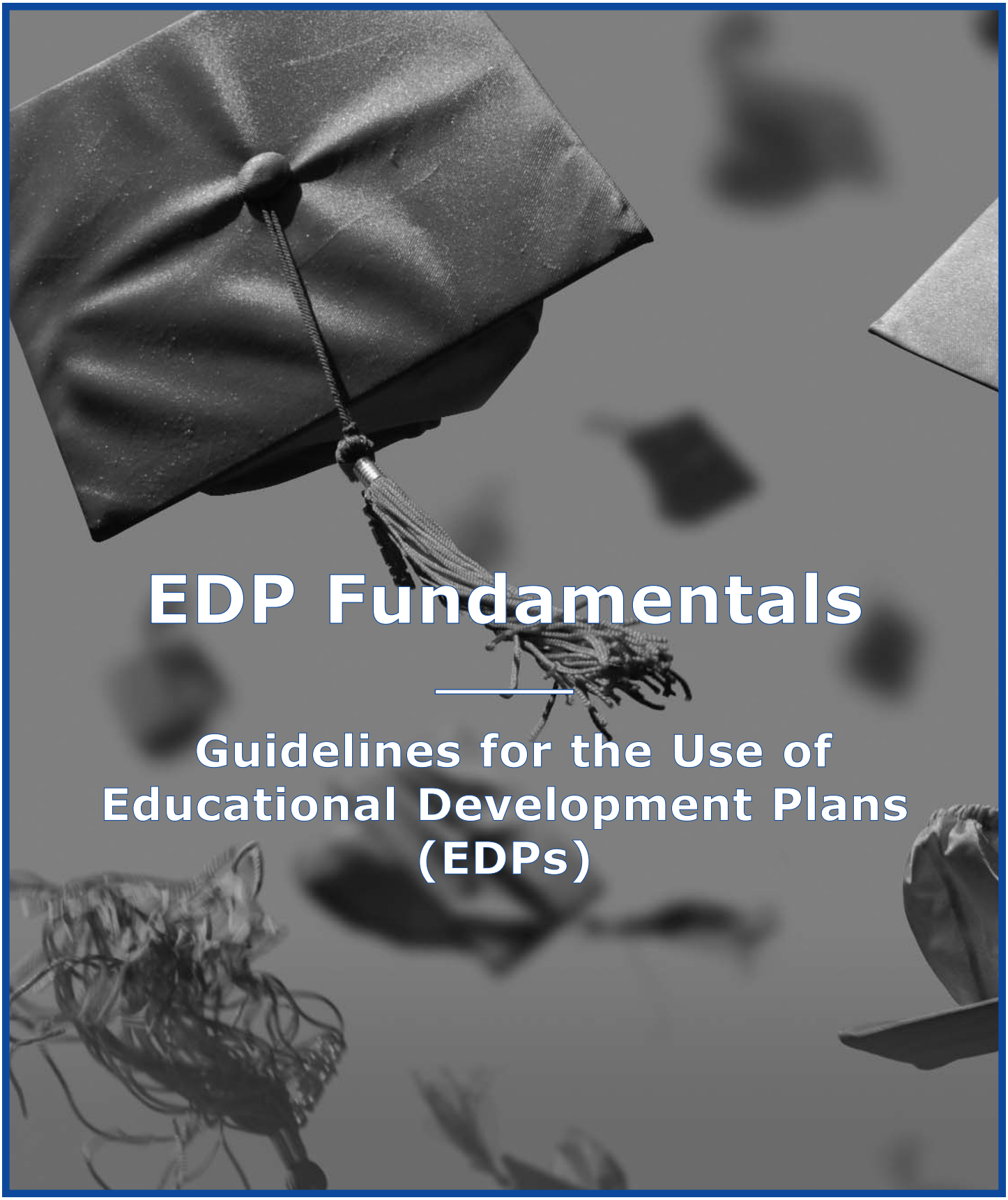

EDP Fundamentals

Guidelines for the Use of Educational Development Plans (EDPs)

MICHIGAN Department of Education

Michigan Department of Education: 2009

Table of Contents

Page 2
Why Do Students Need an Educational Development Plan (EDP)?
Developing an EDP
The Importance of Starting Early
Before You Begin

Page 3
Career Awareness
The Essential Elements for an EDP

Page 4
What Happens After the EDP Is Written?
IEP/EDP Alignment: Transition

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STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW
The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, and with all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

Why Do Students Need an Educational Development Plan (EDP)?
The Revised School Code (380.1278b(11)) states that "The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall provide the opportunity for each pupil to develop and educational development plan during grade 7, and shall ensure that each pupil reviews his or her EDP during grade 8 and revises it as appropriate before he or she begins high school. An educational development plan shall be developed reviewed, and revised by the pupil under the supervision of the pupil's school counselor or another designee qualified to act in a counseling role under section 1233 or 1233a selected by the school principal and shall be based on high school readiness scores and a career pathways program or similar career exploration program. An educational development plan shall be designed to assist pupils to identify career development goals as they relate to academic requirements."

The first step in developing an individualized approach to learning is the EDP. An EDP documents an ongoing process in which a learner identifies both career goals and a plan of action to achieve them. The EDP does not take the place of either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Personal Curriculum (PC) modification.

Developing an EDP
All students are required to develop an EDP with guidance from school advisors. When applicable, parents and community contacts should also be included. EDPs are "living" documents, updated as student interests and abilities become more obvious and focused.

State law requires local schools to provide an opportunity for students to begin developing an EDP in Grade 7 and requires that every student has an EDP before entering high school. By preparing the initial EDP in middle school, students can better plan their high school curriculum to meet their post-school goals. The EDP is a secondary/postsecondary planning tool to direct the student's educational plan and career planning activities. Schools use paper EDPs, electronic EDPs, or Web-based systems such as My Dream Explorer or Career Cruising to help students write their education and career goals, including strategies and high school classes that will help them reach these goals. In addition, a free online career exploration course called CareerForward (cFWD) is available through Michigan Virtual University (MVU) as a resource. The cFWD course provides a good starting point for students to explore the world of work in the 21st century. For more information, visit www.mivhs.com.

The Importance of Starting Early
EDPs start in Grade 7. Many schools develop EDPs with students beginning in Grade 8. However, the statute clearly states that students should be provided the opportunity to develop an EDP in Grade 7. Beginning the process a year earlier gives students additional time to think about career and education goals and gives each student time to prepare for the rigor demanded at the high school level.

Before You Begin
The primary emphasis of the EDP is to develop a student's statement of career goals and a plan of action for reaching them. Through the EDP process, each student becomes more aware of the connection between a career goal and the requirements for attaining that goal. The EDP provides opportunities for a student to learn about himself or herself, to understand career pathway options, and to explore postsecondary education and training. The EDP engages each student to think about the credits he or she needs to take in middle school and high school, and how those credits coordinate with his or her career pathway so that an understanding of the relevance between high school and preparation for entering college or the workforce is enhanced. Each student should be aware of the basic requirements for college and employment, disability supports (if receiving special education services), and traditional or alternative pathways for meeting the MMC (e.g., community college, trade schools, technical college, apprenticeship program, Career and Technical Education, or an interdisciplinary course sequence).

Career Awareness
To be effective, EDPs are dependent upon a larger career development and planning process. In schools, this process includes participation in pathways, career awareness, career exploration, career assessment, and a comprehensive guidance and counseling program. Connecting the EDP to a variety of other career development activities is critical to its meaning and success for students. EDPs do not stand by themselves. They are representative of an individual's decisions and plans at various intervals in their educational experience. The EDP documents a student's accomplishments at any given time in an overall career development and planning process.

The Essential Elements for an EDP
No specific form or format is required for an EDP. Schools may design EDPs that best meet their local needs. The following are some essential elements to include in any EDP:

- Personal Information: This usually includes the student's name, date of birth, and grade level. The school could use a personal identification number for each student to maintain confidentiality when sharing information among staff or publishing information online. The EDP is a learning and planning document and should be maintained with the same policies governing other student records, as required in the *Family Education Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA).
- Career Goal(s): Each student should identify a career pathway and goals for achieving success. Goals may be more general in middle school and become more specific as the student progresses through high school.
- Educational/Training Goal(s): Each student should identify the level of educational preparation needed to meet his or her career goal. This encourages students to think beyond high school graduation and set long-range goals. Options include on-the-job training, military service, certificate programs, two-year associate degree programs, apprenticeship programs, trade or technical education, four-year university programs, and advanced university degree or professional preparation programs.
- Assessment Results: The student may summarize the results of various assessments, highlighting information that is relevant to making career decisions. Assessment data may include formal and informal data such as: career interest surveys, aptitude testing, informal observations, student projects or hobbies, academic achievement, values assessments, and extracurricular activities. From this information, students will be able to identify individual interests and strengths. Students may also set improvement goals. Over time, students will be able to use this information to confirm career decisions or adjust goals.
- Plan(s) of Action: The action plan should include high school course selections, projected completion date, desired degree, certificate or other credential, timeline for college application, financial assistance deadlines, and employment opportunities. The plan may also identify special resources and support needed for the student's success in the Personal Curriculum (PC). For example, an EDP might contain a personal literacy plan to aid students who are struggling readers or a prevention plan for students who have been identified as at risk of dropping out of high school. Activities may include volunteer or work-related experiences including job shadowing, mentorship programs in community businesses, or part-time employment in areas related to the student's career goal(s).

