



Upcoming Rules Impact Advanced Degrees, Endorsements, and Compensation

The Governor recently signed into law several bills that will affect salary compensation for selected advanced degrees, endorsements, and teaching fields. The laws will help address ongoing shortages of math/science teachers and eliminate salary increases for “unused” leadership degrees. The GaPSC and GaDOE are currently working on the changes to rules and policies necessary to implement these laws. The following overview is intended to clarify some basic issues.

HOUSE BILL 280 deals with recruiting and retaining new math and science teachers as well as enhancing the effectiveness of the current workforce. Funding is contingent on appropriation by the General Assembly and is currently scheduled to be provided in FY '11 (School Year 2010-2011).

The first part of HB 280 establishes a **differentiated pay scale**. New, fully certified math and science teachers in grades 6-12 will skip steps E, 1, 2, 3 on the state salary schedule and receive initial placement on step 4 (six years creditable experience). All veteran fully certified math and science teachers below step 4 will also rise to that level. These educators will move up the salary schedule as any other teacher would; however, they must meet student achievement criteria developed by OSA

in year 5. If not, they will revert to their actual chronological step.

The second part of the bill establishes two new **endorsements in grades K-5 math and science** that provide a salary increase. Any K-5 teacher teaching math or science will earn a \$1,000 annual salary increase for completing a math or science endorsement and \$2,000 if both endorsements are completed.

Existing endorsement rules are being revised to: change from grades P-5 to K-5; align with the eligibility requirements for the salary increases; and establish a “bridge” to enable those holding the old P-5 endorsements to qualify for the new K-5 endorsements and salary increases. The rules will be presented to the Commission for initiation at the October 2009 meeting.

The GaPSC will be working with the GaDOE and local systems to determine the teachers who are eligible for the salary increases, which may be funded (if appropriated) starting with school year 2010-2011.

HOUSE BILL 455, a second legislative initiative, addresses the salary increases paid for advanced degrees in leadership for individuals not assigned to leadership positions. The new law specifies that after July 1, 2010, educators earning leadership degrees will be required to hold a leadership position in order to

be compensated for the degree. Those completing a leadership degree before June 30, 2010, will be grandfathered and HB 455 will not apply to them.

Why did the General Assembly take this action? Leadership degrees have clearly become the vehicle that many educators use to acquire a certificate upgrade and raise in pay. Last year, almost \$68 million in tax dollars was spent in salary increases for leadership degrees for educators who are not serving in leadership positions.

In most cases, these leadership degrees are not as relevant to the educator's work as a content degree in their teaching area and the quality of the degrees (many from out-of-state) varies widely from institution to institution.

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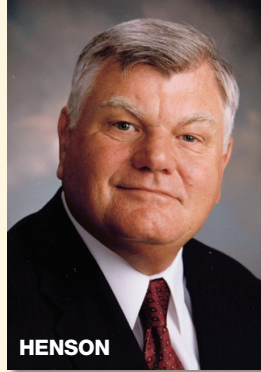
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

What you need to know

With Phil Blackwell's recent retirement, I want to formally welcome Jane Huntley as the new Director of Certification. Jane is well known to many of you through her excellent work in RESAs and through her role at the GaPSC in the early design of the Georgia Master Teacher Program.

**Federal Race to the Top (RTTT) Grant**

We are in the middle of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reshape the educational landscape in our state through the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant.

In July 2009, the U.S. DOE published its draft eligibility and selection criteria for the \$4.35 billion competitive grant. All Georgia state education agencies, under the direction of the Governor's office, are working together to secure part of this funding.

The grant mandates that state plans focus on four RTTT core reform areas: (1) Bolster standards and assessments; (2) Improve teacher and leader effectiveness; (3) Implement a statewide longitudinal data system using data to support instruction; and (4) Turn around struggling schools. Much of the GaPSC's work focuses on the second reform area and involves such issues as alternative (non-traditional) programs, the effectiveness of teacher/principal preparation programs, equitable distribution of effective teachers, and specialized endorsements resulting in increased salary. The great news is that Georgia is well-positioned to compete. Additionally, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has provided Georgia and 14 other states with funding to help guide us through the application process.

RTTT applications must be submitted in December and the U.S. DOE is scheduled to announce the grant recipients in March 2010.

The RTTT grant is part of the nearly \$100 billion allotted to education in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). We are excited about the opportunity to compete in RTTT, and will provide you with updated information as it becomes available.

HB 455/HB 280

We continue our work to implement the recent HB 455 and HB 280 legislation. The lead article in this issue provides information and clarification on these significant initiatives. If you have not yet read the HB 455 Guidance Document posted on our website, please visit www.gapsc.com. The return on investment from the K-5 Math and Science Endorsements created by HB 280, a teacher quality bill, could turn out to be the best piece of education legislation in the '09 session.

Sincerely,

Kelly Henson, Executive Secretary

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission

Teacher recruitment an important focus

Georgia is awarded \$3.5 million grant from the U.S. DOE

A sudden abundance of prospective teachers combined with budget cuts and furloughs makes it easy—but short-sighted—to reduce our efforts aimed at teacher recruitment. A recent GaPSC Best Practice conference focused on our recruitment, retention, and production of teachers.

Why should we continue to focus on recruitment when we have minimal shortages and an ample pool of teachers in most areas? There are several reasons:

- The economy will rebound.
- Student growth will return to Georgia.
- Class sizes will return to lower numbers.
- Teachers will retire.
- Teachers will move to the private sector.
- There will be significant cost associated with teacher turnover.

Some assistance with recruitment is already coming our way with the award of a five-year, \$3.5 million Transition to Teaching Grant from the U.S. DOE. The 2009-2014 grant will be used to place Math, Science, and Special Education Teachers in eligible "high-need schools."

One of only 14 national, state, or local grants selected from 90 qualifying proposals, the Georgia grant is the largest funding amount awarded.

The federal Transition to Teaching Program facilitates teacher recruitment, selection, hiring and placement, as well as the support and retention of non-traditional candidates and teachers-of-record among career changers, paraprofessionals, and recent arts and science graduates.

An Important Note on GaPSC Customer Service

Budget cuts are affecting all of us. Vacant positions, especially in the areas of certification evaluation and ethics investigation, are slowing our productivity. Like all of you, we are working hard, and yet trying to find ways to work smarter, to provide the best service to our customers.

Taskforces convened to assist with rule and policy changes

In order to facilitate continuous improvement, the Educator Preparation Division has convened a number of taskforces to recommend changes to the Commission that may result in new policies or new and revised rules.

These taskforces are comprised of subject-matter experts working in local school districts, Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs), or institutions of higher education, as well as representatives of other state agencies or organizations.

Following initiation, rule changes are open for public comment for a period of 30 days before the Commission officially votes to adopt them.

As of August 2009, five taskforces had been formed and another five will begin work in late fall 2009 or spring 2010. The work of each group is briefly described below.



- The **K-5 Math and Science Endorsement Taskforce** will make recommendations to bring the existing P-5 Math and Science Endorsement program rules into compliance with recent legislation (HB 280). In addition, the taskforce will recommend program delivery guidelines for program providers and will recommend methods for allowing previously endorsed educators to bridge, or convert, from the old endorsement to the new endorsement and become eligible for stipends. Anticipated date for initiating rule amendments: October 2009.
- The **Distance Learning Taskforce** will develop standards and processes for state approval of distance learning programs offered by in-state and out-of-state program providers. Anticipated date for initiating rule making: November 2009.
- The **Teacher Leader Taskforce** will develop new Teacher Leader standards and recommend changes to the existing endorsement preparation rule. Anticipated date for initiating rule making: January 2010.
- The **Educational Leadership Taskforce** will recommend amendments to the leadership rules to provide greater alignment between the preparation and certification rules, clarify ambiguous terms, remove dated phase-in components, and provide additional information regarding building level and district level preparation and certification options. Anticipated date for initiating rule amendments: TBD.
- The **Degree Equivalency Taskforce** will review practices regarding the establishment of certification levels based on advanced degrees and recommend to the Commission a set of rules and/or guidelines for consistent and equitable decisions. Anticipated date for initiating rule amendments: TBD.
- The **Science Education Taskforce** will recommend changes to the Science Education (6-12) Preparation Rule to reduce the number and complexity of content standards and lessen the burden on program providers that offer broad field or multiple science field programs. It is expected that rule changes will encourage more providers to offer multiple science field programs. Anticipated date for initiating rule amendments: TBD.
- The **Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA) Taskforce** will assist GaPSC staff in redesigning GaPSC reporting requirements for all traditional and non-traditional providers of state teacher education programs in response to changes in federal reporting resulting from the re-authorization of the HEOA. Rulemaking not required.

Additional taskforces are working on preparation standards in the areas of ESOL, Health and Physical Education, Special Education, and Educational Interpreter.

