



MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

PATH TO LEADERSHIP

Alternative Route to PK-12 Administrator Certification

MDE Approved | 100% Online | Flexible Scheduling

INFORMATIONAL PROGRAM GUIDE

DEVELOPED BY PRINCIPALS FOR PRINCIPALS SINCE 2011



**Michigan Association of
Secondary School Principals**

4/2026

Who Needs Certification?

STATE REQUIREMENTS:

According to State Law (MCL 380.1246) and Michigan Department of Education Administrative Rule (380.101-380.136):

As of November 16, 2017 any person employed **before** January 4, 2010 as a school administrator or in a position where his/her primary responsibility is administering instructional programs, who has completed all professional learning requirements and who has maintained the proper documentation, **must** hold a “grandparented” Experienced-Based School Administrator Certificate 1246(1)(a).

Any person employed **after** January 4, 2010 as a school administrator or in a position where his/her primary responsibility is administering instructional programs, must hold a School Administrator Certificate 1246(1)(b) with a PK-12 Building or Central Office endorsement **or** be enrolled in a program leading to certification not later than six months after he/she begins employment. The person then has three years to complete certification requirements or he/she shall not continue to be employed as a school administrator.

A School Administrator Certificate issued by the State of Michigan under these rules expires five years from June 30 of the calendar year it is issued. In order to maintain employment, a person’s certificate must be kept current by completing professional learning requirements.

AFFECTED POSITIONS:

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Principal
- Assistant Principal

These positions may require certification, depending on responsibilities:*

- Dean of Students
- Early Education Services Director
- Assistant Director of Early Education Services
- Director of Technical and Education Center
- Technology, Employment, and Community Services Director (*Instructional technology*)
- Great Start Readiness Program Administrator (*Does not apply to GSRP classroom teachers*)

**NOTE: This list is not all inclusive. The local district, public school academy, or intermediate school district must determine whether the position includes “administering instructional programs.”*

For more information on the certification requirements outlined above, please visit michigan.gov/mde and click on *Educator Services*.

Program Overview

The Path to Leadership program is owned and operated by the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP). It is the state's first alternative route to earning a PK-12 administrator certificate. Our goal is to provide candidates with a PK-12 administrator certificate at an affordable cost and in a manageable time frame through a program developed by principals, for principals.

Upon completion of the program and prior to applying for the certificate, MDE requires that all completers take and pass the (MTTC) tests for Elementary and Secondary (PK-12) School Administrator (ES).

Candidate Prerequisites

All program candidates must either hold a bachelor's degree in education and have leadership experience, or hold a Masters Degree.

All candidates must complete the program application in addition to submitting college/university transcripts (GPA Minimum 3.0); a current resume outlining both leadership roles and professional experience; and portfolio documentation, if requesting exemption from any specific Module(s). Directions to complete and submit this information can be found on page 9.

All candidates will receive an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to assist with his/her personal growth, along with meeting required Path to Leadership program objectives.

Module descriptions may be found on pages 5 and 6 of this Program Guide.

Financial Information

PROGRAM FEES

- **Application: \$500** (*Non-refundable fee required in order to submit application materials*)
- **Modules 1-8: \$825 per module** (*Including 36 SCECHs per module*)
- **Field Experience Non Administrators and Administrators \$825**
- **Maximum Program Cost: \$7,925** (*Additional textbook fees may be required.*)

FINANCIAL AID/TAX INFORMATION

The Path to Leadership program is not deemed an eligible educational institution by the IRS. Therefore, participants *do not* qualify for student loans or a tax deduction for program tuition. Program participants are *not* issued a 1098-T.

Candidate Acceptance

MASSP reserves the right to deny or defer any program applicants due to qualifications or space. Candidates who are accepted to the program will be notified via e-mail once the Cohort has reached capacity or the application deadline has passed, whichever occurs sooner.

Candidates who are accepted to the program are required to attend the mandatory online orientation session for the specific Cohort they applied to.

