



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 30, 2019

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Sheila A. Alles, Chairperson 

SUBJECT: Presentation of the Proposed Standards for the Preparation and Practice of Special Education Administrators

In pursuit of its ongoing goal to maintain the high quality of Michigan's educators, the State Board of Education (SBE) receives this proposal for the revision and adoption of new Standards for the Preparation and Practice of Special Education Administrators. These standards were written to support the Top Ten in Ten Years Strategic Goal 3 to "develop, support, and sustain a high-quality, prepared, and collaborative education workforce" and the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE's) Whole Child priority. This set of standards will inform program development and continuous improvement efforts at Michigan's educator preparation institutions.

Currently, [MARSE Rule 340.1771-1774](#) enumerates eleven competencies for the preparation of directors of special education and nine competencies for the preparation of supervisors of special education. These competencies are largely topical in nature and provide limited guidance to preparation programs on the broad knowledge and skills special education administrators should possess to be effective. These competencies are no longer comprehensive of the full range of responsibilities and duties special education administrators are expected to perform in Michigan's PK-12 schools. Furthermore, preparation of supervisors and directors of special education separately is becoming increasingly challenging operationally for preparation programs.

Early in 2018, the Office of Special Education (OSE) and the Office of Educator Excellence (OEE) agreed that the OEE would lead the effort to develop a new set of preparation standards to address the need for effective special education administrators in Michigan schools. Stakeholders from PK-12 schools, educator preparation programs, and school administrator professional organizations representing the special education administrator community began meeting in

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August 2018 to review the competencies of special education administrators listed in MARSE rule and to compose standards. The intent of this set of standards is to clearly identify knowledge and skills special education administrators must have and be able to do and to establish an updated set of preparation and practice standards that address the following areas:

- the evaluation of programs and personnel;
- curriculum and instruction leadership;
- the provision of programs, services, and outcomes;
- the application of research and evidence-based practices;
- leadership of vision, mission, and culture;
- implementation and monitoring of compliance with applicable laws and policies;
- leading professional learning; and
- collaborative approaches and ethical decision making.

Attachment A describes the development of the standards, including the stakeholders involved in the drafting process. Attachment B provides the proposed standards for the preparation and practice of special education administrators.

These standards are being submitted to the SBE for presentation. This presentation will be followed by a period of public comment and a request for approval at the November 12, 2019 SBE meeting.



**Introduction to the Standards for the
Preparation and Practice of Special
Education Administrators**

Conceptual Framework for the Preparation of Special Education Administrators in Michigan

A special education administrator preparation program is comprised of multiple interdependent components that prepare candidates for certification to demonstrate proficiencies defined in several aligned sets of standards. Although there are many standards that can be considered when establishing updated requirements for preparation programs, the following national and state standards and rules were considered as the basis for the current recommendations due to their utilization by preparation programs across Michigan.

- National Standards
 - [Educational Leadership Program Standards - Building Level](#) (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2011)
 - [Educational Leadership Program Standards - District Level](#) (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2011)
 - *What Every Special Educator Must Know: Ethics, Standards and Guidelines* (Council for Exceptional Children, 2015)
- State Rules/Goals
 - [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education](#) (MARSE)
 - Michigan Top 10 and 10 Years Strategic Plan, Goals 1, 2, and 3

Purpose

Recent changes in federal law from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) have required the Department to reconsider the mechanisms, requirements, and standards for school administrator preparation. The existing rules under the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) do not prescribe the training or experience required by special education administrators to make them credentialed or eligible to supervise instruction of special education personnel, programs, and related services.

The intent of this work is to:

- prepare and permit special education administrators to supervise and evaluate personnel,
- provide more cohesive programs and related services for all student, and
- align the existing administrator certification requirements in the development of special education standards in order to create better integration of general education and special education services.

Development of the Proposal

In fall 2017, the Office of Educator Excellence (OEE) and the Office of Special Education (OSE) at the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) began the conversation to plan for a transition process to move the responsibilities of overseeing the preparation program approval and credentialing processes for directors and supervisors of special education from OSE to OEE. This transition is aimed to:

- support Goals 1, 2, and 3 in MDE's Top 10 in 10 Years Strategic Plan;
- provide students, families and educators access to competent administrators;
- reduce duplication of resources to run credentialing from OEE and OSE;

- create consistencies in the credentialing process; and
- recognize the expertise and training special education administrators bring.

A stakeholder group consisting of representatives from P-12 schools, educator preparation institutions, and professional associations was assembled to engage in this process to review current approval and credentialing systems at MDE, special education director and supervisor preparation practices, and on-the-job roles and responsibilities in the field. After examining current systems and practices, these stakeholders determined that competencies listed in MARSE Rule 340.1771 and 1772 are no longer sufficient in identifying what special education administrators should know and be able to do. Specifically, the current rules do not provide detailed guidance for:

- the evaluation of programs and personnel;
- curriculum and instruction leadership;
- the provision of programs, services, and outcomes;
- the application of research and evidence-based practices;
- leadership of vision, mission, and culture;
- implementation and monitoring of compliance with applicable laws and policies;
- leading professional learning; and
- collaborative approaches and ethical decision making.

Starting in August 2018, biweekly meetings were held to construct this new set of standards for the preparation of special education administrators. Through this process, stakeholders also determined that the existing separation of supervisor (MARSE Rule 340.1772) and director (MARSE Rule 340.1771) competencies is no longer operationally practical. In response, another goal of this set of standards is to consolidate MARSE administrative competencies for these two roles to create a comprehensive credentialing system for administrators who have responsibilities over special education programs and services. In doing so, the stakeholder group strongly recommends a single special education administrator certification, as opposed to two separate approval systems.

The OEE plans to reconvene the stakeholder group after the public comment period to revise the standard in preparation for final decision of adoption by the Michigan Board of Education.

Program Requirements

To provide special education administrator preparation in the State of Michigan and to recommend its program completers for school administrator certification with a special education endorsement, providers must construct their programs to address Michigan Standards for the Preparation and Practice of Special Education Administrators and undergo the state program approval process for initial approval. Programs must provide evidence of program and candidate performance periodically to continue their approval with the department.

Special education administrator certification requirements are recommended to include:

- Master's degree or higher;
- Teacher certification with endorsement in at least one area of special education;
- Three years of professional practice or administrative experience in special education or a combination of practice and experience;
- 200-clock hour practicum in special education administration as part of the program; and
- Valid MDE administrator certification at either the building or central office level.

Participants in Standards Development

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**Standards for the
Preparation and Practice of
Special Education
Administrators**

**Michigan Department of Education
Standards for Special Education Administrators**

Standard 1:

Special education administrators plan for and ensure implementation of the evaluation process in special education for personnel and programs. To do so, the special education administrator must possess a strong working knowledge of models, theories, evidence-based practices, and legal requirements used to evaluate educational programs and personnel serving students with disabilities and their families.

Standard 1	Evaluation of Program and Personnel: Special education administrators promote the use of valid and reliable assessment practices.
Element 1 (K)*	Knowledge of models, theories, evidence-based practices, and legal requirements used to evaluate educational programs and personnel serving students with disabilities and their families
Element 2 (S)**	Demonstrate understanding for and implementation of procedures for the participation of students with disabilities in accountability systems
Element 3 (S)	Develop, implement, and monitor ongoing evaluations of education programs and services to ensure compliance to local, state, and federal laws and policies
Element 4 (S)	Develop and implement ongoing evaluations of education personnel
Element 5 (S)	Design and implement evaluation procedures that improve instructional content and evidence-based practices

*(K): Knowledge

** (S): Skill

Standard 2:

Special education administrators plan for and ensure that students with disabilities are provided programs and related services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) combined with the use of appropriate accommodations, differentiation, and trained support staff. To plan for the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for each student with disability, the special education administrator works effectively with general education personnel, content specialists and special education personnel to plan a meaningful, organized, standards-based sequence of curriculum offerings.

Standard 2	Curriculum and Instruction: Special education administrators use their knowledge of general and specialized curricula and instruction to improve programs, supports, and related services within classroom, school, district and community settings.
Element 1 (K)	Knowledge of curriculum and the delivery of instruction needed to support access to the general education curriculum, including scaffolding, differentiated instruction, and assistive technology, for students with disabilities

Element 2 (S)	Develop and implement an administrative plan that supports the use of instructional and assistive technologies
Element 3 (S)	Provide ongoing supervision of personnel working with students with disabilities and their families
Element 4 (S)	Collaborate with other school curriculum personnel to determine an appropriate sequence of curricular offerings to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities
Element 5 (S)	Develop and implement transition services designed to move students toward self-determined post-secondary outcomes and independence

Standard 3:

Special education administrators understand, plan for, and assure implementation of student assessment processes. This involves collecting information about a student for the purpose of making decisions regarding: Child Find; pre-referral and screening; determination of eligibility; and monitoring and reporting of learning progress in the general education curriculum as well as individualized education program goals and objectives.

Standard 3	Programs, Services, and Outcomes: Special education administrators facilitate the continuous assessment of the eligibility process and the efficacy of programs, supports, and services within classroom, school, district and community settings for meeting the needs of students with disabilities.
Element 1 (K)	Knowledge of programs and services within the general education curriculum to achieve positive school outcomes for students with disabilities
Element 2 (K)	Knowledge of programs and strategies that promote positive school engagement for students with disabilities
Element 3 (S)	Develop and implement a flexible continuum of related services based on evidence-based practices for students with disabilities and their families
Element 4 (S)	Ensure the development and implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports which informs appropriate interventions and referrals to meet the needs of all students
Element 5 (S)	Develop data-based educational expectations and evidence-based programs that account for the impact of diversity on students with disabilities and their families
Element 6 (S)	Ensure effective identification, assessment of eligibility, program development and student achievement

Standard 4:

Special education administrators view scholarly literature and professional learnings as the principle sources for information on effective practice. They know models, theories, philosophies, and research methods that form the basis for evidence-based practices in special education. They use research to develop, implement and improve components of program and practice including instructional techniques, intervention strategies, and curricula.

Standard 4	Research and Inquiry: Special education administrators conduct, evaluate, and use inquiry to guide professional practice.
Element 1 (K)	Knowledge of research in administrative practices that support students with disabilities and their families
Element 2 (S)	Engage in data-based decision making regarding the administration of educational programs and related services that support students with disabilities and their families
Elements 3 (S)	Participate in continuous professional learning, including professional administrative organizations, to guide administrative practices when working with students with disabilities and their families
Elements 4 (S)	Function as critical consumers regarding research and inquiry methods, as well as evidence-based practices, while making curriculum, professional learning and other decisions

Standard 5:

Special education administrators lead educational agencies to facilitate policies and practices that promote student growth and achievement. They ensure the delivery of evidence-based practices which capitalize on the individual strengths of each learner.

Standard 5	Leadership: Special education administrators provide leadership to: formulate vision and goals; establish and model high professional expectations; advocate for effective policies and evidence-based practices; and create positive and productive work environments.
Element 1 (K)	Knowledge of models, theories, and philosophies that provide the foundation for the administration of programs and related services for students with disabilities and their families
Element 2 (S)	Apply leadership, organization, and systems change theories to the provision of services for students with disabilities and their families
Element 3 (S)	Ensure effective program development and coordination of the delivery of all programs and related services across schools and districts in collaboration with general education
Element 4 (S)	Communicate a personal inclusive vision and mission for meeting needs of students with disabilities and their families
Element 5 (S)	Demonstrate the ability to lead, support, manage, mentor, evaluate, and coach personnel including paraeducators and other support staff

Standard 6:

Special education administrators interpret and apply local, state and federal laws and policies and understand their history and social significance. They advocate for necessary change to ensure effective delivery of programs and related services designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities and provide a Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. They utilize fiscal policies and funding mechanisms to provide quality programs and related services for students with disabilities.

