



Back to School with the New Leadership Rule

As education in Georgia is transformed to meet rapid change in technology, globalization, and population patterns, the job of school and system administrator is itself undergoing radical change: from supervisor to true learning leader. Georgia is at the forefront of transforming how leaders are prepared and certified, balancing advanced-degree classroom learning with practical, performance-based experiences in actual school-system settings. This transformation, being phased in between January 2008 and September 30, 2009, is outlined in the new Educational Leadership rule set in place by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC).

Leadership matters

Why does Georgia need this new rule? First, because leadership matters. In fact, research shows that school leadership is second only in importance to teacher quality when it comes to impact on student achievement. Also, the ability to attract and retain high-quality teachers is driven by leadership more than any other single factor.

In addition, leadership is fundamental to school improvement. Kenneth Leithwood and his colleagues put it best in the landmark 2004 study *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*, in which they stated, "there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around in the absence of intervention by talented leaders."

Preparation makes a difference

The GaPSC is requiring Georgia's school leaders to pass rigorous exams and enroll in performance-based leadership programs because leadership preparation programs make a difference. Linda Darling-Hammond, professor of education at Stanford University and principal author of *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World*, concluded that high-performing leaders are not just born, they can be made. According to Darling-Hammond, exemplary leadership-preparation programs:

- Recruit candidates—do not simply take anyone who shows up
- Use guidance from practitioners
- Blend theory and practice
- Offer well-designed and supervised internships.

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New Leadership Rule FAQs

Who is affected?

The new leadership rule affects those who:

- Obtain future leadership certification
- Are currently enrolled in a leadership certification program
- Are working in a Georgia school and complete an out-of-state leadership-prep program after September 30, 2009.

What has changed?

The new leadership rule brings several changes, including:

- New standards for preparation programs, including a performance-based, advanced-degree requirement
- A new certification exam, Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE)
- A new certificate structure.

When does the rule come into play?

The new leadership rules, in development since 2002, are in effect.

- The preparation program standards rule took effect in April 2007.
- The certification rule took effect in January 2008.
- The GACE Leadership exam was first administered on June 14, 2008.
- Previously approved Georgia educator-preparation programs are being phased out as of July 1, 2008.
- New state-approved performance-based educator-preparation programs (see page 3) begin this fall.

Want to learn more about the rule?

For a closer look at the rule, see "The New Leadership Rule: What it Means to Georgia School Leaders" on page 2.

The full text and summaries of GaPSC Rule 505-2-.300 Educational Leadership (certification) and GaPSC Rule 505-2.58 Educational Leadership Program (preparation), as well as information on the GACE Leadership Assessment, are available on the GaPSC website, www.gapsc.com.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Welcome back!

I wish all Georgia educators the best in this new academic year.

As you know, the major issues facing our education system require collaborative decisions. At the direction of the Alliance of Education Agency Heads, I recently chaired a statewide task force that made recommendations on how to attract more math and science teachers into Georgia classrooms. These were well received at the Governor's office earlier this month, and will be discussed with the Tough Choices or Tough Times Study Committee in late September. Among our recommendations:

- Increase the number of educator preparation programs in the sciences
- Add an alternative route to certification for teaching "core content" in high school and middle school
- Create a new "adjunct faculty" license
- Develop new teacher induction programs
- Introduce differentiated pay for new math/science teachers
- Introduce differentiated pay for early childhood educators with math/science endorsements
- Introduce math/science service cancelable loans
- Expand distance learning technology.

I also recently joined representatives from the Georgia Department of Education, the University System of Georgia, and Georgia private colleges, as well as a number of teachers, principals, and superintendents, on the HR 1103 Joint Study Committee on Teacher Training and Certification. Over the next few months we will meet with legislators to assess Georgia's teacher training programs and certification process and requirements and their impact on the students in Georgia.

I'm proud to advocate for protecting Georgia's higher standard of learning in these collaborative efforts, and hope you will watch this space for new developments in these and other education-improvement initiatives in which the GaPSC is taking an active role.

Kelly Henson



HENSON

The New Leadership Rule: What It Means to Georgia School Leaders

Beginning this year, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) is requiring school administrators to complete an education specialist's degree within five years of beginning their jobs.

Georgia's new Educational Leadership rule, 505-2-.300, constitutes a major redesign of how educational leaders are prepared and certified. A master's degree is no longer sufficient qualification for becoming a principal or superintendent, for example. Georgia legislators and GaPSC officials believe these professionals also need to show evidence of their ability to excel in leading schools in the 21st century.

The new rule requires these professionals to balance their classroom learning with practical training in an advanced degree program. The idea is to make training for school leadership more rigorous and more reflective of real-world situations.

Students who want to earn their educational leadership certification under the "old" program must complete all program requirements and submit a completed certification application packet to the GaPSC before September 9, 2009. In essence, students must complete coursework by the end of the summer '09 semester.

Addressing the status of existing administrators, the rule states: "Individuals issued a clear renewable Leadership certificate under the old system *prior to September 30, 2009*, will continue to hold that certificate (subject to renewal) and remain eligible to serve in leadership positions."



Where Leaders Learn:

A One-Stop Guide to Georgia Leadership Programs



The Educator Preparation Division is working with Georgia public and private institutions of higher education to implement the new leadership rule that in time should have an impact on schools and the working conditions that encourage teachers to stay. It is known from the work of researchers like Richard Ingersoll that teachers are more likely to remain in schools where:

- support systems are in place to help new teachers adjust to the rigors of teaching
- teachers are supported in collaborative work
- teachers have a voice in decision-making.

The state's new leadership programs have a strong focus on creating school cultures that create support systems for teachers.

To date, 14 Georgia colleges and universities have been approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) to operate the new performance-based preparation programs. The chart below—also searchable online at www.gapsc.org—details their offerings at a glance.

GaPSC-Approved Performance-Based Educational Leadership Program Providers

Institution	Programs leading to NL-5 (Initial) Certification		Programs leading to PL-6 (Performance-Based, Specialist Level) Certification		Programs leading to PL-7 (Performance-Based, Doctoral Level) Certification	
	Master's Degree Program	Certification Only Program	Specialist Degree Program	Certification Only Program	Doctoral Degree Program	Certification Only Program
Albany State University	■	■	■	■		
Augusta State University	■	■	■			
Berry College			■			
Clark Atlanta University	■	■	■		■	
Columbus State University	■	■	■	■		
Georgia College & State University	■	■	■			
Georgia Southern University	■	■	■	■		
Georgia State University	■	■	■			
Kennesaw State University	■					
Mercer University	■	■	■	■	■	
North Georgia College & State University		■	■	■		
University of Georgia	■	■	■			
University of West Georgia	■		■	■		
Valdosta State University	■		■	■		■

Congratulations, Master Teachers

The Georgia Master Teacher Program is unique among education honors. Rather than being based on a teacher's length of service or number of advanced degrees, this program, created by the Governor and the Georgia Legislature in 2005, focuses on the actual impact educators have had on student achievement.

Each year, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) reviews all applications and trains a review team in assessment. The assessment is based on evidence that applicants have achieved standards-based learning goals linked to gains in student achievement.

The rewards of becoming a Master Teacher include a special designation on the educator's certificate, renewal of Georgia educator certificates with Master Teacher standing, opportunities for professional learning throughout the school year, and an invitation to an exclusive professional development retreat at the Sea Palms resort on St. Simons Island in May.

In addition, Governor Sonny Perdue has provided enhancements to make Master Teachers eligible for an annual \$500 stipend for mentoring new teachers and to pay Master Teachers who serve as Academic Coaches an annual \$2,000 stipend.

More information on the Master Teacher Program is online now at www.gamasterteachers.org. The 2009 Master Teacher applications are available online, with applications being accepted from November 1, 2008 through January 31, 2009.

To learn more about the application process, visit www.gamasterteachers.org or e-mail the GaPSC staff member coordinating the program at masterteachers@gapsc.com.

Appling County

- Wade Eugene Bryant '06
- Debra R. Carter '06
- Holly T. Carter '06
- Janey A. Dowdney '06

Atlanta City

- Pamela Renee Andrews '08
- Patricia Churchill Daniel '07
- Adella Lenore Dixon '08
- Sharon C. Green '07
- Karen Leigh Hardison '06
- Holly C. Hayes-Morrissey '07
- Danielle Carene Jackson '07
- Ebony Jackson '07
- Linda Estella Jones '07
- Brenda M. Malik '07
- Shalewa JeTawn Thrash '07
- Susan Veronica Warthen '06
- LaTrenda Shanane Willis '08

Baldwin County

- Nancy Annette Alford '06
- Julie A. Claxton '06
- Lynne Robinson Flournoy '06
- Kim Roberson Hornsby '06
- Donna B. Kirby '08
- Nelanie Witcraft McAfee '06

Banks County

- Charles Amato '07
- Angie Marie Brown Black '07
- Rebecca Goforth Payne '07
- Rita Crane Pickens '07
- Summer Lyn Smith '06

Bartow County

- Debbie Alexander '07

Berrien County

- Staci Rentz Jernigan '08
- Melissa Ann Kegley '07
- Brenna Goff Taylor '06

Bibb County

- Judith B. Fountain '07
- Kristy French Graham '08
- Bennie Martin Moore '07

Bleckley County

- Deanna Kay Allen '07
- Tracee M. Kitchens '07
- Cathy H. Purser '07
- Evelyn Anne Turner '07

Brooks County

- Elizabeth Smart Thomas '06

Bulloch County

- Tammie Akins Dickens '06
- Mary Elizabeth Jones '06
- Cindy Denise Mott '06
- Linda Upchurch O'Dowd '06
- Teresa Beach Phillips '06
- Cindy Perry Pugliano '06
- Timothy Edward Rountree '06

Camden County

- Sherelle Garrett Clark '07
- Christy D. Heatherly '06
- Randa Klawuhn '06
- Michael Allen Siekkinen '07
- Dorothy Dorinda Wooden '06

Candler County

- Monica M. Bohannon '08
- CaDeisha Lavette Cooper '06

Carroll County

- Susan Caffrey '06

Chatham County

- Sonya Lyneita Bigbie '06
- Mary Lou Collins '06
- Cari Michele Delatorre '06
- Tellethia Catrese Garvin '07
- Stacey Mills McPipkin '06
- Sheila M. Weese '06

Cherokee County

- Marcia Pate Boyd '06
- Cindy Hall Crews '06
- Janice Amelia Fuller '06
- Jill M. Johnson '07
- Deborah Lynn Kelly '08
- Sally Suzanne Lolley '07
- Kristie B. Sikes '07
- Katie E. Smith '06

Clarke County

- Summer Elizabeth Tuggle '08

Clayton County

- J. Anesa Bisch '06
- Yvette Cherice McEwen Christian '06
- Sharon Eleese Hall '06
- Georgia Ann Hayes '06
- Kristie Brogdon Heath '06
- Kathryn Holloman '06
- Monica L. Kelley '06
- Linda F. Kight '08
- Margaret C. Rezek '06
- Anita L. Thomaston '07
- Sonya Senell Wash '06
- Joan Carter Wesley '06
- a. Baht Yisrael '07

Cobb County

- Susan Elaine Blackwell '08
- Dora Phillips Brown '08
- Sarah L. Lasiter '06
- Melissa Myers Voss '06
- Christian J. Wood '06

Coffee County

- Angela Rigdon Anderson '08
- Leigh Rice Roberts '06

Colquitt County

- Shirley Davis '06
- Steven Robert Harp '06
- Alicia Taylor Hiers '06
- Belinda Kennedy Thomas '06

Columbia County

- Kimetha Sharvis Hampton '06
- Kathleen Theresa Kohl '06
- Sandra Kay Thompson '08

Commerce City

- Marsha Perry '07

Cook County

- Sheila Marie Humber '07
- Marian Sabrina Lindsey '08
- Debra Lynn Ragland '06
- Wanda Rice '06

Dawson County

- Kristi W. Gerrells '07

Decatur City

- Angela Susan Brooks '07

DeKalb County

- Leisa Taylor Berry '08
- Paige Maria Camp '06
- Angela Renee Duffy '06
- Paulette F. Greene '06
- Carliss Martin Hannah '06
- LaTonia Nicole Massey '06
- Jisu Song '08
- Beverly Matthews Storey '06
- Scott Gene Wilson '06

Dodge County

- Angela Lynn Peacock '08

Dooly County

- Donald Eugene Gramm '06

Douglas County

- Wyndee Council '07
- Louise R. Darnell '06
- Melissa Anne Green '06
- Jessica Erin Hall '06
- Danitza Johnstone '06
- Pegi Gay McCauley '06
- Heather Leigh Palmer '06
- Linda Rogers '06
- Amy Otwell Shadix '06
- Balwinder Kaur Singh '06
- Kimberly Lynn Sutton '06
- Pamela J. Walker '06
- Elaine McGhee Wood '07

Dublin City

- Jessica Pearson Home '06
- Cathy Nobles Methvin '07

Effingham County

- Margaret Nicole Davis '08
- Teshewanda B. Shuman '08

Fannin County

- Connie M. Huff '06

Fayette County

- Angela Denise Boze '06
- Christine Jay Campbell '06
- Ann Stephens Collins '06
- Margaret C. Counts '06
- Sonya Brady Farr '06
- Kimberly J. Fisher '06
- Suzanne Ward Givens '06
- Cindy Dawkins Hendrix '06
- Thomas Lee Reed '07
- Josephine A. Rouse '06

Forsyth County

- Cathy Elaine Carr-Helmuth '07
- Deborah Gail Stair '07
- Deborah K. Turner '07

Fulton County

- Danielle Ruth Arnold '08

Glynn County

- Yondia Kanae Clark '08
- Oatarisha Renee Dawson '08
- Brentsie Bobo Walker '08

Gordon County

- Lisa E. Gayton '07

Grady County

- Del Bibbes '07

Griffin-Spalding County

- Lynn Bryan Hughes Akin '06
- Donna Raye Aragon '06
- Victoria Perdue Bozeman '07
- Kathleen Rowe Edwards '07
- Valeria T. M. Gladney '06
- Jean Woods Hancher '06
- Kimberly G. Jeffcoat '06
- Kristin Parris Jones '06
- Sybil Freeman Anderson '06
- Jane Patten Mitchell '07
- Jacqueline Y. Phillips '07

Gwinnett County

- Steven DeWayne Abbott '06
- Sybil Freeman Anderson '06
- Sallie L. Barrett '07
- Elizabeth Blackmon '07
- Maureen Conway Brannen '07
- Sonjia Faye Bryant '08
- Denise Trosky Buckelew '08
- Douglas James Callahan '07
- Tamara Nicole Candis '08
- Jana Czerwonky '06
- James Walter Eacona '06
- Laurie Fletcher '06
- Jennifer Allyson Walker Gillis '06
- Carol Reagan Hawkins '06
- Susan McKee Hodge '06
- Nina Susan Inglett '06
- Linda Coates King '06
- Sandra F. Kitchen '07
- Linda Marie Koch '06
- Abigail Leigh Krieger '06
- Ellen Ashley Loving '06
- Brian Erik Lucy '06
- Trissa Luftig '06
- William B. Lewis '08
- Melinda Nicholson Lewis '08
- Valerie L. Mickish '06
- Robert Murphy '06
- Deborah M. Pittmon '06
- Hollie Queen '06
- Memorie Rhea Reesman '06
- Anne Marie Scrudato '06
- Cary Sell '06
- Sharissa Yvonne Seymour '06
- Emily Story Spikes '07
- Diann Marie Tyrrell '07
- Kay P. Weber '06
- Kim Michelle White '08
- Kimberly M. Yates '06

Habersham County

- Jean Harris Irvin '06
- Diane B. Sanders '06

Hall County

- Lisa Carol Plowman '07
- Lela H. Whelchel '08

Hart County

- Phyllis B. Boy '07
- Kimberly L. Hill '07
- Kathie Denise McCurley '06
- Sharon Crocker Morris '06

Henry County

- Susan J. Bowlin '06
- Anthony D. DiSario '08
- Janine Lyndell Fearon '06
- Elaine Young Heyward '06
- Laurie Ann Lawrence '06
- Jill Susanne Liberatore '07
- Bland McKinney '07
- Michelle Leigh Platson '08
- Cindy Rochelle Schwartz '07
- Brenton A. Stenson '07
- Marilyn Welch '06
- Nancy E. Zeppa '07

Houston County

- Kaneice Bembry Lucas '06

Irwin County

- Carolyn W. Bellamy '06
- Marilyn Coalson Dove '06
- Dixie Ewing Gibbs '06

Jefferson County

- Marilyn Gibbons Davis '06
- Jeffrey C. Dent '08
- Jacqueline Terry Peebles '06
- Shirley Ann Watson Turner '06

Jones County

- Angela Carnes Bailey '08
- Stephanie Laverne Haynes '06
- Amy Alisha Marlowe-Harrell '06
- Wendy Coleman Martin '06
- Patty Queen Wells '06

Lamar County

- Tami Tyre Barnes '08
- Ruth Nutter Stevenson '06

Long County

- Sabine Hart Little '06

Lincoln County

- Christie Bryan '07
- Rebecca B. Willis '07

Lumpkin County

- Sabrina Grizzle '08
- Patricia Richmond '08
- Rita S. Truelove '08

Marietta City

- Cassandra Core '06
- Martin S. Esterman '06
- Veletta Gebert '06
- Shelia Lynn Leftwich '07
- George Steven Maczko '07
- Julie M. Nielsen-Schunck '07
- Suzannah Lyn Siegel '06

McDuffie County

- Felicia R. Collars '08
- Tonya Kendrick-Powell '07
- Toni L. Kitchens '07
- Seymore Michelle Terrelonge '07
- Sharon N. Turman '08

Meriwether County

- Martha A. Jones '07
- Janice L. Owens '07

Monroe County

- Nancy O. Smyth '06

Murray County

- Jennifer Springfield Swafford '06

Muscogee County

- Staci Nicole Allen '08
- Jodi Diane Christopher '07
- Nakia Hunter Farley '08
- Eric Paul Grigsby '07
- Cheryl Kay Hampel '07
- Tanya Lawrence Kearse
- Karen Anita McDavid '06
- Brenda Montford Merritt '06
- Laura Lorna Perryman '07
- James Ernest Ray '06
- Mickey J. Stoneback '07

Newton County

- Barbara Katherine Henry '07
- Lynn House '08
- Leamon Carroll Jourdan '08
- Susan Ellis Kennon '07
- Shundreia N. Neely '08
- Sandra Janet Owens '06
- Jeanne Roxanne Rachels '08
- Stephanie Demitra Tyler '08

Pickens County

- Glenda Johnston Cagle '07
- Diane Beecken Avant '06
- Paula A. Henderson '06

Pierce County

- Cassie Davis Dyal '06
- Amanda Kay Gay '06
- Martha Joi McCarthy '08
- Hannah Walker Murray '07
- Elizabeth Oliver '06
- John Ratliff '08
- Kimberly Ganus Rowland '06
- Brandi D. Todd '07
- Angelia Dee Treadwell '06
- Amanda D. Turner '06

Pike County

- Christian P. Callahan '06
- Dawn Denise Lanca-Potter '06

Polk County

- Cristi M. Gober '08
- Paige B. Gray '06
- Betty Lane '06
- Dale Loyd Tuck '08

Putnam County

- Holly M. Parker '08
- Sandra M. O'Steen '07
- Donna W. Sertich '07
- Kathy Ulm Smith '06

Rabun County

- Merrabeth Petty Benton '06
- Dee W. Dillard '07
- Kelly Jenae McKay '06
- Lisa Thompson Patterson '06

Rockdale County

- Dorothy Mitcham '06
- Robert James Trickett '07

Rome City

- Cynthia Kennedy Smith '07

Social Circle City

- Kimberly Lynn Pinholster '06

Stephens County

- Elizabeth Randall Hambrick '07
- James K. Hunter '07
- Karrie Lynn Perrin '06

Thomas County

- Delisa L. Barrow '06
- Judith H. Bauer '06
- Camille C. Bolton '06
- Delanna Sharman Clendenin '06
- Janet Carolyn Clifton '06
- Veronica Curry Glee '06
- Angela Ellis '07
- Nancy Louise Evans '07
- Kimberly Vinet Jahn '06
- Louise Y. Leaks Phillips '06
- Gwendolyn S. Pittman '06
- Dixon Dismuke VanHook '06

Thomaston-Upson County

- Jodie S. Day '08
- Traci Harrison '07

Thomasville City

- Catherine M. Briggs '08
- Carla Freeman DuBose '07

Tift County

- Sally Eddy '06
- Sherry H. Waldrop '06

Troup County

- Nancy Chippendale '06
- Cathi Martin '06
- Gina S. Willis '06

Twiggs County

- Wiley McNeal Fryer '06

Valdosta City

- Marilyn Griner Brown '06
- Tammy W. Denley '06
- Susan P. Hogan '06
- Julie G. Holton '06
- Gina Melton '06
- Della Marie Sanford '06

