



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

January 22, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents and
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D. 
Deputy Superintendent, Accountability Services

SUBJECT: Appropriate Instructional Assignments for Elementary Certified
Teachers and Early Childhood Endorsement Clarification

The 2011 document entitled "Appropriate Instructional Assignments for Elementary Certified Teachers" has been revised to include the most current law, rule, and policy changes.

Please share this communication district-wide with each educator in your district who works in an elementary/early childhood program or who is involved in the placement of teachers in elementary/early childhood programs. General elementary assignment questions may be directed to the Office of Professional Preparation Services technical support staff at 517-373-3310 or MOECSSupport@michigan.gov. Questions regarding early childhood programs and placement may be directed to the Office of Preschool and Out-of-School Time Learning at 517-373-8483.

Attachments

cc: Michigan Education Alliance

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APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR ELEMENTARY CERTIFIED TEACHERS

This document is designed to assist administrators in the appropriate placement of elementary or secondary certified teachers in elementary classroom teaching assignments.

CERTIFICATE GRADE LEVEL DESIGNATIONS

- Elementary teaching certificates issued after September 1, 1988, are valid for teaching all subjects in grades K-5 and content endorsements in grades 6-8; or all subjects in **self-contained classrooms** up through and including grade 8.
- Elementary teaching certificates issued before September 1, 1988, are valid for teaching all subjects in grades K-8, self-contained, or departmentalized.
- Secondary certificates issued before September 1, 1988, are valid for teaching all subjects in grades 7-8, self-contained, or departmentalized. They are also valid for teaching in the subject areas specified by their endorsements. Please utilize the *Quick Reference: Courses* document to appropriately place these secondary certified teachers in departmentalized settings.

These certificates have what is known as an “all subjects” designation. The all subjects designation authorizes the holder to teach all subjects under Michigan law, within the grade levels indicated. However, based on the 2008 Elementary Certificate Program Standards the MDE **recommends** that the holders of these certificates only be assigned to teach departmentalized courses (e.g., music, visual arts, physical education, health, Title I reading, Title I Mathematics, library media) if they hold those specific endorsements OR if they have had appropriate coursework or professional development in the relevant content.

These grade level designations will appear on the Michigan certificate. While these designations are no longer issued to new teachers, they remain valid for those that hold them. (Please note: Federal Highly Qualified requirements still apply.)

Secondary certificates issued after September 1, 1988, are valid for teaching in the subject areas specified by their endorsements. Please utilize the *Quick Reference: Courses* document to appropriately place these secondary certified teachers.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES: DEFINITIONS

The revised *Administrative Rules Governing the Certification of Michigan Teachers* (May 2012) provides the following definitions that are helpful in determining teaching assignments:

R 390.1101 Definitions.

Rule 1. As used in this code:

- (a) "Certificate endorsement" means subject or subjects that a teacher is authorized to teach at specific grade levels based on completion of appropriate coursework and passage of the appropriate state teacher subject area examination.
- (b) "Departmentalized classroom" means a classroom in which instruction in a specific subject area is provided for a defined period of time.
- (d) "Elementary certificate" means an authorization to teach all subjects, kindergarten to and including grade 5, and grade 6 to and including grade 8 in a **self-contained** classroom and may include one or more subject area endorsements or authorizations to teach in grade 6 to and including grade 8 in departmentalized classrooms.
- (e) "Self-contained classroom" means a classroom in which one teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupil's instructional day.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Please note that as of September 4, 2014, the ZS endorsement appears on a Michigan teaching certificate as "Early Childhood PK - General and Special Education (ZS)".

Holders of the ZS and Early Childhood Education Pre K-K (ZA) endorsements alone are not authorized to teach:

- K-12 special education **without** also holding a specific special education endorsement, e.g., Learning Disabilities (SM) K-12 and Emotional Impairment (SE) K-12.
- Elementary K-5 **without** also holding an elementary teaching certificate.

Secondary certificate holders with special education categorical endorsement (e.g., Learning Disabilities and Emotional Impairment) who added the ZS or ZA endorsement are not authorized to teach general

education without the general education elementary endorsement (K-5 all subjects; K-8 self-contained classroom) as well.

ASSIGNMENT GUIDANCE

The following table provides examples of appropriate teaching assignments for elementary certified teachers. For some assignments, specific endorsements are required.

Assignment	Required Certification and Endorsement
Preschool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Start Readiness Program • Title I preschool 	Elementary Education Certificate with Early Childhood Education endorsement (ZA) OR Elementary Education Certificate with Early Childhood PK- General and Special Education endorsement (ZS) <i>NOTE: The Great Start Readiness Program and Title I preschool may also be taught by a candidate with a bachelor's degree in child development or early child education with specialization in preschool teaching. See Section 32d of the State School Aid Act.</i>
Early childhood special education programs for 2 years, 6 months through age 5 (MARSE MCL340.1754 Programs)	Elementary Education Certificate with Early Childhood PK- General and Special Education endorsement (ZS) OR Secondary Education Certificate with Early Childhood PK- General with Special Education endorsement (ZS) and categorical special education endorsement OR Secondary Education Certificate with Early Childhood Education endorsement (ZA) and categorical special education endorsement OR Elementary Education Certificate with Early Childhood Education endorsement (ZA) and categorical special education endorsement
Kindergarten through grade 8 self-contained classroom and developmental kindergarten (e.g., Young 5s)	Elementary Education Certificate <i>A self-contained classroom is one in which 1 teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupils' instructional day.</i> <i>It is recommended that either the Early Childhood Education endorsement (ZA) or the Early Childhood PK- General and Special Education endorsement (ZS) be held by teachers selected to teach at the K-3 grade levels. It is not required by law and is locally determined.</i>

