



Comparing the LAUNCH & EXPLORE Programs

Preparing Future Proud Michigan Educators

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) aims to acknowledge, elevate, and celebrate the work of great educators in the state through the Proud Michigan Educator (PME) campaign. As components of this broader effort, Future PME programs are recruitment efforts designed to grow and diversify Michigan's educator workforce.

1. What is the difference between Future PME LAUNCH and EXPLORE, and which program is likely to be best for our system?

LAUNCH and **EXPLORE** are complementary programs. It is possible that one is better suited for your unique system, but there may also be a place for both programs. The two initiatives share the goal of informing students about careers in education and both set the foundation for continuing studies in 2- or 4-year institutions. Both programs are based on a set of specific student competencies, and both encourage creation of partnerships with Michigan-approved educator preparation programs.

EXPLORE is a flexible program that can be implemented as a club, course, unit of study, or out-of-school time program in any combination of middle and high school grades. **EXPLORE** programs are designed to be a one-semester elective but districts can flexibly structure them at different levels of depth, ranging from a broad survey course to a more immersive clinical mentorship with a practicing teacher. The curricular content is an introduction to educational systems, strategies, and professions and begins with a focus on the individual learner. The lessons then build an understanding of teaching and learning through the lens of equity and inclusion.

LAUNCH offers the opportunity to earn a workforce credential that qualifies for entry level employment in early childhood and youth-serving programs. The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a national credential; students earn a certificate either for working with infants and toddlers or preschoolers. The Michigan Youth Development Associate (MI-YDA) is a state-specific credential offered through the Michigan Afterschool Partnership. While career and technical education (CTE) programs may offer one or both credentials, students select one of the credential pathways. Where partnerships with institutions of higher education have been established, students may receive college credits toward continuing education. **LAUNCH** may also serve as a [pre-apprenticeship option](#) for the K12 Teacher, Early Childhood Educator, and Childcare Development Specialist apprenticeships.

2. Are the two programs aimed at different groups of students?

Both programs are designed for students who are interested in exploring education careers. **LAUNCH** will also be of interest to juniors and seniors who want to work with children between birth and age 5

and those who want to work with older youth in out-of-school, recreation, and community programs. For students who are ready to seek employment upon graduation from high school—perhaps while continuing their education—**LAUNCH** provides the advantage of a credential.

EXPLORE programs have the flexibility of providing classroom experience and mentoring to target individual students’ interests as they explore careers. **EXPLORE** will likely draw interest from students in Grades 6–12 who are not yet certain about their career pathway but have an interest and skills that align with education professions.

3. How might the two programs be coordinated?

There are many ways to coordinate **LAUNCH** and **EXPLORE**, including, but not limited to:

- A comprehensive high school implements an **EXPLORE** course in Grades 9–10 to familiarize students with opportunities in education careers followed by **LAUNCH** in Grades 11–12.
- A comprehensive high school offers **EXPLORE** coursework, mentoring, and participatory experiences in Grades 9–12 as an elective as well as a **LAUNCH** program through a CTE program.
- A regional career technical center offers **LAUNCH** as one of its career pathways; several of the affiliated sending high schools provide **EXPLORE** programs.
- A middle school offers an **EXPLORE** program or unit of study followed by a **LAUNCH** program at the affiliated high school.

4. What resources are available to support implementation of each program?

LAUNCH is administered through Michigan’s Career Technical Education program under the Perkins grant in partnership with the Office of Great Start; cost reimbursement is available through Perkins grants to districts. The **LAUNCH website** provides resources, including standards and competencies, resource guides, and professional development for educators.

EXPLORE is administered through Michigan’s Office of Educator Excellence and has been supported with free curriculum and professional learning as well as grant funds for program planning. The **EXPLORE website** provides resources, including flexible models for implementation, curricular resources, hybrid student modules, staffing guidance, and self-paced professional learning for educators.

5. How are the programs coded and staffed?

LAUNCH staffing requirements follow the [guidelines for state-recognized CTE programs](#). **LAUNCH** courses are coded with the federal Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code Education, General (13.000). In the Pupil Accounting Manual, **LAUNCH** courses align with Section 5-P: Work Based Learning Experiences, Apprenticeships, and Internships.

EXPLORE staffing requirements vary by model, but are designed to be flexible. In the Registry of Educational Personnel (REP), **EXPLORE** courses are coded with the assignment code Future Michigan Educator (000ME). In the Pupil Accounting Manual, **EXPLORE** courses align with Section 6-C: Future Proud Michigan Educator Explore Programs.