



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 6, 2020

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

FROM: Venessa Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent 
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

SUBJECT: Supporting Hard-to-Fill Positions with Teaching Candidates

Students enrolled in teacher preparation programs have long been an underutilized resource for filling vacancies when a district is having difficulty finding fully certified teachers—particularly in a time of teacher shortage and during a pandemic. While certainly not as advantageous as their fully certified counterparts, student teachers may be beneficial to school districts as employees *in certain limited circumstances* due to their demonstrated commitment to the teaching profession and essential entry-level knowledge and skills for working with students. Though this approach should not be used to circumvent the hiring of fully credentialed staff, or be implemented in a widespread manner, hiring student teachers does provide a choice that is better than hiring an individual with no training or no experience.

Districts may hire student teachers for a teaching assignment by utilizing the [full-year basic substitute permit](#). There is no law or rule that prevents payment of student teachers when hired by a district. The issue of compensation is one for collective bargaining with the local teachers' union.

Districts choosing to hire student teachers can capitalize on this first-year experience as a year-long job interview and facilitate seamless induction of early-career teachers into the district. That said, it is vital to the success of both the student teacher's preparation program, and the success of the district, that the student teacher's educator preparation program be strategically, intentionally, and collaboratively involved in the mentoring, ongoing support, and training of these teachers.

All student teachers hired in this manner must be assigned a school district mentor who provides regular support and feedback, and must receive professional learning aligned to feedback to ensure continued growth. The assigned mentor should support the student teacher through the completion of the teacher preparation program and into continued employment with the district. This effort sends a message that the district is committed to growing strong educators and contributing to the educator pipeline.

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Page 2
August 6, 2020

Educator preparation programs have been notified of this communication and encouraged to work closely with districts to assist in finding and placing student teachers. Districts interested in hiring student teachers may consider contacting [Michigan-approved preparation programs](#). For more information about hiring student teachers and other strategies for addressing vacancies and shortages, contact MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors