



## School Administrators Encouraged to Seek Certification

By **FLORA JENKINS**,  
 Director, Office of Professional Preparation Services,  
 Michigan Department of Education

Reprinted with permission from *Leading Change*, Volume 5, Issue 2 pg 23

On August 14, 2006, Governor Jennifer Granholm signed into law a provision to allow the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to issue administrator certificates on a voluntary basis. The language of the law directs the department to establish an administrator certificate with three different types of endorsements: elementary, secondary, and central office. The certificate also may display specialty endorsements or enhancements developed with the assistance of institutions of higher education and the various educational organizations representing school administrators. Certificates may only be issued to administrators who hold responsibilities supervising instructional programs.

The MDE has identified four different categories of administrators potentially impacted by this new legislation:

**CATEGORY I** — for school administrators who previously held a valid Michigan school administrator certificate, which has now expired. These administrators may elect to apply for renewal of the certificate through an expedited process. As part of this process, the applicant must present evidence to document meeting the continuing education requirement set out in the law. The administrator certificate will match, as closely as possible, any of the endorsements previously issued.

**CATEGORY II** — for administrators who previously held an out-of-state school administrator certificate, which may or may not be currently valid. These applicants must present a copy of their out-of-state certificate and an official transcript from the university where the preparation program was completed. If presently employed as a Michigan school administrator, the applicant must present evidence documenting that the continuing education requirement set out in the law has been met.

**CATEGORY III** — for administrators who have not been previously certified in Michigan or any other state but have completed an administrator preparation program. Out-of-state applicants will be required to submit an official transcript from a state-approved institution showing completion of a degree in educational administration or its equivalent. If the applicant currently is employed as a school administrator, documentation that the continuing education requirement has been met also will be required. Applicants who completed an administrator program at a Michigan institution must work with that institution to be recommended for certification.

**CATEGORY IV** — for school administrators who have not completed an educational administrator preparation program and have not been previously certified. These individuals are ineligible to obtain a Michigan school administrator certificate. For those currently enrolled in an approved educational administrator preparation program, the university will recommend their names directly to the MDE for a certificate upon completion of the program and degree.

*Individuals interested in applying for a school administrator certificate who previously have held an administrator certificate may obtain an application at [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde).*

*Individuals who have completed an administrator preparation program but never held an administrator certificate, should contact the higher education institution where the program was completed and request that the institution make a recommendation to the MDE for certification.*

*For more information, contact:*

Flora Jenkins, Director, Office of Professional Preparation  
 (517) 373-6505, [JenkinsF@michigan.gov](mailto:JenkinsF@michigan.gov).

According to various studies, effective administrators need specific knowledge and skills in three basic areas:

**instructional leadership, organizational leadership, and community leadership.**

Before the provision was signed into law, Michigan had no state mandates for ensuring that school administrators had these skills and competencies. In addition to the benefits of stronger administration in the classroom, the new voluntary certificate allows administrators to demonstrate their professionalism, and for administrators from other states to maintain their certification.

The application process takes approximately four to six weeks for those seeking certification. Those needing recommendation by a teacher preparation institution due to their participation in an administration education program may take longer, as recommendations typically occur at the end of the semester after grades are posted.

Once an administrator meets the qualifications, he or she must pay a \$125 fee to receive the administrator certificate.