This information can be found on the Cohort calendar and the Path to Leadership website.



Required Coursework

Problem-based curriculum Modules provide a research and theoretical base for understanding leadership, schools as organizations and the role of the school leader in driving school change to improve student learning. The Modules that make up the Path to Leadership curriculum include:

- Module 1: Mastering Technology for Innovative Leadership
- Module 2: Creating an Inclusive Culture and Environment for Learning
- Module 3: Visionary Leadership for Educational Change and Improvement
- Module 4: Elements and Evaluation of Highly Effective Instruction
- Module 5: Creating a Safe and Orderly Environment for Student Learning
- Module 6: Principles of Public School Law
- Module 7: Facilitation of School Improvement
- Module 8: Human Resources and Finance
- Field Experience *240 Hours*

The program's eight Modules are facilitated in an online environment in collaboration with Michigan Virtual and delivered asynchronously. The Field Experience (if applicable) is a maximum of 240 hours that is both face-to-face and project-based. All instructors and mentors are respected members of the education community who hold certification and advanced degrees.

All applications are individually evaluated and an IDP is created for each candidate. Previous graduate-level and above coursework, training and provided portfolio samples are taken into consideration for possible exemption from Modules.

Timeline

All candidates must pay the application fee and submit all required materials by the date specified for each Cohort. The application fee is refunded only if you are not accepted.

MASSP begins a new Cohort every 6-8 weeks, which equates to approximately six Cohorts per calendar year. Information on each new Cohort is posted after the previous deadline has passed.

The Path to Leadership program's coursework takes approximately one year to complete. However, participants are given flexibility to complete the program over two-years.

- Modules are six weeks in length with a one week break between each.
- The Field Experience is school-based and is **240 hours**. Current Principals and Asst. Principals can submit a portfolio to request exemption.

Application materials *MUST* be submitted through the Path to Leadership program's online learning platform at plp.mivu.org. The application is a Google Form.

For a copy of the current Cohort calendar, applicable due dates and other information, please visit pathtoleadership.org.

Module Withdrawal/Repeat Policy

MODULE WITHDRAWAL

Participants are permitted to withdraw from a Module by **making direct contact with the program director**. The following protocol will apply:

- A request made to withdraw prior to the first week of the Module will be granted **without penalty one time only during a person's program participation**. The participant can request to be re-enrolled in a subsequent Cohort, when an opening is available.
- If the one-time withdrawal without penalty has already been exercised, the following protocol will apply:
 - Request to withdrawal no later than the second week of a Module will result in a re-enrollment fee of \$200
 - Request to withdrawal after the second full week of a Module will result in a re-enrollment fee of \$500.

MODULE REPEAT

Participants must complete their IDP as outlined by the program director. If a participant does not pass a required Module, the following protocol will apply:

- If a participant engages in the Module but doesn't earn a "passing" grade that participant can repeat the Module by paying a \$200 re-enrollment fee.
- Failing a Module due to a lack of participation/communication with the instructor will result in the participant paying the full \$825 charge, to repeat the Module.

Questions/Need Help?

START HERE

Many candidate questions and concerns can be addressed with the information provided in **this Program Guide and/or by visiting the Frequently Asked Questions** portion of our website at pathtoleadership.org/FAQ.

STILL WANT TO TALK IT OUT? NO PROBLEM!

For program-related questions, please **contact Heidie Ciesielski** at (989) 413-4166 or via email at heidie@massp.com

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

For technical issues related to the online learning platform, please **contact Michigan Virtual directly at (888) 889-2840**.



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 PathToLeadership

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Module Descriptions

Mastering Technology for Innovative Leadership

This comprehensive course is designed to equip aspiring principals with the essential technology skills to excel in today's educational landscape. Participants will explore current trends in digital engagement, effective communication strategies, and integrating emerging technologies to enhance teaching and learning experiences. Through hands-on activities and real-world applications, future school leaders will develop the capacity to become innovative digital leaders adept at fostering a culture of continuous improvement and technological advancement within their schools.

Visionary Leadership for Educational Change and Improvement

Key objectives for this module include: Providing a research and theoretical base for understanding leadership, schools as organizations, and the role of the school leader in driving school change to improve student learning. Emphasis is placed on understanding the principles of organizational theory and development as they apply to schools, particularly focusing on the concepts of organizational change and building a productive school culture and capacity for continuous improvement. Administrator integrity, fairness and ethical behavior in decision-making and communications will also be discussed.

Elements and Evaluation of Highly Effective Instruction

Key objectives for this module include: Exploration of content related to teacher observation and evaluation, as well as the implications of the school leader's role as an instructional leader. Participants will engage in a case study observation of a teacher. Based on collected observation data, participants will script, code and provide feedback in both written and face-to-face modes, as well as discuss the experience and reflect upon authentic observations. Michigan's educator evaluation statute and the effective implementation of this process will be the focus of the module.

Creating a Safe and Orderly Environment for Student Learning

Key objectives of this module include: Building an understanding of the societal issues that impact student safety and well-being, socio-emotional development and academic learning, and the importance of safe and orderly school environments that are conducive to learning for all students. Emphasis is placed on proactive research-based school-wide approaches and classroom practices for developing a safe, caring, and productive learning community that embraces diversity of staff, students, and community. Topics addressed include: State and federal laws; classroom management and school-wide curriculum approaches; social-emotional learning; staff, family, and community involvement; and human relations and conflict resolution. Specific attention is directed at safety/security, bullying/harassment, violence prevention, and crisis planning and intervention.

Module Descriptions – Continued

Principles of Public School Law

Key objectives of this module include: The principles of basic school law, with an emphasis on the Michigan public education structure and statutes related to the administration of school laws. Specific attention is paid to laws related to the educational environment, student rights and responsibilities, school safety/operations management and management of school finances, personnel and negotiated agreements. Attention will be given to the importance of policy making, state/federal regulations and student advocacy.

Facilitation of School Improvement

Key objectives of this module include: The evaluation of strategies, programs and initiatives to accelerate achievement and close student achievement gaps through the school improvement process. This module provides guidance on required MDE and AdvancedEd school improvement reporting along with practical activities and information to facilitate collaboration with staff and key stakeholders in the SIP process. In addition, participants will explore the efficient use of human, fiscal and technological resources to manage school operations.

Human Resources and Finance

Key objectives of this module include: Exploration of state and legal issues related to human resources and school finance. An overview and discussions related to building a master schedule, while using contractual and state certification guidelines will also be a focus of this module. Within this context, various models and issues are investigated, including those for teachers and support personnel.

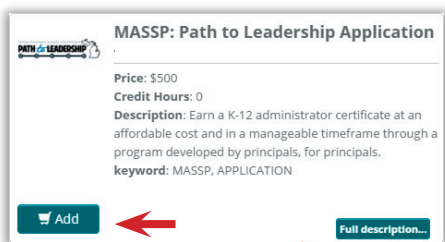
School-Based Field Experience

The School-Based field experience provides significant opportunities to synthesize and apply the knowledge and practice to develop the skills identified in the Michigan Standards for the Preparation of School Principals through substantial, sustained, standards-based work in the school setting. The internship is 240 hours of experiences in the role of a building leader and is designed to be completed while remaining in your current position.

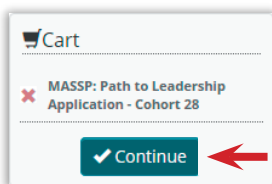
Application Access Instructions

1. Navigate to Michigan Virtual's Professional Learning Portal at plp.mivu.org. Type *PTL* into the catalog's search bar to narrow the scope of courses available.

