

# **IMPORTANT CHANGES TO BROAD FIELD SOCIAL SCIENCE (6-12) CERTIFICATION**

## **JULY 1, 2006 CONVERSION DATE**

The Professional Standards Commission approved significant rule changes in the preparation and certification of Social Science teachers (6-12) that became effective on March 15, 2006. This memorandum outlines the secondary rule changes and the timeline for implementing these new policies. No changes are being made to the Middle Grades Social Science certificate 4-8.

For a number of years Georgia has had a secondary certificate in the field of Social Science that was considered "broad field". Holders of this certificate were in-field to teach classes in grades 6-12 in any of the following five subjects: History, Geography, Economics, Political Science and Behavioral Science. The state-approved preparation programs in this field included concentrations of courses in one subject with supporting course work in the other four fields and the required content assessment for the Social Science certificate included questions from all five topic fields.

Based heavily on No Child Left Behind guidelines calling for increased content mastery, the PSC has determined to eliminate the broad field certificate and replace it with individual certificates in each of the five fields. The proposed changes to the Social Science certificate rules, initiated in December, 2005, were posted on the web site for public review and comment. Feedback received during the 30-day comment period was forwarded to the commission for consideration at the February 9 commission meeting. The draft rules were adopted at the February meeting and have an effective date of March 15, 2006. New content assessments are being developed for each field and appropriate changes are also being applied to all state-approved preparation programs.

The conversion of Social Science certificates will be made electronically on July 1, 2006. The PSC certification database will automatically remove Social Science and replace it with five separate 6-12 certificates in the fields of History, Geography, Economics, Political Science and Behavioral Science. The new certificate status will be electronically available on the PSC database July 1, with paper copies of the new certificates to be mailed to the educators over the following several weeks. There will be no change to the courses in which these teachers are considered in-field and highly qualified.

No new individuals should be admitted to Georgia state-approved Social Science programs after March 15, 2006. Those already participating in Social Science programs prior to that date will be allowed to complete their current course of study. However, depending on when they complete their program, there may be changes to the content assessment they must complete and the Georgia certificate they will receive.

The Praxis Series Assessments are being phased out in Georgia and will be replaced by new assessments known as GACE (Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators). The last Praxis administration in Georgia will be in August, 2006. Praxis II Social Science test scores will not be accepted after the August test administration, with the following exception. Applicants who, by September 1, 2006, have successfully passed one section of the Praxis Social Studies test (either #0081 or #0083), will have until March 1, 2007 to pass the other Praxis test. The applicant may also decide to switch to the GACE test under these circumstances. If the test taker is unable to successfully pass the second Praxis test by March 1, 2007, that educator will need to pass the appropriate GACE assessment.

Those applicants completing a Social Science program and passing the Praxis II assessments within the March 1, 2007 timeframe will receive all five certificate fields. Those taking the GACE assessments will receive certificates only in the fields in which they pass the assessment. New GACE assessments for History, Geography, Political Science and Economics will be available at the initial test administration in November, 2006. The Behavioral Science assessment will be developed and implemented during the following year.

If we may provide any additional information on this issue, please do not hesitate to visit our web site at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) or contact this office at (404) 232-2500.