



Professional Standards Commission
Two Peachtree Street, Suite 6000
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
(404) 232-2500

Amy M. Denty
Chair

Floyd D. Toth
Executive Secretary

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 10, 2003
TO: All Interested Parties
FROM: F.D. Toth, Executive Secretary
SUBJECT: Interim Certification Policy Changes

I. BACKGROUND/PURPOSE:

Effective July 1, 2003 new state legislation (House Bill 590) directs the PSC to revise certification rules to incorporate “appropriate requirements and procedures to ensure high-quality certification standards” and facilitate “the interstate mobility of out-of-state certified educators”. In accordance with the law, the forthcoming certification rules will specifically address a number of issues, including: requirements for educators new to the profession; experienced educators new to Georgia; renewal; and, in-field assignment standards.

At the same time, federal legislation known as “No Child Left Behind” now in effect is also having a significant impact on teacher quality and requirements, particularly in the area of satisfying “highly qualified” criteria. While development of the new certification rules will be done with the federal legislation in mind, it is important to note that standards for some state certificates are NOT the same as federal criteria for “highly qualified.” Information regarding the Georgia No Child Left Behind initiatives, “highly qualified” criteria and, in particular, the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) for veteran teachers may be found on the PSC web site at www.gapsc.com/nclb/admin/files/housse.pdf.

The purpose of this memorandum is to identify specific interim changes to existing state certification rules, as well as to provide information on the anticipated timeline for development and implementation of the new rules. These interim changes are EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY (July 1, 2003). Experienced out-of-state educators who moved to Georgia prior to July 1, 2003, including those employed in Georgia within the last two years, are eligible for the provisions of this interim change as long as they satisfy all requirements outlined in paragraph III, 1 and 2 below. In these situations, the 5-year window for out-of-state experience must be based on a July 1, 2003 application date. These interim changes will remain in effect until superceded by the new rules.

II. ANTICIPATED TIMELINE FOR RULE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION:

July 1 – September 10, 2003:	Input/draft preparation
September 11, 2003:	Commission to initiate rule changes
September 19 to October 19, 2003:	Public review and comment
November 13, 2003:	Commission to approve/disapprove changes
January 1, 2004:	Effective date of new rules

III. OUT-OF-STATE EXPERIENCE TO EXEMPT SPECIAL GEORGIA REQUIREMENTS

The Special Georgia Requirements for Content Assessment (PRAXIS II), Recency of Study/Experience, Standards of Conduct, Computer Competency and coursework in Special Education and the Teaching of Reading will continue to exist and be a part of all Georgia state-approved preparation programs. HOWEVER, specific experience gained by veteran, out-of-state educators moving to Georgia may now be used to exempt all Special Georgia Requirements except Computer Competency and the Standards of Conduct.

To be acceptable, the out-of-state experience must be directly related to the type (teaching, service, leadership) and field (subject area) of the Georgia certificate being requested. For example, to exempt the math PRAXIS II assessment the experience must be in teaching mathematics in a PSC-accepted setting. Likewise, to exempt the school counseling PRAXIS II, the experience must be as a school counselor in an accepted setting and to exempt the leadership PRAXIS II assessment the experience must be in an administrative position appropriate to the Georgia certificate and in a PSC-accepted educational setting.

The experience criteria outlined below are NOT the same experience criteria used to determine salary step or eligibility for the specific certificate fields that have experience requirements, but are designed for the express purpose of exempting selected Special Georgia Requirements.

The following criteria will be used to determine acceptable experience:

1. Applicant must hold, or have held, a professional certificate/license from another state or country in a field that is comparable to a current Georgia certificate field.

Note A. Certificate/license must be professional and equivalent of Georgia Clear Renewable, as determined by the state of origin.

2. Applicant must have a minimum of 3 full years of successful education experience within 5 years of the date of application for a Georgia certificate.

Note A. Only full-time experience will be accepted. One year of full-time experience in a P-12 setting is defined as a minimum of 120 days working full time in a PSC-approved educational setting (see 2, NOTE F). No computations for partial-year experience will apply.

Note B. One year of full-time teaching experience at a college or university is defined as teaching 9 semester hours each semester for two consecutive semesters.

Note C. Applicants may earn 3 years of acceptable experience using any combination of full years of public school, approved private school or approved college/university experience. For example, 2 years of public school experience plus one year of college experience totals 3 years.

Note D. Experience may have been earned while serving on a non-professional certificate. However, the applicant must have converted to a full professional certificate at the time of application for the Georgia certificate.

Note E. Successful experience is defined as no unsatisfactory annual (or equivalent) performance appraisals within the most-recent 3 teaching years (all must be within 5 years of date of application).

Note F. Acceptable experience must take place within the following settings:

- 1) a U.S. public school;
- 2) a U.S. private school regionally-accredited at the time the experience was earned;
- 3) a PSC-approved accredited college or university;

- 4) Jurisdictions that have signed the NASDTEC Interstate Contract (known as the “reciprocity agreement”), such as District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, overseas U.S. military schools, etc;
- 5) Teaching in kindergarten, pre-kindergarten, or a Head Start Program, provided they are under the legal jurisdiction of a public school board of education or are regionally/state accredited;
- 6) Teaching in a school setting in a foreign country, as long as:
 - a. the applicant held the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor’s degree prior to the time the experience was earned;
 - b. the applicant held a valid professional certificate issued by the country’s governing body appropriate to the field and subject taught at the time the experience was earned;
 - c. the school was organized and conducted with educational curriculum similar to that found in U.S. public schools.

Note G. Experience as a supply/substitute or paraprofessional does NOT apply toward Special Georgia Requirement exemption.

Note H. If an applicant is a member of the military Reserve or National Guard and is called to active duty, one full year of active duty status will be accepted as a successful year of educator experience. No more than 2 years of experience within the last 5 years may result from military active duty.

IV. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED AS PART OF APPLICATION PACKET:

To submit experience for consideration to exempt Special Georgia Requirements, the following documents must be included as part of the new application packet for Georgia certification:

Georgia PSC Certification Application, PSC Employer Assurance Form (if employed in a Georgia School), transcripts, etc.

PLUS

1. Copy of out-of-state or foreign country educator certificate;
2. Experience Verification Form (completed and signed by the Superintendent, Headmaster, Agency Director or Designated Personnel Officer at the educational institution where the experience was earned). **NOTE:** The new Experience Verification Form (electronic and paper download available on our web) reflecting the performance evaluation rating must be used;
3. For college/university experience, applicant must submit documentation on official institution letterhead, signed by the institution’s chief academic officer, dean or department chair, that includes the following information:
 - a.) The semester/quarter/year the experience was earned;
 - b.) Verification that the semester teaching load was at least 9 semester hours each semester for two consecutive semesters for every experience year reported;
4. If active military duty is used as experience for members of the Reserve or National Guard, the applicant must submit a copy of official orders showing the specific dates of active duty.

V. 5 DAYS TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN THE CLASSROOM:

The existing requirement for administrators to spend 5 days teaching in the classroom during each year or complete a PSC-approved course is eliminated, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY (July 1, 2003).