SECTION 4: Students

Academic Honors

The determination of academic honors for an EMC student, including consideration for valedictorian status, is a local district decision related to how grades and grade point averages are calculated.

Age

Students must be in grade 9 to be coded 3500 in the MSDS. Districts can start EMC students early to prepare them for dual enrollment and college coursework. Additional funding for 61b and other CTE funding is not available until the student is in grade 9.

For pupil accounting membership purposes, the cut-off for a general education pupil is less than 20 years of age on September 1. If an EMC student turns 20 after September 1, the fifth year of the EMC Program can be completed. If the student is 20 years of age prior to September 1 and has not completed the fifth year, pupil accounting membership cannot be counted. If the student is experiencing extreme barriers to education, please contact the relevant district Pupil Accounting Auditor to discuss pupil membership options.

Athletics

Early Middle College students are eligible to participate in high school athletics in grades 9-12. Under the rules of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA), students are not eligible to participate in high school athletics during the 13th grade. Students are not eligible to participate in collegiate athletics in grades 9-12.

Students in the 5th year may be eligible to participate in athletics in a community college due to a 2023 decision by the National Junior College Athletic Association to allow students concurrently enrolled in state approved high school/college programs to participate in NJCAA athletics. Students must have completed all their high school graduation requirements, exhausted their high school athletic eligibility and received written approval from the NJCAA, prior to participation in NJCAA athletics.

Due to the unique academic and athletic situation of each student, and the complexity of the NJCAA eligibility rules, it is recommended that each potential student-athlete discuss their athletic eligibility with the athletic personnel at the NJCAA college where they have chosen to attend. EMCs with questions related to high school athletics are recommended to contact the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) for specific guidelines at 517-332-5046.

Free/Reduced Lunch for EMC Students

According to the MDE Office of School and Nutrition, students attending EMC programs and schools are eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program.

Due to the different designs of EMCs, MDE suggests working with the School Nutrition Programs (SNP) Unit at the MDE to determine the best fit for students. For additional information, contact the SNP staff at 517-241-5376 or email mde-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov.

One option is for an EMC to work with a public school district or ISD to enter into an agreement with the district to provide meals. The school district would be responsible for all administrative responsibilities and would receive reimbursement for the meals. In this scenario, the public school district would be responsible for all administrative duties, including the application process, the income eligibility process, and the claim submission.

Homeschool and Nonpublic Students

Nonpublic and homeschool students are **not** eligible to participate in EMC programs as these are designed to be full-time education programs that provide students with a high school diploma and a degree or certificate from the postsecondary institution upon completion. EMCs include instruction in content areas considered to be essential to the student's education.

In-State EMC Student Transfers

If EMCs have a request to enroll an in-state EMC student to the EMC after the fall certification date of the grade 11 year, the following must occur:

- The originating district from which the student is transferring should **NOT** remove the 3500 code if the student will be enrolling in the EMC at the new district.
- The receiving district should request documentation from the sending district to verify the student was an EMC participant. The documentation should be kept in the student's file.
- The EMC should provide the student's UIC via email to the EMC Manager so prior EMC participation can be verified in the MSDS. See Section 8 for contact information. No other student information should be emailed.

If an EMC is not available for the student to transfer to, then the 3500 code should be removed. The student will revert to a standard four-year graduation and would be placed in the standard four-year cohort.

Out-of-State EMC Transfer Students

If EMCs have a request to enroll an out-of-state EMC student after the fall certification date of the grade 11 year, the receiving EMC must:

- Request proof of participation from the out-of-state EMC.
- Maintain a copy of the documentation, which should be kept in the student's file with a copy sent via an encrypted email or United States Postal Service to MDE EMC staff. The documentation should include the student's UIC.
- Code the student 3500 at the time of enrollment.
- Mail documentation to:

  MDE-OCTE
  Early Middle College Manager
  P.O. Box 30712
  Lansing, MI 48933

Special Education Students

Students are entitled to receive accommodations through Section 504 plans and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) throughout their EMC experience. High schools are to provide accommodations for high school courses and monitor the IEP and 504 plan through the 5th year. For additional information, contact the Office of Special Education at MDE-OSE.

Colleges and universities offer special accommodation services to students with disabilities, and students can choose whether to disclose a disability. If a student chooses to pursue accommodations at the college, they will coordinate with the department at the college in charge of accommodations, e.g. Disability Services or Office of Student Access. The student will need to provide a copy of the IEP or 504 plan to the college. In some cases, a college may develop a new accommodation plan, but others may implement the same accommodations. Students and EMC staff can access the Campus Disability Resource Database to find disability-related information for Michigan colleges and universities.

Special Populations

In collaboration with the MDE Office of Educational Supports (OES) Special Populations Unit, the MDE EMC Unit published The Early Middle College (EMC) and Students in Special Populations Manual to help EMCs address barriers that many students identifying under Special Populations may face. These categories include students who are English Learners (ELs), immigrants, students experiencing homelessness, students experiencing foster care, or students who are migratory.