



## *Press Release*

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# **MDE and Partners Working to Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educators**

April 23, 2021

LANSING – Do you know someone who’s ready to return to teaching?

*The Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educators* campaign encourages formerly certified educators to seek full-time employment by partnering with a school district. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has created a process to reduce or eliminate barriers to recertification and to facilitate re-entry into the profession.

In support of the state’s Top 10 Strategic Education Plan goal to increase the number of certified teachers in critical shortage areas, MDE will begin to communicate with approximately 36,500 formerly certified educators and work with local school districts and education labor organizations to welcome back former teachers ready to rekindle their passion to educate children.

“We want to encourage educators to return to Michigan schools to support our children,” said State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice. “To paraphrase an old Motown song: We want you back. We welcome you back.”

For educators to recertify their teaching license, 150 hours of additional professional development are typically required. By allowing districts to waive all or some of these hours for educators whose certificates expired in 2020 or before, the *Welcome Back PME* campaign reduces or eliminates the barrier posed by the required professional learning hours to recertify educators that have not had the opportunity to receive district-provided professional development.

David Hecker, president of American Federation of Teachers Michigan, said: “The teacher shortage is real, as is the fact is that fewer college students are choosing teaching as a career. Teachers returning to the profession help address this shortage and bring years of experience and talent to the classroom. This is good news for students.”

Participating local education agencies (LEAs), both traditional public school districts and public school academies (PSAs), must request a waiver on behalf of each eligible educator for participation. A teacher’s years of experience and the number of years since her/his certification expired will determine the level of flexibility and support required for the teacher.

“From classroom teachers to building administrators to district leaders, we are facing an unprecedented and very concerning shortage of educators across the state,” said Dr. Tina Kerr, executive director of the Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators (MASA). “We are glad to see MDE taking these steps to re-engage former educators and help us welcome them back to our school districts. We need to continue thinking creatively and working collaboratively to ensure that Michigan’s 1.5 million students have access to the teachers, leaders, and staff necessary to get the high-quality public education they deserve.”

### **Professional Learning Opportunity**

Educators without a district sponsor may also participate in the campaign by accessing member benefits offered through the Michigan Education Association (MEA) Teacher Re-Entry Program, including quality [professional learning opportunities](#) designed for teachers wishing to transition back into the workforce.

An educator enrolling in the program can receive up to the full 150 hours required for recertification for a low cost of \$100 a year until an individual has been hired into full-time employment and is eligible for a full regular union membership.

“This professional learning program has been carefully developed to meet the needs of educators returning to the workforce, including social emotional learning, instruction with using technology, and classroom management,” said Paula Herbart, president of the Michigan Education Association. “We are excited to be partnering with MDE to support certified educators with expired credentials across the state.”

All educators will be required to fulfill the legal professional practices requirements, including fingerprinting and background checks, as a precursor to recertification and employment.

Visit the [Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educators campaign website](#) for more information.

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