

School Administrator Credentials and Placement

Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) [380.1246](#) and the School Administrator Certification Code, [R 380.102](#), require valid Michigan [school administrator credentials \(certificate or permit\)](#) when:

- The individual is **employed as a superintendent**. This does not depend on the title of the position but on the job duties of the position and on whether the individual is expected to perform the typical duties of a superintendent. For example, if a “chief administrative officer” performs the typical or essential duties of a superintendent, that individual is required to hold a school administrator credential. On the other hand, a “superintendent of transportation” who does not perform the typical or essential duties of a superintendent is not required to hold a school administrator credential.
- The individual is **employed as a principal**. This does not depend on the title of the position but on the job duties of the position and on whether the individual is expected to perform the duties of a principal.
- The individual is **employed as an assistant principal**. This does not depend on the title of the position but on the job duties of the position and on whether the individual is expected to be able to step in and perform the duties of a principal. Applying this standard, most individuals with the title “assistant principal” require a school administrator credential. However, an individual with the title of “assistant principal” whose sole responsibility is, for example, student discipline and who is not expected to be able to step in and perform the duties of a principal is not required to hold a school administrator credential.
- The individual’s **primary responsibilities are administering instructional programs**. “Administering instructional programs” includes assignments where the individual’s position description or day-to-day duties include any or all the following five areas:
 1. *Responsibility for curriculum*: This entails responsibility for final or executive decisions that directly impact what should be taught to students and how it should be delivered, and what learning outcomes are expected, often following a philosophy of research, best practices, and continuous improvement providing equitable access to all students.
 2. *Responsibility for overseeing district or school improvement plan design or implementation*: This entails responsibility for vision, methodology and execution of plans regarding student assessment, using student performance and school safety data to drive decision-making, using information technology to support improvement, professional development, and overall student achievement.
 3. *Oversight of instructional policies*: This entails responsibility for the creation, modification, and recommendation of final policy regarding any aspect of how teachers implement, deliver, and support curriculum. Whether or not making specific financial decisions in support of these policies is part of the oversight role, this person has final decision-making responsibility for instruction.
 4. *Executive-level reporting on academic progress to a governing authority*: This entails responsibility for providing updates, documentation, data, or presentations in an official or executive capacity to a governing body regarding progress on student learning goals.

5. *Supervision and evaluation of direct reports responsible for instruction:* This entails responsibility for providing executive leadership for employees who report to the individual and providing direction to establish work priorities and decision making. This involves evaluation of educator efficacy and general work performance of staff.

Note that a key component of the definition of an individual whose “primary responsibility is administering instructional programs” is that the individual has final or executive decision-making responsibility in one or more of the five areas.

An example of an individual who does not fit this definition is a teacher leader who does not have final or executive responsibility in any of the five areas but who assists another individual who has such responsibility.

Under [MCL 388.1763](#), districts risk deductions in state aid for employing noncertificated or nonpermitted school administrators.

School Administrator Credentials

There are various [pathways](#) outlined in Michigan’s [School Administrator Certification Code](#) for individuals to earn a School Administrator Certificate, including traditional routes, alternative routes, and meeting the Experience-Based Certificate requirements.

School Administrator Certificate – Traditional and Alternative Routes

Michigan-approved school administrator preparation programs can be found in MDE’s [searchable program database](#).

Currently, there are two types of programs leading to endorsements on a School Administrator Certificate:

1. Elementary & Secondary Administrator PK-12 (ES) Endorsement program:
 - Complete a master’s degree or higher from a [regionally accredited college or university](#) that includes an approved elementary and secondary school administrator preparation program;
or
 - Possess a master’s degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university **and** complete a non-degree, approved elementary and secondary school administrator preparation program.
2. Central Office (CO) Endorsement program:
 - Possess a master’s degree or higher from a regionally accredited college or university.
and
 - Complete an approved central office school administrator preparation program at the post-master’s degree level.

Experience-Based School Administrator Certificate

Under MCL 380.1246, and School Administrator Certification Code, [R 380.103](#), MDE issues [Experience-Based School Administrator Certificates](#). This certificate requires evidence of employment as a school administrator on or before January 4, 2010.

An individual who holds an expired school administrator certificate based on completion of a traditional or alternative route preparation program is required to renew that certificate and is not eligible for an experience-based school administrator certificate.

School Administrator Permit

In order to employ an individual who does not hold a valid school administrator certificate as a superintendent, as a principal, assistant principal, or in a position with primary responsibility to administer instructional programs, a district is required to apply in the Michigan Online Educator

Certification System (MOECS) for a [School Administrator Permit](#).

All of the following are requirements for issuance of a School Administrator Permit:

- The required permit fee must be paid.
- Within six (6) months of hire date or placement in the administrator position, the individual must enroll in an approved school administrator preparation program. The program provider shall verify the individual's enrollment and payment of enrollment fees.
- The individual shall apply for and obtain from MDE a school administrator certificate within the three years allowed in law.

School Administrator Placement

While school administrators are not required to hold a particular endorsement at this time, districts are advised to place school administrators appropriately based on their preparation and experience. For example, a school administrator with an Elementary & Secondary Administrator PK-12 (ES) has been appropriately prepared for a role as a school leader, rather than a district leader.

Districts can verify a school administrator credential and endorsement using the [Michigan Educator Public Credential Search](#) webpage. MDE currently issues school administrator certificates with the following endorsements:

- Elementary & Secondary Administrator PK-12 (ES)
- Central Office (CO)
- Experience-Based School Administrator (EZ)

MDE no longer issues the following endorsements on school administrator certificates, although they continue to be recognized for purposes of employment and appropriate placement:

- Chief School Business Official (AB)
- Central Office Administrator (AC)
- Elementary Principal (AE)
- Superintendent (AP)
- Secondary Principal (AS)

Questions regarding the employment of school administrators may be directed to the Office of Educator Excellence at MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov or 517-241-5000.