

Teacher Certification— What Districts Need to Know

Katie Schmiedeknecht (Shh-mid-a-connect)

Analyst, Office of Educator Excellence

Michigan Department of Education

May 5th, 2025

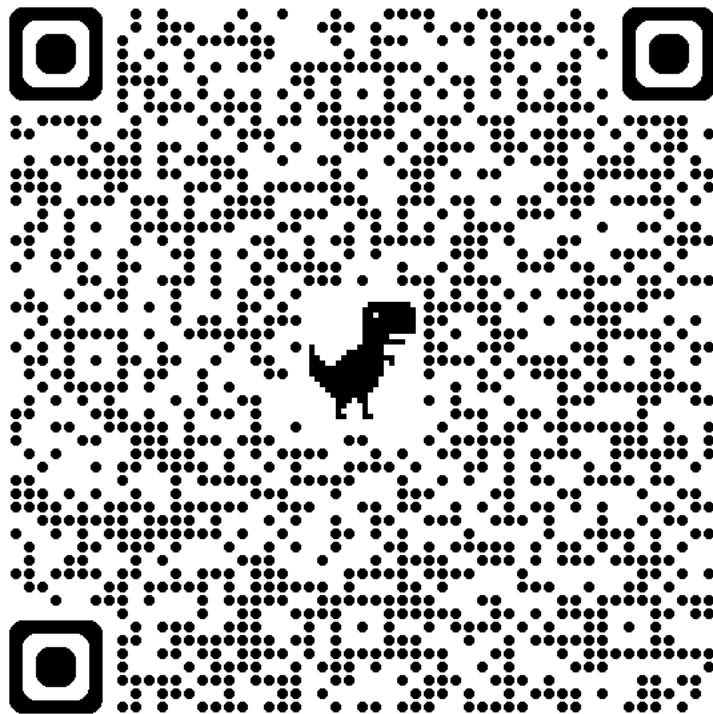


Topics

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- Contact Info



Elementary (ZG) & World Language (FA-FS) Staffing Flexibilities



4/29/2025

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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 2, 2023

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Delsa D. Chapman, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent 
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

SUBJECT: Elementary (ZG) & World Language (FA-FS) Staffing Flexibilities

This memorandum announces additional staffing flexibilities to intermediate school districts and local education agencies, both traditional public school districts and public school academies.

Due to the teacher staffing shortage, teachers with the Elementary K-5 All Subjects (K-8 All Subjects in Self-Contained Classroom) (ZG) endorsement *may also* teach certain assignments outside the grade range and content area listed on their certificate without a permit. Teachers with an Elementary K-5 All Subjects (K-8 All Subjects in Self-Contained Classrooms) (ZG) endorsement may now be placed in grades K-8 in any subject area, whether the structure is self-contained or departmentalized. Previously, teachers with a ZG endorsement could only teach departmentalized courses in grades 6-8 if they also held an additional endorsement for that subject area (e.g., a teacher with a ZG endorsement was required to have a mathematics (EX) endorsement to teach math in grades 6-8). Under this new flexibility, a teacher with a ZG endorsement alone is not restricted from teaching departmentalized coursework in grades 6-8.

Additionally, Michigan's world language endorsements (FA-FS) that denote preparation for a narrower grade range than Pre-K-12 *may also* teach the language identified by their endorsement across the full Pre-K-12 grade range.

The Michigan Department of Education will periodically review and modify these flexible placement policies to address state workforce and student needs.

Additional information on staffing flexibilities, including similar flexibilities already in place for [new elementary endorsements and grade bands](#), can be found on the Michigan Department of Education's [Permits and Placement webpage](#) or by contacting MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments
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World Language (FA-FS)

Additionally, Michigan's world language endorsements (FA-FS) that denote preparation for a narrower grade range than Pre-K-12 *may also* teach the language identified by their endorsement across the full Pre-K-12 grade range.