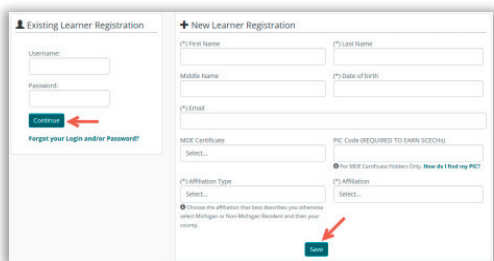
2. Locate the option called MASSP: Path to Leadership Application, then click the "Add" button.



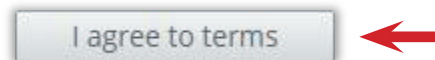
3. At the top of your screen, click the "Continue" button within the cart summary to proceed.



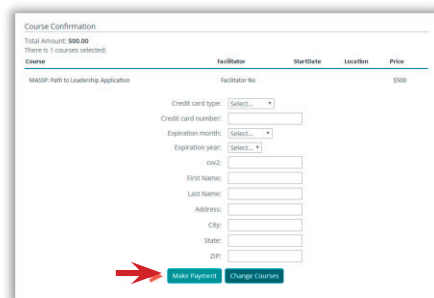
4. You will then be prompted to create an account. Be sure to complete all applicable fields, including entering your legal name and PIC number. Click "Save"



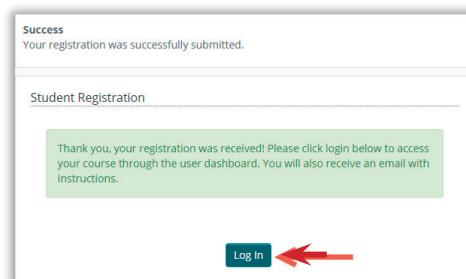
5. The Terms and Conditions page will appear. Click "I agree to the terms" to proceed.



6. Complete your transaction by reviewing the order details, entering credit card information and finally selecting the "Make Payment" button to pay the \$500 application fee.



7. A confirmation page will appear, click the "Log In" button to proceed to the Dashboard and access the application information.



8. The application module will be displayed in the "Active Courses" section within your personal Dashboard. Click the title to access the module.



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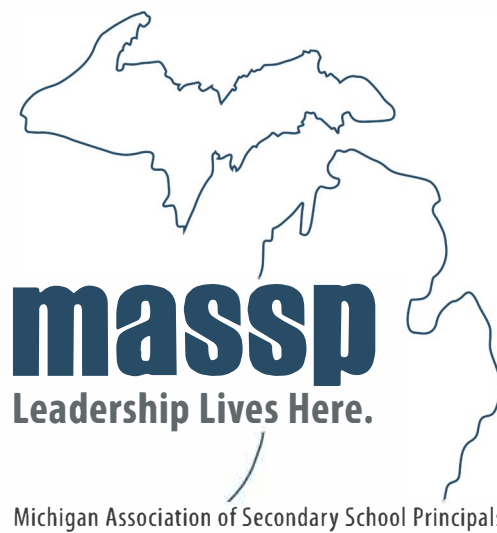
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APPLICATION DIRECTIONS

Candidates seeking to enroll in the MASSP Path to Leadership program should utilize the following steps to ensure that all applications materials are properly completed and submitted.

- 1. Purchase the application module and create a user name and password in Michigan Virtual's Professional Learning Portal** (plp.mivu.org) using the instructions on page 8.
- 2. Access the Application module** in the Professional Learning Portal:
 - A) Download and complete the Path to Leadership application.** The application must be complete before you submit it
 - B) Upload a current resume** in PDF format and copy of job description/duties, if possible, by the required application deadline. Please note, it is important that this information is updated and current.
 - C) Order official graduate transcripts** from each college/university sent to MASSP, attn: Heidie Ciesielski, 1001 Centennial Way, Suite 100, Lansing, MI 48917 or via direct e-mail from the institution to heidie@massp.org.
- 3. Plan to attend the mandatory program orientation session** as listed on the Cohort Calendar and pathtoleadership.com. The face-to-face session is held at MASSP in Lansing.
- 4. Each applicant will be contacted via e-mail after the application deadline has expired** and notified of acceptance, deferment or rejection.



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