



Professional Standards Commission  
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Terri T. DeLoach  
Chair

Floyd D. Toth  
Executive Secretary

## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** October 13, 2005

**TO:** Employers of Educators, Preparers of Educators, Other Interested Parties

**FROM:** F.D. Toth, Ph.D.

**SUBJECT:** Professional Standards Commission Changes in Georgia TAPP Entrance Requirements

At its August 12, 2005, the Commission voted to change the entrance policy for certain candidates in the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP) by requiring passing scores on the Praxis II assessments. These TAPP candidates include:

- All Early Childhood Education candidates
- Special education candidates who are assigned to teach core academic content as the teacher of record, and
- Any middle grades and secondary teachers who do not have a concentration or major in the subject area(s) they are assigned to teach.

TAPP candidates included in this list who do not have a passing score on the appropriate Praxis II test cannot be designated as highly qualified. Parents should be notified that the policy has been changed and that their TAPP teachers are not highly qualified.

These TAPP candidates should proceed to take the appropriate Praxis II test as soon as possible. This change is in effect August 13, 2005, and it applies to all TAPP candidates as designated above who have not passed the appropriate Praxis II assessments.

Please be aware that this change in the Georgia TAPP requirements results from a change in the local guidance provided by the US Department of Education for No Child Left Behind, Title II Part A. The revision dated August 3, 2005 states that:

**A – 8 When can a teacher in an alternate route to certification/licensure program be considered “highly qualified”?**

*“A teacher in an alternate route to certification program may be considered highly qualified if the teacher holds at least a bachelor’s degree, **has already demonstrated subject-matter competency in the core academic subject(s) the teacher will be teaching**, and is participating in an alternate route to certification program in which the teacher: (1) receives, before and while teaching, high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction; (2) participates in a program of intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support for teachers or in a teacher mentoring program; (3) assumes functions as a teacher for a period not to exceed three years; and (4) demonstrates satisfactory progress toward full certification as prescribed by the State”.*

Prior USDOE guidance, revised January, 2004 stated that:

*“Alternative preparation teachers who are not fully certified may be considered to meet the certification requirement in the NCLB definition of highly qualified if they are participating in an alternative route to certification program under which they receive (1) high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive and classroom focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction before and while teaching; (2) participate in a program of intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support for teachers, or a mentoring program; (3) assume functions as a teacher only for a specified period of time (4) demonstrate satisfactory progress toward full certification as prescribed by the state”.*

We requested the USDOE to accept our GA TAPP program as designed with the Praxis II required during the first year of preparation, and a passing score required as a completion requirement for renewable certification. We pointed out that two of the TAPP programs are recognized by the USDOE as exemplary alternative preparation programs and are developed according to the earlier guidance provided by the USDOE. Unfortunately the USDOE denied our request.

Your participation in the Georgia TAPP program is very much appreciated. Please let us know if we can be of assistance as you and your TAPP teachers make these changes.