



News Release

Contact: Martin Ackley, Director of Public and Governmental Affairs, 517-241-4395
Bill DiSessa, Spokesperson, 517-335-6649

‘Students-First’ System Created for Teacher Certification Focuses on Whole Child

May 16, 2018

LANSING – An updated “students-first” teacher certification system that focuses on the whole child is being implemented in Michigan, with input from educators, schools, educator preparation programs, and parents, the Michigan Department of Education has announced.

The new certification system will have five grade bands and an increased focus on early literacy and math instruction.

“This new students-first system will prepare effective educators to use differentiated supports to meet the needs of the whole child and move our state forward to becoming a Top 10 education state in the next 10 years,” Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles said. “This is the culmination of three years of work among Michigan education stakeholders representing hundreds of perspectives on education, such as Pre-K-12 teachers and administrators, college educators, education group representatives, and parents.”

Once rolled out, the new teacher certification system will feature five grade bands: pre-kindergarten (Pre-K)-3, 3-6, 5-9, 7-12, and Pre-K-12 for certain specialized endorsements, such as special education.

In contrast to the current K-8 “all-subjects” elementary certificate, the new Pre-K-3, 3-6, and 5-9 grade bands represent a dramatic shift focusing on specialized preparation of teacher candidates to teach early literacy and mathematics – doubling the amount of preparation time in these critical subjects – and to address the unique social-emotional needs of students in middle grades.

The five-band system will update in phases the current teacher certification grade bands of K-8 and 6-12 as MDE develops standards for the two earliest grade bands first. This will immediately address statewide concerns about early literacy achievement and ensure new teachers in these critical child-development years are well-prepared. Standards development activities then will follow for certification bands for grades 5-9, 7-12, and Pre-K-12.

Michigan's Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) will transition to the updated certification grade bands as they revise and align their programs accordingly. Once the updates occur, the K-8 and 6-12 certification bands no longer will be offered.

Though EPPs have flexibility in teacher program development, standards and program requirements are set at the state level.

The current draft of the Pre-K-3 standards is expected to require a minimum of 12 credits in literacy, 12 credits in mathematics, six credits in science, and six credits in social studies. The 3-6 standards are expected to require a minimum of nine credits for each of the four content areas. These are estimates, however, and may change.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will be supporting educators and schools in creating flexible pathways for teachers to enhance their certificates with the new grade bands. MDE also will be convening education stakeholders to determine the manner in which existing certifications may be transitioned for appropriate placement under the new certificate structure, if at all.

More information on becoming a Michigan teacher is available [here](#).

#