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## Frequently Asked Questions

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### General Information

#### **1. What is the *Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educator (PME)* campaign?**

The *Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educator (PME)* campaign encourages formerly certified educators to seek employment and partner with local education agencies (LEAs), both traditional public school districts, and public school academies (PSAs) to reduce or eliminate barriers to recertification and facilitate re-entry into the profession.

#### **2. What is required for Michigan educator recertification?**

For Michigan educators to recertify their teaching license, [150 hours of professional learning](#) is typically required.

#### **3. How does an educator participate in the Welcome Back PME campaign?**

LEAs, both traditional public school districts, and PSAs must request a waiver for each educator a district is interested in hiring. The [waiver request application tool](#) will adjust the request to meet the unique needs of each educator, based on years of service and years since certification expiration, to allow for employment in academic year 2021-22.

#### **4. Is there an easy way to tell if an educator is eligible?**

Yes. Educators can use the [educator interest survey](#). LEAs, both traditional public school districts and PSAs, can use [waiver request application tool](#).

#### **5. How is teaching experience counted? Does nonpublic or out-of-state experience count? What if I worked a partial year or less than full time?**

Teaching experience within early childhood and K-12 settings (Michigan or out of state, public or non-public) can be counted at the discretion of the LEAs, both traditional public school districts, and PSAs. Less than full-time teaching experience may be used. Accumulation of days must be calculated as outlined below.

- A year is a minimum of 150 days and may be within an academic year or accumulated over a period of years.
- A day is six or more clock hours during which the teacher provides instruction to or has contact with students.
- Two partial days of not less than three hours each may be combined to equal one day.

## Information for Educators

### **6. Friends said they received an email saying they were eligible for the *Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educator (PME)* campaign. Why didn't I get one?**

The three most plausible reasons are:

- a) You hold an educator credential that is something other than a teaching certificate, such as school psychologist or school administrator. Notifications to educators went out in phases, starting with teachers.
- b) Your email address is not up to date in the [Michigan Online Educator Certification System \(MOECS\)](#). Please check your email address in MOECS and update as needed.
- c) You are not eligible. Please check your eligibility using [this tool](#). If you think you should have received the email and did not, please contact [MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov).

### **7. My certificate expires June 2021. I am not eligible for the *Welcome Back PME* campaign and need professional learning. What do I do?**

To support educators in your situation and ease the process of recertification, we have curated a list of [free and low-cost online professional learning](#).

Additionally, please ensure your email address is up to date in the [Michigan Online Educator Certification System](#) to receive important information about other supports for our Proud Michigan Educators.

### **8. Does teaching in an early childhood education setting count toward the teaching experience requirement?**

Yes. Please see question 5 in the General Information Section (above) for specific information about what counts as teaching experience.

### **9. Which LEAs, both traditional public school districts, and PSAs or schools can participate in the *Welcome Back PME* campaign? Do you have a list of participating districts or schools?**

The good news is that ANY Michigan public school district can participate. We do not have a list at this time. LEAs, both traditional public school districts, and PSAs received information about the *Welcome Back PME* campaign at the same time as

educators. Our goal is to publish a list of participating districts or schools on our [website](#) as soon as it is available.

**10. I would like to renew my Standard Teaching Certificate. Do the professional learning hours in the *Welcome Back PME* campaign meet the literacy requirements I need to renew?**

As indicated in the email, educators need 150 hours of professional learning to renew a Michigan teaching certificate. The diagnostic reading course is only necessary if you would like to advance from a Standard (formerly called the Provisional Teaching Certificate) to a Professional Teaching Certificate.

**11. When should I begin applying for jobs? When I apply, how should I let LEAs, both traditional public school districts, and PSAs know I am applying as part of this campaign?**

You should begin applying for teaching jobs as soon as possible. When you apply, please attach the email you received about the campaign and indicate that you wish to be sponsored for recertification. Additionally, add your contact information to our [eligibility and interest tool](#) so LEAs, both traditional public school districts, and PSAs can contact you directly.

**12. I am certified in English and want to become a special education teacher. I am curious if the *Welcome Back PME* campaign would allow me to get my certification back and expand my certificate so I can teach in another endorsement area.**

The campaign allows you to become re-certified in the areas in which you already hold endorsements. LEAs, both traditional public school districts, and PSAs can obtain a permit or special education approval to support your interest in teaching outside your current endorsement area(s). To learn more about adding additional endorsements, check out this [help document](#).

**13. I've been teaching in another state, can I be part of this campaign?**

Good news, we have an even easier way for you to renew your Michigan certificate! A valid out-of-state teaching certificate may be used one time to renew either the Standard (formerly known as the Provisional) or Professional Teaching Certificate. Please apply for recertification through [Michigan Online Educator Certification System \(MOECS\)](#) and answer "yes" when asked if you hold a valid teaching certificate in another state.

**14. I am retired. Will teaching as part of the *Welcome Back PME* campaign impact my retirement benefits?**

Maybe. Educators who retired under the Michigan Public School Employees' Retirement System (MPERS) should visit the online [Working After Retirement Pension Impact Estimator](#) offered by the Office of Retirement Services (ORS) to

determine what effect, if any, working after retirement has on your pension. For any remaining questions, you can contact ORS at 800-381-5111.

## Information for Districts

### **15. Can an independent/non-public school or out-of-state school apply for a waiver on behalf of an educator?**

No. Michigan Law limits the availability of waivers for this campaign to Michigan public school districts and public-school academies.

### **16. Can I employ an educator under an expired or out of state credential until their Michigan certificate gets renewed?**

No. Educators are NOT allowed to teach with an expired or out of state credential. To participate in the campaign, districts may apply for a waiver of either professional learning requirements or permit requirements. Only after a certificate or permit is issued, may the individual be placed in a classroom. Submitting the waiver does not make the individual eligible for placement.

### **17. Will educators have to complete fingerprinting and background checks to obtain recertification and employment?**

Yes. Educators will be required to fulfill the legal professional practices requirements, including fingerprinting and background checks, as a precursor to recertification and employment.

### **18. I have an educator who is interested in teaching at my district, but my vacancies don't match their endorsement areas. Can I participate in this campaign and have them teach out-of-field?**

The permit waiver option is only for endorsement areas on the individual's certificate. LEAs, both traditional public school districts, and PSAs may not waive professional learning hours for recertification, to hire an educator for an assignment that will then require a permit. For example, for an educator holding a secondary math endorsement, a district should not waive professional learning hours for a permitted placement in Spanish. This doesn't mean that they can't use a permit for the educator, but they can't waive any professional learning if they have them teaching out of field.

For additional information about permits, please see the [Permit Options Overview guidance document](#).

### **19. Can a district request all professional learning required for school counselor certification be waived?**

No. The 50 hours of professional learning required for school counselors cannot be waived because it is in law. Educators with a school counselor credential (including

teaching certificates with a school counselor (NT) endorsement) must fulfill the professional learning requirements before any additional hours can be waived.

**20. Can LEAs, both traditional public school districts, and PSAs be flexible on how to determine teaching experience?**

Yes. Please see question 5 in the General Information Section for specific information about what counts as teaching experience.

**21. Are educators who retired under the Michigan Public School Employees' Retirement System (MPSERS) system eligible to participate in the campaign?**

Yes, however, educators should contact the Office of Retirement Services (ORS) about how their benefits may be impacted. ORS offers an online [Working After Retirement Pension Impact Estimator](#) to determine what effect, if any, working after retirement has on their pension. District administrators can contact ORS at 800-381-5111 with any questions.

**22. Who can I contact to speak with someone about our situation?**

Districts can request an appointment with a certification specialist, or email a question, by contacting [MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov).