

EARLY MIDDLE COLLEGE FAQs

July 1, 2020

Items highlighted in green have been updated since the previous EMC FAQ dated 1.16.20

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I. GENERAL

1. What is an Early Middle College?

An Early Middle College is a five-year program of study that may begin as early as grade 9 and is designed to allow a pupil to earn a high school diploma while also earning 60 transferable college credits toward a four-year degree from a Michigan public or private university, an associate degree from a community college, a *professional certification, the Michigan Early Middle College Association (MEMCA) technical certificate (see question 3 for definition), or the right to participate in a registered apprenticeship. Early Middle Colleges must have a formal agreement with at least one Michigan public or private college or university and maintain formal agreements with all postsecondary partners.

*A professional certification is any certificate or industry recognized credential in which the pupil prepared for by taking course work provided by a Michigan public or private college or university.

A school district or ISD must apply to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to receive approval to open an Early Middle College. An Early Middle College must maintain the following documentation.

- the five (5) year program of study the pupil is working toward
- a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with all postsecondary partners
- the local district(s) Board of Education minutes showing approval of a five (5) year program of study, for Early Middle College students, that requires the successful completion of a math or math related course, that counts toward high school graduation in the final (5th) year of high school
- pupil's Educational Development Plan (EDP) showing the 5th year of study
- a copy of the transcript(s) or the certificate that the student completed

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2. What should be included on the five-year program of study?

The program of study should:

- clearly show the student the courses to be taken each of the five years and the number of college credits that will be earned
- include all Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements with the fifth-year math/math related course clearly identified
- include the name of the institution, and the degree or certificate
- include Career & College readiness course(s)

3. What is the MEMCA Technical Certificate?

The MEMCA Certificate provides verification among MDE, the school district, and the higher education partner that the graduate has successfully completed each of the following:

- a) The State of Michigan high school graduation requirements.
- b) A member school's MEMCA approved College Readiness Curriculum.
- c) A minimum of 15 transferable college credit hours (non-remedial courses).

AND one of the following options:

- 100 hours of verified community service
- A minimum of 40 hours of verified career exploration, internship, job shadowing, or clinical experience
- A combination of the two that equals 70+ hours

MDE therefore accepts these students as early college graduates from their approved Early Middle Colleges.

4. What is the process/timeline for getting approval of the MEMCA certificate?

The MEMCA's Leadership Council approves Career and College Readiness curricula four times each year (April, May, October, and November). Typically, approvals are issued for Early Middle Colleges one year before the school's first graduating class.

The Early Middle College must be in their second year of operation and attend a Cluster II workshop to learn about the requirements necessary for earning the right to confer the MEMCA certificate.

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5. **Is Dual Enrollment the same as enrollment in an Early Middle College?**

Dual Enrollment courses are available to all students who meet eligibility requirements as outlined in the MDE's [Dual Enrollment FAQ](#) found at www.michigan.gov/dualenrollment. Students meeting eligibility requirements can enroll in up to 10 postsecondary courses under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (PA 160 of 1996) and the Career and Technical Preparation Act (PA 258 of 2000). The Dual Enrollment laws do not alone prescribe a specific course of study but allow for certain types of courses to be taken when eligibility requirements are met.

In contrast, Early Middle Colleges are structured programs that use the flexibility with the Dual Enrollment laws to provide a specific and deliberately designed course of study that includes wrap-around student support services.

6. **Is there a simple definition to explain the difference between “Early” vs. “Middle?”**

In Michigan there are no substantive differences between an “early” or “middle” college, hence the terms are used interchangeably. Michigan Early Middle Colleges embed the national middle college design principles and purpose, while requiring dual enrollment in a five-year model.

7. **What is the difference between an Early Middle College High School and a Program?**

An early middle college high school means a stand-alone public high school, where 100% of the pupils are enrolled as EMC pupils.

An early middle college program is a high school program designed to serve less than 100% of the high school population.

An early middle college consortium program is comprised of multiple school districts with one coordinating agency.

8. **What is an Enhanced Dual Enrollment System (EDES)?**

An “EDES” is a high school instructional model that allows the student to earn 12 college credits by the end of their traditional twelfth grade year (12 x 12). It is intended to be a precursor to opening a full scale 5-year Early Middle College.

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9. How can an ISD/RESA establish an Early Middle College program?

Please contact the MDE Early Middle College staff for assistance at 517-241-5342.

10. How does having an Early Middle College Affect Career Center programs?

Early Middle Colleges and Career Center programs can coexist and even work in collaboration with one another. Early Middle Colleges can simultaneously focus on career and technical education (CTE) and postsecondary courses. A CTE Early Middle College is eligible for 61b funding if it has a state approved CTE program. A CTE program may not earn 61b funding if it does not first have an approved Early Middle College. The secondary state approved CTE program must be delivered and completed before the end of the Early Middle College students' 4th year in high school.

11. If a student is enrolled in an Early Middle College, is the student eligible to participate in MHSAA sports?

Eligible students can participate in athletics with his or her resident district following the requirements provided by the district and the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA). Please call the MHSAA for specific guidelines 517-332-5046. Participation in intercollegiate athletics, however, is prohibited by Section 5 of the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (MCL 388.515, p. 5).

12. Are homeschooled and nonpublic students eligible to participate in an Early Middle College?

A nonpublic or homeschool student is one who receives instruction in at least one course from a nonpublic or homeschool entity.

Nonpublic and homeschool students are not eligible to participate in Early Middle College 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 upon completion. Early Middle Colleges would include instruction in content areas considered to be essential to the student's education.

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13. Where can I find a sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between a district and a postsecondary institution?

A sample MOU can be found [here](#):

http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-43092_51178---,00.html#noprint.

Districts are encouraged to engage the entire Early Middle College design team, including secondary and postsecondary educators, to customize the template and/or develop an MOU to meet individual partnership needs. The MDE also encourages districts to have the final MOU reviewed by legal counsel. The MDE recommends annual review of all MOUs with all partners.

14. Can an Early Middle College have more than one postsecondary partner?

Yes. The Early Middle College should have a primary postsecondary partner, but additional postsecondary partners may be added later, or at the time of application. The postsecondary partner will report in Student Transcript and Academic Record Repository (STARR).

15. Is there guidance that states local districts are responsible for sending 504 accommodations and documentation to a partnering EMC program and or the partnering college?

Dual Enrollment legislation does not speak to 504 Plans and how those might come into play as part of dual enrollment. Per the Office of Special Education at MDE, the student would be entitled to receive 504 accommodations through the dual enrollment, but they would have to work with the college to receive them. To do so, the college would need a copy of the students current 504 plan, which could be provided by the student or if there was a release of information, could be provided by the district. In some cases, a college may develop their own plan and in others they may implement the same plan. It is recommended to work with your districts administration to determine appropriate sharing of student information that is in the best interest of the student.

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II. FUNDING, FEES & COSTS

1. Who must pay for Dual Enrollment expenses (tuition, registration, books, fees, etc.)? The district or parents?

Districts are required to pay the tuition and mandatory course fees, material fees, and registration fees required for enrollment in an eligible course, unless the costs exceed the prorated percentage of the statewide weighted average foundation allowance. After this amount is exhausted, the district has the option of paying the additional costs using local funding sources, or the parent must pay the remaining costs. For the most recent information on Dual Enrollment costs, please see the MDE's Dual Enrollment FAQ and Calculation Worksheet at www.michigan.gov/dualenrollment.

Early Middle Colleges are designed with the intent of providing additional access to postsecondary courses. The maximum number of courses, as well as the handling of costs more than the student's foundation, should be detailed in the MOU between the secondary school and postsecondary institution. In other words, MDE does not impose a cap on the number of courses/credits allowed for Early Middle Colleges. Any limitations should be addressed at the local level inside the MOU.

2. What are the rules (if any) regarding Free and Reduced Lunch/Title I funding and Early Middle College students?

Students attending Early Middle College programs and schools are eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program. One option is for the Early Middle College to work with a public-school district to enter into an alternate agreement with that district to provide the meals. The school district would be responsible for all administrative responsibilities and would receive the reimbursement for the meals. In this scenario, the public-school district is responsible for all administrative duties including the MEGS+ application process, the income eligibility process, and the claim submission. Due to the different designs of Early Middle Colleges, we suggest you work with the School Nutrition Programs (SNP) Unit at the Michigan Department of Education to determine what might be the best fit for your students. The SNP staff are available at phone 517-241-5376 or email mde-schoolnutrition@michigan.gov.