PREPARATION

100% HiQ Systems

- Banks County
- Barrow County
- Ben Hill County
- Berrien County
- Bryan County
- Charlton County
- Clarke County
- Cook County
- Decatur County
- Effingham County
- Elbert County
- Evans County
- Fayette County
- Floyd County
- Forsyth County
- Glascock County
- Habersham County
- Hancock County
- Harris County
- Jackson County
- Jasper County
- Jeff Davis County
- Jefferson County
- Lincoln County
- Madison County
- Miller County
- Monroe County
- Oconee County
- Pickens County
- Pierce County
- Pike County
- Rabun County
- Screven County
- Taliaferro County
- Tift County
- Toombs County
- Treutlen County
- Warren County
- Wheeler County
- Wilkes County
- Wilkinson County
- Bremen City
- Buford City
- Cartersville City
- Chickamauga City
- Pelham City
- Thomasville City

Announcing 2009's 100 Percent Highly Qualified Systems and Schools

The GaPSC, contracting with the GaDOE, provides technical assistance and monitoring services to school systems and schools to help assure teacher quality. The state Title II, Part A consultants and staff work to ensure all Georgia teachers and paraprofessionals in every core academic subject classroom are highly qualified and that all students have equal access to instruction by experienced and effective teachers.

As part of this program, the GaPSC has formed a Charter School Taskforce to assist school systems and charter schools in attaining 100 percent highly qualified status.

The GaPSC is proud to announce the systems and schools that attained 100 percent highly qualified status by June 30, 2009.

The complete list of 100 percent highly qualified schools for 2009 is available at:
www.gapsc.com/EducatorPreparation/NoChildLeftBehind/home.html



Recent Educator Preparation Rule Changes

Effective July 15, 2009:

- 505-3-.22 Healthcare Science and Technology Education Program
- 505-3-.49 School Nutrition Director Program

Mark Your Calendar: University Certification/Program Officials

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us on Wednesday, December 2, 2009, for the 16th Annual University Certification and Program Officials Conference at the Macon State College Conference Center. The conference will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude by 3:30 p.m.

Additional details and online registration information will be made available in early November.

MyPSC Account is a step toward paperless certification

CERTIFICATION

As mentioned in the previous issue of the PSC Pulse, the GaPSC is moving to paperless certification. Beginning January 1, 2010, the GaPSC will no longer print and mail certificates and correspondence to educators. It will instead issue these documents electronically.

Going paperless will have several important benefits. First, it will result in faster communications. You will no longer have to wait for delivery of your correspondence and certificate. Second, it is more convenient. You can access your certificate and correspondence anytime, anywhere. Third, going paperless will result in significant cost savings on paper, printing, envelopes, and postage. For educators, obtaining duplicate copies of your certificate is easy and free—simply print another copy when you need one.

Your access to the paperless system will be through your “MyPSC Account.” Once implemented, individual accounts MUST be created by all certified Georgia educators, applicants for certification, and individuals who have taken the GACE but have not yet applied for certification. To view or print your certificate, or to read correspondence from the GaPSC, simply log in to your account. We will even notify you via email when new correspondence has been posted.

The web portal is targeted to be available this November. Everyone will need to take a few minutes to create his or her account at that time. We will provide more details as we get closer to the implementation date.

The new launch page for MyPSC will provide an easy and convenient way for you to access your certificate, check your status, and get the information you need when you need it.

Please note these three very important points:

- Who must create a MyPSC Account? All certified Georgia educators, applicants for certification, and individuals who have taken the GACE but have not yet applied for certification.
- As part of the account creation process, it is critical you provide a valid email address. Since correspondence will be via email, you will need to use a reliable email address—one that you check often. To make sure we are able to reach you, you may enter a second, backup email address during the registration process. While providing a secondary email address is not required, we strongly recommend you do this. If your email address changes, you will need to update your MyPSC Account with the new address.
- You must have your certification ID number to create and log in to your account. Your six-digit certification number is your GaPSC Account Number. This number is printed on your certificate and on correspondence from GaPSC. Please keep this number handy.

Georgia Master Teacher Program Launches Applications for 2009-2010

As the Georgia Master Teacher program moves into its fifth year, K-12 public school teachers are invited to apply for this recognition based on their impact on student achievement and progress. Applications in three categories — Instructional Coach, Core Curricular (CRCT) and Non-Core Curricular — are available on the Master Teacher website (www.gamasterteachers.org).

The deadlines for application to the program are December 15, 2009 (CRCT) and January 31, 2010 (Non-CRCT and Instructional Coach).

For current Master Teachers, specialized training in January 2010 will feature noted author and educator Jay McTighe presenting the workshop Understanding by Design and Differentiated Instruction. Jay is well known for his work with “thinking skills.” The training is offered with the support of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE).



Recent Certification Rule Changes

Effective July 15, 2009:

- 505-2-.08 International Exchange Certificate
- 505-2-.70 Healthcare Science Technology Education Certificate
- 505-2-.203 School Nutrition Director

Effective October 1, 2009:

- 505-2-.02 Classification: Category, Title, Type, Field, Level
- 505-2-.25 Add a Field to An Existing Certificate
- 505-2-.108 Special Education General Curriculum/Early Childhood Education (P-5)

Effective October 15, 2009:

- 505-2-.15 Certification By Interstate Reciprocity

CERTIFICATION

DID YOU KNOW ?

From July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2009, the GaPSC processed 5,714 upgrades based on advanced leadership degrees.

In comparison, during the same period of time, upgrades were processed for advanced degrees in these majors:

■ English	289
■ Math	258
■ Broad Field Science	85
■ Music	168
■ Early Childhood	2,164

NOTE:

As of June 30, 2009, just under 25% of those 5,714 educators obtaining leadership degrees were employed in a leadership position.

DID YOU KNOW THIS?

In the last three months between July 1 and September 30, the GaPSC received 15,000 applications, completing 13,544 of those application transactions. As a result, Georgia has 3,797 newly certified educators and 2,495 educators with renewed certificates. Other transactions included upgrades, conversions, and name changes.

During the same three months, the GaPSC Call Center processed 28,360 telephone calls.

Hot Topic: Unsatisfactory Annual Evaluation Requirements

The GaPSC receives many questions each month about “Unsatisfactory Annual Performance Evaluations.” The laws, rules, and procedures related to this issue are included in the box below. Please review this information to assure that your school system is in compliance with the requirements. Superintendents should note that it is their responsibility to ensure that the information on unsatisfactory evaluations is provided to the GaPSC in an accurate and timely manner.

Recent Ethics Rule Changes

Effective October 15, 2009:

- 505-6-.01 Code of Ethics for Educators

“Unsat”-Related Rules, Laws, and Procedures

Rules

DOE Rule 160-5-2-.04 (2) (a) 5

Certified personnel shall not receive credit for any year of experience in which the individual received an unsatisfactory performance evaluation.

GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 8.(a)

For Clear Renewable or Performance-Based certificates that expire June 30, 2005, or after, an educator with two unsatisfactory annual performance evaluations during the previous five-year validity cycle that have not been satisfactorily remediated by the employing school system shall not be entitled to a renewable certificate in any field.

1. At the request of an employing Georgia school system, the individual may be issued a one-year non-renewable Waiver certificate. During the validity period, the individual must demonstrate that the performance deficiency has been satisfactorily addressed as verified by the employer.
2. When the performance deficiency has been satisfactorily addressed and verified by the employer, the employing school system may apply for the appropriate renewable certificate. The new, Clear Renewable certificate will be issued for four years to complete the established five-year cycle.
3. The GaPSC shall maintain a central clearinghouse of information on Georgia educators receiving annual unsatisfactory performance appraisals or annual performance remediation. Each local school system is required to report this information on or before June 30 of the academic year in which the appraisal or remediation occurred. **The local system superintendent is responsible for ensuring this information is provided in an accurate and timely manner.**

Laws

O.C.G.A. 20-2-200.(c)

An individual who has received two unsatisfactory annual performance evaluations in the previous five-year period pursuant to Code Section 20-2-210 shall not be entitled to a renewable certificate prior to demonstrating that such performance deficiency has been satisfactorily addressed, but such individual may apply to the commission for a nonrenewable certificate.

O.C.G.A. 20-2-212.(a)

The placement of teachers on the salary schedule shall be based on certificate level and years of creditable experience, except that a teacher shall not receive credit for any year of experience in which the teacher received an unsatisfactory performance evaluation.

Procedures

Marking an Unsatisfactory Evaluation as REMEDIATED on the GaPSC Website:

When the performance deficiency has been satisfactorily addressed and verified by the employer, the administrator at the local education agency (LEA) authorized to access the UNSAT box on www.gapsc.org can check the Remediated box on the educator's UNSAT file.

Correcting an Erroneous Entry in the GaPSC Database:

Submit a letter, hardcopy or electronic, from the superintendent to Mark Pevey (GaPSC, 2 Peachtree Street, Suite 6000, Atlanta, GA 30303 or mark.pevey@gapsc.com) explaining the error and requesting that the entry be changed.

Upcoming Rules Impact Advanced Degrees, Endorsements, and Compensation

(continued from front cover)

Specific details, such as the definition of leadership degrees, leadership positions, and procedures for school systems to determine placement on salary schedules, are addressed in “**HB 455 Guidelines**,” available on the GaPSC website at www.gapsc.com.

What’s next? HB 455 is a start on addressing “unused” degrees, but in actuality leadership degrees represent only the tip of the iceberg. Practically any advanced degree in virtually any other area currently results in a certificate upgrade. There is often no quality control on the program and no need for the degree to be relevant to the educator’s work.

GaPSC is developing a new proposed rule with significant changes in certificate upgrades. Connecting degree majors with certification and job duties as part of the compensation process should enhance educator effectiveness, facilitate student achievement and school improvement, and provide a greater return on our investment in advanced degrees. Draft copies of the rule will be circulated for review and comment prior to taking the rule to the Commission.



Protecting Georgia’s Higher Standard of Learning



Georgia Professional Standards Commission

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