



# Understanding the 2014 Educator Certification Rule Changes

Georgia Professional Standards  
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## OVERVIEW

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) voted to adopt new Certification Rules on April 10, 2014. After careful consideration of public comment, revised versions of several rules were adopted.

These new Certification Rules were developed over 12 months by a task force representing the Governor's office, educator preparation providers, Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Board of Regents, Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE), Georgia Association of Educators (GAE) and local units of administration (LUAs). Most of the new rules took effect on July 1, 2014.

All of the former Certification Rules were replaced; however, many have simply been updated to ensure consistency and accuracy. Other rules changed in ways that will have a substantive impact on educator certification. Several new rules have been created, and a few previously implemented rules have been eliminated. You may read all of the recently adopted rules [here](#). This guide will help you understand the changes and how they will affect you.

### Tiered Certification

The most significant change is the creation of a **4-tiered certification structure**, which is detailed in rules 505-2-.03 through 505-2-.07. Benefits of this new structure include:

- Transformation of a flat profession into one that offers increased opportunities for professional growth to teachers who remain in the classroom
- New certification requirements that ensure that new teachers enter the profession better prepared
- Identification of excellent teachers and recognition of their accomplishments

It is important to note that tiered certification is not tied to compensation. The GaDOE will continue to use certificate levels to determine placement on the salary schedule.

While some of the current certificate types, such as Non-Renewable Professional and Permit, will continue to be issued under the new rules, all Clear Renewable, Non-Renewable Non-Professional, Technical Specialist, and GaTAPP certificates will eventually be replaced by the following 4 tiers:

1. **Pre-Service:** This tier is intended for educator candidates completing field experiences or student teaching in Georgia schools. It will require admission to an initial certification preparation program, a successful criminal record check, and completion of the appropriate Georgia Educator Ethics Exam.

2. **Induction:** This tier is intended for teachers with fewer than 3 years of experience within the last 5 years. It is also issued in some service certificate fields, such as Media Specialist and School Counseling. There are multiple pathways to Induction certification, and each has specific qualifications. The pathways are designed to address the needs of those completing a traditional educator preparation program in Georgia, those completing an educator preparation program in another state, early career educators who are certified in another state, and those who have begun teaching before completing an educator preparation program. The Induction certificate replaces the formerly used Non-Renewable Non-Professional and GaTAPP certificates. It is also issued to many people who would have qualified for an initial Clear Renewable or Technical Specialist certificate under the former system.
3. **Professional:** The new Professional certificates are either *Performance-Based* or *Standard*. Both types of Professional certificate require at least 3 years of experience within the last 5 years and a Professional level passing score on the GACE content exam. Performance-Based Professional certificates are for those teachers who have been evaluated for at least two years on the statewide Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and for leaders who have completed a Georgia performance-based certification program. Standard Professional certificates are issued in all service fields, as well as to leaders who have not completed a performance-based program (those who hold field 704) and to teachers who do not have the TKES evaluations required for the Performance-Based Professional certificate. For example, teachers working in private schools or in positions outside of the classroom are not evaluated on TKES and therefore will be issued a Standard Professional certificate.
4. **Advanced/Lead Professional:** The fourth tier includes two different certificates: Advanced Professional and Lead Professional. Both of these certificates are designed for classroom teachers, and both require a minimum of 5 years of experience, with 3 years on the TKES system. The Advanced Professional certificate is for teachers who demonstrate expert classroom practice, evidenced by Exemplary performance ratings and advanced education or NBPTS certification. The Lead Professional certificate is for teachers who are leaders of their peers. It will also require Exemplary performance ratings; other qualifications include holding certification in Teacher Leadership or an endorsement in Teacher Leader, Coaching, or Teacher Support Specialist and a passing score on the GACE Teacher Leadership content assessment. These certificates will not be issued until July 1, 2015, or later.

On July 1, 2014, all valid Clear Renewable teaching and service certificates were converted to Standard Professional certificates. Non-Renewable certificates remained unchanged. For more details about how implementation will affect existing certificate holders, please see [Information for Georgia Educators](#).

## Other Changes

In addition to the transition to a tiered certification structure, the new Certification Rules contain several other substantive changes, including:

