

Getting Your Teaching Certificate & Keeping It Current

Jointly developed by: Michigan Education Association and the Michigan Department of Education Office of Professional Preparation Services.

What is a teaching certificate?

Your certificate is a license to teach in the state of Michigan. It affirms to parents, students, taxpayers and your co-workers that you have met all requirements to work as a teaching professional in Michigan schools. Certificates are issued by the Michigan Department of Education after you have completed an approved professional preparation program covering curriculum and instruction, student developmental needs, and your teaching subject area(s). Under Michigan law, all teachers employed in the public schools must hold a teaching certificate, permit or vocational authorization valid for the position to which they are assigned.

Are all certificates the same?

Michigan teaching certificates come in several different varieties. As a new teacher graduating from an approved Michigan teacher preparation institution, you will receive a Provisional (initial) Certificate valid for up to six years. Your certificate will list the endorsement(s) authorizing you to teach certain subjects or grade levels.

How do I obtain my first certificate?

Candidates who have completed a teacher preparation program at a Michigan institution can apply for the Provisional Certificate through the teacher certification officer normally associated with the department or college of education at that college/university.

Before you can be employed as a teacher, you must apply for and receive a certificate. In most instances, the Provisional Certificate is the initial Michigan license. You obtain application documents for certification from the certification office at your Michigan approved teacher preparation college or university and obtain information about the Michigan Online Educator Certification System (<https://mdoe.state.mi.us/MOECS/Login.aspx>). The application asks for information about you, your education, and about what type of certificate and endorsement you wish to receive. You must answer some questions about any possible criminal history.

You must also take the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC). Passing the MTTC Basic Skills exam (reading, writing and math) is a prerequisite to student teaching. Taking and passing the appropriate subject exams must occur prior to certification. Information about the exam is available from either your college/university or the Michigan Department of Education or www.mttc.nesinc.com

What am I responsible for under my certificate?

You are responsible for obtaining your certificate and keeping it up-to-date. Most certificates expire on June 30 of a given year. **You may be notified by the Michigan Department of Education by e-mail.** Make sure you know the validity period of your certificate and meet the necessary renewal requirements before the expiration date. **If you let your certificate lapse, you may lose your job and tenure rights.** You are now able to print your Michigan teaching certificate using the Michigan Online Educator Certification System (MOECS). This certificate becomes official once signed and notarized.

While working as a certified teacher, you must obey Michigan laws regarding your conduct as a school employee. Your certificate can be revoked by the State of Michigan for certain kinds of fraud, criminal behavior with children and any felony. Notification of certificate revocation and suspension are reported to other states through a clearinghouse. Teachers are required by Michigan law to report to the employing district within 3 business days any instance where they have been arrested and arraigned for a criminal offense. Failure to do so may result in further charges against the teacher.

Criteria for an initial Michigan Provisional Certificate:

- Be at least 18 years old;
- Hold a bachelor's degree from an approved college or university;
- Have completed an approved teacher preparation program in a specific area.

Candidates who can document completion of an approved teacher preparation program through an out-of-state institution, apply directly to the Michigan Department of Education for the Provisional Certificate or the Professional Certificate.

The initial Provisional certificate is valid for up to six years. During this six year period the teacher is expected to acquire at least three years of successful teaching within the validity of the certificate and complete the additional continuing education requirements, including an additional 3 semester credit course on the diagnosis and remediation of reading difficulties. If this does not happen, the Provisional Certificate can be renewed at least twice, and possibly a third time. A renewal is valid for an additional three years.

Renewing a Provisional Certificate *(each renewal is valid for up to 3 years):*

- **First** renewal requires completion of ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:
 - 6 semester hours in a planned course of study* since the issuance of the Provisional Certificate at an approved educator preparation institution; OR
 - 150 State Continuing Education Contact Hours (SCECHs) appropriate to the grade level and content endorsement(s) of the certificate held since the issuance of the Provisional Certificate; OR
 - combination of semester credit hours and SCECHs (25 SCECHs equate to 1 semester credit hour) since the issuance of the Provisional Certificate; OR
- **Second** renewal requires completion of ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:
 - 6 semester hours in a planned course of study* since the issuance of the FIRST Provisional Renewal at an approved educator preparation institution; OR
 - 150 State Continuing Education Contact Hours (SCECHs) appropriate to the grade level and content endorsement(s) of the certificate held since the issuance of the FIRST Provisional Renewal; OR
 - combination of semester credit hours and SCECHs (25 SCECHs equate to 1 semester credit hour) since the issuance of the FIRST Provisional Renewal; OR
- **Third** renewal requires sponsorship by the local school district or private school, completion of all academic requirements for the Professional Certificate, and approval of the MDE. This renewal will not be issued to individuals who meet all the requirements for the Professional certificate.

An individual who holds an expired Provisional, Temporary Vocational Authorization, or Interim Occupational Certificate, and who has not met the credit requirements for a first or second renewal may qualify for a 3-year renewal of the certificate if he/she:

- holds a valid certificate from another state; and
- has taught in that state within the grade level and subject area endorsement or endorsements to the validity of the certificate for at least 1 year in the preceding 5-year period.

** Credit completed outside the State of Michigan must be in an approved Master's degree program or in an endorsement program (minimum 20 semester credit hours to obtain endorsement) at a state approved teacher preparation institution.*

Two-Year Extended Provisional Certificate:

Individuals with expired Provisional Certificates who do not meet the requirements for a Provisional renewal may be eligible for a Two-Year Extended Provisional Certificate if the following conditions are met:

- The individual's initial Provisional Certificate expired less than ten years ago;
- The individual has at least one year of satisfactory teaching experience within the validity of his/her teaching certificate;
- The individual is currently enrolled* in a planned program at an approved college/university;
- A Michigan public or private school is employing and sponsoring the individual for the Two-Year Extended Provisional Certificate.
 - The sponsoring school agrees to monitor the teacher's progress towards the completion of the Professional Education Certificate requirements.

The Two-Year Extended Provisional Certificate is valid for two calendar years and is nonrenewable. **Individuals who fail to complete all requirements for the Professional Certificate during the two-year validity period of the Two-Year Extended Provisional Certificate will not be granted additional renewals or extensions of their Provisional Certificates.**

*Enrollment must be verified by the approved college/university. To be enrolled, the individual must be registered for at least one class during the current semester/trimester or the upcoming semester/trimester AND have paid enrollment fees.

Advancing to the Professional Certificate *(valid for up to 5 years):*

Requirements:

- 3 years of successful teaching experience* within the validity and grade level of the Provisional Certificate;
- The appropriate reading credit as described in the "Additional Requirements" below;

And *ONE* of the following:

- 6 semester hours in a planned course of study** since the issuance of the Provisional Certificate at an approved educator preparation institution; OR
- 150 State Continuing Education Contact Hours (SCECHs) appropriate to the grade level and content endorsement(s) of the certificate held since the issuance of the Provisional Certificate; OR
 - 150 annual District Provided Professional Development (DPPD) hours in accordance with Michigan School Code Sections 380.1526 & 1527.
- A combination of semester credit hours, SCECHs (25 SCECHs equate to 1 semester credit hour), and/or DPPD hours (25 clock hours of DPPD equates to 1 semester credit hour or 25 SCECHs) since the issuance of the Provisional Certificate;

Additional Requirements

In-state:

- Must also meet the basic reading requirements (6 semester hours of teaching of reading or reading methods for elementary and 3 semester hours for secondary); AND
- Beginning July 1, 2009 all teachers *advancing* to the Professional Certificate must have completed 3 semester credits of reading diagnostics and remediation, which includes a field experience, in accordance with Michigan Revised School Code MCL 380.1531(4)***; The following link provides a list of approved Michigan courses that meet this requirement: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/PA_118_Web_chart_2_4_11_344767_7.pdf