Standard 6	Law and Policy: Special education administrators advocate for and ensure the implementation of relevant local, state, and federal laws and policies at classroom, school, and district levels.
Element 1 (K)	Knowledge of federal and state historical and social significance of the laws, regulations, and policies as they apply to the administration of programs and the provision of services for students with disabilities and their families
Element 2 (K)	Knowledge of local, state and federal fiscal policies and funding mechanisms in education, social, and health agencies as they apply to the provision of services for students with disabilities and their families
Element 3 (K)	Knowledge of local, state and federal requirements on dispute resolution including mediation, state complaints, and due process complaints
Element 4 (S)	Interpret and apply current federal and state laws, regulations, and policies to the administration of instructional programs and services supporting students with disabilities and their families
Element 5 (S)	Develop a budget in accordance with local, state, and federal laws for the provision of services for students with disabilities and their families
Element 6 (S)	Engage in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices that comply with local, state, and federal laws as they apply to personnel serving students with disabilities and their families
Element 7 (S)	Advocate for local, state and federal policies that ensure effective delivery of programs and related services for students with disabilities

Standard 7:

Special education administrators engage in learning activities to continuously increase their knowledge and skill in the provision of programs and related services for students with disabilities. They plan and deliver ongoing professional development that is evidence-based and supported by professional standards and/or educational organizations. They design and align professional development activities to improve practice of key stakeholders of the educational community at all organizational levels.

Standard 7	Professional Learning: Special education administrators use professional standards to inform practice, engage in lifelong learning, advance the profession, and perform leadership responsibilities to promote the success of educators and all students.
Element 1 (K)	Knowledge of adult learning theories and models as they apply to professional growth activities
Element 2 (K)	Knowledge of professional growth theories and evidence-based practices that address and improve academic, behavioral, and programmatic outcomes for students with disabilities
Element 3 (S)	Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate professional growth activities and programs that improve staff professional practices and be in compliance with local, state, and federal requirements leading to improved outcomes for students with disabilities and their families
Element 4 (S)	Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate professional growth activities that improve self administrative practices leading to improved outcomes for students with disabilities and their families

Standard 8:

Special education administrators model and facilitate high professional expectations and ethical decision making to create supportive environments that improve outcomes for students with disabilities. They have a deep understanding of the significance of collaboration among educators, families, and others from the community in order to promote understanding, resolve conflicts, and build consensus.

Standard 8	Ethics and Collaboration: Special education administrators engage in ethical decision making and collaborate with stakeholders to improve programs, related services, and outcomes for all students and their families.
Element 1 (K)	Knowledge of ethical theories and related leadership implications for program and supervision that inform collaborative practices and support the administration of programs and related services for students with disabilities and their families
Element 2 (K)	Knowledge of administrative theories and models that facilitate communication among stakeholders
Element 3 (K)	Knowledge of contemporary and historical perspectives of advocacy at the local, state and federal level for students with disabilities and their families
Element 4 (K)	Knowledge of parent, community, and advocacy organizations as they support students with disabilities and their families
Element 5 (K)	Knowledge of the impact of diversity on educational programming expectations for students with disabilities
Element 6 (K)	Knowledge of intra- and inter-agency agreements that create programs with shared responsibility for students with disabilities and their families

Element 7 (S)	Implement collaborative administrative procedures and strategies to facilitate communication among stakeholders
Element 8 (S)	Engage in leadership practices that support shared decision making
Element 9 (S)	Demonstrate the skills necessary to promote ongoing communication, education, and support for and with families of all students
Element 10 (S)	Consult, collaborate, and coordinate regarding academic, behavioral and programmatic decisions at the school, district, intermediate school district levels to provide services within the least restrictive environment
Element 11 (S)	Utilize collaborative approaches for involving stakeholders in educational planning, systemic implementation, and evaluation
Element 12 (S)	Apply ethical practices when working with stakeholders serving all students and their families