



# STUDENT HANDBOOK



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## I. PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

### What is Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College

Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College (E/MC) is a comprehensive 3-year high school program that blends the best elements of the high school and early college experience. Currently a partnership between Lake Michigan College (LMC), Southwestern Michigan College (SMC) and the Berrien Regional Education Service Agency. The program provides student support along with a rigorous educational environment to students who qualify through an application process throughout the participating districts who wish to earn college credit while still in high school. Students will have the opportunity to earn up to 62 transferable college credits and/or an Associate Degree from one of our post-secondary partners while graduating with their high school diploma after the 5th year.

The Berrien County E/MC is designed to prepare students for a four-year university or the workplace after graduating from the program. Beginning in their 11th grade year students will have the opportunity to earn college credits. Total number of college credits earned each year and throughout the program will be dependent on the student's chosen program of study.

## II. 5TH YEAR EARLY/MIDDLE COLLEGE TIMELINE

This is a basic timeline breakdown detailing the 5th Year E/MC program.

- ❑ **10th grade** - Students will apply to become part of the program beginning in December of their 10th grade year.
- ❑ **11th grade** - Students' classes will consist of BOTH high school and college courses. The ratio between the number of high school classes and college classes will vary depending on the program of study chosen.
- ❑ **12th grade** - Students' classes will consist of BOTH high school and college courses. The ratio between the number of high school classes and college classes will vary depending on the program of study chosen.
- ❑ **13th (5th year)** - Student will be a full-time college student with all classes on the college campus.



### **III. NONDISCRIMINATION/TITLE IX POLICY**

Nondiscrimination/Title IX:

Berrien RESA , Lake Michigan College and Southwestern Michigan College comply with all federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and with all requirements and regulations of the United States Department of Education and the Michigan State Department of Education. It is the policy of the Berrien Regional Education Service Agency not to discriminate in its policies and practices with respect to compensation, terms, or conditions of employment because of an individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, height, weight, marital status, political brief, genetic information, disability, or handicap which does not impair an individual's ability to perform adequately in that individual's particular position or activity.

Any inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy should be addressed to:

Lynda Hurlow, Director of Human Resources at Berrien RESA, 711 St. Joseph Ave., Berrien Springs, MI 49103 or the Executive Director, Human Resources (Diversity Officer) at Lake Michigan College, 2755 East Napier Avenue (Room A-305), Benton Harbor, MI 49022-1899, (269) 927-8102. Inquiries may also be sent to Thomas Atkinson, Chief of Staff, Southwestern Michigan College, Briegel Building Room 2104, 58900 Cherry Grove Road, Dowagiac, MI 49047, (269) 782-1276, tatkinson@swmich.edu. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights can be reached at (800) 368-1019.

### **IV. GOALS OF BERRIEN COUNTY 5TH YEAR EARLY/MIDDLE COLLEGE**

1. Provide an opportunity for students to earn up to 62 transferable college credits and/or an Associate Degree, or Technical Certificate.
2. Prepare students for successful transfer to a four-year university or workplace.
3. Prepare students in critical thinking, communication, and life-skills necessary to be successful that will prepare the student for the university experience or the workplace.
4. Meet the unique educational, cultural, and societal needs of each individual student.
5. Provide student services that assist students in learning and being satisfied with all facets of the college experience.
6. Generate an atmosphere where diversity is acknowledged and encouraged.
7. Encourage students to continue their post-secondary education/training beyond their high school experience and the 5th Year Early/Middle College program.
8. Increase the range of courses offered to students, specifically the students that may have chosen not to pursue post-secondary education or training.
9. Encourage intellectual curiosity, promote humanitarian values, and enhance the general educational experiences necessary for persons to function as effective citizens.

## V. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. Attendance

In order for students to be successful within the program students must be present in both high school and college courses. Local district as well as college attendance policies will be enforced. Attendance policies at the college will be established by the instructor of each individual class. It is the student's responsibility to review the course syllabus thoroughly and abide by all course policies. Students are to notify the instructor if there is a conflict that will result in a student missing class.

### B. Withdrawing/Changing Classes

Any change in class schedule MUST be coordinated through the program consultant and local school district. Any schedule change that occurs after the add/drop period (typically the end of the first week of the semester) may incur the cost of tuition, fees and books for the dropped class. Any student dropping or withdrawing after the add/drop period will be placed on 5th Year Early/Middle College academic probation.

### C. Monthly Cohort Meetings

As part of the Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College program, first year students (juniors) are required to attend group cohort meetings one time per month (4 per college semester). Second (seniors) and third (5th) year students will be required to attend two cohort meetings Fall semester and two cohort meetings Spring semester. These meetings will be held at different times to ensure equal access to all of our E/MC students each month. Cohort meetings are established for students to be able to share information with one another as well as for the program consultant to provide information and reminders to the students.