Out-of-state (Initial Michigan Certification):

- Must also meet the basic reading requirements (6 semester hours of teaching of reading or reading methods for elementary and 3 semester hours for secondary);
- Candidates from other states who hold a regular, valid teaching certificate from another state and meet all of the requirements of the Professional Education Certificate at the time of application are not required to take the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification for initial Michigan certification;

**Teaching experience acquired in a licensed, private, "Child Care Center" may apply towards the experience requirements for an elementary Professional Education Certificate. The Michigan institution which plans a person's 18-semester hour planned program shall determine that the experience is under appropriate supervision and is successful for in-state candidates based on the report of the employing district(s).*

*** Credit completed outside the State of Michigan must be in an approved Master's degree program or in an endorsement program (minimum 20 semester credit hours to obtain endorsement) at a state approved teacher preparation institution.*

**** Applicants who complete the reading diagnostics course **out-of-state**, must have the Reading Diagnostics Course Certification form completed and signed by the out-of-state university.*

Renewal of the Professional Certificate (valid for 5 years):

A teacher seeking to renew an advanced certificate must demonstrate having successfully completed one of the following:

- Completed 6 semester credits in a planned program of study since the issuance of the Provisional Certificate at any approved college or university.
- Completed 150 hours of State Continuing Education Clock Hours of professional development appropriate to the grade level or content endorsement(s).
- Annual district provided professional development (DPPD) as required by MCL 380.1527 of the Revised School Code with professional development activities appropriate to the grade level or content endorsements of the certificate. (Note that professional development associated with the induction and mentoring period required by MCL 380.1526 may not be used to satisfy this requirement.)
- A combination of the 3 options stated above to equal 150 clock hours of professional development. (One semester credit will equate to 25 clock hours of professional development.)

What is the application process for renewing or applying for a certificate?

The Michigan Department of Education now only accepts online applications for a teaching certificate through the Michigan Online Educator Certification System (MOECS). An applicant must first establish an account with the Michigan Education Information System (MEIS) before accessing the MOECS at www.michigan.gov/moeecs. Once the application has been completed the applicant may now pay the fee online using a credit card (VISA, MasterCard, or Discover). Fee payments are only accepted by using a credit card and e-checks may not be used. If you do not have a credit card you will need to obtain a pre-paid card to use during the application process. Please note that you only need to create a MEIS account once so be sure to remember your user name and password for future use.

Is the Professional/Occupational Certificate valid for five years from the day of issuance?

Certificates expire on June 30 of the given year. The expiration year of the initial Professional Certificate and the Occupational Certificate shall be determined as follows:

1. Certificates issued on January 1 or later expire five years from June 30 of the year of issuance.
2. Certificates issued beginning July 1 expire five years from June 30 of that year.

May renewal credit be taken at any time?

Semester hours and/or State Continuing Education Contact Hours (SCECHs) for renewal purposes must be completed after the issuance of the certificate that is being renewed and within a five-year period **before application** for the renewal.

Where can I get help?

- The certification officer at your Michigan teacher preparation college/university.
- A current list Certification Officers at the various Michigan colleges and universities is available at: www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/TPI_Certification_Personnel_284724_7.doc
- The certification officer at your college/university should always be the first contact regarding certification requirements, applications, renewals, or general questions
- The Michigan Department of Education Office of Professional Preparation Services 517/373-3310 or www.michigan.gov/teachercert
- Pearson Evaluation System, Amherst, MA (Michigan Test for Teacher Certification) 413/256-2876
- For Michigan Education Association members: the MEA Communications and Public Policy Department 517/332-6551 or 800/292-1934 or Web site: <http://www.mea.org>

Having an expired certificate will jeopardize employment and forfeit tenure rights.

NOTE: The content of this brochure is limited to very basic information. Questions regarding other types of certificates and information not addressed in the brochure should be directed to your certification officer, the Michigan Department of Education Office of Professional Preparation Services or the Michigan Education Association.

Provided as a service of the Michigan Education Association.