School Administrator Certificates

As outlined in Michigan law (MCL 380.1246), school administrators whose primary responsibility is to “administer instructional programs” must hold a valid Michigan School Administrator Certificate.

The determination of whether a certificate is required depends not on the label assigned to an individual’s position title, but on the nature of the position. If the duties assigned to an individual are those commonly understood to be those of a superintendent, principal, assistant principal, a school administrator certificate is required. To require a certificate for a person by only a person’s title, would easily invite circumvention of legislative intent.

**Individuals Needing a Certificate:**

In this case, one law (MCL 380.1246) refers to another law (MCL 380.1536) which addresses the development of a school administrator certificate for superintendents, school principals, assistant principals, and other administrators whose primary responsibility is administering instructional programs. There is no specific mention of chief business officials in MCL 380.1536.

Thus, the legislature has recognized three categories of school administrators for certification purposes:

1. Individuals who were employed in Michigan on or before January 4, 2010, as superintendents, as principals, as assistant principals, in positions whose primary responsibility was administering instructional programs, and as chief business officials. Those individuals must complete continuing education requirements.

2. Individuals employed in Michigan after January 4, 2010, as superintendents, as principals, as assistant principals, and in positions whose primary responsibility is administering instructional programs. In general, those individuals must hold school administrator certification under MCL 380.1536.

3. Individuals to whom neither MCL 380.1246(1)(a) nor MCL 380.1246(b) applies. Those individuals are not required to hold a school administrator certificate or to satisfy continuing education requirements. Included in this category is any individual who satisfies both of the following:
   a) Not employed in Michigan on or before January 4, 2010, as a superintendent, as a principal, as an assistant principal, in a position whose primary responsibility was administering instructional programs, or as a chief business official.
   b) Not employed in Michigan after January 4, 2010, as a superintendent, as a principal, as an assistant principal, or in a position whose primary responsibility is administering instructional programs.
Thus, an individual who is currently employed as a chief business official, who was not employed in that position on January 4, 2010, and whose primary responsibility is not administering instructional programs is not required to hold school administrator certification or to satisfy continuing education requirements.

**Program Requirements for a Standard School Administrator Certification:**

Individuals may earn a Michigan administrative certificate through various [Pathways to Administrator Certification](#). Michigan approved School Administrator Certificate preparation programs can be found within the Michigan Department of Education’s (MDE) searchable program database.

Individuals seeking an Elementary & Secondary Administrator K-12 (ES) endorsement must:
- Complete a master’s degree or higher in educational leadership or administration at any [regionally accredited college or university](#).

Individuals seeking a Central Office (CO) Endorsement must:
- possess a master’s degree or higher; and
- complete at least 21 semester credit hours at the post-master’s degree level earned at any [regionally accredited college or university](#).

**Experience-Based School Administrator Certification:**

**Beginning September 1, 2018** school administrators employed in positions as defined by [MCL: 380.1246](#) will be required to hold a valid School Administrator Certificate, a [Experience-Based School Administrator Certificate](#), or obtain the [School Administrator Permit](#).

The Experience-Based School Administrator Certificate allows professional development maintenance within the Michigan Online Educator Certification System (MOECS), ensures school safety laws have been met/maintained, and enables employers to ensure compliance with professional development maintenance aspect of law.

Under MCL 380.1246(3) a non-certified person who was not hired as an administrator on/or before January 4, 2010 and does not hold the standard School Administrator Certificate, may be hired to fill a school administrator position if the following requirements are met:

- The individual must, within 6 months of their hire date, enroll in a program leading to certification as a school administrator. Enrollment must be verified by the provider and include evidence of payment of enrollment fees.
- The program must be completed, and certification must be issued within 3 years.

**Beginning September 1, 2018** administrators hired and employed without certification must obtain the [School Administrator Permit](#) while they meet the requirements.

*Note: No extensions to this permit are available or provided for in law.*