



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** May 12, 2022

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors

**FROM:** Delsa D. Chapman, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent   
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

**SUBJECT:** Reminder: Revised Certificate Structure and Appropriate Placement

All students should have access to well-prepared teachers. In April 2018, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) announced the initial rollout of the revised teacher certification system, found here: [Presentation of the Revised Teacher Certification Structure](#). This was a culmination of years of collaboration with education stakeholders. The collaboration was formed in response to concerns expressed by school leaders that educator preparation needed to shift to meet the diverse needs of today's students. The result is a redesigned certificate structure that places students at the heart of the system and addresses the whole child. Similarly, feedback on appropriately assigning teachers using the new certificate grade band endorsements led to a flexible model that places students first and meets the needs of districts, even in a time of teacher shortage. An updated 2022 visual representation of the Revised Certification Structure can be found here: [Revised Certification Structure](#).

Local education agencies (LEAs), both traditional public school districts and public school academies (PSAs), can expect to begin seeing graduates who hold certificates with the new grade band endorsements as early as May 2022. As this first group of teachers enters the workforce, it is important for LEAs to understand how these educators should be placed to best support children.

The new structure does not affect previously certified Michigan teachers. The endorsements, grade levels, and appropriate placements for existing Michigan certificates will not change.

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### **Revised Certificate Structure Overview**

The defining feature of the new certificate structure are the modified grade bands that focus teacher preparation deeply on the specialized skills and knowledge necessary to meet the unique learning needs of children at each grade and developmental level.

As a reminder, this certificate structure contains six grade bands.

Educators prepared to teach the **Birth-Kindergarten** grade band engage in an integrated course of study focused on whole child development, special education, relationships, and content area knowledge and pedagogy. The standards include developmentally appropriate instructional practices for children in Birth-Kindergarten settings. An educator in this grade band is prepared to teach children across the Birth-Kindergarten continuum including, but not limited to: Home Visiting, Great Start Readiness Programs (GSRP), Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), Head Start, and public or private school kindergarten classrooms.

Educators prepared to teach the **Pre-K-3** and **3-6** grade bands engage in an integrated course of study with a strong focus on literacy and mathematics instruction along with coursework in teaching science and social studies. The preparation standards for both grade bands place a greater emphasis on effective research-based instructional practices to support children's literacy development in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing, as well as other learner-centered supports.

Educators prepared to teach the **5-9** and **7-12** grade bands engage in a course of study that focuses on at least one of the following content areas: English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies. A teacher with the 5-9 grade band has the depth of content knowledge preparation and is able to provide instruction that enables middle school age students to earn high school credit.

Educators prepared to teach the **Pre-K-12** grade band engage in a course of study that focuses on a specific content area or student population. Pre-K-12 endorsement programs include visual arts, music, world language, library media, bilingual education, English as a second language, special education, or health/physical education.

Supporting the preparation experience in these grade bands is a set of 19 research-based core teaching practices that teacher candidates are to develop and practice, and of which they are to demonstrate appropriate mastery within enhanced clinical experiences. These practices are woven throughout their preparation programs, regardless of grade band or discipline area. Known as "high-leverage practices," TeachingWorks identified these fundamental competencies that "are used constantly and are critical to helping students learn important content....These high-leverage practices are used across subject areas, grade levels, and contexts. They

are 'high-leverage' not only because they matter to student learning but because they are basic for advancing skill in teaching."<sup>1</sup>

The endorsements in the new system now reflect more closely the content in which educators were prepared and equip LEAs with the knowledge to assign an appropriately prepared and endorsed teacher to meet student needs.

### **Appropriate Placement for New Grade Band Endorsements**

While certified teachers may always teach in the grade range and content area listed on their certificates, teachers with these new grade band endorsements may also teach outside of the grade range without a substitute permit in specific placements.

While it is strongly preferable for a teacher to be placed in an assignment in their grade band endorsement, current flexibility given the teacher shortage extends beyond grade band endorsements. Please refer to this [graphic](#) for a visual representation of appropriate placement using the redesigned certificate structure, and [this video](#), which provides both a narrative and visual explanation.

### **Additional Flexibilities**

When there is no teacher to fill a particular assignment, MDE encourages local districts to continue utilizing the system of permits and other flexibilities to support staffing needs and vacancies. Additional information on permits and other staffing flexibilities can be found on MDE's [Permits and Placement webpage](#).

cc: Michigan Education Alliance  
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments

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<sup>1</sup> TeachingWorks. (n.d.). High-Leverage Practices. Retrieved from <http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching/high-leverage-practices>