**To Become**
**Effective January 1, 2027**

**505-2-.153. Educational Leadership Certificate**

**Nature of Amendment(s):**

**___√__Substantive**
**____Clarification**
**____Further Definition**

**Discussion:**
It is proposed that GaPSC Rule 505-2-.153 Educational Leadership Certificate, dated January 1, 2026, be REPEALED and that a new rule with the same number and title be INITIATED. Consistent with Strategy 8 of SR237 and the recommendation of the 2026 Educational Leadership Task Force, the new rule condenses the current two-tier certification structure (Tier I and Tier II) into a single Educational Leadership certificate. Current Tier II certificates are automatically converted. Tier I is retained as a legacy certificate, renewable, with no new issuances to out-of-state educators through reciprocity after January 1, 2027. This rule change is part of a coordinated revision with GaPSC Rule 505-3-.77 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM and Rule 505-3-.76 ALTERNATIVE PREPARATION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM.

**(1) Purpose.** The Educational Leadership certificate confirms that an individual has completed the preparation and assessment requirements established for entry-level school and district leadership in Georgia. Two titles are issued: Standard Professional and Performance-Based Professional. This rule outlines the requirements for certification under each title, the provisions for automatic conversion of legacy Tier II certificates, and the continued renewal of the legacy Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier I certificate.

**(2) Professional requirements.**

(a) Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier I (Legacy – Georgia Educator / GaPSC-approved program)

1. Georgia educators completing GaPSC-approved Tier I certification programs must meet the following requirements for a Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier I certificate.

(i) Complete a GaPSC-approved Tier I educator preparation program certification-only or master's degree level program.

(I) If a certification-only program is completed, the educator must hold a level five (5) or higher certificate prior to enrollment.

(ii) Meet the following Special Georgia requirements as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 SPECIAL GEORGIA REQUIREMENTS:

(I) Pass the aligned GACE content assessment.

(II) Satisfy the Special Education requirement with a grade of B or better.

(III) Pass the GACE Ethics for Leaders assessment.

(IV) Meet Standards of Conduct.

(iii) Apply for certification following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

2. Holders of the Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier I certificate may convert to the Performance-Based Educational Leadership certificate by completing one of the following certification programs:

(i) Complete a GaPSC-approved Educational Leadership – Tier II educator preparation certification-only, specialist or doctoral degree level program.

(I) If a certification-only program is completed, the educator must hold a minimum of level six (6) or higher certificate prior to enrollment.

(ii) Complete a GaPSC-approved certification-only bridge program aligned to the revised Georgia Educational Leadership Standards (GELS), as described in GaPSC Rule 505-3-.77 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM or Rule 505-3-.76 ALTERNATIVE PREPARATION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP after January 1, 2027; or

(iii) Complete a GaPSC-approved Educational Leadership certification program aligned to the revised Georgia Educational Leadership Standards (GELS), once such programs are approved and available under GaPSC Rule 505-3-.77 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM or Rule 505-3-.76 ALTERNATIVE PREPARATION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

3. Conversion to Standard Professional Educational Leadership (Reciprocity). If the Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier I certificate was issued through reciprocity, the holder may apply to convert to the Standard Professional Educational Leadership certificate. To convert, the holder must:

(i) Complete a state-approved Educational Leadership certification program at the master's degree level or higher from a GaPSC-accepted institution and verify program completion through submission of the Approved Program Completion form or a professional out-of-state certificate; and

(ii) Update Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) as part of the reciprocity application outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES; and

(iii) Apply for certification following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

(I) Existing Educational Leadership – Tier I certificates will maintain their original validity period upon conversion. Any outstanding Special Georgia Requirements must be met prior to renewal.

4. The Educational Leadership – Tier I certificate may continue to be renewed under the renewal requirements outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS.

(i) Upon conversion to Standard Professional Educational Leadership or Performance-Based Educational Leadership, the previously held Educational Leadership – Tier I certificate will be invalidated.

(b) Standard Professional Educational Leadership (Reciprocity)

1. Prior to becoming a Georgia educator, individuals seeking initial Georgia certification must meet the following requirements for a Standard Professional Educational Leadership certificate:

(i) A state-approved Educational Leadership certification program at the master's degree level or higher from a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution and verify program completion through submission of the Approved Program Completion form or a professional out-of-state certificate.

(ii) Meet the following Special Georgia requirements as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 SPECIAL GEORGIA REQUIREMENTS:

(I) Pass or exempt the aligned GACE content assessment.

(II) Satisfy the Special Education requirement with a grade of B or better.

A. Certificate may be issued prior to completion of this requirement; however, the course must be satisfied as part of the requirements to renew or convert the certificate.

(III) Pass or exempt the GACE Ethics for Leaders assessment.

(IV) Meet Standards of Conduct.

(iii) Update Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) as part of the reciprocity application outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES; and

(iv) Apply for certification following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

(c) Performance-Based Educational Leadership (Georgia Educator / GaPSC-approved program)

1. Georgia educators who complete a GaPSC-approved Educational Leadership certification program must meet the following requirements for a Performance-Based Educational Leadership certificate.

(i) Complete a GaPSC-approved Educational Leadership educator preparation certification-only, master's, specialist, or doctoral degree level program that meets the standards established in GaPSC Rule 505-3-.77 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM or Rule 505-3-.76 ALTERNATIVE PREPARATION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

(I) If a certification-only program is completed, the educator must hold a level five (5) or higher certificate prior to enrollment.

(ii) Meet the following Special Georgia requirements as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 SPECIAL GEORGIA REQUIREMENTS:

(I) Pass the aligned GACE content assessment.

(II) Satisfy the Special Education requirement with a grade of B or better.

(III) Pass the GACE Ethics for Leaders assessment.

(IV) Meet Standards of Conduct.

(iii) Apply for certification following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

**(3) Non-renewable professional requirements.**

(a) One (1)-Year Non-Renewable Professional Educational Leadership (Issued to individuals who have not completed renewal requirements).

1. Issuance.

(i) Hold an expired professional Georgia certificate in the field.

(ii) Have the certificate requested by the employing Georgia local unit of administration following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

2. Conversion.

(i) Verify completion of requirements outlined in the renewal rule. (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS).

(ii) Update Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) as part of the reciprocity application outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES; and

(iii) Apply for certification following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

(b) One (1)-Year Non-Renewable Professional Educational Leadership (Issued to individuals who meet initial Georgia certification requirements based on reciprocity, but must satisfy the GACE content assessment).

1. Issuance.

(i) Hold a professional out-of-state certificate in the field of Educational Leadership.

(ii) Pass or exempt the GACE Ethics for Leaders assessment.

(iii) Have the certificate requested by the employing Georgia local unit of administration following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

2. Conversion.

(i) Pass or exempt the aligned GACE content assessment.

(ii) Apply for conversion following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

(c) Three (3)-Year Non-Renewable Professional Educational Leadership (Issued to individuals who have not completed a GaPSC-approved program and assigned out-of-field in a leadership position).

1. Issuance.

(i) Hold a minimum of a master's degree from a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution.

(ii) Pass the GACE Ethics for Leaders assessment.

(iii) Have the certificate requested by the employing Georgia local unit of administration following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

2. Conversion.

(i) Complete a GaPSC-approved Educational Leadership educator preparation program.

(ii) Meet the Special Georgia requirements outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 SPECIAL GEORGIA REQUIREMENTS.

(iii) Apply for certification following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

**(4) Additional certificate title issued in the field.**

(a) Retired Educator (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.44 RETIRED EDUCATOR).

**(5) To add the field.** (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.34 ADD A FIELD).

(a) To add a renewable, Professional certificate in Educational Leadership to a valid or expired Georgia certificate in any field, an educator must complete a GaPSC-approved preparation program in Educational Leadership to include all applicable Special Georgia Requirements (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 SPECIAL GEORGIA REQUIREMENTS). Georgia educators who complete out-of-state programs not accepted by the GaPSC will not be eligible for Georgia certification in Educational Leadership.

**(6) To upgrade the level.** (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.33 CERTIFICATE UPGRADE).

(a) In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-212, an educator may be assigned a leader level at the time of initial certification in an Educational Leadership field. This leader level applies only to any Educational Leadership fields held, and is used for placement on the State Salary Schedule only when the educator is employed in a position requiring Educational Leadership certification (See Section (6) of GaPSC Rule 505-2-.02 CLASSIFICATION).

(b) An upgrade that is earned by completion of an advanced degree that is in-field with an Educational Leadership certificate will be applied to the leader level of the educator's certificate unless the certificate has not previously been assigned a leader level. If there is no previously assigned

leader level, the upgrade will be applied to the general level (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.33 CERTIFICATE UPGRADE).

(c) Educators completing a GaPSC-approved Educational Leadership program at the doctoral level will not qualify for leadership certification or an upgrade to level six (6) based on achieving All But Dissertation (ABD) status during the doctoral program. A New-Field upgrade requires completion of the GaPSC-approved program in Educational Leadership. An educator enrolled in a doctoral program will not qualify for leadership certification or a New-Field upgrade until completion of the Educational Leadership doctoral program and meeting all requirements to add the field.

**(7) Renewal requirements.** (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS).

**(8) Exceptions.**

(a) Educational Leadership (Field 704): Prior to January 15, 2016, this field was issued to some out-of-state educators earning initial Georgia certification through interstate reciprocity, and to Georgia educators who completed a state-approved certification program in Educational Leadership at the master's degree level or higher prior to September 30, 2009. Educators holding this field were able to serve in any Educational Leadership position. Certificates in this field were converted to the Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier II on January 15, 2016, and were converted to Standard Professional Educational Leadership effective January 1, 2027.

(b) Pre-Service Leadership (Field 705): Prior to December 15, 2010, this non-renewable field was issued to individuals who held a master's degree or higher and passed the GACE Educational Leadership assessment. Holding this field indicated an educator's eligibility for a Non-Renewable Educational Leadership certificate upon employment in an Educational Leadership position but did not allow the holder to serve in any type of Educational Leadership position. Certificates in this field were not eligible for conversion to any other type of Educational Leadership certificate.

(c) Educational Leadership Building-Level (Field 706): Prior to January 15, 2016, this field was issued to individuals who completed a GaPSC-approved performance-based certification program in the field. Educators holding this field were able to serve in Educational Leadership positions at the school building level, such as Principal. Certificates in this field were converted to the Performance-Based Professional Educational Leadership – Tier II on January 15, 2016, and were automatically converted to Performance-Based Educational Leadership effective January 1, 2027.

(d) Educational Leadership System-Level (Field 707): Prior to January 15, 2016, this field was issued to individuals who completed a GaPSC-approved performance-based certification program in the field. Educators holding this field were able to serve in Educational Leadership positions at the school system level. Superintendents were required to hold Educational Leadership certification in both System-Level and Building-Level. Certificates in this field were converted to the Performance-Based Professional Educational Leadership – Tier II on January 15, 2016, and automatically converted to Performance-Based Educational Leadership effective January 1, 2027.

(e) Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier I (Field 700 / Reciprocity): Prior to January 1, 2027, this certificate was issued to out-of-state educators who completed a master's degree level Educational Leadership program from a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution but did not meet the experience requirements for a Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier II certificate. No new certificates are issued through reciprocity under this section after January 1,

2027. Existing holders retain the certificate under the renewal requirements outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS and may apply to convert to the Standard Professional Educational Leadership certificate under Section (2)(a)3 of this rule.

(f) Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier II (Field 710): Prior to January 1, 2027, this certificate was issued to out-of-state educators with a state-approved master's degree or higher from a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution and three or more years of successful out-of-state experience in an educational leadership position. Certificates in this field are automatically converted to Standard Professional Educational Leadership effective January 1, 2027.

(g) Performance-Based Professional Educational Leadership – Tier II (Field 710): Prior to January 1, 2027, this certificate was issued to educators who completed a GaPSC-approved Performance-Based Tier II certification program at the specialist or doctoral degree level. Certificates in this field were automatically converted to Performance-Based Educational Leadership effective January 1, 2027.

(h) Upon conversion to Standard Professional Educational Leadership or Performance-Based Educational Leadership, the previously held Educational Leadership – Tier I or Tier II certificate will be invalidated.

1. Upon conversion, certificates will maintain their original ending validity period. Any outstanding Special Georgia Requirements must be met prior to renewal.

**(9) Restrictions.**

(a) Georgia educators who complete out-of-state programs that are not GaPSC-accepted will not be eligible for Georgia certification in Educational Leadership or an upgrade to the certificate level based on the degree in educational leadership unless the degree meets In-Field Upgrade requirements as outlined in the Upgrade Rule (GaPSC Rule 505-2-.33 CERTIFICATE UPGRADE).

(b) The One (1)-Year Non-Renewable certificate is not available to individuals who held/hold a Non-Renewable certificate in Educational Leadership to complete a GaPSC-approved program and did not meet requirements for Professional certification.

**(10) Alternative Preparation for Educational Leadership Program.** (See GaPSC Rule 505-3-.76 ALTERNATIVE PREPARATION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM).

(a) Educators enrolled in the Alternative Preparation for Educational Leadership Program must meet degree and admission requirements outlined in the Educator Preparation Program Rule, be employed by a local unit of administration, and have the certificate requested following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 CERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND TEST ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES.

(b) Educators completing the Alternative Preparation for Educational Leadership Program must meet minimum degree requirements outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-3-.76 ALTERNATIVE PREPARATION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM and requirements for issuance of the Performance-Based Educational Leadership certificate.

**(11) Superintendent.** (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.154 SUPERINTENDENT).

(a) A Superintendent certificate is issued to an individual who is selected to serve as a Superintendent and meets the requirements outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.154 SUPERINTENDENT.

**(12) In-field statement.** (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.40 IN-FIELD ASSIGNMENT).

(a) (Standard Professional or Performance-Based) Educational Leadership is the comprehensive certification issued after January 1, 2027. The scope of practice and specific position qualifications for a given role are determined by the employing local unit of administration.

(b) Educational Leadership – Tier I is an entry-level Standard Professional Educational Leadership certification. Educators certified in this field may work only in school-level leadership positions below the principal, and district-level leadership positions that do not supervise principals.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200