



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** May 12, 2022

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

**FROM:** Dr. Scott M. Koenigsknecht, Deputy Superintendent *SK*  
P-20 System and Student Transitions

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

**SUBJECT:** New Flexibility for Out-of-State Special Education Reciprocity

All students should have access to high-quality teachers. In support, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is modifying an evaluation process used to issue special education endorsements when the educator completes a preparation program outside of Michigan. Each year over 1,000 new teachers, prepared in out-of-state programs, come to Michigan seeking employment. However, due to the categorical nature of Michigan's special education endorsements, teachers who have been prepared in cross-categorical programs in other states have historically faced challenges obtaining documentation to demonstrate competencies in each special education categorical area in Michigan. These challenges have caused barriers to filling empty positions with otherwise qualified special education teachers, which is lightly affecting the shortage in this area of need.

The current out-of-state evaluation process requires teachers to meet all requirements specified in Michigan Compiled Law [380.1531](#).

Additionally, the current out-of-state evaluation process requires prospective special educators to provide the following documentation for each of Michigan's special education endorsements:

- Completion of a state-approved special education preparation program, and
- Completion of a competency form.

The new out-of-state evaluation process is designed to reduce the barriers faced by prospective special education teachers who come from other states by eliminating

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the requirement for the competency form for issuance of a standard or professional teaching certificate for the following special education endorsements:

- Learning Disabilities
- Emotional Impairment
- Cognitive Impairment
- Physical or Other Health Impairment

Use of the current evaluation process and competency forms will be maintained for the following special education endorsements:

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Visual Impairment
- Physical Education for Students with Disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorder

The Speech and Language Impairment endorsement will continue to require specific program preparation, including the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) certification.

The flexibility noted above is not a substitute for broader reciprocity flexibility recommended by MDE and introduced in the legislature as [Senate Bill \(SB\) 861](#) by Senator Ed McBroom (R-Vulcan) on February 8, 2022. Though MDE and others have advocated for passage, this bill has yet to become law. We encourage local and intermediate school superintendents and PSA directors who support this legislation to make their views known to their elected leaders.

The change to the special education reciprocity process, as outlined in this memorandum, does not conflict with SB 861 that MDE helped draft. The flexibility in this memorandum will affect approximately 50 out-of-state special education educators annually. MDE does not have the authority to address reciprocity broadly, as would take place under SB 861, but can offer this specific change to affect the state's special education talent pool in a positive manner.

Please contact the Office of Educator Excellence at [MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov) with questions regarding this process.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance  
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments