

**505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Nature of Amendment(s):**

Substantive  
 Clarification  
 Further Definition

**Discussion:**

It is proposed that GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS, dated July 1, 2014, be RESCINDED and that a new rule with the same name and number be ADOPTED to change renewal requirements starting with certificates expiring in 2018.

**(1) Purpose.** Certificate renewal is an outcome of applying Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC)-accepted continuing professional learning toward the continued validity of a state certificate or license. While it is essential for individual educators to maintain valid certificates and licenses, professional learning should be focused toward school improvement leading to improved teaching and increased student learning. The goal of certificate renewal and professional learning is for educators within a Georgia local unit of administration (LUA) to work together to enhance established educational goals for the individual educator, the school and the LUA to assist students in meeting state standards for student achievement. Written Professional Learning Plans (PLPs) or Professional Learning Goals (PLGs) shall be required for all certificate holders employed by a Georgia LUA. PLPs outline requirements for the professional growth of educators as well as clearly delineate support the school or school system will provide for the educator's professional growth. PLGs outline identified areas for educator growth for those educators not required to have PLPs. All professional learning approved for certificate renewal shall be designed around national professional learning standards as outlined by Learning Forward (formerly the National Staff Development Council). This requirement applies to the design of school and LUA learning communities, the selection of workshops that support learning communities, and any other professional learning designed for certified educators.

**(2) Requirements.** Georgia's renewable certificates are the Standard Professional, Performance-Based Professional, Advanced Professional, Lead Professional and Life certificates. Renewable licenses are Adjunct, Educational Interpreter, Non-Instructional Aide, Paraprofessional and Support Personnel. These certificates and licenses are valid for a five (5)-year period (except for the Life certificate), during which time the following requirements must be met:

(a) Employment in a Georgia LUA at the time of renewal application, with the following exception:

1. Renewal of professional certificates held by educators who have at least one (1) year of acceptable educator experience in a Georgia LUA, as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.25 EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, paragraph (3)(a)1. The educator must have held a valid Georgia renewable, professional certificate at the time the experience was earned;

(b) A criminal record check, unless exempted in section (4) below;

(c) For the Performance-Based Professional certificate, a minimum of two (2) Proficient or Exemplary annual performance ratings earned on the statewide Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) within five (5) years of the renewal date:

(i) Performance-Based Professional certificates may be renewed as Standard Professional certificates if the educator has earned fewer than two (2) Proficient or Exemplary TKES annual performance ratings within five (5) years of the renewal date;

(d) For the Advanced Professional and Lead Professional certificates, a minimum number of Exemplary TKES annual performance ratings earned within five (5) years of the renewal date, and no annual performance ratings below the Satisfactory or Proficient level earned during the most recent five (5) year validity period of the certificate. (The number of Exemplary performance evaluations will be determined when sufficient data on the distribution of TEM ratings on TKES is available.):

(i) Advanced Professional and Lead Professional certificates may be renewed as Performance-Based Professional certificates if the educator has the minimum number of Proficient TKES annual performance ratings outlined in section (2)(c) above, but does not meet the minimum required number of Exemplary TKES annual performance ratings or has received one (1) annual performance rating below the Satisfactory or Proficient level during the most recent five (5) year validity period of the certificate;

(ii) Advanced Professional and Lead Professional certificates may be renewed as Standard Professional certificates if the educator does not meet the minimum required number of Exemplary TKES annual performance ratings or has received one (1) annual performance rating below the Satisfactory or Proficient level during the most recent five (5) year validity period of the certificate and does not have the minimum number of Proficient TKES annual performance ratings outlined in section (2)(c) above.

(e) Certificate and license holders who are employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring certification at the time of renewal application must satisfy professional learning requirements as outlined below, with the exceptions noted in section 5 below. Employing LUAs shall document fulfillment of these requirements and verify their completion as part of the renewal application package:

1. Engaging in professional learning on a continuing basis by fully participating in the LUA's professional learning community as documented by the educator's supervisor and described in GaPSC Guidelines accompanying this rule;

2. Setting written Professional Learning Goals (PLGs) or developing a written Professional Learning Plan (PLP) and making acceptable progress, as defined by the employing LUA, toward accomplishing these goals or completing the PLP:

(i) Educators who hold Professional level certification or higher shall engage in continuous improvement by developing PLGs and shall engage in professional learning appropriate for successful completion of these goals, with the following exception:

(I) Educators who are required to develop a PLP as outlined in section (ii) below are not required to develop additional PLGs while the PLP is in effect;

(ii) The following educators shall develop PLPs and shall engage in professional learning appropriate for successful completion of the PLPs:

(I) Educators who hold Induction level certification (Induction certificates are only renewable in the specific circumstances outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.04 INDUCTION CERTIFICATE](#); however, successful completion of professional learning requirements is one of several requirements to move from Induction to Professional certification. Induction is listed here to clarify that Induction is one of several categories of educators who must have PLPs.);

(II) Educators in positions requiring them to hold non-renewable certificates;

(III) Educators who are working in a service or leadership field and have fewer than three (3) years of satisfactory experience in that field;

(IV) Educators who were not employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring certification at the time of their most recent certificate renewal and then reenter the profession;

(V) Educators who have less than one (1) year of educator experience in Georgia;

(VI) Educators who have received any unremediated annual summative evaluation ratings of Needs Development, Ineffective, or Unsatisfactory during the previous five (5)-year validity of their certificate. The PLP for these educators shall be included in the remediation plan developed according to procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.43 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION](#).

(iii) PLPs shall remain in effect for one (1) to three (3) years, as determined by the supervisor, for all educators who do not hold Induction certificates; PLPs for Induction certificate holders shall remain in effect for the validity period of the Induction certificate.

(iv) Written PLGs and PLPs will be developed by individual educators based, at a minimum, on annual performance data. Once the educator develops the PLGs or PLP, they are encouraged, but not required, to engage colleagues in reviewing the PLGs or PLP to provide constructive feedback. Then the educator will meet with the supervisor to review the PLGs or PLP and seek approval before beginning implementation;

(v) During the course of the year, educators are encouraged, but not required, to meet with colleagues to review progress on implementation of the PLGs or PLP prior to periodic reviews with the supervisor. Prior to a designated date set by the school system near the end of the school year, the supervisor will determine whether or not the educator has made sufficient progress on implementation of the PLGs or PLP and will attest that this process has been implemented as defined by GaPSC Guidelines. Educators who do not make satisfactory progress will be rated accordingly on the state evaluation instrument;

3. Professional learning is to be primarily job-embedded and done in the context of the school learning community. Other forms of professional learning such as workshops shall be for the purpose of supporting job-embedded learning.

4. With the approval of the educator's supervisor, college course work may be used as professional learning under the following conditions:

(i) Course work that is part of a degree or certification program in the educator's field or in a new field with approval by the educator's supervisor may be used in addition to job-embedded professional learning;

(ii) Final course grades must be "B" or higher; and

(iii) Developmental studies courses and course work that is audited and/or exempted without credit shall not be accepted.

5. The following individuals employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring certification may renew their certificates without meeting the professional learning requirements outlined in this section:

(i) Educators who also hold valid National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification at the time of renewal in a field comparable to one held on their Georgia educator certificate;

(ii) Educators who also hold valid Georgia Master teacher certification at the time of renewal;

(iii) Educators certified in the service fields of Speech and Language Pathology, Audiology, School Psychology, School Counseling and School Social Work who meet optional requirements associated with GaPSC-accepted state or national credentials as outlined in the appropriate GaPSC field rules as long as this is approved by the supervisor as appropriate for professional learning;

(iv) Non-Instructional Aides who earn required clock hours of job-related training, as determined by the employing LUA (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.17 NON-INSTRUCTIONAL AIDE LICENSE](#));

(v) Support Personnel License holders who meet the requirements for renewal outlined in the Individual Development Plan developed by the employing Georgia LUA;

(vi) Educational Interpreters who hold a valid RID Certification or submit official documentation verifying the EIPA assessment has been completed during the validity period established on the license. If the initial license required completion of a bachelor's degree, all degree requirements must be completed before the applicant may apply for renewal (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.16 EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETER LICENSE](#));

(vii) Permit holders who meet renewal requirements outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.10 PERMIT](#);

(viii) Adjunct License holders who meet renewal requirements determined by the employing Georgia LUA; and

(ix) Faculty of Georgia colleges/universities who can document other professional learning as long as there is evidence of continuous engagement in professional learning. Examples include, but are not limited to: special assignment work in P-12 schools that includes teaching, delivery of professional learning to P-12 educators, formal presentations at state/national conferences for P-12 educators, and publication of original work focused on teaching and learning or services in support of teaching and learning. These activities may be verified by a letter, on official letterhead, from the dean of the employing college or university and submitted by the university's certification officer. The teaching of college-level courses shall not be applied toward certificate renewal. Guidelines accompanying this rule provide additional information regarding certificate renewal for higher education faculty.

(f) Educators who are no longer employed by Georgia LUAs in positions that require certification, but are employed in Georgia education agencies or organizations may renew certificates as described in Section (e)5(ix) above . These educators will work with their employers to develop PLGs or PLPs. The supervisor will evaluate PLGs or PLPs to determine if the educator makes continuous professional learning progress. These educators may also choose to renew their certificates as outlined in section (g) below without developing PLGs or a PLP.

(g) Educators who no longer work in schools, agencies, or other education organizations in Georgia must satisfy one of the following requirements:

(i) Complete any combination of six (6) semester hours of college course work; ten (10) Georgia Professional Learning Units (PLUs) awarded prior to January 1, 2016; or one hundred (100) clock hours of Bright from the Start (BFTS)-approved training;

(I) College course work must be earned at an institution that meets the accreditation standards outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.31 GaPSC-ACCEPTED ACCREDITATION; VALIDATION OF NON-ACCREDITED DEGREES](#). Final course grades must be "B" or higher. Developmental studies courses and course work that is audited and/or exempted without credit shall not be accepted.

(II) PLUs must be awarded by a State of Georgia education agency, a Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA), a Georgia LUA or a GaPSC-approved college or university. Agencies, RESAs, and LUAs may contract with vendors provided a process is in place that assures the provider designs and implements professional learning that meets Learning Forward standards. Documentation must be maintained that the agency, RESA, or LUA uses an approval process to assure that all professional learning for certificate renewal is standards-based. Only those PLUs awarded prior to January 1, 2016, and within the timeframe outlined in section (2)(h) below, will be acceptable for certificate renewal.

(III) BFTS-approved trainings may be found on the BFTS website at <http://dec.al.ga.gov>.

(ii) Hold valid National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification at the time of renewal in a field comparable to one held on their Georgia educator certificate;

(iii) Hold valid Georgia Master teacher certification at the time of renewal;

(iv) Have at least one (1) year of acceptable, successful educator experience, as outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.25 EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS](#), while working in another state on a valid certificate issued by that state;

(v) For educators certified in the service fields of Speech and Language Pathology, Audiology, School Psychology, School Counseling and School Social Work, meet optional requirements associated with GaPSC-accepted state or national credentials as outlined in the appropriate GaPSC field rules; or

(vi) Re-take and pass at the Professional level the content assessment approved by the GaPSC at the time of renewal for the field(s) being renewed. This is not an option to renew fields for which there is no GaPSC-approved content assessment at the time of renewal. Only the field(s) for which the educator passes the appropriate assessment will be renewed.

(h) Renewal requirements for certificates that are currently valid must have been completed during the validity period established on the certificate. Renewal requirements for expired certificates must have been completed within the five (5)-year period preceding the date of renewal application.

(i) Retired Georgia educators, as verified by the Teachers Retirement System (TRS), who do not wish to meet the renewal requirements outlined in this section may apply for a Retired Professional Certificate as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.44 RETIRED PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE.

### **(3) Focus of Renewal Credit.**

(a) Certificate holders who are employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring certification must have an individual Professional Learning Plan (PLP) or Professional Learning Goals (PLGs) coordinated with their supervisor and employing LUA. These PLPs or PLGs are developed and maintained locally, and must be aligned with individual educator evaluation results as well as with school and school system professional learning plans. To be acceptable for certificate renewal, the PLP or PLGs must be directly associated with the annual personnel evaluation and in addition, may be related to any of the following:

1. Field(s) of certification held;
2. School/District Improvement Plan; and/or
3. State/federal requirements.

(b) The Special Georgia Requirement in Special Education as outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.24 SPECIAL GEORGIA REQUIREMENTS](#) may be required as part of renewal requirements.

(c) The GaPSC and/or GaDOE may periodically conduct an on-site visit to review and verify professional learning and renewal documentation maintained by the LUA.

**(4) Criminal Record Check.**

(a) A criminal record check shall be required for renewal of all certificates held by educators employed in a Georgia LUA including state chartered special schools and commission charter schools. This requirement does not apply to employees of state agencies.

(b) If the educator has not had an FBI background check (fingerprint) while employed in the present public school system, the FBI background check (fingerprint) is required for renewal. If the educator has satisfactorily completed an FBI background check (fingerprint) at the present public school system of employment, then a Georgia criminal history check will satisfy the renewal requirement. The Georgia criminal history check will satisfy the renewal requirement for private school, chartered special school, and commission charter school employees that do not require certification; such schools that do require certification must meet those requirements listed in (1), (2) and (3) as well as the Criminal Record Check.

(c) The employing Georgia LUA is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate criminal record check is completed during the school year in which the certificate expires. The employer may apply for renewal after the criminal record check or FBI background check has been completed.

(d) If the educator is not employed in a Georgia public school, private school, chartered special school, or commission charter school at the time of renewal, the educator is exempt from the background check requirement until such time as Georgia public or private school employment is resumed.

**(5) Renewal Cycle.**

(a) Georgia certificates usually have a beginning date of July 1 and an ending date of June 30. Valid certificates may be renewed from October 1 of the calendar year preceding the ending validity date to September 30 of the calendar year in which the certificate expires. The grace period between July 1 and September 30 allows completion of professional learning during the summer period. When renewed within this cycle, the validity period continues with no break in dates.

(b) After October 1 of the calendar year in which the validity period ends, the certificate is considered expired.

1. To renew an expired certificate, the educator must meet all applicable renewal requirements outlined in section (2) above, including any remaining Special Georgia Requirements, and submit an application packet with appropriate documentation to the GaPSC. Specific renewal application procedures for educators may be found on the GaPSC web site at <http://www.gapsc.com>;

2. At the request of an employing Georgia LUA, an educator who meets the applicable requirements outlined in section (2)(a), (b), (c) and (d) above but has not met applicable professional learning requirements may be issued a one (1)-year Non-Renewable Professional certificate to allow the educator time to complete all remaining renewal requirements.

**(6) Renewal Application Process.**

(a) Renewal of certificates held by educators employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring GaPSC certification must be submitted electronically by the employing LUA according to procedures established by the GaPSC. Information about the online procedures is available to authorized school system personnel on the GaPSC web site at [www.gapsc.org](http://www.gapsc.org).

(b) Educators not employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring GaPSC certification may apply for renewal according to procedures outlined on [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com).

**(7) Exceptions.**

(a) An educator who has received any combination of two (2) Unsatisfactory, Ineffective or Needs Development annual performance evaluations during the previous five (5)-year validity cycle that have not been satisfactorily remediated by the employing Georgia LUA shall not be entitled to any certificate except for a Waiver in any field (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.43 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION](#)). Waiver certificates must be requested by an employing Georgia LUA and are issued at the discretion of the GaPSC (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.13 WAIVER CERTIFICATE](#)).

**(8) Implementation.**

(a) Educators holding professional certificates expiring after July 1, 2015, must be employed by a Georgia LUA for renewal of their certificates unless meeting (2) (a) 1 above. Educators who meet renewal requirements with the exception of employment will be issued a Certificate of Eligibility.

(b) Educators holding professional certificates expiring prior to July 1, 2017, who apply for renewal prior to October 1, 2017, may renew their certificate by meeting the requirements outlined in sections (2)(a), (b) and (c) and the renewal requirements outlined in section (2)(g), regardless of employment status. These educators will not be required to meet the professional learning requirements outlined in section (2)(e) if they apply for renewal prior to October 1, 2017.

Authority O.C.G.A. 20-2-200