Elementary (ZG)

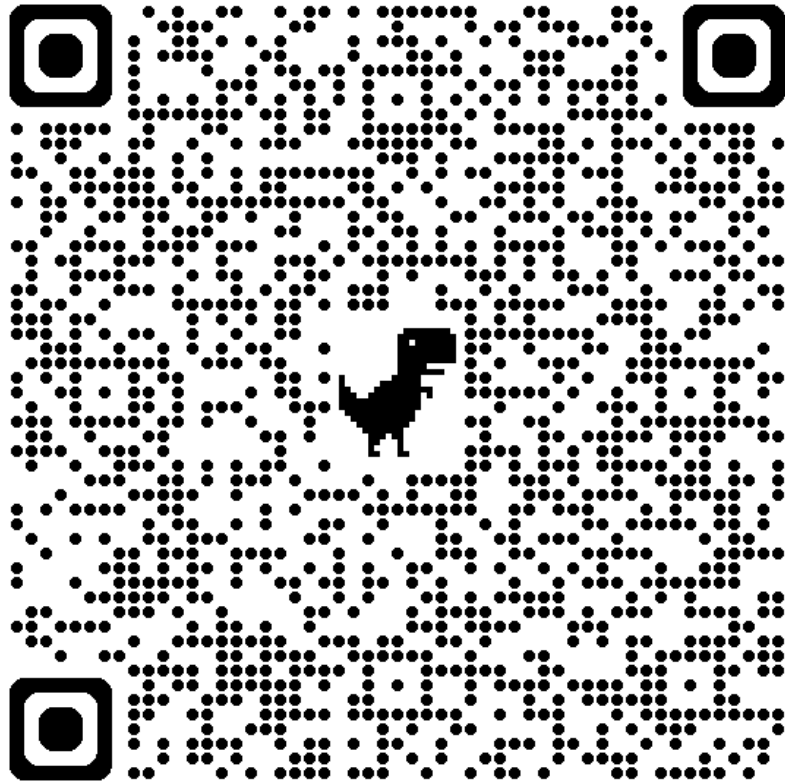
Certificate Endorsements

Subject/Grade Level

ELEMENTARY K-5 ALL SUBJECTS (K-8 ALL SUBJECTS IN SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOM) (ZG) K-8

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New Core Content Grade Level Staffing Flexibilities



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GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 10, 2024
TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors
FROM: Dr. Michele A. Harmala, Deputy Superintendent
Division of Educator Excellence, Career Technical
Education, Special Education, and Administrative Law
SUBJECT: New Core Content Grade Level Staffing Flexibilities

In support of [Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan](#) Goal 7 to increase the numbers of certified teachers in areas of shortage and in an effort to improve student achievement, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) seeks to provide access to high-quality instruction for all students. This memorandum announces additional staffing flexibilities to intermediate school districts and local education agencies, both traditional public school districts and public school academies. Districts may now place teachers whose certificates contain content endorsements with K-8, 6-8, 5-9, K-9, 5-12, or 6-12 grade ranges **one grade level** outside the grade range explicitly listed on their teaching certificate without the district needing to request a permit.

This new flexibility only applies to general education content area endorsements that currently carry a grade range. It **does not apply** to special education, English as a second language, bilingual, pre-K, or elementary Z-coded program endorsements.

This allowance complements previously released flexibilities connected with the new grade bands and the 2022 [Appropriate Placement Using Michigan's Re-Envisioned Staffing System](#), as well as the [elementary and world language staffing flexibilities](#) announced in November 2023.

Examples of new placement flexibilities:

- Language Arts K-8 (BX) may also teach 9th grade language arts without a permit.
- Mathematics 6-12 (EX) may also teach 5th grade math without a permit.
- Health 6-8 (MA) may also teach 9th grade health without a permit.

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Additional information on staffing flexibilities can be found on MDE's [Permits and Placement webpage](#) or by contacting the Office of Educator Excellence at MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments

Core Content Flexibilities

Certificate Endorsements

Subject/Grade Level
ENGLISH (BA) 6-12
PHYSICAL EDUCATION (MB) 6-12

Certificate Endorsements

Subject/Grade Level
ELEMENTARY K-5 ALL SUBJECTS (K-8 ALL SUBJECTS IN SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOM) (ZG) K-8
LANGUAGE ARTS (BX) K-8

traditional public school districts and public school academies. Districts may now place teachers whose certificates contain content endorsements with K-8, 6-8, 5-9, K-9, 5-12, or 6-12 grade ranges **one grade level** outside the grade range explicitly listed on their teaching certificate without the district needing to request a permit.

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- Health 6-8 (MA) may also teach 9th grade health without a permit.

Confusion Time

Certificate Endorsements

Subject/Grade Level

ELEMENTARY K-5 ALL SUBJECTS (K-8 ALL SUBJECTS IN SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOM) (ZG) K-8

LANGUAGE ARTS (BX) K-8

Elementary – No. Cannot teach 9th grade.

Language Arts – Yes. Can also teach 9th grade Language Arts.

Certificate Endorsements

Subject/Grade Level

MATHEMATICS (EX) 5-9

MIDDLE LEVEL SPECIALIZATION (ZL) 5-9

Math – Yes. Can also teach 4th or 10th grade Math.

Middle Level – No. Cannot teach 4th or 10th grade.

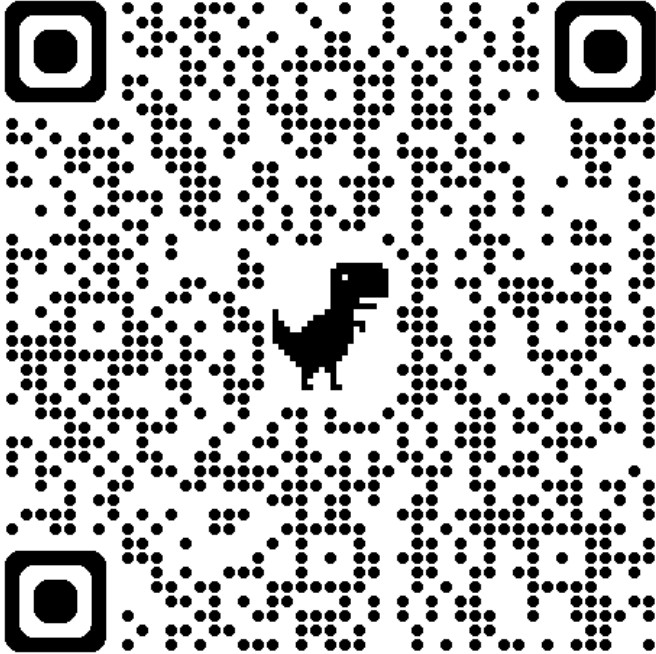


Flexibility Limitations

This new flexibility only applies to general education content area endorsements that currently carry a grade range. It **does not apply** to special education, English as a second language, bilingual, pre-K, or elementary Z-coded program endorsements.



Special Education Teacher Flexibility Waivers



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

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August 10, 2023

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 10, 2023
TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors
FROM: Dr. Michele A. Harmala, Deputy Superintendent *MH*
P-20 System and Student Transitions
SUBJECT: Special Education Teacher Flexibility Waivers

In response to the state's ongoing critical shortage of special education teachers, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is continuing to provide intermediate school districts (ISDs) and local education agencies (LEAs), both traditional public school districts and public school academies (PSAs), flexibility regarding appropriately certified and endorsed special education teachers in specific special education programs. The flexibility is available through a waiver application.

Pursuant to [MCL 380.1281](#) and [Executive Order 1996-12](#), the Superintendent of Public Instruction is making available two waivers for ISDs and LEAs to continue to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities while addressing the critical personnel shortage. Specifically, the two waivers are designed to minimize special education program vacancies and help address the current critical teacher shortage, to provide flexibility with current and newly hired special education teachers and to reduce the use of substitute teachers in special education programs.

Waiver to R 390.1105(3) of the Teacher Certification Code

[MCL 380.1281](#) allows for this limited time waiver of state administrative rules governing teacher certification. The waiver to [R 390.1105\(3\)](#) of the teacher certification code allows an ISD or LEA to assign a certified teacher with a special education endorsement in any area to an eligible special education program that is different from the teacher's area of endorsement.

Eligible special education programs under the waiver for [R 390.1105\(3\)](#) include programs for students with cognitive impairment, emotional impairment, learning disabilities, physical and other health impairment, and severe multiple impairments.

Waiver to R 340.1758(a) Teacher Requirement of the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE):

[MCL 380.1281](#) allows for a limited time waiver to [R 340.1758\(a\)](#) of the MARSE. The waiver allows an ISD or LEA to assign a teacher with a special education endorsement in cognitive impairment, emotional impairment, or specific learning disability to a program for students with autism spectrum disorder.

Waiver Requirements

Waivers to [R 390.1105\(3\)](#) of the teacher certification code and [R 340.1758\(a\)](#) of the MARSE may be approved for one academic year for any ISD or LEA that:

1. is able to demonstrate the intent of the rule can be addressed in a more effective, efficient, or economical manner, or that the waiver is necessary to stimulate improved pupil performance; and
2. is able to demonstrate unsuccessful attempts to fill an open special education position with an appropriately endorsed special education teacher, which includes but is not limited to:
 - a. posting the vacant position for a reasonable time, and
 - b. notifying the current teaching staff of the option for temporary approval for any teacher willing to enroll in an approved program to pursue the endorsement that matches the program, and
 - c. tuition reimbursement opportunities from the MDE Office of Special Education, the ISD, or the LEA, for working under temporary approval.

Waiver Renewals

Renewals of waivers to [R 390.1105\(3\)](#) of the teacher certification code and [R 340.1758\(a\)](#) of the MARSE may be obtained for one additional year for the same teacher in the same position by completing a renewal application.

The renewal for one additional year:

- requires satisfactory performance evaluations for the teacher, and
- does not require the ISD or LEA demonstrate additional unsuccessful attempts to fill the position with an appropriately endorsed special education teacher.

A new waiver application must be completed when the teacher has been in the same position for two academic years.

Waiver applications must be completed in Catamaran: [How to Complete a Waiver Application for Districts - Catamaran Training Site](#).

The information provided is directly aligned with and supports [Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan](#) Goal #7: Increase the number of certified teachers in areas of shortage.

Please direct questions pertaining to this waiver opportunity to the MDE Office of Special Education Information Desk at 1-888-320-8384 or MDE-OSE@Michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments

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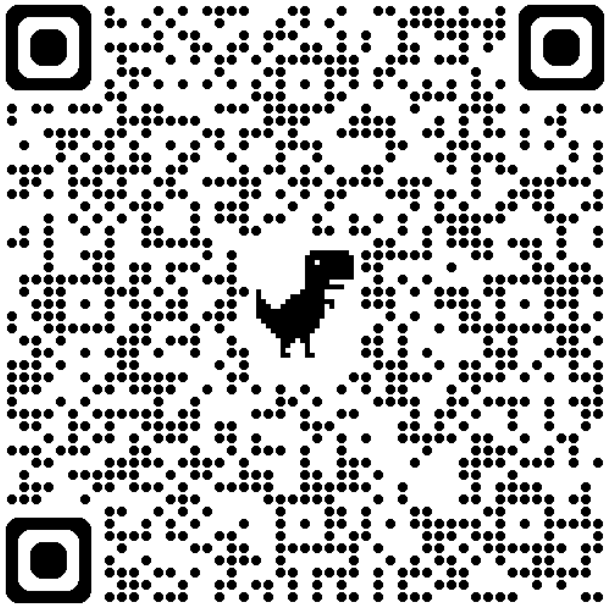
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Substitute Teacher Placement for Special Education Programs



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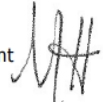
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MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 24, 2023

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Dr. Michele A. Harmala, Deputy Superintendent
P-20 System and Student Transitions 

SUBJECT: Substitute Teacher Placement for Special Education Programs

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education (OSE) recommends intermediate school districts (ISDs) and local education agencies (LEAs), which include traditional public school districts and public school academies (PSAs), review federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) minimum requirements for teachers placed in special education programs. MDE OSE suggests ISDs and LEAs prioritize substitute teacher placements in each special education program to ensure those programs are staffed by an individual who minimally has a bachelor's degree and is participating in either a traditional or alternative route to special education certification.

While Michigan law [MCL 380.1233\(5\)\(a\)](#) allows for substitute teachers to work under a permit with a minimum of 60 credit hours, the federal IDEA requires ISDs and LEAs to provide students with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE), which includes specially designed instruction from appropriately and adequately trained personnel as outlined in [34 CFR §300.156](#).

ISDs and LEAs are reminded of their responsibility to ensure all students with disabilities have available to them a FAPE that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for future education, employment, and independent living, and to ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate all students with disabilities ([34 CFR §300.1](#)).

IDEA is clear that the minimum requirements for a qualified teacher are a bachelor's degree and participation in either a traditional or alternative route to a special education certification program ([34 CFR §300.156](#)).

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August 24, 2023

Additional information on personnel qualifications is available in a memorandum issued by the federal Office of Special Education Programs on October 4, 2022: [Personnel Qualifications under Part B of IDEA](#).

The aforementioned guidance is consistent with department guidance shared on May 25, 2023 regarding [Substitute Teacher Placement for Special Education Programs](#).

The Michigan Online Educator Certification System (MOECS) application process for Full-Year Basic Permits (FYBP) was recently modified and applications for FYBP for substitute teachers in special education placements were being placed on hold for verification of a bachelor's degree. This created an unintended delay in issuing permits. The Office of Educator Excellence (OEE) has addressed and resolved the issue. A notification will also be provided to current MOECS users.

Please contact the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education Information Desk at 1-888-320-8384 or MDE-OSE@Michigan.gov with any questions.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments

4/29/2025

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Salary vs. FTE

Question: Am I making deductions for uncertified teachers solely based on count day or at any given time of the school year? Would this also be a salary deduction since this individual only utilizes sub permits?

Answer: Please make the FTE deductions if the teacher was not certified on count day. If the teacher was certified on count day, you do not have to make any FTE deductions.



REP Reporting & The TCVR

Question: We have several of our special education teachers showing as review settings. Our teachers push into the classroom, so we have them listed as part of the core subject in our SIS and in our REP report. An example would be a teacher who is certified with SA Cognitive Impairment, but we have listed with EX Math because she pushes into two hours of Math 7. Should we be reporting these teachers like this in REP? This Co-Teaching. There is always a certified core content teacher in the room / reported to REP as well.

Answer (from CEPI): REP is designed to collect the Assignment Code that aligns to the content of the course, not the educators Endorsement. So, if they are the TOR, you should be choosing the most appropriate REP course content assignment code.

The TCVR is a tool that is a starting point to an investigation. It does pretty well with most K-12 general education placements. Special Education, NX Other assignment code, CTE, Pre-K are some areas that it has more challenges that we are looking into.

CEPI email: CEPI@michigan.gov

Question: I have a school who is giving the wrong assignment codes in REP. These teachers all have the K-5 endorsement. For Example:

1. Teaching 6th grade Math but given K-5 ZG assignment code
2. Teaching 6th grade Science/Social Studies but given k-5 ZG assignment code

Is this incorrect in the REP?

Answer: It's not necessarily wrong, but it may not be best practice. I know some districts are structured differently, and their elementaries are K-6 or K-8. If these individuals are teaching departmentalized classes, where they are only teaching one subject per day to different students, then they should be coded for the individual assignments. If they have questions on how to report individuals in REP, please have them [contact CEPI](#).



Appropriate Placement

Question: Quick question for you on the "New Core Content Grade Level Staffing Flexibilities" memo:

If a teacher held a content-area endorsement for 6-12 such as BA or CC, would they be permitted to teach a non-endorsed subject area (such as a basic computers course) at grade 5 under this memo? The assignment would not be specific to the content area on their certificate (they wouldn't be teaching English or History for example but a course that anyone at grade level could teach).

Answer: No. The memo is specific to content areas held on teacher certificates.

For non-endorsed areas, a District can obtain Full-Year Basic Permits without requiring testing or a minor in the content area, so FYB Permits are the recommendation.

Question: If a teacher has two separate credentials (for example a ZG K-8 and then a full-year **permit** for special education 9-12) but is teaching outside of the correct grade level for their content (in this case, teaching special education for K-8), this would still be considered "out" - correct?

Answer: Correct. The ZG allows for "All Subjects" but Special Education is not a subject area, and educators need to be appropriately credentialed for Special Education assignments. This individual would be out of compliance if they were teaching Special Education students outside of 9-12.

Endorsement	Grade Level	Is Approved
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER	Elementary (PK-5), Middle (6-8), High (9-12)	Yes

Question: If a teacher had a Daily permit from another district, this does not cover them at a different district for a placement, correct?

Answer: Correct. Each district must have their own permit, but if there is a permit obtained by the ISD, it covers any district within the ISD.

Question: Does someone with a Full-Year Basic qualify for the “free 90”?

Answer: Nope. The “Free 90” allows for individuals who hold valid Michigan Teaching Certificates to teach for up to 90 days outside the validity of their teaching certificate without needing a permit.

Question: We have a district that has a teacher who is highly qualified for a subject area under the HOUSSE option. Do you know if this option still applies?

Answer: Nope. No Child Left Behind, which encompassed Highly Qualified and HOUSSE options, ended in 2015 when NCLB was replaced by ESSA. Since 2015, the utilization of HQ instead of valid, appropriate credentials has not been applicable.

Question: Are permits retroactive?

Answer: Nope. Retroactivity for Daily Substitute Permits ended in 2017. Full-Year permits have never been retractive



Question: Why are permit issue dates different when the paid date is the same? What do I look for in MOECS?

Answer: Always go with the “Issue Date” of permits. Because there is only one permit fee per person per year, no matter how many permits are obtained. The “Paid Date” is always going to be the same and will only reflect the Paid Day of whatever district/ISD initially obtained it.

Select App	App #	School District	Date Evaluated	Paid Date	Issue Date	Subject Area	Expiration Date
<input checked="" type="radio"/>		Advanced Technology Academy - DEARBORN	10/03/2022	09/13/2022	10/03/2022		08/31/2023
<input type="radio"/>		Cornerstone Jefferson-Douglass Academy - DETROIT	09/12/2022	09/13/2022	09/13/2022		08/31/2023
<input type="radio"/>		David Ellis Academy - DETROIT	09/28/2022	09/13/2022	09/28/2022		08/31/2023
<input type="radio"/>		David Ellis Academy West - REDFORD	02/07/2023	09/13/2022	02/07/2023		08/31/2023
<input type="radio"/>		Discovery Creative Pathways - Harper Woods	03/06/2023	09/13/2022	03/06/2023		08/31/2023
<input type="radio"/>		Eaton Academy - EASTPOINTE	04/11/2023	09/13/2022	04/11/2023		08/31/2023
<input type="radio"/>		Escuela Avancemos - DETROIT	10/10/2022	09/13/2022	10/10/2022		08/31/2023
<input type="radio"/>		Jalen Rose Leadership Academy - Detroit	09/19/2022	09/13/2022	09/19/2022		08/31/2023
<input type="radio"/>		MacDowell Preparatory Academy - Detroit	03/21/2023	09/13/2022	03/21/2023		08/31/2023
<input type="radio"/>		Madison-Carver Academy - DETROIT	09/26/2022	09/13/2022	09/26/2022		08/31/2023



Multiple variations of this question: a district has staffed a Sub on a Daily Permit for the whole year in a single assignment, but every 89th day the Sub took a vacation day/went to PD/swapped a class. Is this allowable?

Answer:





Michigan Teacher Certification Code R 390.1142 - Daily Substitute Permits

Rule 42. (1) The superintendent of public instruction may issue a daily substitute permit to a school district or nonpublic school for an individual who has satisfactorily completed the credit requirement of section 1233(5) of the act, MCL 380.1233.

(2) **A daily substitute permit is valid for teaching on a substitute or intermittent basis when the certificated teacher regularly assigned to the classroom is temporarily absent.** A daily substitute permit is valid for no more than 90 consecutive calendar days in the same assignment.

(3) A daily substitute permit is not renewable.

(4) On application by a school district or nonpublic school, the superintendent of public instruction may issue to the school district or nonpublic school an extension of a daily substitute permit as follows **if the individual does not qualify for transition to a full-year substitute permit:**



Certification Code R 390.1142 Continued

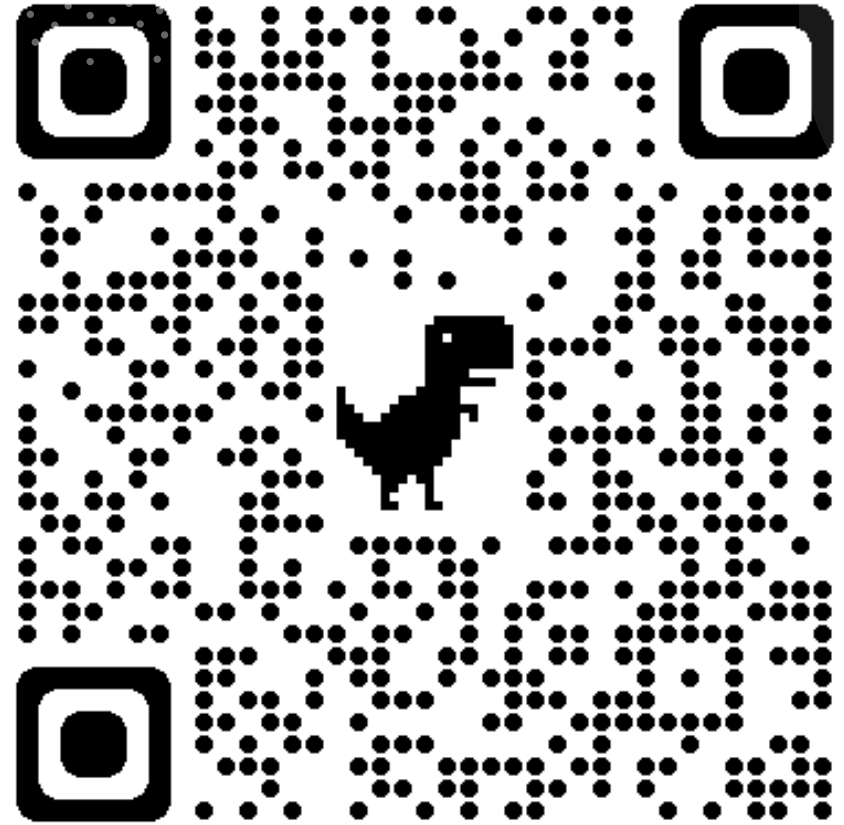
- (a) The superintendent of public instruction may issue an extension of the daily substitute permit for 1 additional 90-consecutive-calendar-day period if the school district or nonpublic school verifies both of the following:
 - (i) There was a formal satisfactory observation of the individual by an administrator or designee during the period of the daily substitute permit.
 - (ii) The school district or nonpublic school assigned a mentor to the individual during the period of the daily substitute permit.
- (b) In addition to an extension granted under subdivision (a) of this subrule, the superintendent of public instruction may, in the exercise of discretion, grant the application of a school district or nonpublic school for 1 emergency extension of the daily substitute permit for another 90-consecutive-calendar-day period.

- Daily's for INTERMITTENT use or a MAXIMUM of 90 calendar days for single assignments.
- Daily Extensions for emergency situations.
- Full-Year permits (Basic, Shortage, Expert) for long term assignments.
- Grow-Your-Own programs to recruit the individuals serving in these vacancy roles is both efficient and cost effective.
- Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification or Endorsement
 - There are Alt Route programs for Special Education.

What Questions Do You Have?



We value your
feedback!



Thank You!

Katie Schmiedeknecht

Email: SchmiedeknechtK@Michigan.gov

Phone: (517) 335-1151

Work Hours: Monday through Thursday 7:00am – 5:30pm

For more information regarding certification,
please contact the Office of Educator Excellence

Monday through Thursday

8:00am – 12:00pm and 1:00pm – 5:00pm

517-241-5000

OR

Monday through Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm at:

MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov