



GaPSC Quarterly Highlights

3rd 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 third quarter 2020.

A Message from Matt Arthur

First, to our school districts and schools, educator preparation providers (EPPs), educational organizations, and others who support education, thank you for all the work you are doing to meet the challenges presented by COVID-19. We at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) remain extremely appreciative of your collaboration and input, which we use to inform our policy decisions.

In third quarter 2020, we made significant progress toward our streamlining and enhancement initiatives. In addition, with the start of the 2020-21 academic year, we greatly increased the number of virtual outreach events to provide information, technical assistance, and professional learning. Examples of these initiatives and events are included in this quarterly update. We also further strengthened our communication efforts, introducing our *GaPSC Connection* publication, which is available on our [website](#).

In looking ahead, please note the following:

- Preparation in the field of Computer Science is a critical, emerging need, fueled by the 2019 passage of SB108 that requires increased availability of computer science courses in schools. Currently there are nine approved endorsement programs and six full-field programs offered at Georgia colleges or universities. We encourage potential and current educators to pursue this program or endorsement and encourage additional EPPs to offer these programs.
- As we do not currently plan to extend COVID-19 flexibility measures past June 30, 2021, educators are encouraged to plan ahead to meet their certification requirements by the end validity date on their certificates. Although we continue to carefully monitor the impact of the pandemic, we do not anticipate any policy changes at this time.
- Additional reminders and tips for Certification, Educator Preparation, Ethics, and Assessment are included in the [October 7, 2020, issue](#) of the *GaPSC Connection* publication.

With increased teleworking by our staff, we have reduced our office space. Although we did not move, this adjustment gave us a new office suite number (Suite 1712). The full mailing address is on the [GaPSC homepage](#).

As always, I invite you to follow us on our social media outlets for frequent updates, reminders, and resources. These are accessible from our home page, along with [News and Announcements](#), where we post new, important notices and information. As a reminder, COVID-19 updates are posted [here](#).

Please let us know how we can assist you.

COVID-19 Updates

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

- GaPSC issued a COVID-19 update in the [September 14, 2020, issue](#) of the *GaPSC Connection* publication, sharing the status of GaPSC decisions regarding COVID-19 flexibility measures. The communication announced:
 - Certification requirements extended in the spring and summer of 2020 must be met by the end validity date of the certificate. At this time, GaPSC does not plan to issue additional COVID-19 flexibility measures, yet are closely monitoring the impact of the pandemic.

- As the GACE Program Admission Assessment (PAA) is readily available both at test sites and at home or another secure location, there is no need to extend educator preparation program conditional admittance flexibility for the spring semester of 2021. Information about the PAA requirement, including exemption criteria, is available [here](#).
- All GACE Prometric test sites that closed due to COVID-19 reopened; most 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.
- [GaPSC Guidance for Traditional Field and Clinical Experiences](#) was posted in July and updated in August 2020. The guidance document, developed in collaboration with EPP representatives, provides flexibility to EPPs as they work within the context of the pandemic to arrange school placements needed to ensure pre-service educators have the opportunities and experiences necessary for them to develop their skills.

Please continue to monitor the GaPSC website for [COVID-19 updates](#).

Policy Changes

The substantive policy changes adopted during second quarter, which are part of GaPSC streamlining measures, became effective July 1, 2020. Please refer to [GaPSC's 2nd Quarter Highlights](#) for a review of these policy changes. Below are additional policy updates:

- Accompanying the Dyslexia Endorsement preparation program rule, a corresponding certification rule was adopted in September 2020 to create a certificate for identifying educators prepared to recognize and support students with dyslexia.
- The Administrative Approval process for endorsement programs was added to [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.01, REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR APPROVING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS](#). This new endorsement approval review process was implemented to drastically reduce the time involved in approving a new program. The need to quickly prepare more teachers for online teaching prompted this change.
- Nineteen proposed rule changes were previewed for the Commission at the September 10, 2020, meeting. These rules were initiated on October 8th, and the public comment period ends November 20, 2020. The public comment notice, summary of proposed rule changes, and the proposed rules are available [here](#).

Enhancements

The following are examples of third quarter GaPSC actions aimed at enhancing the quality of our services:

- The *GaPSC Connection* publication, an agency-wide communication avenue for informational updates on targeted topics, launched on [September 14, 2020](#). A second issue was published [October 7, 2020](#).
- We encouraged educators to pursue GaPSC-approved endorsement programs and Georgia EPPs to expand their endorsement program offerings, with an emphasis on the following:
 - Online Teaching Endorsement - Twenty Georgia program providers are now approved to offer the Online Teaching Endorsement, which is designed to help teachers gain new skills and strategies for distance teaching and learning.
 - Computer Science Endorsement – Teacher preparation in the field of Computer Science is available as a full-field (P-12) program and as an endorsement. Currently there are nine approved endorsement

programs and six full-field programs offered at Georgia colleges and universities. All of Georgia's 23 GaTAPP providers offer Computer Science certification for career changers.

There are 31 state-approved endorsement fields to help meet the needs of students and educators. A list of GaPSC-approved providers offering programs is available [here](#). EPPs wishing to add a new program can complete and submit the Endorsement Program Approval Application available [here](#).

- To assist school districts and schools as they work with their in-service educators and EPP faculty as they work with their pre-service educator candidates, GaPSC provided multiple professional learning/technical assistance events. Over 1,875 EPP and P-12 representatives took advantage of these learning and support opportunities. Below are examples of these initiatives:

Examples of GaPSC Support and Professional Learning Events
3rd Quarter, 2020

Ethics

Agricultural Education: New Teacher Orientation on Ethical Pitfalls
Five orientation sessions for new P-12 employees
CTAE: Ethical Pitfalls

Certification

Four P-12 certification training events
Two EPP certification training events
One RESA certification training event

Educator Preparation

Three GaTAPP Coordinators' Meetings
P20 Collaborative Meeting: Metro RESA
Five technical support webinars:
(Endorsements; Key Program Assessments: Introduction; Key Program
Assessments: Validity Examples; Curriculum Mapping; and
A Focus on Standard One – Part 2)

Assessment

Two Program Admission Assessment (PAA) Faculty Support Workshops
Program Admission Assessment (PAA) Input Session with EPPs
Three Title II/TPMS-NTRS webinars for EPPs

- Substantive progress was made on a GaPSC webcast series focused on providing helpful instructions and assistance related to Certification, Ethics, Educator Preparation, and Assessment. Planned are webcast productions for prospective educators, practicing educators, EPPs, other users, including an agency overview and foundational information, aimed at helping to easily navigate GaPSC processes. The webcasts will be published on the GaPSC website.
- As many school districts are providing instruction through virtual learning environments, GaPSC increased its focus on encouraging school districts to remind educators to carefully consider what they post, especially on social media outlets.
- Although most components of the certification process have been digital for many years, work began on moving to a fully paperless system. Toward this aim, school districts and educators were informed of the need to submit documentation through an educator's MyPSC account or by the school district using ExpressLane, and to submit official transcripts via ExpressLane or to email these directly from the institution to mail@gapsc.com, not through MyPSC.

- On July 27, 2020, the [Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures \(PPEMs\)](#) were released privately to GaPSC-approved EPPs via the GaPSC secure portal for their review, with the public release scheduled for November 2020. 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.
- GaPSC and the Georgia Educational Leadership Faculty Association (GELFA) launched a virtual series of panel discussions on cultural inclusiveness and equity, including challenges and needed actions to prepare leaders to face these challenges. This series is offered by the GELFA/GaPSC Virtual Professional Learning Community (VPLC), which is an inclusive, collaborative structure of support for state-approved Educational Leadership preparation program faculty and their P-12 partners.

Please refer to [1st Quarter GaPSC Highlights](#) and [2nd Quarter GaPSC Highlights](#) for additional enhancements.

Support by the Numbers

During third quarter 2020, GaPSC:

- Answered 12,503 certification calls, totaling 41,371 year to date (YTD).
- Responded to 23,700 emails, totaling 73,077 YTD.
- Opened 19,643 certification cases, totaling 73,089 YTD.
- Completed 21,950 certification cases, totaling 72,416 YTD.
- Completed 329 ethics cases, totaling 1,177 YTD.
- Continued approval for 12 existing programs and approved 18 new endorsement programs. Also during third quarter, work was conducted on new or continuing approval reviews for a total of 18 program providers.

Need Assistance?

The [GaPSC website](#) provides helpful, detailed information. If you don't find the answers you need on the website, 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](#).

Stay Connected

- GaPSC Website: <https://www.gapsc.com/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaPSC/>
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/Ga_PSC