

## Research and Reports

**G**aPSC gathers, maintains, and analyzes data related to Georgia educators' preparation, certification, and professional conduct. As an independent agency, we have the technology and capacity to collect, store, and share a wide range of information and research with related agencies and, ultimately, with the people of Georgia.

As we expand our data analysis capacity, we are making new and more-accurate information available to help leaders understand and anticipate issues that affect education policy.

The GaPSC is quoted frequently in national and state media. Reporters know we'll respond swiftly to tough questions about education with current data on critical issues such as teacher quality and ethics.

Our website at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) includes reports such as:

- *Annual Report of the Supply, Demand, and Utilization of Teachers, Administrative and Student Services Personnel in Georgia Public Schools*
- *2007 Georgia Teacher Survey*
- *Beginning Teacher Study*
- *Teacher Retention Study*

For more information on GaPSC, visit our website or contact us at:

### Georgia Professional Standards Commission

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**Georgia Professional Standards Commission**

*Protecting Georgia's Higher Standard of Learning*

# Safeguarding Georgia's Students and Standards

## An Overview for Georgia Leaders



[www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com)

## Introducing the Georgia Professional Standards Commission

**I**n Georgia, educators who help students succeed must demonstrate their own achievement by meeting a set of standards for their professional preparation, certification, and ethical conduct. Establishing those educator standards and putting them into effect is the work of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC).

### What Is Our Purpose?

The GaPSC was created in the early 1990s to simplify the educator certification process, improve the level of educator preparation, enforce ethical behavior among educators, attract qualified personnel to schools, and promote the hiring of qualified educators.

The commission is made up of 18 members—educators and community representatives—appointed by the Governor from all regions of the state and supported by a small, service-oriented staff.

Georgia's rate of population growth is far greater than that of the United States as a whole. Each school year, our public school system needs to hire 14,000 to 15,000 "new" educators to meet growth and replace those leaving the profession. Supplying all geographic regions in Georgia with an adequate pool of qualified educators is also part of our mission.

**“GaPSC works to protect students and support achievement by ensuring that Georgia has the best-prepared, best-qualified, and most ethical educator workforce in the nation.”**

**—Kelly Henson, Executive Secretary,  
Georgia Professional Standards Commission**

### How Are We Doing?

- In 2007 the Georgia Department of Audits surveyed school systems and reported that 94 percent of respondents “believed the certification process has been simplified” and 95 percent “were ‘very satisfied’ with the amount of time required to process applications.”
- New alternative routes are bringing more “career switchers” into the classrooms.
- New content tests—called GACE—verify content knowledge needed to teach the Georgia P–12 curriculum.
- Critical teacher-quality data is becoming more available for decision- and policy-makers.
- Teachers who document strong, positive influences on student achievement are being recognized as Master Teachers.
- A new performance-based leadership initiative promises to change dramatically the quality of our future school leaders.





## What Does GaPSC Do?

### Educator Certification

Fifteen years ago, a complex and bureaucratic certificate-application system created a six-month processing delay of educator certifications. Teachers routinely spent most of a school year in the classroom without verification that they met certification standards. Now, with the streamlining of requirements and the application of technology, certification turnaround time is measured in days rather than months. Last year GaPSC processed 145,000 certification transactions, with most being completed in less than five days.

In 2004, the entire certification system was revised to make it more flexible for and accountable for local school districts. Today, we process more than half of all certificate transactions with Georgia's 180 school systems through a secure, paperless system on the Internet.



Throughout 2006, our Call Center handled an average of 7,581 certification telephone calls each month. In 2008, we are completely redesigning two of our websites—[www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) and [www.TeachGeorgia.org](http://www.TeachGeorgia.org)—to further improve customer service and increase satisfaction among all of our constituents.

In collaboration with the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE), we also routinely create standards for educators teaching such “new” subjects as Chinese Mandarin; American Sign Language; Aviation: Aircraft Support and Flight Operations; and Culinary Arts.

### Ethics Enforcement

A safe learning environment for all students is a top priority for everyone in Georgia.

