



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 4, 2024

TO: Current School Social Worker Approval Holders

FROM: Kelli Brozanski, Interim Director, Office of Educator Excellence 
Teri Rink, Director, Office of Special Education 

SUBJECT: School Social Worker Certification Code Changes

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is pleased to announce an update to the [School Social Worker Certification Code](#).

Effective June 27, 2024, MDE is transitioning from the School Social Worker Approval system to School Social Worker Certificates. The new School Social Worker Certificates are multi-level, renewable credentials. Eligibility for a School Social Worker Certificate will no longer be attached to employment, and the certificate will be issued directly to educators. This means that individual school social workers are responsible for applying for their certificates through the [Michigan Online Educator Certification System](#) (MOECS).

Intermediate school districts (ISDs), local education agencies (LEAs), or employers may continue to apply for School Social Work Approvals during the transition year of 2024-25 until July 1, 2025. Individuals holding Approvals may apply for a School Social Worker Certificate at any time. During this transition year, individuals applying for a School Social Worker Certificate will be exempt from paying the \$210 application fee until July 1, 2025 as an incentive to transition to the new certificate.

Waivers to employ individuals who are completing school social worker preparation coursework are no longer available. Instead, employers who have been unable to hire an appropriately credentialed school social worker but have a candidate who is enrolled in an approved school social worker preparation program may apply for a School Social Worker Permit through MOECS.

The table below provides general information on each level of certification, its corresponding credential in the outgoing Approval system, the validity period for each certificate type, and renewal requirements. More detailed information is available on MDE's [School Social Worker Credentials webpage](#).

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Approval System (Old)	Certification System (New)	Term of Validity (Years)	Renewable
Waiver (no longer available)	School Social Worker Permit	1	One-time, when renewal requirements are met
Temporary & Continuing Temporary Approval	Preliminary School Social Worker Certificate	3	One-time, when renewal requirements are met
Full Approval	Professional School Social Worker Certificate	5	Indefinitely, when renewal requirements are met

Transition information for Full Approvals

- Individuals holding a valid School Social Worker Full Approval **may** choose to apply for a School Social Worker Certificate through MOECS.
- All Full Approvals issued prior to July 1, 2025 will remain valid as long as an individual continues to be employed as a school social worker and they maintain a valid Social Work License issued by the [Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs](#) (LARA). A Full Approval expires when an individual is not employed as a school social worker for five or more consecutive years.
- Individuals currently holding a valid Full Approval and a valid Master Social Worker License (LMSW) issued by LARA may be eligible for a Professional School Social Worker Certificate.
- Individuals currently holding a valid Full Approval and a valid Limited Master Social Worker License (LLMSW) issued by LARA may be eligible for a Preliminary School Social Worker Certificate. They will become eligible to apply for a Professional School Social Worker Certificate after they have received a valid LMSW from LARA.
- Once a Full Approval expires due to unemployment, individuals may apply for a School Social Worker Certificate.

Transition information for Temporary or Continuing Temporary Approvals

- Individuals holding valid School Social Worker Temporary or Continuing Temporary Approvals **must** apply for a School Social Worker Certificate through MOECS no later than June 30, 2025.
- Individuals currently holding a Temporary or a Continuing Temporary Approval and a valid LMSW issued LARA who have worked one (1) full academic year as a school social worker in a school setting under the supervision of an individual who holds Full Approval or a Professional School Social Worker Certificate providing social work services to students with disabilities whose Individual Education Program (IEP) required those services may apply for a Professional School Social Worker Certificate.
- Individuals currently holding a Temporary and Continuing Temporary Approval who have **not** worked as a school social worker for a full academic year under the supervision of an individual who holds a Full Approval or a Professional

School Social Worker Certificate or who do not hold a valid LMSW from LARA are not yet eligible for a Professional School Social Worker Certificate but may apply for a Preliminary School Social Worker Certificate.

- Individuals who have completed a school social worker preparation program, hold a master's degree in social work and a LLMSW or LMSW issued by LARA, and who have completed 500 clinical clock hours that address professional practices detailed in Michigan's [Standards for the Preparation and Practice of School Social Workers](#) but who have not fulfilled the one year of experience as a School Social Worker may apply for a Preliminary School Social Worker Certificate.

Employers may apply through MOECS for School Social Worker Permits on behalf of eligible candidates. Individuals may qualify for a School Social Worker Permit when they:

- Hold an earned master's degree or higher in social work,
- Hold a valid LLMSW or LMSW issued by LARA,
- Are accepted into or enrolled in an MDE-approved school social worker preparation program, and
- Are employed by a school in Michigan to provide social work services to students with disabilities whose IEP require those services, while under the supervision of an individual who holds a Full Approval or Professional School Social Worker Certificate.

To locate your existing account, please visit [MDE Account Search](#). If you hold a School Social Worker Approval but cannot locate your account, please contact MDE-EducatorHelp@michigan.gov. Steps to [apply for a certificate](#) through MOECS can be accessed on the Office of Educator Excellence website. For information on renewing School Social Worker Certificates or Permits, please visit the [School Social Worker Credentials webpage](#).

For inquiries please contact, MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov.