

SECTION 1: EMC History, EMC Entities, the Michigan Early Middle College Association, and Dual Enrollment

History of Michigan Early Middle Colleges

College in high school programming has seen increased interest from stakeholders across Michigan. The Michigan Department of Education Office of Career and Technical Education (MDE-OCTE) oversees the Early Middle College (EMC) programming in Michigan.

Michigan opted to alter the traditional Early College Program to increase access and opportunity to students by allowing districts to provide a five-year program of study and choose to set up the EMC as a high school, program, or consortia. As such, Michigan has seen incredible growth in the number of districts and public-school academies that have selected to seek approval to open an EMC. With substantial growth also comes challenges that the MDE-OCTE staff must address to create sustainable, robust, high-quality EMCs. As such, the EMC Unit has developed an EMC Administrator Manual to support EMC staff.

Traditionally, throughout the nation, Early Colleges or Middle Colleges were high schools where 100% of the students were working toward a high school diploma and postsecondary credit. Early Colleges were geared toward advanced students, who had the opportunity to graduate in four years with a high school diploma and postsecondary credit or an associate degree. Middle Colleges were for students behind on high school credit and needing additional social/emotional support.

Michigan's approach to Early Middle Colleges was to blend the approach of Early Colleges with the philosophy of Middle Colleges. In Michigan, EMCs are encouraged to support first generation, underrepresented, underserved, underperforming, and at-risk students, but each individual school can determine the focus and acceptance requirements of the EMC.

In 1991, the first Middle College was opened in Michigan by Dr. Chery Wagonlander and titled Mott Middle College on the campus of Mott Community College. The establishment of Mott Middle College was supported by the Middle College National Consortium. Dr. Wagonlander also served as the Executive Director of the Michigan Early Middle College Association (MEMCA) from 2005 through 2021.

The Michigan approach to Early Middle Colleges changed with the passage of the Postsecondary Options Act of 1996, PA 160 in 1996 and The Career and Technical Preparation Act, PA 258, in 2000. The legislation resulted in the following:

- An increased number of college courses that EMC students could take while in high school.
- The identification of EMCs as unique five-year models.

- The permission for districts to choose between a high school EMC entity or a program serving a cohort of students. In 2020, MDE made a third category for consortia EMCs.
- The permission for districts to collect foundation allowances for 5th year EMC students.
- The tracking of EMC students by flagging them in the CEPI System.
- The securing of a waiver from the United States Education Department (USED) to allow EMC students to be considered on time graduates after five years for Adequate Year Progress (AYP) reporting.
- The authorization of the MEMCA Certificate.
- The permission for sites other than the high school to be eligible as locations for earning concurrent credit.
- The encouragement to districts to exercise school of choice options allowing the release of a student from one school to another, including the entry into an EMC.

EMC Philosophy and Populations Served

The philosophy is that an EMC experience can benefit all students. MDE-OCTE's philosophy is the students that can most benefit from an EMC experience are students that are:

- Economically Disadvantaged
- Underrepresented
- Underserved
- Underperforming

The philosophy and populations served are not a requirement of EMCs in Michigan. The guidance is that the above student demographics could benefit most from the support structures, teaching philosophy, and unique environment provided by an EMC.

EMC Definition and Student Outcomes

An EMC is a Michigan Department of Education approved five-year program of study. Students/parents/guardians must be made aware of the five-year commitment for an EMC. The EMC will provide a unique cohort environment for students to develop and integrate a 'career and college readiness' curriculum, and provide guidance and counseling specifically designed to support EMC students. The EMC may begin as early as grade 9 and is designed to allow a pupil to earn a high school diploma while also earning one or more of the following:

1. 60 transferable college credits
2. Associate degree
3. A professional certification
4. Michigan Early Middle College Association (MEMCA) technical certificate
5. Participation in a Department of Labor registered apprenticeship

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 intermediate school district (ISD) must apply to the Michigan Department of Education to receive approval to open an Early Middle College.

EMCs must have a formal agreement with at least one Michigan public or private college or university and maintain formal agreements with all postsecondary partners.

EMC Entity Types

Early Middle College **High School** is a stand-alone public high school, where 100% of the pupils are enrolled as EMC pupils.

Early Middle College **Program** is a high school program designed to serve less than 100% of the high school population.

Early Middle College **Consortium** is comprised of multiple school districts with one coordinating agency.

High-Quality EMC Program

MDE-OCTE is working on a high-quality EMC program definition. It is not final as of the date of this publication. Currently the definition includes:

- Academic programming with career and college readiness curriculum embedded.
- A student-centered philosophy providing social emotional and wraparound support by secondary and postsecondary.
- A culture of continuous improvement and data driven decision making.
- Robust, active partnerships between secondary and postsecondary.
- Organizational leadership support that provides resources for staff professional development and appropriate staff time dedicated to supporting EMC students/families.
- Access and equity for all students.
- A comprehensive five-year program of study for each student.
- Timeliness, accuracy, and fidelity in student reporting.
- Students exit with at least one of the five on-track graduate outcomes.
- An advanced training culture throughout the school.

On-Track and Off-Track Graduate Definitions

EMC students will be considered '**on-track**' graduates by earning a high school diploma while also earning an associate degree, a Michigan Early Middle College Association (MEMCA) technical certificate, a professional certification, participation in a registered apprenticeship, or 60 transferable college credits. An exit status code of 40 would be entered in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS).

EMC students will be considered '**off track**' graduates by earning a high school diploma but **NOT** earning an associate degree, a MEMCA technical certificate, a professional certification, participation in a registered apprenticeship, or 60 transferable college credits. An exit status code of 41 would be entered in the MSDS.

How To Start an EMC

1. Assess the interest in establishing an EMC with key stakeholders.
 - a. Secure resources and support.
2. Develop a plan and vision based on the Design Principles, Beliefs, and Best Practices in EMC Programs (see below).
 - a. Consider EMC staff resources, recruitment, social and emotional learning support.
3. Reach out to potential postsecondary partners to explore program of study options for students.
 - a. Consider degrees available, transferability of credit, and costs to students/families.
4. Attend a Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Getting Started Workshop for prospective EMCs.
 - a. Develop a project plan with key steps for EMC opening and check points.
5. Incorporate into the curriculum “The Big Four” Dimensions of College Readiness for students (see page 10).
6. Submit an EMC Application to MDE-OCTE by the annual EMC Application deadline.

EMC Design Principles, Beliefs and Best Practices

POWER OF THE SITE

Locating the school on a college campus is integral to student motivation and success and to an enduring collaborative partnership. It is a visible symbol to the community of dual accountability for student outcomes and academic success. Students are treated as college students and see themselves as college completers.

TEACHING & LEARNING

Developing students’ literacy skills is critical to academic success. Schools regularly engage students in rigorous, in-depth academic work, use active intellectual inquiry, and sustained writing and revisions in all classes.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Schools design a system of assessment that provides multiple opportunities for students to publicly exhibit knowledge and abilities. Assessments grow out of classroom work and provide on-going feedback to the school community, the teacher, the student, and the parent/guardian on a student’s progress toward achieving academic proficiency.

STUDENT SUPPORT

'Smallness,' less than 100 students per grade level, helps to create a learning community for students and teachers and provides opportunities for flexible and innovative structures to support students academically and emotionally.

All students are known well not only because the school is small, but also because the school values and gives priority to small class size and extended time with teachers both daily and over the course of the student's high school years.

DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Purposefully designed structures provide for everyone's voice to be heard and respected in the decision-making process regarding hiring personnel, managing budgets, determining curriculum and pedagogy, developing students' activities, and any other policies that affect the daily life of students and faculty.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff participates in on-going, embedded professional development that focuses on student success. Time during the school day is provided for staff development and the creation of learning communities. New teachers are mentored to help them to understand and to implement the goals of the community.

"The Big Four" Dimension of College Readiness

Taken from "What Makes a Student College Ready?" Dr. David T. Conley, October 2008, Education Leadership, Vol. 66, Number 2.

1. **Key Cognitive Strategies**
Formulate, investigate, understand, analyze, evaluate, integrate, exercise precision, etc.
2. **Key Content Knowledge**
College knowledge and subject area big ideas.
3. **Key Self-Management Skills**
Organizations, judgment, study groups, seeking help, reflection, academic behaviors, etc.
4. **Key Knowledge About Postsecondary Education**
College selection, adult living, applying, financing, college culture, deadlines & details, contextual skills & awareness, etc.

Michigan Early Middle College Association (MEMCA)

The Michigan Early Middle College Association (MEMCA) formation and purpose were established at the June 10, 2009, MDE Early Middle College Leadership Team Meeting. MEMCA is a voluntary alliance of educators actively involved with one, or more, of the Early Middle Colleges working toward significantly increasing the collegiate and postsecondary success and completion rate of Michigan youth. The group comes together to share best practices, develop a community of learners and reflective practitioners, and share research with the broad high school transformation community. MEMCA is governed by a Leadership Council of members.

MEMCA provides the vehicle for awarding an Early Middle College Technical Certificate as an additional option in lieu of an associate degree or other certificates typically given by community colleges. MEMCA believes that Dr. David T. Conley's work should be studied and embedded into all EMC models.

The MDE has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on file designating the responsibilities of MDE and MEMCA regarding EMCs.

Purpose of MEMCA

The purpose of the MEMCA is threefold:

1. Professional development
 - Reflective practice
 - Professional learning community
 - Best practice dissemination
 - Technical assistance for members and groups seeking to develop new Early Middle Colleges
2. Research and contribution to the literature related to Early Middle Colleges
 - Share outcomes and best practice
 - Data collection and analysis
 - Contribute unique perspectives to high school transformation literature
 - Share student voice as well as educator voice
 - Collect and disseminate state-wide data
3. Credentialing
 - Michigan Early Middle College Association Technical Certificate
 - Student credentialing

MEMCA Student Certificate

An EMC has the option to present the Career and College Readiness Curriculum, for approval by the MEMCA Leadership Council, before its first EMC cohort graduation. This approval will allow the EMC the right to confer the MEMCA Technical Certificate. This certificate will support students entering the EMCs that are behind on high school credit, and/or may **not** graduate with an associate degree, a professional certification, have not participated in a registered apprenticeship, or received 60 transferable college credits.

To award the MEMCA Technical Certificate, an EMC must present the college readiness curriculum and EMC overview to the MEMCA Leadership Council and receive approval. The MEMCA presentations occur four times each year during April, May, October, and November. The EMC must be in the second year of operation or further and attend a MEMCA workshop to learn about the requirements necessary to confer the MEMCA Certificate. MEMCA staff will contact the EMC to invite staff to attend the workshop to prepare to present to the Leadership Council and schedule a date for the presentation. The presentation team should include the district administrator, a counselor, teacher, EMC Coordinator, and postsecondary partners. To receive a MEMCA certificate, a student must complete the following:

- The Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC)
- A minimum of 15 non-remedial college credits
- The member school's MEMCA approved College Readiness Curriculum

And one (1) 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
- Or a combination of the two that equals 70+ hours

MEMCA Membership

There are no fees to be a member of MEMCA. All EMCs are automatically enrolled in MEMCA as members, once the application to open a new EMC is approved.

Dr. Chery Wagonlander EMC Excellence in Practice Awards

Two awards are solicited and awarded every year at MDE and MEMCA events in recognition of Dr. Wagonlander and her leadership in creating the Early Middle College System in Michigan. The awards recognize Excellence in Practice in EMCs at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. A link to the application, process, timeline, and details are available at MDE's [EMC web page](#).

Early Middle College and Dual Enrollment

EMCs are unique and designed to allow a pupil to earn a high school diploma while also earning an EMC outcome by continuing education for a 5th year of high school. EMCs provide a structured experience for students that is fortified by structured and intentional student support services. EMCs also include a specific and deliberately designed course of study that includes unique social/emotional student support services.

Dual Enrollment provides an opportunity for students to take college classes while in high school. Dual Enrollment courses are available to all students meeting the eligibility requirements as outlined in the MDE's [Dual Enrollment FAQ](#). High School students may participate in dual enrollment by attending at least one high school course and simultaneously attending a degree-granting postsecondary institution. Students may or may not receive unique social/emotional supports or complete a degree or certificate while participating in dual enrollment.

Under Dual Enrollment, students enroll in individual courses and are not following a degree plan. Dual Enrollment provides for up to 10 postsecondary courses. Dual Enrollment is guided by the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (PA 160 of 1996) and the Career and Technical Preparation Act (PA 258 of 2000) and provides for payment from a school district's state aid foundation grant. Visit the [Dual Enrollment web page](#) for more information or contact Office of Education Services:

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