

Administrator Certification Pathways

In Michigan, school administrator preparation is guided by state law, state administrative rules, and administrator preparation program standards. Additional information is available regarding what administrative positions require the [School Administrator Certificate](#).

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

As outlined in law ([MCL 380.1246](#)), school administrators whose primary responsibility is administering instructional programs must hold a valid School Administrator Certificate. This certificate can be obtained by completing a program for an Elementary & Secondary Admin K-12 (ES) or Central Office (CO) endorsement. Additionally, those administrators in these positions prior to January 4, 2010 who have maintained their [professional learning requirements](#), are eligible for the [Experience-Based Administrator Certificate \(EZ\)](#).

Individuals seeking an Elementary & Secondary Administrator K-12 (ES) endorsement must:

- Complete a master's degree or higher in educational leadership or administration at any [regionally accredited college or university](#).
- Complete an approved preparation program.

Individuals seeking a Central Office (CO) Endorsement must:

- Possess a master's degree or higher and
- Complete at least 21 semester credit hours at the post-master's degree level at an approved preparation program.

Michigan approved School Administrator Certificate preparation programs can be found within Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) [searchable program database](#).

PATHWAYS TO CERTIFICATION

Currently, there are three pathways to earn a school administrator certificate in Michigan.

- **Traditional:** Complete a master's degree or higher in educational leadership or administration at any [regionally accredited college or university](#) and an approved administrator preparation program.
- **Alternative Route:** Individuals wishing to complete an alternative route school administrator preparation program for certification can apply to [an approved program](#) under the following conditions:
 - Possession of a master's or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university, or

- Possession of a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university and a minimum of three (3) years of experience as a school administrator
- **Experience-Based:** To qualify for the experience-based certificate, individuals employed as school administrators prior to January 4, 2010 must demonstrate completion of any combination of [education-related professional learning](#) hours, as defined in [R 380.101](#), totaling 150 hours. Note: Individuals who hold a valid Michigan Professional Teaching Certificate shall be considered as meeting the continuing education requirements of this rule. For more information on this pathway review the [School Administrator Experience-Based](#) guidance. NOTE: A school administrator who does not hold a Michigan School Administrator Certificate may be authorized for a [School Administrator Permit](#).

OUT-OF-STATE PROGRAMS

Individuals who seek out or complete an administrator preparation program at institutions or universities [outside the state of Michigan](#) (regardless of whether it is online or face-to-face) must meet the requirements of that state. MDE does not have the authority to approve out-of-state educator preparation programs prior to completion. Upon completion of the preparation program and issuance of the out-of-state certificate or license, administrators may apply for a comparable Michigan School Administrator Certificate.

ENHANCEMENTS

Educational organizations often offer educators enhancements that show the completion of professional learning focused on an educational topic (e.g., curriculum, human resources management, athletic organization, etc.). Completion of a school administrator enhancement program does not lead to the issuance of a School Administrator Certificate. Enhancements are, instead, a way for individuals to display specific skills they have learned through professional learning and training. An individual looking to add enhancements to their portfolio should investigate this option with education organizations – state or national.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Application for initial certification based upon an in-state preparation program or evaluation of an out-of-state school administrator certificate must be submitted using the [Michigan Online Educator Certification System](#).