



# **Standards for the Preparation of Central Office School Administrators**

Michigan State Board of Education  
Approved August 10, 2021

### **Process of Reviewing and Revising Administrator Standards**

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE), in collaboration with Michigan stakeholders, has been working to improve the preparation of the educator workforce in Michigan. This is in direct alignment with MDE's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan. As part of this continuous improvement process, MDE convened a stakeholder committee to examine Michigan's preparation standards for school administrators, both at the building and central office levels. These preparation standards were adopted in 2013 and were based on the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Standards for Administrator Preparation (2011). The work to revise Michigan's administrator preparation standards became a priority when the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) replaced the ELCC standards with the National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards (NELPS) in 2018. The stakeholder committee was charged with two tasks:

1. Update administrator preparation standards to align with revised national administrator standards (NELPS)
2. Provide administrator preparation programs with standards that align to national accreditation expectations

### **Assumptions and Beliefs**

The stakeholder committee held the following beliefs about well-prepared school administrators and effective school administrator preparation as non-negotiables to guide their work:

- *PK-12 learners-first*: All decisions must consider the impact on Michigan's PK-12 students
- *Instructional leadership*: School administrators must be prepared to provide instructional leadership for multiple content areas and grade or developmental levels
- *Performance of quality educator evaluations*: School administrators demonstrate instructional leadership while performing high-stakes evaluations and providing quality feedback to educators
- *Equity*: School administrators are a gatekeeper to equitable practices for both students and adults in schools and districts
- *Cultural competence*: School administrators are critical composers of a school and district's cultural environment and help to determine whether all students and families feel welcome and included
- *Clinically based preparation*: School administrator preparation should be embedded in real-world experiences serving Michigan's students and families
- *Shared responsibility for student success*: School administrator preparation programs must ensure that candidates share responsibility for **all** students and provide diverse experiences that incorporate equity, inclusiveness, and cultural responsiveness throughout the program
- *Three-dimensional preparation*: School administrator preparation programs must include three dimensions:
  - Awareness – acquiring concepts, information, definitions, and procedures
  - Understanding – interpreting, integrating, and using knowledge and skills
  - Application – apply knowledge and skills to new or specific opportunities or problems

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The stakeholder committee reviewed state and national school administrator preparation standards, current research exploring what skills and knowledge school administrators need to develop during preparation and recent survey data from Michigan PK-12 administrators identifying areas of expertise and skills that school administrators need to develop prior to certification. Throughout the process, the committee requested feedback and critical input from additional stakeholders through surveys and informal conversation. Committee members analyzed the NELPS to ensure that they addressed key non-negotiables and areas of need identified through practitioner input.

The following documents were utilized as primary source material for this work:

- Michigan Standards for the Preparation of Elementary and Secondary PK-12 Administrators (2013)
- Michigan Standards for the Preparation of Central Office Administrators (2013)
- [Educational Leadership Constituent Council Standards Educational Leadership Program Standards: Building Level](#) (2011)
- [Educational Leadership Constituent Council Standards Educational Leadership Program Standards: District Level](#) (2011)
- [National Educational Leadership Preparation Program Recognition Standards: Building Level](#) (2018)
- [National Educational Leadership Preparation Program Recognition Standards: District Level](#) (2018)

The stakeholder committee used these resources to determine whether Michigan's current administrator preparation standards required updating and, if the standards required updating, whether the committee would recommend to the State Board of Education one of the following actions:

- adopting the NELPS or another standards set as written,
- adapting the NELPS or another standards set for a Michigan context, or
- creating new standards.

At the end of this initial process, the committee determined the NELPS as written were reflective of what beginning education administrators in Michigan need to know and to be able to do to be successful and competent leaders.

### **Public Comment**

These standards were presented to the SBE on January 12, 2021, followed by a period of public comment through February 28, 2021. Additional public comment was solicited through May 11, 2021 to capture feedback from more individuals across a wider geographic area. A total of 265 individuals (school administrators, teachers, educator preparation faculty, parents, citizens, educational organization members) from across 73 Michigan PK-12 districts, intermediate school districts and service agencies, and private schools participated in the public comment survey.

Response to the standards was strongly positive. 88% of respondents agreed the proposed standards for the preparation of elementary and secondary PK-12 school administrators would improve the preparation of building level school administrators and 85% agreed that the central office standards would improve the preparation of

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central office administrators. 97% of respondents agreed the proposed elementary and secondary standards provide the basic elements of administration and leadership for beginning administrators and 90% of respondents support agreed the proposed central office standards provide those same elements for beginning district-level administrators.

160 open-ended comments were provided by respondents. Statements of support constituted 63% of open-ended comments. 51% of supportive comments directly addressed the standards and 45% of supportive comments praised the increased focus on equity, culturally responsive instruction, and equity included in the proposed standards.

21% of open-ended comments did not express direct support of or concern with the standards, but instead articulated the numerous needs of administrator preparation programs and administrators in Michigan. These needs included an increased focus on supporting learners in special education and English learners, as well as ethics and equity. Many of these comments acknowledge the challenges of learning about these issues from preparation alone. Other comments voiced a need for more direct school finance, school law, and instructional support, all areas that are included in the standards. Needs-based comments also included suggestions for the internship and mentor needs, which are also addressed in the structure of Standard 8. Other comments voiced a need for the standards to include more direct reference to school finance, school law, and instructional support, all areas that are included in the standards. Comments that identified preparation needs also included suggestions for the internship and mentors, which are addressed in the structure of Standard 8.

15% of open-ended comments expressed concerns. Six comments indicated dissatisfaction with current preparation programs and standards, available professional learning options, and the knowledge and skills of current administrators. Ten comments argued standards, requirements, and certification were not necessary and two of those comments specifically focused on a perceived overemphasis on equity. This should be compared to the 27 comments supporting the focus on equity and 11 comments articulating the need for a greater focus on equity.

Five open-ended comments raised concerns about the amount of work required by the proposed standards, including the internship. This can be compared to the five positive comments about the internship and two comments expressing a need for an extended internship experience. Additionally, five comments focused on the limitations of time and instruction in preparation.

All public comment feedback was reviewed by the original stakeholder committee, which responded to the comments collectively by theme, but did not recommend revising or adjusting the standards. The full text of public comments, as well as a summary, will be provided to the Board.

### **The National Education Leadership Preparation Standards**

The NELPS for building and district-level school administrators were developed by the National Educational Leadership Preparation Specialized Professional Association, sponsored by the NPBEA. These standards represent a historic shift in the preparation of educational leaders from an emphasis on organizational management

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to the promotion of the well-being of all individuals within the school environment. The NELPS outline the knowledge and skills that a well-prepared beginning school administrator should have upon successfully completing a preparation program.

The NELPS are comprised of eight standards with subsequent components that provide detailed context and clarification for each overarching standard. The eight standards are:

- Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Improvement
- Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms
- Standard 3: Equity, Inclusiveness, and Cultural Responsiveness
- Standard 4: Learning and Instruction
- Standard 5: Community and External Leadership
- Standard 6: Operations and Management
- Standard 7: Policy, Governance, and Advocacy
- Standard 8: Internship

Although the topics addressed in each standard are the same across the Elementary and Secondary PK-12 and the Central Office standards, the components are uniquely crafted to differentiate knowledge and skills relevant to the level of practice. Considering the non-negotiable of a clinically based program, the stakeholder committee determined that effective implementation of these standards relies on embedding preparation in an educational context meaningful to the candidate.

### **Changes from current standards to NELPS**

The NELPS represent several key shifts in the field of administrator preparation that have taken place since the adoption of the ELCC standards, upon which the current Michigan administrator preparation standards were based. One such shift changes the stem used at the beginning of each standard from “apply knowledge that promotes the success of every student” to “understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult.” Another shift expands the responsibilities of administrators to all of the community members of a school. These shifts align with MDE’s Top 10 Strategic Education Plan goal to “improve the health, safety, and wellness of all learners” by focusing programs and outcomes on learner and adult well-being instead of solely student success.

Other shifts between the current standards and the NELPS include more explicit focus on:

- promoting equity, inclusivity, and cultural responsiveness in the school environment (Standard 3),
- making data-driven decisions to improve school and curricular outcomes (Standard 1),
- building professional capacity to implement those decisions (Standard 7),
- demonstrating instructional leadership that improves student outcomes equitably (Standard 4), and
- engaging in community leadership that includes families and supports the well-being of all individuals in a school environment (Standard 5).

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Certain standard areas are maintained from the current standards to the NELPS. Standard 1 continues to promote “developing a shared school vision”, and resource management moves from the current Standard 3 to NELP Standard 6. Other standards both maintain and expand upon Michigan’s current standards. NELP Standard 7 maintains “demonstrating collaborative leadership” from the current Standard 3 and adds expectations for “building professional capacity” to create those collaborative leadership opportunities. NELP Standard 5 maintains expectations for “advocating for families and sustaining community partners” from the current Standard 4 but adds a consideration for how community leadership is reflected in student outcomes. Additionally, a specific standard for internships appears in both the ELCC (Standard 7) and NELPS (Standard 8), with NELPS calling for an increase in the minimum hours required from 216 to 240.

### **Reaction from the Field**

When the NELPS were finalized in early 2018, many of Michigan’s school administrator preparation programs that pursue recognition from the National Policy Board for Educational Administration were already attuned to the changes. These standards were developed with guidance from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation to better align recognition expectations with requirements for national accreditation, which is required in Michigan. This national recognition is valued by preparation programs and their institutions and provides a method for assuring that administrators prepared in Michigan meet national standards for quality.

For practitioners, Michigan’s PK-12 building level and central office administrators are currently evaluated through tools aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSELs), also created by NPBEA. The NELPS and PSELs were developed to operate together as a continuum of support and expectations for the growth and learning of education administrators. Administrator candidates entering the Michigan education workforce from programs aligned to the NELPS will be explicitly prepared to perform the practices outlined in the PSELs and evaluated by state approved observational instruments.

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### **Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Improvement**

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to *collaboratively lead, design, and implement a district mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.*

**Component 1.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to collaboratively evaluate, develop, and communicate a district mission and vision designed to reflect a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

**Component 1.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to lead district strategic planning and continuous improvement processes that engage diverse stakeholders in data collection, diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation.

### **Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms**

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to *understand and demonstrate the capacity to advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate and enact professional norms.*

**Component 2.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to reflect on, communicate about, cultivate, and model professional dispositions and norms (i.e., fairness, integrity, transparency, trust, digital citizenship, collaboration, perseverance, reflection, lifelong learning) and professional district and school cultures.

**Component 2.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.

**Component 2.3** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to model ethical behavior in their personal conduct and relationships and to cultivate ethical behavior in others.

### **Standard 3: Equity, Inclusiveness, and Cultural Responsiveness**

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to *develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive district culture.*

**Component 3.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to use data to evaluate, design, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive district culture.

**Component 3.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to safe and

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nurturing schools and the opportunities and resources, including instructional materials, technologies, classrooms, teachers, interventions, and adult relationships, necessary to support the success and well-being of each student.

**Component 3.3** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, advocate, and cultivate equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instructional and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.

### **Standard 4: Learning and Instruction**

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to *evaluate, design, cultivate, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, data systems, supports, assessment, and instructional leadership.*

**Component 4.1** Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, design, and implement high-quality curricula, the use of technology, and other services and supports for academic and non-academic student programs.

**Component 4.2** Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to collaboratively evaluate, design, and cultivate coherent systems of support, coaching, and professional development for educators, educational professionals, and school and district leaders, including themselves, that promote reflection, digital literacy, distributed leadership, data literacy, equity, improvement, and student success.

**Component 4.3** Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, and evaluate a developmentally appropriate, accessible, and culturally responsive system of assessments and data collection, management, and analysis that support instructional improvement, equity, student learning and well-being, and instructional leadership.

**Component 4.4** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, and evaluate district-wide use of coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, assessment, student services, technology, and instructional resources that support the needs of each student in the district.

### **Standard 5: Community and External Leadership**

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to *engage families, communities, and other constituents in the work of schools and the district and to advocate for district, student, and community needs.*

**Component 5.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to represent and support district schools in engaging diverse families in strengthening student learning in and out of school.

**Component 5.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to understand, engage, and effectively collaborate and communicate

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with, through oral, written, and digital means, diverse families, community members, partners, and other constituencies to benefit learners, schools, and the district as a whole.

**Component 5.3** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to communicate through oral, written, and digital means within the larger organizational, community, and political contexts and cultivate relationships with members of the business, civic, and policy community in support of their advocacy for district, school, student, and community needs.

### **Standard 6: Operations and Management**

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to *develop, monitor, evaluate, and manage data-informed and equitable district systems for operations, resources, technology, and human capital management.*

**Component 6.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to develop, communicate, implement, and evaluate data-informed and equitable management, communication, technology, governance, and operation systems at the district level to support schools in realizing the district's mission and vision.

**Component 6.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to develop, communicate, implement, and evaluate a data-based district resourcing plan and support schools in developing their school-level resourcing plans.

**Component 6.3** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to develop, implement, and evaluate coordinated, data-informed systems for hiring, retaining, supervising, and developing school and district staff in order to support the district's collective instructional and leadership capacity.

### **Standard 7: Building Professional Capacity**

Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to *cultivate relationships, lead collaborative decision making and governance, and represent and advocate for district needs in broader policy conversations.*

**Component 7.1** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to represent the district, advocate for district needs, and cultivate a respectful and responsive relationship with the district's board of education focused on achieving the district's shared mission and vision.

**Component 7.2** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to design, implement, cultivate, and evaluate effective and collaborative systems for district governance that engage multiple and diverse stakeholder groups, including school and district personnel, families, community stakeholders, and board members.

**Component 7.3** Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, engage in decision making around, implement, and appropriately communicate about district, state, and national policy, laws, rules, and regulations.

**Component 7.4** Program completers understand the implications of larger cultural, social, economic, legal, and political interests, changes, and expectations and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate and represent district needs and priorities within larger policy conversations and advocate for district needs and priorities at the local, state, and national level.

### **Standard 8: Internship**

Candidates successfully complete an internship under the supervision of knowledgeable, expert practitioners that engages candidates in multiple and diverse district settings and provides candidates with coherent, authentic, and sustained opportunities to synthesize and apply the knowledge and skills identified in NELP standards 1–7 in ways that approximate the full range of responsibilities required of district-level leaders and enable them to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult in their district.

**Component 8.1** Candidates are provided a variety of coherent, authentic field or clinical internship experiences within multiple district environments that afford opportunities to interact with stakeholders, synthesize and apply the content knowledge, and develop and refine the professional skills articulated in each of the components included in NELP district-level program standards 1–7.

**Component 8.2** Candidates are provided a minimum of six months of concentrated (10–15 hours per week) internship or clinical experiences that include authentic leadership activities within a district setting.

**Component 8.3** Candidates are provided a mentor who has demonstrated effectiveness as an educational leader within a district setting; understands the specific district context; is present for a significant portion of the internship; is selected collaboratively by the intern, a representative of the school and/or district, and program faculty; and has received training from the supervising institution.