GaPSC safeguards that environment by setting and communicating clear standards for how educators are expected to conduct themselves with students, with one another, and within the broader community. We set forth these guidelines in the educator Code of Ethics and communicate the standards throughout school systems and to the Georgia public.

With a highly qualified team of investigators (many with law enforcement and investigative experience) and legal and support staff, the ethics division of GaPSC has the resources and authority to investigate fully all complaints of improper conduct, including child abuse, mishandling of public funds, and disclosure of confidential records.

In the last five years, we investigated 7,132 cases and formally sanctioned 2,552 educators. We determined that 613 of those sanctioned educators placed students at serious

risk. Our work resulted in the removal of those individuals from the classroom through the denial or revocation of their professional certificates. Fortunately, that's a tiny percentage of the more than 135,000 education professionals employed in Georgia schools.

### Oversight of Preparation Programs

To make sure that education professionals have the skills to succeed in their careers, GaPSC establishes the program standards and provides state oversight approval (and sometimes denial) for all educator preparation programs—both traditional and alternative routes. We verify that all of these programs are current, challenging, well-taught, and designed to produce skilled and knowledgeable educators.

Each year, about one-fourth of Georgia's newly certified educators are hired directly from traditional programs, with another fourth coming from alternative-route programs provided by 103 approved providers: colleges, universities, technical colleges, regional educational service agencies (RESAs), and local education agencies (LEAs).

In addition, GaPSC directs the Title IIA Improving Teacher Quality State Grants Program. This program distributes federal funds from the No Child Left Behind Act to local schools and districts to enhance teacher quality. We collect and analyze teacher data and report back to the schools and districts, and to the U. S. Department of Education, via the Georgia Department of Education.

For more information, please visit [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com).



### Georgia: Home of the Masters

GaPSC standards reflect Georgia's expectations for educators at each stage of their careers, from training to mentoring. Through the Master Teachers program, GaPSC has cultivated a statewide cadre of exemplary teachers who inspire excellence throughout the field. Master Teachers are recognized for improving academic achievement, as measured by student assessment data, over at least a three-year period.

For more information, visit [www.georgiamasterteachers.org](http://www.georgiamasterteachers.org).

## Teacher Recruitment Programs

Hiring and retaining top-quality teachers is important not only to schools, but to taxpayers, too. Educators leaving Georgia's public schools, whether because of age or other factors, cost the state an estimated \$300 million annually. GaPSC's efforts to cut this cost by retaining current teachers and recruiting new ones include:

### TeachGeorgia

This high-visibility nationwide multimedia campaign—with the slogan “Use Your Head. Follow Your Heart. TeachGeorgia”—is a one-stop shop for all current and potential Georgia educators. The state's official educator recruitment and job-posting website, [www.TeachGeorgia.org](http://www.TeachGeorgia.org), registered 25,866 new users, posted 6,420 jobs, and processed 103,411 resumes and job applications in 2007 alone.

### Georgia TAPP

The Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP) prepares college graduates from all walks of life for internship/induction programs and, eventually, jobs as certified teachers. TAPP is just one of the alternative routes to certification Georgia has created. Twenty-two percent of the state's new teachers were prepared through these routes in 2006.

For more information, please visit [www.gapsc.com/GATAPP/home.asp](http://www.gapsc.com/GATAPP/home.asp).

### Troops to Teachers

Georgia is home to a large number of military retirees and military bases filled with service personnel who would make great teachers. The federal Troops to Teachers (TTT) initiative provides funding and helps guide military personnel through the transition to civilian careers in Georgia schools.

Georgia's TTT Program consistently ranks among the top five state programs in the nation, having helped more than 430 veterans transition into classrooms since the 2002 school year.

For more information, visit [www.tttga.net](http://www.tttga.net).

### Hometown Teachers

To expand the pool of qualified applicants for school systems in rural, underserved areas of the state, this recent GaPSC initiative communicates the benefits of teaching in small, rural communities through specially targeted recruiting efforts.