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3. Can the Early Middle College pay for a college-level courses described as “developmental” or “remedial” if it is equivalent to the schools’ 12th grade English class?

It is plausible for an Early Middle College student to take developmental college courses due to scheduling and/or school/program location limitations as long as the district local funding sources pay for the associated costs. Section 5GA(B) of the Pupil Accounting Manual gives the district the option of paying for remedial courses if it is in the best educational interest of the student (See Section R 388.155 (2) of the State School Aid Act).

4. What types of Dual Enrollment courses cannot be funded using state aid?

Please review the [Dual Enrollment FAQ](#), as well as the related laws at www.michigan.gov/dualenrollment.

5. Can students’ families be billed for college courses they fail or withdraw from?

The repayment clause in the Dual Enrollment law does not apply to an eligible student who does not complete the course due to a family or medical emergency [MCL 388.514(9)(b)]. Moreover, the law states that students “shall” repay, but it also says that districts “may” impose sanctions. This leaves districts with the discretion to determine if additional flexibility or forgiveness is needed when repayment would cause the student hardship. For more information, please review the [Dual Enrollment FAQ](#), as well as the related laws at www.michigan.gov/dualenrollment.

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III. DATA REPORTING & GRADUATION

1. When must Early Middle College students be identified and coded in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS)?

Participation in an Early Middle College can begin as soon as the first year of high school (9th grade) and should be declared before the student begins grade 11. In accordance with the MSDS rules, all Early Middle College (EMC) students must be coded "3500" (EMC participating) in MSDS, by the fall general collection certification deadline of the student's third year of high school (junior year or 11th grade). To find the fall certification deadline date [visit https://www.michigan.gov/cepi](https://www.michigan.gov/cepi).

2. When must the Early Middle College student be coded 3500?

EMC students must be coded in the MSDS, and the MSDS collection certified by the fifth Wednesday after the fall count date of their third year of high school (junior or 11th grade). Districts may resolve any pupil membership conflicts with other districts, correct any data issues and recertify no later than the sixth Wednesday after count day. To find the dates and times for reporting and certification [go to https://www.michigan.gov/cepi](https://www.michigan.gov/cepi).

A student can be coded 3500 as soon as the student and parent commit to the 5th year. This can be as early as 9th grade. They do not need to be dual enrolled before coding 3500.

Note: Once a student has been declared an Early Middle College student, they need to be reported with Program Participation Code "3500" in each subsequent collection thereafter. If a student exits the Early Middle College, the 3500 code must be removed from the student's profile in MSDS.

3. What is the age cutoff for EMC students?

For pupil accounting membership purposes, the cut-off for a general education pupil **is less than 20 years of age on September 1**; the cut-off for certain special education pupils is less than 26 years of age on September 1; the cut-off for a pupil facing extreme barriers to education and who had dropped out is less than 22 years of age on September 1.

If an EMC student turns 20 after September 1, they can complete their fifth year of the EMC Program. If they turn 20 prior to September 1 and have not completed their fifth year, they cannot be counted for membership.

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4. What happens if a student moves to another district?

If a student moves to a district that also has an Early Middle College program, he/she should enroll in that program and maintain his/her 5-year graduation cohort. If no Early Middle College program is available, then the 3500 code should be removed, and the student becomes a standard 4-year graduate and would be placed in the standard 4-year cohort.

5. What happens if a student decides the program is not for them in their senior year? Can they “drop” the Early Middle College and attempt to complete state and district graduation requirements by the end of their senior year (4th year) to graduate?

The MDE recommends that all students and parents considering an Early Middle College be fully advised of the 5-year commitment.

If a student decides the Early Middle College program is not for them, then the district may remove the 3500 code and the student will return to his/her original four-year cohort. The 3500 code must be removed by June 30 of the student's senior (4th) year; otherwise the student will be off track for graduation. It is the local districts responsibility to ensure that the students have met all state and local district graduation requirements.

6. What year should schools place on the student diploma for Early Middle Colleges?

The diploma date must coincide with the Early Middle College students' legal graduation date after he/she has completed all the Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements and local district graduation requirements. Earning the 5th year FTE funding also coincides with this completion.

The act of walking across the stage during the graduation ceremony is a local district decision. The MDE and CEPI recommend that districts place the 5th year on the student's diploma because the high school curriculum is not officially completed until after the 5th year is completed (given that a math or math related course must be taken during the 5th year).

7. What kind of math class qualifies for the final year (5th year) math requirement in an Early Middle College?

The final year math math/related requirement may be a high school course or a Dual Enrollment course but must count for high school credit. The course can be offered at the high school, college campus, or online. Also, note that this is a

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requirement regardless of how many math credits have been previously earned. The Michigan Merit Curriculum [FAQ](#) can be found here for questions on math courses:

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Complete_MMC_FAQ_August_2014_467323_7.pdf.

8. If a student is flagged as a 5th year Early Middle College student, does the 5th year math requirement mean that they can take 5 years of math? In other words, what if a student completes 4 years of math by the end of the fourth year of their Early Middle College experience, do they still need a final year of math (in their 5th year)?

The Michigan Merit Curriculum graduation requirements state that students must take at least 4 years of math, with one of the math classes being successfully completed the final year of high school, to graduate. This applies to Early Middle College students just as it does for all other students. An Early Middle College student must successfully complete a math/math related class during their 5th year of high school and have completed at least 3 years or more of math previously. The Michigan Merit Curriculum [FAQ](#) can be found here https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Complete_MMC_FAQ_August_2014_467323_7.pdf. The 3500 code puts the student in a five-year graduation cohort; therefore, their final year of high school is year five.

9. If in college classes, what constitutes a full-time high school student?

A full-time college course load equates to 12-16 credits (depending on the postsecondary institution's definition of full-time). A 2-credit college course would equate to one high school class for a six-period day ($2/12 = 1/6$). A 3-credit college course would equate to one high school class for a four-block day ($3/12 = 1/4$). Use the course credits to determine high school class equivalency for those Dual Enrollment courses.

Please refer to 'How to Count the FTE for a Dually Enrolled Pupil' in Section 5-G-A of the Pupil Accounting Manual for sample calculations at the following [link](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6605-22360--,00.html) <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6605-22360--,00.html>.

10. Do Early Middle College students need to meet the state hours of instruction requirement (1,098 hours under current law) if they are in a college program with fewer hours?

Section 6(4)(q) of the State School Aid Act [MCL 388.1606] states:

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"In determining full-time equated memberships for pupils who are enrolled in a postsecondary institution, a pupil shall not be considered to be less than a full-time equated pupil solely because of the effect of his or her postsecondary enrollment, including necessary travel time, on the number of class hours provided by the district to the pupil." Under this language, a dual enrolled student needs to equate to a full-time student per one of the calculation methods provided in 'How to Count the FTE for a Dually Enrolled Pupil' under [Section 5-G-A](#) of the Pupil Accounting Manual. <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6605-22360--,00.html>.

Additionally, a district may elect to support a student with a reduced schedule under Section 101(6)(c) of the State School Aid Act [MCL 388.1701], which provides an exception to the 1,098-hour requirement.

11. When does a student take the state assessment exam?

The state assessment exam is administered in the spring to third year high school students, 11th grade students, as well as to students in the 12th grade that have not yet participated in the assessment.

12. What should a pupil accounting auditor look for as evidence of an Early Middle College pupil enrollment?

A five-year Program of Study (POS) every Early Middle College POS must reflect a fifth-year math/math related course.

EDP reflecting the fifth year.

Student course schedule showing both high school and college courses

Upon graduation, a copy of college transcript showing the degree or certificate that was earned, a copy of the MEMCA Certificate issued, or documentation that the student was accepted to a registered apprenticeship.

If any of these evidences are missing the Pupil Accounting Auditor reserves the right to list a finding in the audit.

13. What happens if a student misses a semester?

Assuming a PA (pupil accounting auditor) audits all pupils, in all classes each year, and they find an Early Middle College student misses a college semester due to illness or another valid reason, and the student is expected to return, the student

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shall remain coded 3500 for all three collections. However, from an FTE perspective the district would lose .5 FTE for those pupils.

14. How is the extra grade level reported in MSDS?

A student's grade level should be reported based on the high school credits/progress earned toward high school graduation requirements as determined by the local high school or district board of education. A typical high school student following a normal course of study will have grade 9 reported for a student's first year of high school, progressing upward to grade 12 being reported for the student's fourth year of high school. Since Early Middle College students will have a fifth year to fulfill diploma and degree/certificate requirements, one grade level must be reported for two consecutive school years. Grade 12 is the only grade level expected to be reported twice in consecutive school years. **This means that sequence of grade levels reported for an Early Middle College student, over the course of their high school and 5th year is expected to be 9, 10, 11, 12, 12.**

15. If there are 6 classes in the high school, college adds another one. Does that include an extra day?

If an Early Middle College pupil schedule exceeds that of the regular high school student, their hours earned will equate to an extra day beyond the 180 days. In other words, if an Early Middle College pupil is enrolled in a mixture of high school classes and college courses that exceed the 1,098 hours per year then the district is eligible to claim extra FTE. The extra FTE shall be determined by the PA. Refer to section 6(4)(kk) in the State School Aid Act of 1979.

Section 6(4)(kk) of the State School Aid Act [MCL 388.1606] states:

"A pupil enrolled in a middle college program may be counted for more than a total of 1.0 full-time equated membership if the pupil is enrolled in more than the minimum number of instructional days and hours required under section 101 and the pupil is expected to complete the 5-year program with both a high school diploma and at least 60 transferable college credits or is expected to earn an associate degree in fewer than 5 years."

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16. Can a student enter the Early Middle College as a 12th grade student if he/she has taken enough Dual Enrollment courses to match what a student would complete in the junior year of the Early Middle College program? In other words, can you add someone in the 12th grade year if they are on track?

No. Early Middle College students must be identified and coded 3500 in the MSDS by the Fall Certification date at the beginning of the third year of high school, 11th grade for accountability purposes.

17. If we code students 3500 this year and then they decide not to participate, won't local districts have an issue with their graduation rate?

If the 3500 Program Participation code is removed prior to reporting the student as graduating, the cohort year reverts to the original 4-year expected graduation year and their graduation/cohort status is determined using the original cohort year.

18. In Section 6(4)(kk) of the State School Aid Act of 1979 it states that "a pupil enrolled in a middle college program may be counted for more than a total of 1.0 full-time equated membership if the pupil is enrolled in more than the minimum number of instruction days and hours required under section 101 and the pupil is expected to complete the 5-year program with both a high school diploma and at least 60 transferable college credits or is expected to earn an associate's degree in fewer than 5 years". How do I determine this and what documentation is needed?

Look at the student's program of study. This should tell you which classes, or number of classes, that a student would need to complete by the end of year to be on-track. If the student has completed more of the program of study than would normally be expected as of the current semester or trimester, then it would be fair to expect the student to complete the program early. You should also see the student taking courses over the summer, or during the regular school year that in addition to the student's full-time schedule. It is recommended to check with your local Pupil Accounting Auditor or the MDE Pupil Accounting Office at 517-373-3352.

19. Which exit status code do I use for Early Middle College Student in the MSDS?

Exit status 40 is an Early Middle College student who graduates with their high school diploma **and** one of the following:

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- 60 transferable college credits toward a four-year degree from a Michigan public or private university
- an associate degree from a community college
- professional certification
- Michigan Early Middle College Association (MEMCA) technical certificate
- the right to participate in a registered apprenticeship.

Exit status 41 is an Early Middle College student who graduates with their high school diploma and does not earn one of the credentials above. A student in a five-year cohort, who is exited with a status of 41, will be off track for graduation.

20. Does the 3500 EMC student code automatically upload to MSDS from my Student Information System (SIS)?

No, it does not.

21. How can I check if my students are coded properly by the Fall Certification Deadline?

The district pupil accounting personnel can verify their data by pulling the "Program Participation Count" report from the MSDS. If things look correct, then no further action is necessary.

22. How long do the districts need to keep the documents for an Early College Student?

Per the [Records Retention and Disposal Schedule for Michigan Public Schools](#), and the individual pupil level requirements in [Section 1 of the Pupil Accounting Manual](#) should be followed by all school districts. A student's high school/college transcript should be a part of the student's permanent file forever. For EMC consortia, providing EMC services to districts, the program of study, EDP, EMC application etc., should be maintained for three years after the student graduates. An electronic copy of the student file is acceptable.