  The scope of student planning can include career awareness or exploration activities, work-based activities, and course selections that will prepare her/him for greater understanding of career options and achievement of career goals.

Students may also investigate educational programs available within the school or college curriculum that will provide opportunities to become more aware and skilled in a career pathway (e.g., an internship in a community agency or intensive project-based learning in a particular course). The student should also take the time to explore the opportunities for earning college credit while still in high school through Advanced Placement (AP) courses, dual enrollment, International Baccalaureate (IB), and other programs.

- Parent Consultation/Endorsement: Parents/guardians should have the opportunity to review and endorse their child's EDP. This will give parents access to information about emerging careers and employment trends so they can help their children to prepare for the future. Parents/guardians may also need to discuss assessment results or have assistance interpreting them. Students should be encouraged to discuss career-related issues with their parents and share their goals and action plans.

What Happens After the EDP Is Written?

A student's EDP should be reviewed and updated on at least an annual basis. An EDP process could also include yearly work samples that document the student's progress toward anticipated goals and accomplishments. The school must establish times to annually review EDPs and update them as students choose and change high school courses or career pathways.

IEP/EDP Alignment: Transition

The passage of the Michigan Merit Curriculum in April of 2006 established a requirement for schools to assist students with the development of an EDP in Grades 7 and 8. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) requires that students eligible for special education programs and services have an IEP. Additionally, transition services must be in place for students with disabilities who are over the age of 16. The EDP and the IEP are distinct documents; however, as students move into high school, the documents share a common goal of improved post-secondary outcomes for students. The guidelines for developing the EDP outlined in this document align with and complement many of the IEP requirements stated by the IDEA.

The EDP should contain results from an assessment process designed to assist students in identifying educational and career interests and aspirations. The IDEA requires educators to gather information about a student's interests and strengths through an age-appropriate transition assessment and to develop measurable postsecondary goals in the areas of education, training, employment, and when appropriate adult living. Information gathered during the EDP process could prove valuable in developing areas of the transition IEP.

The EDP should identify a student's career pathway and goals for achieving success as well as the level of educational preparation that will be needed to meet the career goals. This supports and encourages students to think beyond high school graduation and set long-range goals. When the transition IEP is being developed, information related to the required education, training, employment, and when appropriate adult living goals may be drawn from the EDP helping to create alignment between general and special education.

The EDP should include high school course selections, projected high school completion date, desired degree, certificate or other credential and employment opportunities. The plan may also identify resources and support needed for the student's success, such as a personal literacy plan or a prevention plan for students at risk of dropping out of high school. Activities may include volunteer or work-related experiences including job shadowing, mentorship programs in community businesses, or part-time employment in areas related to the career goal(s).

Transition services are defined as a coordinated set of activities that focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities. The transition IEP contains the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching their postsecondary goals. The EDP outlines the course of study in a way the IEP typically does not. The EDP may document courses and course sequence where specific content will be learned while the IEP speaks specifically to the programs, accommodations and modifications, and services that are necessary to support the student's success. Together, these two documents complement each other in supporting the student toward the EDP goals.

If the EDP structure recommended in this document is followed, the gathering and documentation of information related to key areas of student development will be well underway long before federal requirements begin (transition services must be in place for the IEP that will be in effect when the student turns 16).

The EDP can provide support and documentation for a Personal Curriculum (PC) modification. Students with a disability requesting a Personal Curriculum (PC) must have a modification aligned to their EDP. The student may be granted a Personal Curriculum (PC) modification not otherwise allowable if the modification is consistent with both the student's EDP and the student's IEP.

The link between the EDP and the transition IEP may be more clearly understood by thinking about universal elements of quality planning:

1) Development of postsecondary goals in education, training, employment, and when appropriate adult living.
2) Identification of student preferences, interests, strengths, and needs.
3) Review of academic performance, learning style, and effective support strategies for students in grades K-8.
4) Identification and coordination of course(s) and support and possible consideration of a Personal Curriculum (PC).
5) Annual review.

Sample EDPs can be found at
www.michigan.gov/mde
on the High School Counselor web page.