



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** October 4, 2024

**TO:** Employers of School Social Workers

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

**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.

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 the [Michigan Online Educator Certification System](#) (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 information. More detailed information is available on MDE's [School Social Worker Credentials website](#).

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Approval System (Old)	Certification System (New)	Term of Validity (Years)	Renewable
Waiver	<a href="#">School Social Worker Permit</a>	1	One-time, when renewal requirements are met
Temporary & Continuing Temporary Approval	<a href="#">Preliminary School Social Worker Certificate</a>	3	One-time, when renewal requirements are met
Full Approval	<a href="#">Professional School Social Worker Certificate</a>	5	Indefinitely, when renewal requirements are met

**Requirements for School Social Worker Certificates and Permits** (For detailed information, please visit the [School Social Worker Credentials website](#)).

- To qualify for a **School Social Worker Permit**, an individual must:
  - Be enrolled in or accepted into an [approved school social worker preparation program](#),
  - Hold an earned master’s degree in social work,
  - Hold a valid Limited Master Social Worker License (LLMSW) or Master Social Worker License (LMSW) issued by the [Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs](#) (LARA), and
  - During the validity of the Permit and under the supervision of a holder of a Professional School Social Worker Certificate or a Full Approval, provide social work services to students with disabilities whose individualized education programs (IEP) require those services.
  
- To qualify for a **Preliminary School Social Worker Certificate**, an individual must:
  - Complete an approved school social worker preparation program,
  - Hold a LLMSW or LMSW issued by LARA, and
  - Complete a minimum of a 500-clock-hour supervised social worker practicum that reflects and supports Michigan’s [Standards for the Preparation and Practice of School Social Workers](#).
  
- To qualify for a **Professional School Social Worker Certificate**, an individual must:
  - Complete an approved school social worker preparation program,
  - Hold a valid LMSW issued by LARA, and
  - Complete one (1) full academic year of service as a school social worker in a school setting providing social work services to students with disabilities whose IEP required those services while under the supervision of an individual who holds a Full Approval or a Professional School Social Worker Certificate.

Steps to [apply for a certificate](#) through MOECS can be accessed on the Office of Educator Excellence website. For information about applying for a School Social Worker Permit, please review the [School Social Worker Permit website](#).

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 worker license issued by LARA. A Full Approval expires when an individual is not employed as a school social worker for five or more consecutive years. Individuals holding a currently valid School Social Worker Full Approval **may** choose to apply for a School Social Worker Certificate through MOECS.

For inquiries, please contact [MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov).