



GaPSC Quarterly Highlights

2nd Quarter, 2020

The mission of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) is to build the best prepared, most qualified, and most ethical education workforce in the nation. This document highlights progress and actions of this state agency during the second quarter of 2020.

A Message from Matt Arthur

It is important to me to first express my admiration for the manner in which Georgia's school districts and schools, educator preparation providers (EPPs), and educational organizations have responded to the challenges presented by COVID-19. All the work that those in the profession do each and every day, especially during these challenging times, exemplifies Georgia's commitment to excellence in education.

GaPSC's staff shares this commitment, evidenced by the agency's substantive enhancements and streamlining progress. GaPSC's second quarter of the calendar year brought multiple policy changes, most of which became effective July 1, 2020, along with many of the first quarter's initiated reforms. As is our practice, these changes were informed by diverse and representative groups. We are highlighting many of these policy actions and guidance updates in this edition.

To help you stay informed, I invite you to follow us on our social media outlets for frequent updates, reminders, and resources. These are accessible from our home page at www.gapsc.com. Also on our home page is a link to [News and Announcements](#), where we post new, important notices and information. As a reminder, COVID-19 updates are posted [here](#).

Given our charge to be highly responsive to the emerging needs of our educators, EPPs, P-12 districts, and schools, our process of examining policy and practice across the work of the agency is ongoing, and we will continue to make adjustments as needed.

I am appreciative of the hard work, responsiveness, and professionalism of our staff and our colleagues across the continuum of the education profession. As always, please contact us should you have any questions.

COVID-19 Updates

During the second quarter, COVID-19 policy and guidance changes were implemented and updates were made to previously issued COVID-19 response measures; these are highlighted below.

- GaPSC issued a COVID-19 Webcast, available [here](#), that includes "20 Things You Need to Know Now," which highlights COVID-19 flexibility measures and reminders.
- The [GACE PAA at Home](#) option launched, making the Program Admission Assessment (PAA) available to take at home or another secure location. Since its launch, over 4100 potential educators have selected this option.
- The detailed [Certification Flexibility Chart](#) was updated to extend certification flexibility to service and leadership field certificate holders, as outlined in the document. This extension provides qualified educators an extra year to meet certification requirements.
- [GaPSC Guidance for Addressing EPP Disruptions](#) was updated to, in part, allow educational leadership candidates additional time to complete certification requirements and to provide EPPs with [instructions](#) for using COVID-19 waivers in GaPSC reporting systems for teacher and leadership Spring 2020 and Summer 2020 completers who were not able to complete all certification requirements.

- Conditional admittance into preparation programs was implemented for candidates who had not yet met admission assessment requirements, as described in [GaPSC’s Guidance for EPPs Conditionally Admitting Candidates](#) and in [Program Admission: Conditional Admittance and PAA Assessment](#).
- All GACE Prometric test sites that closed due to COVID-19 reopened; many non-Prometric test sites (i.e., colleges and institutions) also reopened. Current Prometric test site closure status is available [here](#), and test takers can access the status of non-Prometric test sites through their ETS accounts. COVID-19 safety protocols for GACE testing are in place and are included [here](#). All rescheduling fees continue to be waived by the testing supplier.
- Work began on [GaPSC’s Guidance for Traditional Field and Clinical Experiences](#), which was finalized and posted in July. The guidance document, developed in collaboration with EPP representatives, provides flexibility to EPPs as they work within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to arrange the school placements needed to ensure pre-service educators have the opportunities and experiences necessary for them to develop their skills.
- As a reminder, teaching, leadership, and service certificates were issued or extended for one year, valid through June 30, 2021, for candidates who completed their educator preparation programs in Spring 2020 or Summer 2020, and who were not able to complete certification assessment requirements due to school and/or test site closures. This extension was also granted for certain certificate types that expired in June 2020.

Please continue to watch GaPSC’s website for [COVID-19 updates](#).

Policy Changes

The following policy changes were adopted by the Commission during the second quarter as part of GaPSC’s streamlining measures.

- In an effort to ease certification requirements, GaPSC removed two assessment requirements, cutting the testing costs for teachers by almost half (48.5%).
 - One of the two ethics assessments was removed. Teacher and Educational Leadership candidates now only have to pass the instructional ethics assessment prior to program entry, which ensures these future teachers and leaders have training in the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators and ethical principles to guide professional decision-making prior to substantive field experiences. Additional policy information is available [here](#).
 - edTPA, a performance-based content pedagogy assessment, was removed. Initial teacher education candidates no longer must attempt the edTPA prior to initial teacher preparation program completion and pass it for certification. Additional policy information is available below.
 - [edTPA Proposed Rule Changes Memo](#)
 - [edTPA Proposed Rule Changes Guidance](#)
 - [edTPA Rules Action](#)
 - [EPP Key Assessments Post edTPA](#)
- The One-Year Non-Renewable certificate reduces the need for employing districts to request a waiver certificate for certain teaching, service, and leadership candidates who have not met all assessment requirements, which also includes those applying by reciprocity who lack assessments. This [one year non-renewable certificate](#) option available to teaching fields was added for service and leadership fields.
- The validity date for [permits](#) was extended to five years once initial requirements are met.
- To reduce redundancy, a new [Teaching Field rule](#) was adopted that consolidates 66 individual teaching field rules to one main rule.

- There are now five-year, three-year, and one-year certificate options for teaching, leadership, and applicable service fields.
- The number of content field concentrations required of traditional post-baccalaureate (e.g., M.A.T., certification-only) middle grades program candidates was reduced from two to one.
- To ease restrictions related to program admission, the specification to use the GPA in a major or content area coursework was changed to allow for use of the overall GPA.
- In response to the passage of Senate Bill 48 (2019), expectations were added to GaPSC Rule [505-3-01, Requirements and Standards for Approving Educator Preparation Providers and Educator Preparation Programs](#), to prepare all teachers to recognize the characteristics of dyslexia and other related disorders and demonstrate competence in using appropriate interventions.
- The [Dyslexia Endorsement Program preparation rule](#) (505-3-.112) became effective. This endorsement focuses on preparing practicing teachers to meet the needs of students with dyslexia or other related disorders. Nine program providers are approved to offer the program and other EPPs plan to seek approval. A [guidance document for the Dyslexia Endorsement](#) program was posted in July.
- Informed by a task force representative of Georgia educator preparation providers and P-12 schools, [English to Speakers of Other Languages \(ESOL\) Program](#) and [ESOL Endorsement Program](#) content standards were updated to align with recent changes to the national standards published by the specialized professional association, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

Enhancements

The following are examples of GaPSC's actions to enhance quality during the second quarter of 2020:

- The ethics assessment requirement was added for issuance of new Clearance Certificates, International Exchange certificates, and Permits, as well as for out-of-state educators applying for an Induction certificate based on reciprocity.
- To assist potential educators, EPP faculty and candidate webinars were conducted on preparation for the Program Admission Assessment (PAA), which included Khan Academy's free instructional resources in reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as and other preparation information, available [here](#). For additional PAA support, work began on webcasts for candidates and a monthly webcast series for EPP faculty, which launches in August 2020. Preparation resources for all state-approved assessments are available [here](#).
- Collaborative work began with school districts to identify needs regarding instruction and resources around appropriate use of social media and in ethical considerations in virtual learning environments.
- The annual process of calculating and publishing the [Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures \(PPEMs\)](#) resulted in the July 27th release of the 2020 PPEMs to EPPs via the GaPSC secure portal. The PPEM public dashboard will be updated with the 2020 measures in November. PPEMs indicate how well state-approved EPPs are preparing teachers for the classroom and provide contextual data for each program provider, including program enrollment and employment trends.
- Plans began for a GaPSC webcast series focused on helpful topics related to Certification, Ethics, Educator Preparation, and Assessment. This informative series will be published on the GaPSC website and will launch in Fall 2020.

- As a reminder, educators who wish to pursue [Teacher Leadership](#) certification no longer need three years of experience. Now, only one year of experience is required. In addition, the three-year experience requirement for the fields of [Instructional Technology](#) and [Curriculum and Instruction](#) has been removed.

Support by the Numbers

During the second quarter of calendar year 2020, GaPSC:

- Answered 15,361 certification calls, totaling 28,868 year to date (YTD).
- Responded to 26,342 emails, totaling 49,377 YTD.
- Opened 27,932 certification cases, totaling 53,446 YTD.
- Completed 25,160 certification cases, totaling 50,466 YTD.
- Completed 421 ethics cases, totaling 848 YTD.
- Conducted approval reviews for 57 existing preparation programs, and approved 15 new initial preparation programs and 17 new endorsement programs. During the second quarter, approval reviews for either new or existing programs were conducted for a total of 27 program providers.

Need Assistance?

The [GaPSC website](#) provides helpful, detailed information. If you still need assistance, the following contact information may be helpful:

- [Certification](#): Please use the online contact form [here](#).
- [Educator Preparation](#): EPPs are asked to contact their education specialist.
- [Ethics](#): Contact information is provided [here](#).
- [Assessment](#): Contact information is provided [here](#).

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