It is the responsibility of the E/MC student to adjust their schedules to attend these cohort meetings. **ONLY college classes, high school games or performances** that conflict with these times are reasons for missing a cohort meeting. Practice or work are not acceptable reasons to miss a cohort meeting and will be counted against the overall number of missed meetings. If a student misses a cohort meeting for any reason, the student is responsible to contact the program consultant within 24 hours. Not informing the program consultant of absent OR missing cohort meetings other than for the reasons listed about could result in the student being placed on 5th Year Early/Middle College academic probation.

### D. Meetings with Program Consultant

Students are required to check-in with the program consultant on a regular basis during the Fall and Spring semesters to discuss class progress and any concerns. First year students (juniors) will have a required meeting time with the consultant at least one time per month. Second year students (seniors) will be required to meet with the consultant at least three times each semester. Third year students (5th year) will meet with the consultant on an as needed basis. Second and third year students can

schedule the meetings, drop by the consultant's office on campus during office hours or communicate via email. In addition, students should be monitoring their email (both their college and personal accounts) on a regular basis. Email will be utilized as the primary source of communicating important information. Remind (web-based site) will be used in addition to email and Canvas for communicating important program information and deadlines.

## **E. Student Conduct**

It is a privilege to be a part of the Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College Program. Students enrolled in the E/MC program will follow the rules and guidelines as established from their local school district as well as the rules and guidelines of the college, Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College, and the state of Michigan. Proper behavior is expected while in high school and on the college campus.

## **F. 5th Year Early/Middle College Academic Probation Criteria**

Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College is a privilege, and each E/MC student must meet the criteria as set by the handbook to remain in the program.

When a student fails to meet these set criteria, that student will be placed on 5th Year Early/Middle College academic probation for the remainder of the current semester and the entire following semester or until it is deemed that the student has met the probationary criteria set below.

To be placed on 5th Year Early/Middle College academic probation a student has failed to meet one or more of the following:

- ❖ Student has consistently failed to participate in communication with the program consultant.
- ❖ Student has failed to attend established cohort meetings
- ❖ Student's semester GPA is below 2.0
- ❖ Student dropped or withdrew from a college class after the drop/add deadline
- ❖ Other actions or inactions that may have a detrimental impact on the student's ability to successfully complete the program in a timely manner as deemed by the Early/Middle College Consultant.

For a student to move from a probationary status to one of good standing, all of the following minimum criteria must be met:

- ❖ Regular face-to-face meetings with the program consultant for the remainder of the current semester. A mutual meeting time and place will be established with each individual student that is placed on academic probation.
- ❖ Development of a plan of action for student success that may include:
  - Tutoring sessions,
  - Attendance plan created between student, local school district, parent/guardian and program consultant,
  - Weekly progress reports turned into the program consultant,
  - Other plans of action based on the individual student needs for increased success in the 5th Year Early/Middle College program



- ❖ Earn an overall GPA of 2.0 or greater at the semester

*\*In addition to the above, the number of college classes may be decreased in upcoming semester(s) to ensure student success in the 5th Year Early/Middle College program.*

**At the end of the probationary period a review will be completed to determine the student's status within the program. If the student has continued to fail to meet the minimum requirements, their file will be reviewed by the 5th Year E/MC Leadership Committee for final determination as to whether the student remains on academic probation for another semester or will be transitioned out of the program. If it is determined that the program is no longer a good fit for the student then a transition plan created between the local school district, leadership committee, and program consultant will be created.**

## **G. Transportation**

Students are expected to attend all college classes and it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they have transportation to the college campus.

## VI. GENERAL INFORMATION

### A. Resources/Activities

Students have full access to all resources available at the college including: Learning Assistance Center (Tutors), Career and Transfer Center, clubs, etc. Students are encouraged to utilize the Tutoring Center as needed, prior to having trouble in class. Early/Middle College students are not eligible to participate in interscholastic athletic programs at the college, but they are encouraged to join clubs and engage in the activities provided by the college.

### B. Closing of School

Students should follow local TV and radio stations for college or high school closures. If your high school is closed it does **NOT** mean that the college campus is necessarily closed. It is the student's responsibility to assure that they are attending school/college classes if it is open.

### C. Fees

As part of the 5th Year Early/Middle College Program, students are not required to pay for tuition, book fees or supplies/materials required for the class. However, students may be responsible for the reimbursement of these fees should a student withdraw or drop a class after the deadline (typically one week after the start of classes) or should a student fail a class.

### D. College Student ID Card

Students are expected to carry their college student ID card with them while on campus. Students can use their card to enter most events on campus. Student ID cards will be distributed during College Success Bootcamp.

### E. Online Classes

Due to historically low success rates, first year 5th Year Early/Middle College students **will not** be allowed to participate in an online class. Upon the completion of two successful semesters with a GPA of 3.0 or above, online curriculum will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis. An online curriculum is different than a hybrid curriculum, which incorporates both face-to-face and online portions of classes. This rule is for online curriculum only, hybrid classes may be used at anytime within a program of study.

## **F. Book Policy**

All 5th Year Early/Middle College required textbooks are provided to the student at no cost. Books are ordered by the E/MC program consultant and students will be required to pick them up at the college bookstore. All rental books are to be returned to the college bookstore by the established deadline. All non-rental books will be returned to the student's individual high school. Deadlines will be communicated through email, Canvas, and Remind. Any cost associated with a book returned after the deadline will be the responsibility of the student/parent/guardian.

## **G. Tutoring**

Information pertaining to college tutoring can be found in the college student handbook or on the college website. Learning assistance is free and available to all students.

## **H. Student Technology Assistance**

Information pertaining to student technology can be found in the college student handbook or on the college website.

## **I. Career and Transfer Center**

Career and transfer assistance information can be found in the college student handbook or on the college website.

## **J. Class Scheduling**

Scheduling of college classes for Fall and Spring semester in the student's 10th grade and first semester of junior year will take place at the high school with the high school counselor, E/MC consultant and college advisor.

In the student's second semester of the 11th and their first semester of the 12th grade year class scheduling will take place on campus with the program consultant. In the second semester of the 12th grade & the entire 5th year, the student will meet with the E/MC consultant to discuss a possible class schedule, then meet with a college academic advisor to schedule classes. Students will not be registered for the next semester until the meeting with the 5th Year Early/Middle College consultant has taken place.

## **K. Student Privacy**

The Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College Program will follow all of the appropriate FERPA laws as they pertain to student privacy. Please contact the program consultant should you have any questions.

### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT**

***The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain right with respect to their educational records. They are:***

*The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the College receives a request for access. Students should submit to the Dean of Academic Services and Registrar written request that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The College will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.*

*The right to request the amendment of the student's education record that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask the College to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. Student should submit to the Dean of Academic Services and Registrar in written request, clearly identify the part of the record(s) they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the College decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the College will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.*

*The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position; a person or company with whom the College has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agency); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.*

*The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Lake Michigan College or Southwestern Michigan College to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:*

*Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605*



## VII. 5TH YEAR EARLY/MIDDLE COLLEGE PROGRAM CONTACTS

**\*All initial contact should be directed to the 5th Year Early/Middle College Consultant**

<b>5th Year E/MC Consultant:</b>	<b>Lake Michigan College (LMC) E/MC:</b>
Melissa Springsteen 5th Year Early/Middle College Consultant Berrien RESA Office: 269-471-7725 ext 1304 Cell: 269-313-1738 <a href="mailto:melissa.springsteen@berrienresa.org">melissa.springsteen@berrienresa.org</a>	Jeremy Schaeffer Director of Admissions Lake Michigan College 269-927-8626 <a href="mailto:jschaeffer@lakemichigancollege.edu">jschaeffer@lakemichigancollege.edu</a>
<b>Program Director Berrien RESA:</b>	<b>Southwestern Michigan College (SMC) E/MC:</b>
Chris Machiniak Regional CTE Director Berrien RESA 269-471-7725 ext 1328 <a href="mailto:chris.machiniak@berrienresa.org">chris.machiniak@berrienresa.org</a>	Jason Smith Director of Admissions Southwestern Michigan College 269-782-1220 <a href="mailto:jsmith07@swmich.edu">jsmith07@swmich.edu</a>



## VIII. Student Agreement Page

**A signature below indicates:**

I have read and understand the Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College handbook and guidelines.

I will follow the rules and guidelines set by my local district, Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College, the post-secondary institution partner, as well as the Michigan Department of Education.

Any severe violation of the above guidelines/rules, which includes the local district's student handbook, may lead to my dismissal from the 5th Year Early Middle College Program. I understand that if I am dismissed from the Berrien County 5th Year Early/Middle College program, I may be responsible for any costs associated with tuition and/or books. I also understand that a dismissal from the program may jeopardize the timeline of my high school graduation; meaning I may no longer be able to graduate with my original class.

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Printed name of Early/Middle College Student

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Signature of Early/Middle College Student

Date

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Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

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Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date