



# GaPSC Quarterly Highlights

3rd Quarter, 2021

**The mission of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) is to build the best prepared, most qualified, and most ethical educator workforce in the nation. This document highlights progress and actions of this state agency during third quarter, 2021.**

## A Message from Matt Arthur

I continue to be amazed at the close collaboration we have together as educational partners, including our school districts and schools, educator preparation program providers (EPPs), Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs), state agencies, organizations, and others across our state. Your input in our policies, guidelines, and practices remains very important to us, and we appreciate your ongoing willingness to serve on our many task forces, advisory groups, committees, collaboratives, and virtual communities, as well as responding to our rules public comment, surveys, and inquiries. Please know we do use all these avenues of input to inform our decisions.

We still hear back from our educators, and you, regarding how helpful the flexibility measures have been we put in place as a result of the impact of the pandemic. Giving your pre-service and in-service educators the extra year to complete certification requirements is frequently noted, as are the other measures including additional flexibility for field and clinical experiences, implementing an at-home Program Admission Assessment (PAA) testing option, expanding ways potential candidates can meet the PAA requirement, and others. We thank you for this as our decisions on those flexibility measures were informed by your input.

During third quarter, we continued our laser focus on supporting and strengthening the educator pipeline across the continuum through our policy and initiatives, including our multiple, diverse professional learning opportunities. For the largest impact, we recognize we must all do this work together. Our agency is committed to continuing to support you in this shared work.

This third quarter report highlights updates regarding Governor Brian Kemp's Teacher Pipeline legislation with a focus on military veterans and spouses of veterans and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Collaborative. Also highlighted is the substantive progress made on many of our targeted initiatives designed to support and strengthen the educator workforce, featuring the following as examples:

- Since the July 1, 2021, launch of paperless certification, which is designed to save educators' time, the number of paper applications we received between July 1 and September 30, 2021, is one tenth of what we received between the same period in 2020.
- An additional eight percent of all newly enrolled educator candidates obtained admission into preparation programs due to the composite score option for the PAA, which launched July 1, 2021.
- GaPSC reached over 3,875 P-12 and EPP representatives through professional learning presentations during third quarter, totaling over 7,225 for the first three quarters. We invite your participation in these.
- During the first three quarters of 2021, GaPSC's certification staff answered 33,579 calls, responded to 54,865 emails, and completed 80,635 certification cases.
- During the first three quarters of 2021, GaPSC continued approval for 259 existing preparation programs and approved 30 new endorsement programs. During this time frame, work was conducted on new or continuing approval reviews for a total of 36 program providers.

Please watch for and share our publications and other communications, including our rules notices, all available at <https://www.gapsc.com/Commission/News/NewsRoom.aspx>. We also invite you to follow us on our social media outlets.

As always, thank you for the trust you put in us as educational partners.

Matt

## COVID-19 Updates

Although there were no additional COVID-19 measures initiated third quarter, the flexibility measures for meeting the PAA requirement became effective July 1, 2021. Information about these measures to assist potential candidates who show promise yet struggle on the PAA is available in [GaPSC Connections: Additional Flexibility Measures](#). There are no current plans to further extend certificates or implement additional COVID-19 flexibility measures, yet the impact of the pandemic will continue to be closely monitored.

All GACE test sites across Georgia remained open. Still in place are COVID-19 safety protocols, which are listed [here](#). Test takers who encounter any difficulty in securing a testing slot or need any other assistance should contact ETS at [gace\\_inquiries@ets.org](mailto:gace_inquiries@ets.org).

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

## Policy Decisions

A summary of Certification and Educator Preparation rule amendments that became effective July 1, 2021, is available in [GaPSC's 2nd Quarter Highlights](#).

At its September 9, 2021, meeting, the Commission adopted the following Educator Preparation rules, which were initiated at the July 8, 2021, Commission meeting:

- [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.06 PEDAGOGY-ONLY PROGRAM](#) – This rule allows GaPSC-approved colleges and universities to offer certification programs at the Master's degree level that are focused solely on pedagogy for career changers holding content expertise. The new field of Reading Education (T) was removed from the list of eligible fields, and the types of prior coursework eligible for evidence of content expertise at program admission were revised.
- [GAPSC 505-3-.27 MATHEMATICS EDUCATION PROGRAM](#) – The rule was changed to reflect current content standards adapted from the standards published in 2020 by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).
- [505-3-.92 K-5 MATHEMATICS ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM](#) – The rule was changed to incorporate the new K-5 Mathematics standards published in 2020 by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and sunset the portfolio review process for converting the former Early Childhood (ECE) Mathematics Endorsement to the K-5 Mathematics Endorsement used to qualify educators for the K-5 endorsement salary stipend.

The passing standard for the revised GACE Educational Leadership Assessment (Test 311), which the Commission established at its May 13, 2021, became effective July 1, 2021. The assessment was updated to align with changes in national and GaPSC program standards. The assessment design and framework, as well as preparation materials, are available [here](#).

## Enhancements

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

- The paperless certification process became effective July 1, 2021. As a result, in the third quarter, the number of paper applications received between 7/1/21 and 9/30/21, is ten percent of those received between 7/1/20 and 9/30/20. This environmentally-friendly system is designed to streamline certification processes while adding convenience and flexibility for educators and prospective educators applying for certification. More about paperless certification is available [here](#).
- The expansion of options to satisfy the Program Admission Assessment (PAA) requirement became effective July 1, 2021, including the PAA Composite Score option and the expanded Limited Flexibility Exemption (LFE) option. In

third quarter, an additional eight percent of educator candidates obtained admission into preparation programs due the PAA composite score option for the Program Admission Assessment. More information of ways to satisfy the PAA requirement is available [here](#).

- GaPSC’s work to actively recruit and support military veterans and spouses of veterans at four of the seven military bases across the state continued. The openings at bases for in-person recruitment briefings is expected to increase after the new year. A part of the GaPSC’s structure of support includes assisting veterans and spouses of veterans in the certification process and providing a modified timeline to complete certification requirements.
- Development began on an “at home” testing option for paraprofessionals who are not able to exempt the assessment. Expected to be available in early 2022, paraprofessionals can choose to take the assessment at home or another secure location, which is similar to the PAA “at home” testing option, selected by over 24,000 prospective educators since its availability in May 2020.
- Work continued toward the release of the 2021 Teacher Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures (TPPEMs), expected to be available publically on the GaPSC’s website in mid-November 2021. TPPEMs provide EPPs access to data to inform improvement, hold EPPs accountable for the quality of educators they produce, and provide transparency to the public about the quality of teachers produced. Additional TPPEM information is available at <https://www.gapsc.com/EducatorPreparation/ppems.aspx>.
- During third quarter, GaPSC reached over 3,875 P-12 and EPP representatives through professional learning presentations, including statewide events, totaling over 7,225 for the first three quarters of 2021. Below are examples of the multiple professional learning and technical assistance events provided by GaPSC staff 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.

**Examples of GaPSC Support and Professional Learning Events  
3rd Quarter, 2021**

**Ethics**

Thirteen presentations to P12 Districts and Schools, as well as EPPs  
(Code of Ethics for Educators; Fraud;  
Social Media and Remote Learning)  
One Aspiring Human Resources Event (Ethics Updates)

**Certification**

Seven Georgia LUA Certification Training Sessions  
One EPP Presentation to Teacher Candidates

**Educator Preparation**

Two GaTAPP Coordinators’ Meeting  
Two P20 Collaboratives’ Convenings  
One Webinar on Rubric Design and Data  
Facilitated Approval Review Meetings for Six Program Providers

**Assessment**

Three Title II Webinars  
(Traditional and Non-Traditional EPPs)  
EPP Training on the Performance Assessment for School Leaders (PASL)  
GELFA/GaPSC Virtual Professional Learning Community Meeting  
Two RESA Directors’ Meetings: Paraprofessional Ethics Modules

- A new issue of the [Latest on GACE](#) newsletter was published, which covers the Performance Assessment for School Leaders (PASL), the Teacher Leadership performance-based assessment, and program updates.

- GaPSC is continuing the collaborative work with deans and faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) through the HBCU Collaborative. Building on prior work, this initiative is focused on preparation program effectiveness outcomes and exploring new strategies and practices to promote increased program enrollment and completion. The collaborative is engaging with P-12 partners to understand and address their school staffing needs.
- With its July 9, 2021, launch, GaPSC's website was optimized for viewing on a wide range of devices such as smartphones and tablets, and content was made easier to find. On the enhanced website are over 30 separate webcasts on a variety of topics regarding certification, educator preparation, ethics, and assessment. The webcast content is aimed at assisting pre-service educators, in-service educators, EPPs, and other audiences, as well as advocating for the profession and enhancing awareness of GaPSC services and policies.
- On the heels of a four-segment virtual series on the topics of *Appropriate Use of Social Media* and *Ethical Considerations for Remote Teaching*, GaPSC further expanded its focus on helping all educators avoid missteps in using social media and in remote learning environments. Guidelines for ethical use of social media and ethical remote learning were developed, which also include considerations for general online behavior and resources.
- All sixteen RESAs reviewed the draft ethics modules for paraprofessionals for each of the ten standards in the [Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators \(COE\)](#). Each module will provide an overview of the standard, examples of ethics violations for that standard, related scenarios and resources, and checks for understanding. The purpose of this preventive training, available in January 2022, is to assist paraprofessionals in avoiding potential missteps.

To learn more about the agency's enhancement initiatives, please refer to previous issues of GaPSC's Quarterly Highlights, available [here](#).

## Support by the Numbers

During the third quarter of calendar year 2021, GaPSC:

- Answered 10,239 certification calls, totaling 33,579 year to date (YTD).
- Responded to 15,530 certification emails, totaling 54,865 YTD.
- Opened 23,829 certification cases, totaling 81,436 YTD.
- Completed 25,096 certification cases, totaling 80,635 YTD.
- Completed 414 ethics cases, totaling 1,155 YTD.

Between July 1 and September 30, 2021, GaPSC continued approval for 39 existing educator preparation programs and approved 7 new endorsement programs. During this quarter, work was conducted on new or continuing approval reviews for a total of 9 program providers. During the first three quarters of 2021, GaPSC continued approval for 259 existing preparation programs and approved 30 new endorsement programs. During this time frame, work was conducted on new or continuing approval reviews for a total of 36 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](#).