Vidalia City

- Ann Nelson Curtis '06

Walker County

- Chastity Leann Steadman '08

Walton County

- Ginger W. Godfree '06
- Tina Wilson Mitchell '07

Ware County

- Allyson Paige Coker '06

Wayne County

- Tina Howard Moseley '07

White County

- Teresa Bowen Greenway '06
- Wendy Leigh Mullis '06
- Susan J. Phillips '06

Whitfield County

- Nanette Dockery Davis '07
- Connie Copeland Kopcsak '07

Wilkes County

- Janet Pharr '06

Wilkinson County

- Robert L. Wells '07

Worth County

- Felecia R. Cook '06

At Your Service

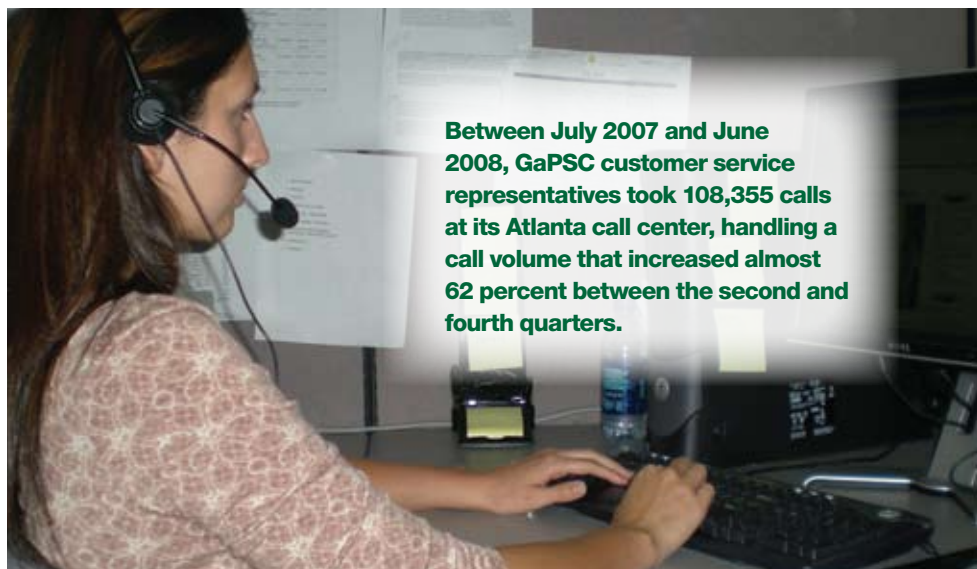
Extended call-in hours

Always striving to meet the needs of the customers of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), the agency recently changed its call center hours. Information specialists are now available to receive calls Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., except for state holidays.

To speak with a GaPSC Information Specialist, call 404-232-2500. If you're calling from outside the Metro Atlanta area, call 800-869-7775.

GaPSC offices continue to be open Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Between July 2007 and June 2008, GaPSC customer service representatives took 108,355 calls at its Atlanta call center, handling a call volume that increased almost 62 percent between the second and fourth quarters.



GaPSC POINTS OF CONTACT

GaPSC Telephone Call Center
7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (404) 232-2500 x 1 x 1
(800) 869-7775 (Outside Metro Area)

PROGRAM / POSITION	CONTACT	E-MAIL
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Troops to Teachers	Bill Kirkland	bill.kirkland@gapsc.com
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Director	Phil Blackwell	phil.blackwell@gapsc.com
Certification Program Manager	Kelli Young	k.young@gapsc.com
Master Teacher / National Board	Ginny Elliott	ginny.elliott@gapsc.com
Ethics:		
Director	Gary Walker	gary.walker@gapsc.com
Ethics Division		ethics@gapsc.com
Policy & Communications:		
	Rick Eiserman	rick.eiserman@gapsc.com
Information Technology:		
	Chuck McCampbell	chuck.mccampbell@gapsc.com
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	Jerry Eads	jerry.eads@gapsc.com
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	Kristina Stroede	kristina.stroede@gapsc.com

CERTIFICATION



Just Adopted

New types of certificates

Even as the GaPSC's certification team continues to process certificates quickly and accurately, the need has arisen for new GaPSC credentials for additional categories of school personnel and positions. New rules have recently been adopted to create a Support Personnel License and for Non-Instructional Aides. The new rules took effect on September 15, 2008. The rules help protect Georgia's schoolchildren and staff by ensuring that yet another group of personnel who work in school buildings are subject to certification standards and are trackable through the GaPSC's system.

Rules for teaching new languages

The Georgia Department of Education has approved the teaching of several additional foreign languages; accordingly, the GaPSC has initiated certification rules for the instruction of those four new languages, which are Farsi, Hindi, Urdu, and Turkish.

Educator Ethics

Division Marks Boundaries for Professional Practice

Amendments passed in two bills during the 2008 Legislative session have a direct effect on the how the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's (GaPSC's) Ethics Division carries out its work.

House Bill 250 authorizes the GaPSC to investigate and sanction all convictions of controlled substances charges and all sexual offenses included in specific sections of the Georgia Code. Many of these convictions were not authorized areas of investigation prior to this amendment.

House Bill 1321 adds a section to the Georgia Code that spells out a process for students to follow in reporting alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student.

It further mandates that the GaPSC coordinate and deliver a training program on educator sexual misconduct to the certified staff of every school system in the state. The agency is currently delivering that training, according to Gary Walker, GaPSC

Ethics Division director. He says the staff of the GaPSC is committed to education and investigation in equal measure.

As one of the fastest-growing states in the country, Georgia has one of the largest educator ethics investigative units. Five investigators work on cases in the field—such as that of a superintendent who was “looking for love in all the wrong places,” says Walker. Additionally, two investigators work on certification application cases. All have a background in law enforcement.

“The biggest problem we have right now is educators accessing pornography on school computers,” Walker says, adding that disciplinary action takes into account the extent of such Internet use and any other infractions on teachers’ records.

In policing the education workforce, the Ethics Division looks into a wide variety of infractions, some more serious than others. They are authorized to look into any violations of state law, including criminal convictions.

“Our primary responsibility,” says Walker, “is protecting students.”



Ethics Hot Topic: Changing Student Grades

The Ethics Division is receiving many calls from educators about administrative actions related to changing student grades. Administrators and teachers are encouraged to review the information below to avoid ethical violations in this area.

The Grade Integrity Act of 2007 amended O.C.G.A. 20-2-989.20 to provide that:

“(a) No classroom teacher shall be required, coerced, intimidated, or disciplined in any manner by the local board of education, superintendent, or any local school administrator to change the grade of a student. This subsection shall not apply when a teacher has failed to comply with grading policies or rules adopted by the local board of education or written procedures established by an individual school that are applicable to the grading process, unless such policy, rule, or procedure would require a student be given a grade different than the actual grade achieved. A violation of this Code section shall constitute an ethics violation reportable to the Professional Standards Commission pursuant to Part 10 of this article.

(b) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to prevent a principal or other local school administrator from discussing the grade of a student with a classroom teacher.

(c) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to prevent a central office administrator, superintendent, or local school administrator from changing a student's grade. Any grade change made by a person other than the classroom teacher must be clearly indicated in the student's school records and must indicate the person responsible for making such grade change.”

A second area of concern is administrators posting student grades under the name of a teacher who never directly serves as that student's teacher of record, and doing so in order to meet NCLB and AYP requirements. This is clearly a violation of the “Misrepresentation and Falsification” Standard of the Georgia Code of Ethics for Georgia Educators.



(continued from page 1)

These characteristics should sound familiar; they are essentially the foundation of the new leadership rule.

Time for a change

Perhaps the most important reason for this change, however, is that existing educational leadership programs were simply not working.

Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College, Columbia University, in his study *Educating School Leaders*, concluded that the majority of educational leadership programs ranged from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities. While some may disagree with the harshness of his description, there is now an understanding on the part of an overwhelming number of educators at all levels—university, local school system, state, and federal—that substantive change is necessary.

Georgia legislators and GaPSC officials hope school leaders will greet this rule change with an open mind and heart. It will not be easy, and there will be obstacles as well as resistance. If, however, those affected by the rule change look for ways to make it work, Georgia can develop a corps of school leaders that is the best in the nation.



Protecting Georgia's Higher Standard of Learning



Georgia Professional Standards Commission

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