



Tiered Educational Leadership Guidance

July 1st, 2025

Rule [505-2-.153](#)

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1. Introduction

As of January 15, 2016, Georgia Educational Leadership certification has a tiered structure consisting of Standard Professional Tier I, Standard Professional Tier II, and Performance-Based Professional Tier II. This replaced the Educational Leadership 704, Building Level 706, and System Level 707 fields previously issued, while adding an additional Leadership field (Tier I) for those who wish to hold a leadership position that does not supervise other leaders (e.g., assistant principal at the building level, or curriculum director at the system level).

1a. Tier I and Tier II Comparison:

Tier I	Tier II
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Entry-level leadership certification acceptable for the position of assistant principal or below at the building-level, or any position that does not supervise principals at the system-level➤ Not performance-based, issued as Standard Professional➤ Master's degree level program➤ Required for admission into an approved Tier II program➤ Becomes obsolete upon issuance of Tier II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Advanced-level leadership certification acceptable for any leadership position at the building or system level➤ Performance-based unless an educator previously held Standard Professional Leadership certification, or obtains Leadership certification through reciprocity, and has not completed an approved performance-based program.➤ Specialist or doctoral degree level program required unless based on reciprocity with a master's degree and 3 years of successful leadership experience

1b. When did Tiered Leadership programs become available?

Tier I programs became available beginning summer semester 2016, and are only offered at the master's degree level, or certification-only for those who hold a master's degree or above. Tier II programs became available beginning summer semester 2017, and are offered at the specialist and doctoral degree levels, or certification-only for those who hold a specialist degree or above. Note that Tier I requirements must first be completed to be certified in Tier II, unlike the previously independent Building and System Level programs.

1c. Will the completion of Tiered Leadership programs result in a leader level?

Yes, not unlike the previous Building and System Level programs, completion of a Tier I or Tier II Educational Leadership program that results in initial leadership certification through the completion of a higher degree will be accompanied by a leader level. If a leader level is issued, an educator must be in a leadership position to be compensated at the assigned leader level.

1d. Are unapproved out-of-state leadership programs acceptable towards the addition of Leadership to a valid Georgia certificate?

No, Georgia educators must complete GaPSC-approved Leadership programs. Unapproved out-of-state programs, as well as programs approved by other states, remain ineligible towards the addition of Leadership (Tier I or Tier II) to Georgia certification.

1e. May Georgia educators who were initially certified through reciprocity and denied Leadership, now reapply under the current Educational Leadership rule?

Yes, educators who were initially certified based on reciprocity and now qualify for Tier I may reapply for evaluation. Only application materials submitted at the time of initial certification will be considered. This does not apply to Georgia educators who may have completed unapproved out-of-state leadership programs after becoming certified in Georgia.

1f. How does Tiered Educational Leadership affect Georgia Educators enrolled in Building and System Level programs?

Building and System Level programs continued to enroll applicants through spring of 2017, with active participation in coursework being required by that time to qualify for certification. Educators completing these programs are issued Performance-Based Educational Leadership – Tier II upon completion. Building and System Level program completers are subject to the following GACE assessments: the Educational Leadership Tier I assessment (test code 334), and the Ethics for Leaders Assessment (test code 352).

2. Conversion of Previously Issued Educational Leadership Certification

2a. Existing Georgia Educational Leadership certificates were automatically converted on January 15, 2016 to conform to the Tiered Educational Leadership structure. Please see the following table outlining the previous field, the tiered equivalent, and the leadership position(s) applicable:

Leadership Field Prior to 1/15/16	Tiered Leadership Equivalent After 1/15/16	Applicable Leadership Position
Educational Leadership – Field 704	Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier II, Field 710	Any at either the building, or system level. Effectively a change in terminology only.
Educational Leadership – Building Level – Field 706	Performance-Based Educational Leadership – Tier II, Field 710	Any at either the building, or system level. Previous Building-Level certificate holders are no longer restricted to the building level.
Educational Leadership – System Level – Field 707	Performance-Based Educational Leadership – Tier II, Field 710	Any at either the building, or system level. Superintendents are now only required to hold Tier II certification.

3. Non-renewable Educational Leadership

3a. Non-renewable Educational Leadership certification remains available for issuance at the request of an employing Georgia Local Unit of Administration (LUA) to previously certified educators meeting the following requirements:

Non-renewable Educational Leadership Certificate Type	Issuance Requirements	Conversion Requirements	Validity Period
Tier I (appropriate only for leaders who do not supervise other leaders, e.g. assistant principal)	Bachelor's degree or higher, Ethics for Leaders Assessment	Master's level approved program, Educational Leadership Tier I assessment	3 years
Tier II only (appropriate only for leaders who supervise other leaders, e.g. principal. Tier II will not be issued for positions where Tier I is appropriate)	Tier I certification, Ethics for Leaders Assessment (if not previously completed)	Specialist or doctoral level program, Educational Leadership Tier I assessment (unless met or exempt), Educational Leadership Tier II assessment (test code 347) or PASL if passed before 5/15/26	3 years
Tier I & Tier II (appropriate only for leaders who supervise other leaders, e.g. principal. Tier II will not be issued for positions where Tier I is appropriate)	Master's degree or higher, Ethics for Leaders Assessment	Specialist or doctoral level program, Educational Leadership Tier I assessment, Educational Leadership Tier II assessment or PASL if passed before 5/15/26	3 years initially, with 3 additional years available at the request of an employing LUA upon meeting the requirements of an approved Tier I program.

3b. How does Tiered Leadership affect previously issued Non-renewable Performance Based Educational Leadership certification?

Prior to January 15, 2016, previously issued 5-year, Non-renewable Performance-Based Educational Leadership certificates at either the Building or System Level were honored for the remaining validity.

4. Educational Leadership Reciprocity

4a. Reciprocity remains in effect for out-of-state Educational Leadership certificate holders, with Tier I available to those who would not have qualified for Leadership under the rule before 2016. The following illustrates the differences between the previous and current Educational Leadership Rule:

Educational Leadership Reciprocity Prior to January 15, 2016	Educational Leadership Reciprocity As of July 1, 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Specialist and doctoral level leadership programs led to Standard Professional Educational Leadership – 704 field certification➤ Master’s level leadership programs led to 704 field certification only if completed by December 15, 2010, or if accompanied by 3 years of successful leadership experience➤ Educational Leadership content assessment or exemption was required for initial issuance unless a 1-year Non-renewable was being requested by a Georgia LUA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Specialist and doctoral level leadership programs result in Standard Professional Educational Leadership – Tier II certification➤ Master’s level leadership programs result in Educational Leadership – Tier I certification unless accompanied by 3 years of successful leadership experience.➤ Ethics for Leaders Assessment (test code 352) required for initial issuance➤ Educational Leadership Tier I assessment or exemption is required for initial issuance unless a 1-year Non-renewable is being requested by a Georgia LUA.

4b. How does an out-of-state educator who completed a master’s level Educational Leadership program qualify for Tier II?

Out-of-state educators professionally certified in Educational Leadership through a master’s-level program must have completed 3 years of successful leadership experience to qualify for Educational Leadership – Tier II certification.

4c. What is considered successful out-of-state leadership experience?

Full-time, satisfactory rated experience accrued at an acceptable institution in a leadership position that required government-issued Educational Leadership certification. For further details, please review the [Experience Requirements rule](#). Educational leadership experience may be accepted from any year previous to an application towards the issuance of Tier II, or exemption of [Special Georgia Requirements](#).

4d. Will a higher, non-leadership degree qualify an out-of-state educator with a master’s-level leadership program and less than 3 years of experience for Tier II certification?

No, eligibility for Educational Leadership is determined by using the leadership program only. For example, an out-of-state educator who completed a master’s level leadership program, and an unrelated specialist, would be subject to experience requirements towards Tier II certification.

4e. May out-of-state educators professionally certified in Educational Leadership who did not complete a leadership content test, exceptional child course, or other Special Georgia Requirement, qualify for initial Georgia Educational Leadership certification?

No, Special Georgia Requirements (excluding the exceptional child course) must be complete prior to issuance. However, non-renewable certification may be requested by a Georgia employer to allow time for content testing.