- Employment by a Georgia LUA is now required for initial Georgia educator certification. Applicants who have completed an educator preparation program or hold professional educator certification in another state and meet all other requirements for certification will receive a Certificate of Eligibility if not employed by a Georgia LUA. This Certificate of Eligibility will demonstrate to potential employers that the applicant will qualify for certification if hired.
- Employment by a Georgia LUA is also required for certificate renewal unless an educator has worked for at least 1 year in Georgia on a Clear Renewable or Professional Georgia educator certificate. This 1 year of experience could have been earned at any time in the educator's career, as long as he/she held a professional educator certificate at the time. Renewal applicants who are not employed by a Georgia LUA and do not have the 1 year of experience will be issued a Certificate of Eligibility.
- The recency-of-study requirement, which mandated that applicants for initial certification have a certain amount of course credit or out-of-state teaching experience within the most recent 5 years to qualify, has been eliminated.
- Out-of-state educators seeking to exempt both the GACE content assessment and the Exceptional Child requirements using experience are now required to verify full-time, satisfactory experience in their certificate field for all of the previous 5 school years. However, out-of-state educators who have met or exempted the content assessment requirement but have not yet met the Exceptional Child requirement are able to obtain their first Georgia certificate. They will have to complete the Exceptional Child requirement before renewing or converting their initial certificate.
- GACE content assessments have 2 different passing levels: Induction and Professional. However, any Induction level passing score on a GACE exam taken before July 1, 2017, will be considered equivalent to a Professional level passing score.
- Some new certification assessments are being introduced:
  - The Educator Ethics Assessment will ensure that certification applicants are familiar with the Georgia Code of Educator Ethics. There are two Educator Ethics Assessments: Program Entry and Program Exit. The Program Entry Assessment does not have a passing score; completion of the assessment is all that is required. As of January 1, 2015, Pre-Service certificate applicants admitted to Georgia educator preparation programs will be required to complete the Program Entry Assessment, and so will applicants for the Induction Pathway 4 certificate. Pre-Service certificate applicants admitted to out-of-state educator preparation

programs will be required to pass the Program Exit Assessment, and so will applicants for Induction Pathway 1 and 2 certificates. Out-of-state applicants will be able to receive an Induction certificate after January 1, 2015, without passing either Ethics Assessment, but they will be required to pass the Program Exit Assessment before conversion to a professional certificate.

- On September 1, 2015, a passing score on [edTPA](#), the GaPSC-approved content pedagogy assessment, will become a requirement for Induction applicants who have completed student teaching in Georgia. Out-of-state applicants with no teaching experience who receive an Induction certificate on or after September 1, 2015, will be required to pass a content pedagogy assessment before conversion to a professional certificate.
- Out-of-state applicants holding Special Education or Middle Grades certificates will no longer be able to add Academic Content Concentrations based on evaluation of transcripts. An out-of-state applicant who was not required to take content exams in these fields will be required to pass the appropriate GACE to receive Special Education Academic Content Concentrations or Middle Grades fields in Georgia.

## INFORMATION FOR GEORGIA EDUCATORS

The GaPSC Certification Rule changes will affect Georgia educators – those who have ever held a Georgia educator certificate – differently depending on the type of certificate held. Every effort has been made to minimize the inconvenience to Georgia educators during this transition.

### Clear Renewable Certificate Holders

If you held a **valid** Clear Renewable certificate on July 1, 2014:

- Your certificate has been automatically converted to a Standard Professional certificate. If you held a valid Clear Renewable Performance-Based Educational Leadership (Building- or System-Level) certificate, it has been converted to a Performance-Based Professional certificate.
- The expiration date of your certificate remains the same.
- If you held a Clear Renewable **teaching** certificate, you will be eligible to convert to a Performance-Based Professional certificate once you have the required years of experience and TKES evaluations.

If you held an **expired** Clear Renewable teaching or service certificate on July 1, 2014:

- Once you meet current renewal requirements, you will be eligible for a 5-year Standard Professional certificate.

Professional learning requirements for renewal are not changing in 2014. Educators renewing certificates that expire during 2011-2015 will continue to be exempt from professional learning requirements. However, please be aware of the following:

- If you do not have 1 year of educator experience in Georgia at any time in your career while holding a Professional or Clear Renewable certificate and you apply for renewal after July 1, 2015, you will have to be employed by a Georgia LUA in order to renew your certificate. If you are not, you may receive a Certificate of Eligibility upon completing professional learning requirements for renewal.
- Professional learning requirements for renewal may be revised in the next several years; changes would be implemented in 2018 at the earliest.

### Non-Renewable Certificate Holders

If you held a **valid** Non-Renewable certificate on July 1, 2014:

- Your certificate remains unchanged. During the remaining validity of your Non-Renewable certificate, you may convert to a Professional certificate by completing the requirements outlined at the time of issuance.
- If your Non-Renewable certificate expires, you will be subject to the new requirements for initial certification (Induction or Professional).

- If you are required to pass a GACE content exam and you do so after July 1, 2017, you will be required to pass it at the Professional level in order to convert to a Professional certificate.
- You will **not** have to be employed by a Georgia LUA in order to convert your Non-Renewable certificate to a Professional certificate.

If you held an **expired** Non-Renewable certificate on July 1, 2014:

- You will be subject to the new requirements for initial certification (Induction or Professional).



## INFORMATION FOR EDUCATOR CANDIDATES

If you are or soon will be enrolled in an educator preparation program leading to initial certification, you may encounter some new certification requirements after July 1, 2014. However, these changes do not all take effect on the same date, so please read the information below carefully. Please note, the rule governing certificate upgrades has not changed substantially with this revision. If you are completing an advanced degree that meets the former upgrade requirements, you should not encounter significant new requirements when you apply to upgrade your certificate.

### Candidates Enrolled in Traditional Programs

If you are currently enrolled or plan to enroll in a traditional educator preparation program **based in Georgia**, please be aware of the following changes that may affect your certification and program requirements:

- If you will be completing any field experiences or student teaching in Georgia schools after July 1, 2015, you will be required to hold a Pre-Service certificate. This certificate will be requested by your college/university and will require a background check. You will also have to complete the Educator Ethics – Program Entry Assessment before receiving a Pre-Service certificate.
- If you begin an educator preparation program in the Fall of 2014, you will have to complete the Educator Ethics – Program Entry Assessment before 2015. If you begin a Georgia educator preparation program in 2015 or later, you will be required to complete the Educator Ethics – Program Entry Assessment for admission to the program.
- If you complete a certification program in a teaching field, you will be able to apply for Induction certification upon employment. You must have a full 3 years of teaching experience in order to be eligible for a Professional teaching certificate.
- If you apply for certification on or after January 1, 2015, you will be required to pass the Educator Ethics – Program Exit Assessment to obtain certification.
- If you apply for certification on or after September 1, 2015, you will be required to have passed [edTPA](#), the GaPSC-approved content pedagogy assessment, during your educator preparation program.

If you are currently enrolled or plan to enroll in a traditional educator preparation program **based in another state but will be completing your student teaching or field experiences in Georgia**, please be aware of the following changes that may affect your certification requirements:

- If you will be completing any field experiences or student teaching in Georgia schools after July 1, 2015, you will be required to hold a Pre-Service certificate. This certificate will be requested by your college/university and will require a successful background check. You will also have to pass the Educator Ethics – Program Exit Assessment before receiving a Pre-Service certificate.

- If you complete a certification program in a teaching field, you will be able to apply for Induction certification upon employment. You must have a full 3 years of teaching experience in order to be eligible for a Professional teaching certificate.
- If you apply for certification on or after January 1, 2015, you will be required to pass the Educator Ethics – Program Exit Assessment to obtain certification.
- If you apply for certification on or after September 1, 2015, you will be required to have passed [edTPA](#), the GaPSC-approved content pedagogy assessment, during your educator preparation program.

If you are currently enrolled or plan to enroll in a traditional educator preparation program **based in another state and will be completing all student teaching or field experiences outside of Georgia**, please be aware of the following changes that may affect your certification requirements:

- If you complete a certification program in a teaching field, you will be able to apply for Induction certification upon employment. You must have a full 3 years of teaching experience in order to be eligible for a Professional teaching certificate.
- If you apply for certification on or after January 1, 2015, you will be required to pass the Educator Ethics – Program Exit Assessment in order to convert your Induction certificate to a Professional certificate.
- If you apply for certification on or after September 1, 2015, and you have less than 1 year of teaching experience, you will be required either to have passed a portfolio-based content pedagogy assessment (such as [edTPA](#)) during your educator preparation program or to take and pass the [Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers](#) in order to convert your Induction certificate to a Professional certificate.
- You will **not** be required to complete a course in identifying and educating exceptional children in order to receive your initial Georgia certificate. This course must be completed before renewal or conversion of your first certificate.

## Candidates Enrolled in Non-Traditional Programs

If you are enrolled in a non-traditional program – one that does not lead to college credit – in another state, you will have to obtain professional certification in that state in order to apply for Georgia educator certification. Please see the [Information for Out-of-State Educators](#).

If you are **currently** enrolled in a GaTAPP or other non-traditional program in Georgia and you already hold a Non-Renewable certificate, you should refer to the [Information for Georgia Educators](#).

If you are planning to enroll in a GaTAPP or other non-traditional program in Georgia in the near future, please be aware of the following changes that may affect your certification and program requirements:

- If you begin your program on or after January 1, 2015, you will be required to complete the Educator Ethics – Program Entry Assessment to obtain the Induction Pathway 4

certificate, and you will be required to pass the Educator Ethics – Program Exit Assessment to convert your certificate to a Professional certificate.

- If you will complete your program and apply for conversion of your Induction Pathway 4 certificate on or after September 1, 2015, you will be required to pass [edTPA](#), the GaPSC-approved content pedagogy assessment, during your non-traditional preparation program.

## INFORMATION FOR OUT-OF-STATE EDUCATORS

If you have ever held a professional certificate issued by another state or country, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), or the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), you may apply for Georgia certification through reciprocity. The new Certification Rules will affect the type of certificate you may qualify for, as well as the extra requirements you may need to meet. All out-of-state educators moving to Georgia should keep the following certification changes in mind:

- Out-of-state educators who have not met the content assessment requirement are no longer eligible for a Non-Renewable certificate in that field, with the exception of the field of Educational Leadership.
- Out-of-state educators seeking to exempt both the GACE content assessment and the Exceptional Child requirements using experience are now required to verify full-time, satisfactory experience in their certificate field for all of the previous 5 school years.
- The requirement to take a course in identifying and educating exceptional children, which applies to nearly all certificate fields, is no longer required for an out-of-state educator's first Georgia certificate. It will have to be completed before renewal or conversion of that certificate.
- Employment by a Georgia LUA is now required for initial Georgia educator certification. Applicants who have completed an educator preparation program or hold professional educator certification in another state and meet all other requirements for certification will receive a Certificate of Eligibility if not employed by a Georgia school. This Certificate of Eligibility will demonstrate to potential employers that the applicant will qualify for certification if hired.
- The recency-of-study requirement, which mandated that initial certification applicants have a certain amount of course credit or out-of-state teaching experience within the most recent 5 years to qualify, has been eliminated.
- Out-of-state applicants holding Special Education or Middle Grades certificates are no longer able to add Academic Content Concentrations based on evaluation of transcripts. An out-of-state applicant who was not required to take content exams in these fields will be required to pass the appropriate GACE assessments to receive Special Education certification and add Special Education Academic Content Concentrations or Middle Grades fields in Georgia.

The adoption of a tiered certification structure means that initial qualification for some certificates requires successful educator experience. These experience requirements vary by type of certificate, and are outlined below.

## Teachers with Less Than 3 Years of Experience

If you hold out-of-state certification in a teaching field and you have less than 3 years of satisfactory educator experience **within the last 5 school years**, you are considered an early career educator in Georgia. That means that you will need to qualify for and hold an Induction certificate before being eligible for a Professional certificate.

## Teachers with At Least 3 Years of Experience

If you hold out-of-state certification in a teaching field and you have at least 3 years of satisfactory educator experience **within the last 5 school years**, you may qualify for a Standard Professional certificate. In order to do so, you will have to either pass the appropriate GACE content assessment or exempt it.

If you meet the requirements for a Performance-Based Professional certificate while holding a Standard Professional, you may apply to convert your certificate.

## Service Certificate Holders

If you hold an out-of-state certificate in a service field such as School Counseling, Media Specialist, or School Psychologist, you are not required to have experience in order to qualify for a Standard Professional service certificate in Georgia. However, if there is a GACE content assessment required for your field, you must pass it or meet exemption criteria in order to qualify for a Standard Professional certificate. In a few service fields, it is possible to qualify for an Induction certificate if you do not meet the requirements for a Standard Professional certificate. These requirements are outlined in [rules 505-2-.140 through 505-2-.149](#).

Performance-Based Professional certificates are not issued in service fields.

## Leadership/Administration Certificate Holders

The requirements for Georgia Educational Leadership certification are not changing significantly in 2014. An out-of-state educator who qualifies for Georgia Educational Leadership certification according to the requirements outlined in the leadership rule, [505-2-.153](#), will be eligible for a Standard Professional certificate in Educational Leadership under the new rules. The only new requirement for full certification will be employment by a Georgia LUA; those who are not employed but meet all other requirements will receive a Certificate of Eligibility.

The only way to qualify for a Performance-Based Professional certificate in Educational Leadership is to complete a GaPSC-approved performance-based leadership certification program. Out-of-state educators therefore may not qualify for a Performance-Based Professional certificate in this field based on reciprocity.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### FAQs for Georgia Educators

#### What happened to my valid certificate on July 1, 2014?

If you held a valid **Clear Renewable certificate in a teaching or service field**, your certificate was automatically converted to a **Standard Professional** certificate. The expiration date of your certificate remains the same.

If you held a valid **Clear Renewable Performance-Based Educational Leadership certificate (Building or System Level)**, your certificate was automatically converted to a **Performance-Based Professional** certificate. The expiration date of your certificate remains the same.

If you held a valid **Clear Renewable Educational Leadership certificate (Field 704)**, your certificate was automatically converted to a **Standard Professional** certificate. The expiration date of your certificate remains the same.

If you held a valid **Non-Renewable or GaTAPP certificate**, your certificate remains the same. During the remaining validity of your Non-Renewable certificate, you may convert to a Professional certificate by completing the requirements outlined at the time of issuance.

#### I held a Performance-Based Clear Renewable teaching certificate. Do I still have a Performance-Based certificate after July 1, 2014?

No. The new Performance-Based Professional teaching certificate is based on satisfactory evaluations earned on the statewide Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). Your certificate was converted to a Standard Professional certificate on July 1, 2014. You will have to receive Proficient or Exemplary evaluations on TKES for at least 2 years before you can qualify for the Performance-Based Professional certificate.

#### Why does GaPSC believe tiered certification will be good for Georgia children, teachers, and schools?

Taken alone, tiered certification will not make a difference. Just like the current one-tier system or like block scheduling in high schools, the team approach used in middle schools, or the Four Blocks reading program used in some elementary schools, an innovation will not work unless it is matched up with structures already in place, other innovations being implemented at the same time, and educators who want to make a difference. Tiered certification, development of induction standards, changes that will professionalize professional learning, the statewide evaluation system, and measures taken to strengthen teacher preparation all working together can make a difference when fully implemented.

#### I held a Clear Renewable service certificate (fields such as Media Specialist, School Counseling, etc.) before July 1, 2014. How does tiered certification affect me?

Impact on service field certificates is minimal. Service field certificates are now called Professional rather than Clear Renewable and are Standard certificates rather than Performance-Based since service field holders are not evaluated under the statewide evaluation system, TKES.

*Recent graduates will receive Certificates of Eligibility rather than teaching certificates. Won't this make it more difficult for them to get jobs?*

No. Human resources directors know the Certificate of Eligibility means this person has met every qualification necessary to teach. Many other states issue letters or certificates of eligibility rather than teaching certificates to people who do not yet have positions.

## **The New Tiers**

*Is the Standard Professional certificate less prestigious than the Performance-Based Professional?*

No. Both of these certificates are in the Professional tier. It is necessary to have 2 types of Professional certificates because only some educators (classroom teachers in public schools) will be evaluated on the statewide Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). Holding the Standard Professional certificate indicates only that an educator was not evaluated on TKES for a minimum of 2 of the last 5 school years.

*If Standard Professional and Performance-Based Professional certificate holders can do the same things, what is the point of having both of them?*

The Performance-Based Professional certificate recognizes a teacher's experience and effectiveness in the classroom using the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System, a comprehensive, statewide framework for evaluating teacher performance. However, at this time only classroom teachers in public schools will be evaluated on TKES. In order to make use of this new tool, we have created the Performance-Based Professional certificate for those teachers who will be evaluated on TKES, and the Standard Professional certificate for those teachers who will not.

*Why can't I get a Performance-Based certificate in a service field, such as School Counseling or Media Specialist?*

The Performance-Based certificate is based on performance evaluations earned on the statewide Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). There is not currently a comparable statewide evaluation system for educators working in service fields. It is therefore not possible to qualify for a Performance-Based certificate in any service field.

*Is the Lead Professional certificate replacing Educational Leadership certificates?*

No. Educational Leadership certificates will continue to be issued in much the same way as they were before July 1, 2014. Georgia educators who complete a GaPSC-approved performance-based educational leadership certification program will receive a Performance-Based Professional leadership certificate. Out-of-state educators who



qualify for educational leadership certification through reciprocity will receive a Standard Professional leadership certificate. The Lead Professional certificate is only issued in **teaching** fields. It is intended for those teachers who remain in the classroom but take on leadership roles such as mentoring early career teachers.

*What do Advanced and Lead Professional certificate holders do? Are those certificates tied to specific jobs?*

The Advanced Professional certificate is intended to recognize teachers who demonstrate expert classroom practice. It is not currently tied to any particular job or position. The Lead Professional certificate also recognizes expert classroom practice along with an ability and willingness to take on leadership roles such as mentoring early career teachers.

*I am an experienced classroom teacher. How can I get an Advanced or Lead Professional certificate?*

The Advanced Professional certificate will not be issued until more data on TKES evaluations is available and the requirements can be finalized. The Lead Professional certificate may be issued to teachers meeting the requirements outlined in Certification Rule [505-2-.07](#) as early as July 1, 2015.

*Can I add a field to my Induction certificate by passing a GACE content assessment?*

While you hold an Induction certificate, you may only add **Supplemental Induction fields**. Supplemental Induction fields must be requested by an employing Georgia LUA and have the following requirements:

- To be eligible for a Supplemental Induction **full field**, an Induction educator **must** pass the appropriate content assessment at the Induction level or higher.
- To be eligible for a Supplemental Induction **endorsement**, an Induction educator is **not** required to have completed the endorsement program.

Supplemental Induction fields and endorsements will be valid until the expiration of the base Induction certificate. They may be converted to Professional upon conversion of the base certificate if all requirements have been met.

## **Certificate Renewal**

*How do these changes affect renewal requirements?*

Professional learning requirements for renewal are not changing in 2014. Educators renewing certificates that expire during 2011-2015 will continue to be exempt from professional learning requirements. However, please be aware of the following:

- If you do not have 1 year of educator experience in Georgia while holding a Professional or Clear Renewable certificate *at any time in your career* and you apply for renewal after July 1, 2015, you will have to be employed by a Georgia school in order to renew your certificate. If you are not, you may receive a

Certificate of Eligibility upon completing professional learning requirements for renewal.

- Professional learning requirements for renewal may be revised in the next several years; changes would be implemented in 2018 at the earliest.

*I am a retired teacher. Will I be able to renew my certificate?*

If you have worked for at least one year on a professional Georgia educator certificate (such as a Clear Renewable or Life certificate) *at any time in your career*, you will be able to renew your certificate without being employed. You may be required to verify one year of experience if none of your Georgia educator experience was reported electronically to the GaPSC.

*Does tiered certification affect professional learning required for renewal or the process of upgrading a certificate level by earning an advanced degree?*

No. A taskforce is currently working to revise the standard renewal requirements for certificates, and this will result in changes to professional learning as it relates to certificate renewal. This work may also change how advanced degrees are viewed for purposes of certificate renewal. However, these changes would not be expected to take effect until 2018.

## Salary

*Will the certificate changes affect my salary?*

No. Tiered certification is not tied to compensation. GaDOE will continue to use certificate levels to determine placement on the salary schedule.

There is interest around the country, including in some Georgia school districts, in changing the teacher salary structure. The Georgia legislature may demonstrate an interest in doing so sometime in the future. This could happen with or without tiered certification. One Georgia school system has already made changes to its salary structure within our current one-tier system.

*Will Georgia teachers still be able to increase their salaries by completing advanced degrees?*

Yes. Georgia educators will continue to be able to upgrade their certificate level by completing advanced degrees that meet the requirements outlined in Rule [505-2-.33](#). GaDOE will continue to use certificate levels to determine placement on the salary schedule. GaDOE creates a state salary schedule and incorporates salary differentials based on certificate levels. Tiered certification does not change this.

The following types of certificates will be eligible for an upgrade:

- Induction Pathway 1
- Induction Pathway 2
- Induction Pathway 3
- Standard Professional

- Performance-Based Professional
- Advanced Professional
- Lead Professional

Please note that Induction Pathway 4 certificates may not be upgraded. However, an Induction Pathway 4 certificate may be converted to a different Pathway if the educator meets all of the requirements for that Pathway.

*Will teachers who move to the Advanced or Lead tier be rewarded in any way?*

GaPSC does not have the authority to address salary or salary supplement issues. If school districts have available funding and wish to use it to compensate teachers who achieve Advanced or Lead Professional certification, they may do so. We believe it would be appropriate for Lead Professionals who are working with new teachers to be compensated statewide and as the economy improves, the likelihood of this happening probably increases.

## **Performance Evaluation**

*Does the tiered certification system have to use TKES since there is so much uncertainty about it?*

Yes. TKES & LKES are part of the law that created the statewide evaluation system. This law calls for use of this evaluation system beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. Decisions about certificate renewal are based, by law, on summative evaluations.

*I am a teacher at a private school. How do these changes affect me?*

If you are a certified teacher employed by a private school, you will not be evaluated on the statewide Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). This means that you will not be able to qualify for the Performance-Based Professional certificate. However, your teaching experience in a Georgia private school will allow you to qualify for a Standard Professional teaching certificate.

*I won't be evaluated on TKES during the 2014-2015 school year. Am I at a disadvantage?*

No. Even if you aren't evaluated on TKES, you may meet the qualifications for a Standard Professional certificate.

*I'm certified in several teaching fields. Can I get a Performance-Based certificate in all my fields even if I've only been teaching in one of them?*

Yes. When you earn a Performance-Based Professional teaching certificate based on experience in one of your fields, the Performance-Based status will be applied to all the teaching fields you hold. However, this does not apply across certificate types: holding a Performance-Based Educational Leadership certificate will not automatically convert your teaching fields to Performance-Based professional, and all professional service certificates will be Standard.

## FAQs for Georgia Educator Preparation Providers

*If a candidate completes a program and all certification requirements in Spring 2014 but does not apply for certification until after July 1, 2014, will he/she be subject to the new Certification Rules?*

Yes. Effective dates of certification requirements apply to the date of application for certification, unless specifically noted in the rule.

*edTPA must be completed during the educator preparation program. Does a candidate who completes his/her program before September 1, 2015 but applies for certification after that date have to pass edTPA to qualify?*

Yes. Like other certification requirements, the effective date of September 1, 2015, for the edTPA requirement applies to the date of application for certification. So a candidate in this situation would have to pass edTPA in order to qualify for an Induction certificate. Candidates who complete a Georgia program without completing edTPA but apply for certification after September 1, 2015, will need to work with their EPP or employing LUA to fulfill the edTPA requirement. Our recommendation is that Georgia program completers apply for certification as soon as they complete program and certification requirements, even if they are not planning to work as Georgia educators right away. If they are not employed when they apply, they will receive a Certificate of Eligibility. That will allow them to be certified without completing any further requirements if they are employed by a Georgia LUA within 5 years of receiving the Certificate of Eligibility.

*Is the Performance-Based Professional teaching certificate based on completing a performance-based preparation program?*

No, the new Performance-Based Professional teaching certificate is not based on completion of a performance-based program. Initial qualification for a Performance-Based Professional certificate requires 2 Proficient or Exemplary annual evaluations under the statewide evaluation system (TKES). These evaluations may be earned while holding an Induction, Standard Professional, or Permit certificate.

*Our M.A.T. program has a certification-only program embedded within it, so our candidates get certified after the first year of the program and then complete the M.A.T. at the end of the second year. What certificates will they get along the way?*

- For a candidate who is employed during the **second** year of the M.A.T. program:

Upon completion of the embedded certification program and employment, the candidate will qualify for an Induction Pathway 1 certificate. If the M.A.T program is completed the next year, the candidate will be able to upgrade to a level 5 Induction Pathway 1 certificate. After teaching on an Induction certificate for a total of 3 years, the candidate will be eligible for a Professional certificate. If the candidate receives Proficient or Exemplary TKES evaluations for at least 2 of the 3 years of experience while holding the Induction certificate, the candidate will qualify for a Performance-Based Professional certificate. If the candidate is not evaluated on TKES for at least 2 years, a Standard Professional certificate will be issued.

- For a candidate who is employed during **both** years of the M.A.T. program:

When hired, the candidate will receive an Induction Pathway 4 certificate based on holding a bachelor's degree and meeting content knowledge & Program Admission Assessment requirements. Upon completion of the embedded certificate program, the candidate may apply to convert to an Induction Pathway 1 certificate. When converting to a new Induction Pathway, the expiration date of the certificate will remain the same. When the candidate completes the M.A.T. the next year and applies to upgrade, the level 5 Induction Pathway 1 certificate will be issued. After teaching on an Induction certificate for 3 years, the candidate will be eligible for a Professional certificate. If the candidate receives Proficient or Exemplary TKES evaluations for at least 2 of the 3 years of experience, the candidate will qualify for a Performance-Based Professional certificate. If the candidate is not evaluated on TKES for at least 2 years, a Standard Professional certificate will be issued.

- For a candidate who is **not** employed during the M.A.T. program:

Upon completion of the embedded certification program, this candidate will receive a Certificate of Eligibility for a level 4 Induction Pathway 1 certificate. Upon completion of the M.A.T. program and employment, the candidate will qualify for a level 5 Induction Pathway 1 certificate.

*If a candidate already holds an Induction certificate when he/she completes an M.A.T. program, will he/she be able to upgrade the level of that Induction certificate?*

Induction certificates attained through Pathway 1, 2, or 3 may be upgraded. If a candidate holds a level 4 Induction Pathway 4 certificate, he/she may convert and upgrade to a level 5 Induction Pathway 1 certificate upon completion of the M.A.T.

*Will students enrolled in educator preparation programs before Fall Semester 2014 have to pass the Educator Ethics assessment to qualify for the Induction certificate?*

Anyone applying for Induction Pathway 1 or 2 certificates (program completers who student taught in Georgia) on or after January 1, 2015, will be required to pass the Educator Ethics – Program Exit Assessment.

## **Pre-Service Certificate**

*Are Pre-Service certificates required for certification-only or M.A.T. students who are already teaching?*

No. Pre-Service certificates are not necessary for candidates who already hold valid teaching certificates.

Existing Non-Renewable Non-Professional or GaTAPP certificates will remain valid after July 1, 2014. A candidate who currently holds one of these certificates may continue teaching, complete his/her program, and convert to a Professional certificate by fulfilling

the requirements outlined in the correspondence issued with the Non-Renewable certificate.

A certification-only or M.A.T. candidate who is hired after July 1, 2014, will be issued an Induction Pathway 4 certificate.

*Are Pre-Service certificates required for certification-only or M.A.T. students who are **not** teaching while enrolled in the program?*

Yes. Any person who does not hold a Georgia educator certificate but will be participating in student teaching or field experiences in Georgia schools must hold a Pre-Service certificate.

*Will the Verification of Lawful Presence (VLP) form be required for the Pre-Service certificate?*

Yes. This form, along with a copy of an acceptable identification document, must be submitted as part of the Pre-Service certificate application packet.

*Is there an application that students must complete and submit to the GaPSC for the Pre-Service certificate?*

There will be an application process and the GaPSC will advise EPPs on the required documents when the final details are determined.

## FAQs for LUAs

How will LUAs identify qualified applicants if the GaPSC will not issue certificates to unemployed educators?

LUAs should accept a valid Certificate of Eligibility for employment purposes. The Certificate of Eligibility is only issued to those individuals who meet all qualifications for certification with the exception of employment by a Georgia LUA. A valid Certificate of Eligibility may be converted to the corresponding certificate as soon as the holder is hired by a Georgia LUA and the LUA submits the application for conversion to the GaPSC.

Several of the teachers in my district held NNT or GaTAPP certificates before July 1, 2014. What is their status now?

Valid NNT and GaTAPP certificates remain unchanged. Upon completion of the requirements outlined in the correspondence issued with the Non-Renewable certificate, these educators will be able to convert to a Standard Professional certificate.

But aren't NNT and GaTAPP certificates being replaced by Induction certificates?

Yes, in a manner of speaking. Existing NNT and GaTAPP certificates have not been replaced with Induction certificates, but no new NNT or GaTAPP certificates will be issued. Individuals who might have qualified for these certificates in the past will need to meet requirements for Induction Pathway 4.

My district employs a Spanish teacher who holds a Permit. Will she have to meet requirements for an Induction or Professional certificate?

No. Permits, International Exchange certificates, and Waivers will continue to be issued after July 1, 2014. The requirements for these certificates have not changed significantly.

I was told that out-of-state tests taken after July 1, 2014, would not be accepted to exempt the GACE content exam. Is that true?

No. That change was part of the Certification Rules initiated on March 4, 2014. However, several revisions were made in response to public comment. The following substantive revisions were adopted by the Commission:

- Out-of-state content tests required for professional certification will continue to be accepted as they were before July 1, 2014.
- Induction Pathway 1, 2, and 3 certificates may be upgraded according to the same procedures that currently apply to Clear Renewable certificates. Induction Pathway 4 certificates may not be upgraded.
- An educator holding an Induction Pathway 4 certificate may convert to a different Induction Pathway upon completing the requirements for that Pathway. For example, a GaTAPP candidate who completes his/her program in 3 semesters

may apply to convert to a Pathway 1 certificate. This is beneficial to educators because it allows them to move off of the BT pay scale when they have completed their certification requirements. It also opens the possibility of upgrading the Induction certificate. As another example, an M.A.T. student who teaches on a Level 4 Induction Pathway 4 certificate during the last year of his/her program may convert to Pathway 1 and simultaneously upgrade to Level 5 upon completing all certification and degree requirements.

- Although GACE assessments will continue to have two passing levels, Induction scores earned before July 1, 2017, will be considered equivalent to Professional scores for certification purposes. For example, an individual who receives an Induction certificate in 2016 after passing the GACE content exam at the Induction level will **not** have to retake the GACE in order to convert to Professional in 2019.
- Individuals seeking Induction certification through Pathway 3 (out-of-state educators and out-of-state program completers) will not be required to complete the content pedagogy exam, the Educator Ethics Assessment, or the Exceptional Child course until conversion of their initial Induction certificate to Professional.

We do apologize for any confusion these revisions have caused. Please know that they were made after careful consideration of the concerns of stakeholders throughout Georgia.

*Are LUAs still able to request Non-Renewable Professional certificates for out-of-state educators missing Special Georgia Requirements?*

No, except for out-of-state educators certified in Educational Leadership. However, the only Special Georgia Requirements that out-of-state educators will be required to fulfill for initial Georgia certification are the Standards of Conduct and the content assessment. Any other applicable Special Georgia Requirements (such as the Exceptional Child course) must be completed before renewal or conversion of the initial certificate. The recency-of-study requirement has been eliminated. The only Georgia teaching or service certificate an out-of-state educator who has not passed or exempted the appropriate content assessment may qualify for is a Waiver.

Non-Renewable Professional certificates will still be issued to the following individuals at the request of employing Georgia LUAs:

- Georgia educators who do not meet renewal requirements
- Professionally certified Georgia educators who are assigned to teach out-of-field
- Certain individuals who do not meet all requirements for Induction or Professional certification in a Service field
- Educators working in leadership positions while completing a GaPSC-approved Educational Leadership program
- Out-of-state educators professionally certified in leadership who have not fulfilled the content assessment requirement



*Has the process for obtaining a Non-Renewable Performance-Based Educational Leadership (NPL) certificate changed?*

No. LUAs are still able to request a 5-year NPL for individuals holding at least a master's degree and working in a leadership position or a 1-year NPL for out-of-state educators needing only the content assessment to qualify for a Standard Professional certificate in Educational Leadership.

*Can an LUA request a Non-Renewable Professional certificate for an Induction educator assigned to teach out-of-field?*

No. Induction educators are eligible for **Supplemental Induction** fields and endorsements, but not Non-Renewable Professional certificates. Supplemental Induction fields must be requested by an employing Georgia LUA and have some distinct requirements:

- To be eligible for a Supplemental Induction **full field**, an Induction educator **must** pass the appropriate content assessment at the Induction level or higher.
- To be eligible for a Supplemental Induction **endorsement**, an Induction educator is **not** required to have completed the endorsement program.

Supplemental Induction fields and endorsements will be valid until the expiration of the base Induction certificate. They may be converted to Professional upon conversion of the base certificate if all requirements have been met.