



DATE: March 31, 2022

TO: EPP Heads and P-12 Superintendents

FROM: Matt Arthur, Executive Secretary

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to State-approved Program Admission Criteria

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your continued commitment to our shared work of ensuring effective Georgia education. As the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) remains focused on what we can do to support the educator pipeline, we have proposed changes to program admission requirements that also impact certain non-professional certification eligibility criteria. These changes were initiated by the Commission at a special session on March 30, 2022.

Proposed Changes to State-approved Program Admission and Certification Eligibility

We have heard from many school systems struggling to hire teachers that some of our program admission requirements stand in the way of prospective educators enrolling in Georgia certification programs and seeking Provisional certification. In light of our rigorous standards for program approval and candidate performance, we believe GaPSC-approved program providers, rather than the state agency, are in the best position to make admission decisions. Therefore, the Commission has initiated rule amendments to:

- 1) Remove the Program Admission Assessment (PAA) requirement; and
- 2) Remove the minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) to qualify for a Provisional Certificate and to enter a GaPSC-approved educator preparation program leading to initial certification in a Teaching (T), Leadership (L), or Service (S) field.

Although the PAA has value in helping to ensure a candidate has the minimum competency in reading, writing, and mathematics to be successful in a preparation program, we believe admission decisions, including an assessment of basic skills and a minimum GPA requirement, should be the responsibility of the educator preparation provider (EPP), not the state agency. Our focus should be on what new teachers, leaders, and other school personnel know and are able to do upon completion of a program.

Measurable Benefits:

- The removal of the PAA results in a savings of \$128, which is a 36.47% reduction in current initial teaching assessment costs. Combined with the removal of edTPA and one of the ethics

assessments in Spring 2020, the total reduction in assessment costs for initial teaching candidates in the past two years will be 67.25%.

- School systems will have a larger pool of eligible and diverse candidates for Provisional and Permit Certificates, which will reduce the number of Waiver Certificate requests.
- Instead of teaching on Waiver Certificates, individuals can be accepted into programs and begin receiving training and support from a GA EPP.
- School systems will no longer need to utilize strategic waivers for educators lacking the minimum GPA and/or PAA for certification eligibility, which supports individuals meeting requirements to become professionally certified and remaining in the profession.
- We anticipate fewer Georgians will seek training outside the state in programs over which we have no regulatory authority to ensure program quality.
- Program providers, at their discretion, will have increased flexibility to admit candidates who show promise yet who may struggle to pass the PAA.

Effective Date

If adopted by the Commission, these rule amendments will become effective July 1, 2022, and the following guidance and timelines will apply:

- For academic year 2022-2023, the program admission criteria established by the GaPSC will no longer be required. This includes removal of the current state-approved requirements to 1) meet or exempt the PAA requirement, and 2) meet a minimum GPA requirement.
- Individuals admitted to programs prior to academic year 2022-2023, who have not yet met the PAA requirement for program admission or certification, will not be required to complete the requirement.
- Individuals for whom the PAA was required for certification eligibility, prior to adoption of these proposed rules, will not be required to complete the requirement. Certification guidance for educators who may be affected will be forthcoming.

It is important to note educator preparation providers (EPP) may establish their own admission criteria, and, therefore, may continue to require an admission assessment and/or a minimum GPA, along with other established criteria.

Policy Transition and Refunds

For EPPs:

As the GACE PAA will no longer be offered after July 1, 2022, pending the proposed rules adoption, EPPs that wish to continue to use an assessment for program admission may adopt the [Praxis® Core Academic Skills for Educators: Combined Test](#) (Reading, Writing and Mathematics), which is identical in design and content to the PAA. Please know ETS is willing to offer webinars and/or regional workshops on the *Praxis*® Core in support of EPPs that adopt the *Praxis* Core. As a reminder, the support materials currently being used, including those from Khan Academy, are strictly aligned to the *Praxis*® Core, as it is the same test as the PAA.

To adopt *Praxis*® Core, EPPs must send an email to PEPDataManager@ets.org with the EPP score recipient's name, title, phone #, email and their mailing address at the institution. The request will be reviewed and once approved, your institution will be given a score recipient code number to receive scores for *Praxis*® Core, if there is not one currently assigned.

To [sign in](#) or request an account to access the ETS Data Manager, program providers should visit [ETS Client Services](#). For more information, contact PEPDataManager@ets.org.

For Test Takers:

While we recognize the rule amendments are pending adoption in May 2022, test takers who are currently registered for an upcoming administration of one or more parts of the PAA may cancel their registration if they so wish. Should the PAA requirement not be removed, test takers can re-register for the PAA at a later date. The GACE Program at ETS will send all registered PAA test takers a communication on April 15, 2022, regarding the PAA cancellation and refund process. However, the essential information is as follows:

- In order to cancel their PAA registration and receive a full refund, test takers should send their request via email to ETS at gace_inquiries@gapsc.org. To receive a full registration refund, requests must be received by **June 3, 2022**. The email to ETS must include the following:
 - "GACE PAA Cancellation Refund" in the subject line.
 - Test taker's full name
 - Test taker's date of birth
 - Test taker's GA Certification ID
 - The email address associated with the test taker's MY GACE account

Test takers should allow 7 business days for a response.

Note: After June 3, 2022, the standard cancellation and refund policies and procedures will apply; see [Cancel or Change Your Registration](#) for additional information. Students who take or have taken the PAA are ineligible for a refund.

Contact Information

For Test Takers:

- Should you have questions about the PAA assessment registration and/or refunds, please email gace_inquiries@ets.org.
- Should you have certification questions, please complete the contact form available at <https://www.gapsc.com/Certification/EmailPSC.aspx>.

For EPPs:

- For questions about the PAA Assessment, contact Anne Marie Fenton at annemarie.fenton@gapsc.com.
- For questions about the Praxis Core assessment, contact ETS at gace_inquiries@ets.org.
- A webinar will be scheduled for EPPs to discuss any questions about the removal of the GPA admission requirement.

In Closing

To view the proposed rule amendments, see <https://www.gapsc.com/Commission/Rules/home.aspx>.

We appreciate your commitment to preparing effective educators and supporting the Georgia educator pipeline. As always, thank you for your work, and please let us know how we can be of assistance.