



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educator program?

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is launching the Welcome Back Proud Michigan Educators campaign for educators with expired credentials to return to the teaching workforce by reducing or eliminating professional learning recertification requirements. The campaign recognizes these educators' experience and preparation while providing an opportunity for immediate employment with a local education agency (LEA), both traditional public school districts and public school academies (PSAs), as part of strategic efforts to increase the number of certified educators in areas of shortage.

2. What is the eligibility for the program?

To participate in the campaign, districts may apply for a waiver on behalf of an educator for a reduction or elimination of professional learning hours, depending on the individual's years of teaching experience and time away from the workforce. (For those not working at a school district, you can still enroll with the MEA and work to receive your SCECH's – see below for more.)

Professional learning required by Michigan Compiled Law MCL 380.1233(6) for school counselors cannot be waived. Educators with a school counselor credential (including teaching certificates with a school counselor (NT) endorsement) must fulfill the professional development requirements under MCL 380.1233(6) before any additional hours may be waived.

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

Educators with expired certificates have received a direct communication from MDE with information about the campaign. Educators who may be eligible but did not receive the email may complete this [eligibility survey](#) to determine eligibility.

3. When does the program start?

The program was announced by the MDE on April 23, 2021.

4. How is the Michigan Education Association involved in this program?

For those NOT currently employed by a school district (and therefore ineligible for the district waiver program above), MEA has an alternate pathway to recertification. An educator enrolling in the MEA Teacher Re-Entry Program can receive up to the full 150 hours required for recertification from MEA for a low cost of \$100 per year until an individual has been hired into full-time employment and is eligible for a full regular membership. More information about how to join at this discounted rate will be available here soon

5. Where can I learn more about the program and how to join?

www.mea.org/welcomeback

6. What is the cost of membership for the program?

Your MEA membership would be \$100 per school year (September-August).

7. Will I be a MEA member once I sign up?

Yes, you will be a MEA member under this program. However, this is not the same type of membership that we offer to our active members employed in bargaining units – it includes only some of the benefits of membership, including professional development.

8. Why should I participate in this program?

We encourage anyone who has an expired certification to participate in this program because of the value in receiving SCECH credits. While you may find some free credits online, the average cost of SCECH credits is a minimum of \$5 per credit.

9. What do I get for my \$100 each year?

The greatest benefit of this program is the ability to receive professional development opportunities that would normally be available only to MEA members. You will also receive MEA publications.

10. Do I have to have an expired certification to participate in this program?

Yes, this program is only for those who have an expired certification. If you are certified and would like to work in a district you would not be eligible for this program.

11. Where can I find the professional development opportunities?

You can find our professional development opportunities at www.mea.org/professionaldevelopment. You also will receive these opportunities via email.

12. Can I receive 150 SCECH hours in one year?

In some cases, with a lot of hard work, you can earn 150 SCECH credits in one school year. We do not, however, guarantee that this will be the case for every member who enrolls in the program.

13. Is this program open to people who do not work or will not work in a MEA district?

Yes, this program is open to anyone who has an expired certification. You do not have to work or commit to work in an MEA-represented district to participate.

14. If I decide to no longer pursue my certification renewal can I get a refund?

Unfortunately, due to the exceptional price for this membership we are unable to offer any refunds.

15. If I finish my certification and am hired by a district can I keep this membership?

If you finish your certification and are hired by a district we hope that you will become a MEA (or another union) member. If you are hired in a district represented by MEA, we will apply the rest of your payment for this membership to your MEA membership.

16. Does this program guarantee me a job in a MEA district?

No, this program does not guarantee you a job in an MEA-represented district. It is a pathway to renew your certification so that you can obtain employment as an educator.

17. If I have additional questions who do I contact?

If you have additional questions, please visit www.mea.org/welcomeback or call the MEA Help Center at 866-MEA-HELP.