when parents and educators work in partnership;
- schools should support different styles of learning by implementing the principles of universal design for learning;
- teachers are informed and trained in the implementation of current best practices regarding the education of children with disabilities and are given appropriate resources and support; and
- any benefits of future changes in the laws affecting quality assurance, school choice, school funding, online instruction, and other related school issues be made available equally to children with disabilities.

These principles are supported by both state and federal education laws. Full implementation will result in better outcomes for all students which, in turn, will benefit all Michigan communities.

Adopted June 2013

Universal Education Resources

Center for Applied Assistive Technology – www.cast.org

Center for Educational Networking – www.cenmi.org

Michigan Alliance for Families—www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

Michigan Department of Education (MDE) - www.michigan.gov/mde

MDE School Improvement - www.michigan.gov/schoolimprovement

Michigan's Integrated Technology Supports– [www. MITS.CENMI.org](http://www.MITS.CENMI.org)

TASH-www.tash.org

Whole Schooling-www.wholeschooling.net

Focus on Results 2006 — <http://focus.cenmi.org/2006/08/01/universal-education-a-framework-for-educational-policy-development-in-michigan/>

Partners



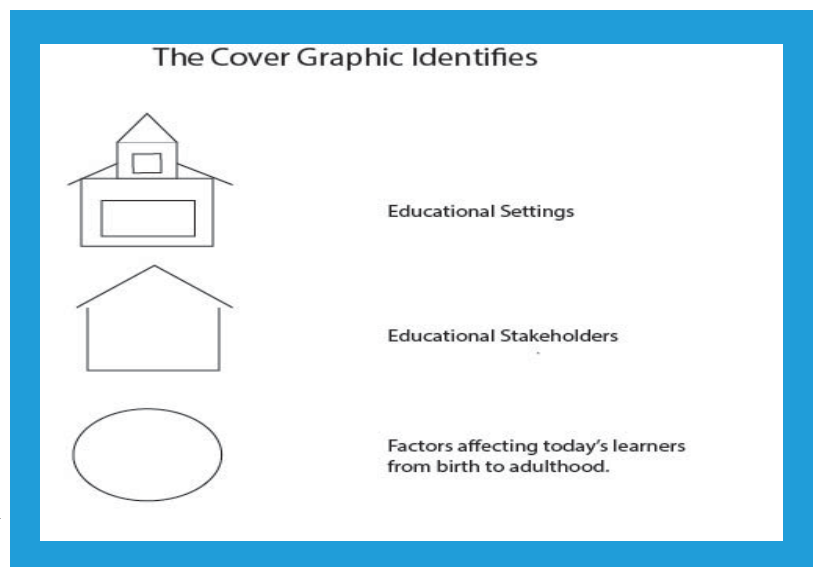
Universal Education



This diagram explains what Universal Education is and what it means to the community.

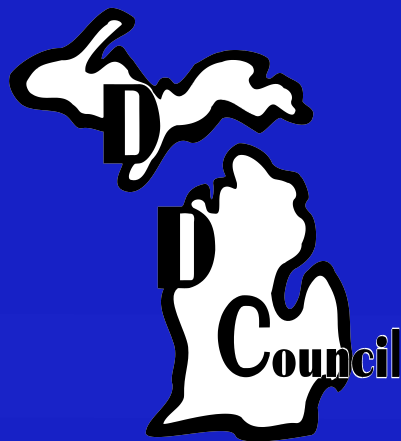
Learners in all of their diversity come from a variety of backgrounds and life situations that may pose barriers to their access to, experience with, and progress in public education.

*provided by Michigan Department of Education (MDE)



NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Michigan Department
of Community Health



Rick Snyder, Governor
James K. Haveman, Director

Our Community Includes Everyone

Inclusion Student-Centered
Together ProblemSolving Adaptability
Meaningful ALL Communication
Capable Teachers Initiative
Participation Apps Curiosity Building Friends
Imagination Students Civil Aids Choice Right
School Children Partnership Community Education Expectations
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