



# GaPSC Quarterly Highlights

3rd Quarter, 2023

**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 2023.**

## A Message from Matt Arthur

GaPSC's focus on reading and literacy continued in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with significant progress made toward meeting the requirements outlined in the Georgia Early Literacy Act (HB 538). This legislation requires GaPSC:

- Revise standards for acquiring and maintaining teacher certification in all teaching fields to include requirements regarding developmentally appropriate evidence based literacy instruction;
- Ensure candidates completing teacher certification programs have the knowledge and skills to teach reading;
- Create standards designed to ensure that postsecondary students completing teacher certification programs in this state graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach reading; and
- Align the GACE or any other assessment required by the Commission for teacher certification with developmentally appropriate evidence based literacy instruction by July 1, 2025.

Regarding our progress:

- the Commission adopted rules to address the standards and requirements outlined in HB 538, which became effective July 1, 2023, including Educator Preparation Rule [505-3-.03 Foundations of Reading, Literacy, and Language](#). This rule established the standards educator preparation providers (EPPs) will incorporate in all teacher certification programs to prepare pre-service educators to teach reading.
- We thank all GaPSC-approved EPPs for meeting the October 18, 2023, deadline to submit Action Plans to GaPSC describing their work to fully implement the standards by August of 2024. GaPSC staff are reviewing the plans and will provide formative feedback to EPPs to further inform plans for full implementation. EPPs were provided implementation guidance, as well as curriculum resources to support their efforts, and in early 2024, our staff will provide more focused technical assistance through webinars.
- All initial teaching field GACE assessments will change beginning July 1, 2025, to align to the new standards in [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.03](#).

Upcoming Timelines:

- By August 2024, the new standards in [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.03](#) must be fully implemented in all teacher certification programs.
- By October 23, 2024, EPPs will submit evidence of full implementation.
- By July 1, 2025, all GACE teaching field content assessments will be aligned with the science of reading and measure different levels of knowledge and application of the teaching of reading appropriate for the preparation field.
- Beginning in the fall of 2025, GaPSC approval reviews will require evidence of full implementation, to include candidate assessment data.

Please refer to my previous message in our [2nd Quarter Highlights](#) for a brief summary of the two levels of expertise expected of pre-service teacher candidates (demonstration or awareness), as well as the groups of teaching fields to which these levels apply and to which GACE assessments will be aligned.

Through the new Educator Preparation standards and the subsequent changes to the GACE assessments, we are committed to doing our part to make this new legislation truly make a difference in Georgia's schools.

We look forward to your continued input and involvement in this collaborative work to ensure effective literacy education.

Matt

## Reminders

- Educators should utilize the [GaPSC Certificate Upgrade Advisor](#) prior to enrolling in an advanced degree program for a certificate level upgrade.
- For the 2024-2025 school year, an educator who wishes to terminate a contract for the upcoming school year must submit a letter of resignation or request to be released from the contract by June 1, 2024. A *Guidelines for Breach of Contract* document regarding Standard 9: Professional Conduct of the Code of Ethics for Educators and is available at [GaPSC - Resources](#).
- EPPs offering Curriculum and Instruction should consider adding a certification-only option. As the Conversion Mechanism is no longer available, educators who complete out-of-state programs that do not result in certification will be required to complete a certification-only program to add the field and earn an upgrade. Contact your GaPSC Education Specialist for more information.
- Candidates completing clinical practice in a Georgia school must hold a Pre-Service Certificate before beginning field and clinical experiences, unless they hold a valid Professional, Induction, Provisional, Permit, or Waiver certificate. A candidate who is employed as a teacher of record while holding only a Clearance Certificate must also hold a Pre-Service Certificate, otherwise their clinical practice may not be accepted for certification. Updated guidance is in development.
- Please remind pre-service candidates and in-service educators to carefully answer the Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) to ensure accuracy each academic year. A new and expanding [GaPSC Video Series](#) is available to help educators answer PAQs, navigate MyPSC, and more.
- Please watch for our communications under [News and Announcements](#), frequently visit our website as we continue to add new resources, and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [X](#) (formerly Twitter).

## Policy Changes

Substantive policy changes initiated by the Commission on April 13, 2023, and adopted on June 8, 2023, became effective July 1, 2023. These changes are highlighted in the [GaPSC's Quarterly Highlights, 2nd Quarter 2023](#).

At the September 14, 2023, Commission meeting, proposed Certification, Educator Preparation, and Ethics rule changes were previewed that subsequently came before the Commission for their initiation consideration on October 12, 2023, as summarized below:

### Certification

- 505-2-.195 SCHOOL SAFETY AND ANTIGANG ENDORSEMENT – proposed as a new rule to create an endorsement that will expose qualified individuals to multidisciplinary best practices for promoting and preserving safe schools and for identifying and deterring youth gangs.

### Educator Preparation

- 505-3-.01 REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR APPROVING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS – amendments are proposed to allow out-of-state organizations accredited by CAEP (without conditions or probation) and approved by the home state (without conditions or probation) to seek GaPSC approval to offer non-credit-bearing certification-only programs leading to initial teacher certification. Clarifications are included related to embedded endorsement programs, approval process requirements, certain definitions, and to remove outdated language.
- 505-3-.02 EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER ANNUAL REPORTING AND EVALUATION – amendments are proposed to remove outdated language related to PPEMs.
- 505-3-.63 CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION PROGRAM – amendments are proposed to update program content standards and reduce required content/content pedagogy coursework from nine or twelve hours to six hours.

- 505-3-.70 SPEECH-LANGUAGE ASSOCIATE PROGRAM – proposed as a new rule to result in the preparation of individuals at the baccalaureate degree level qualified to support certified Speech-Language Pathologists.
- 505-3-.71 SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PROGRAM – amendments are proposed to update program content standards.
- 505-3-.72 TEACHER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM – amendments are proposed to update program content standards.
- 505-3-.76 ALTERNATIVE PREPARATION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM – amendments are proposed to program admission requirements to ensure admitted candidates hold a minimum of a master’s degree from a GaPSC-accepted accredited college or university, and to clarify the requirement that candidates must work in leadership positions for at least one-half day or more each day.
- 505-3-.92 K-5 MATHEMATICS ENDORSEMENT – amendments are proposed to remove an outdated set of program content standards and replace them with the current program content standards.
- 505-3-.104 TEACHER LEADER ENDORSEMENT – amendments are proposed to update program content standards.

#### Professional Practices (Ethics)

- 505-6-.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS – amendments are proposed to remove outdated references to the Department of Human Resources and make other necessary revisions.
- 505-6-.02 PROCEDURES FOR INVALIDATED OR DENIED CERTIFICATION – amendments are proposed to remove outdated references to the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation and the Department of Human Resources and make other necessary revisions.

GaPSC current and proposed rules are available at <https://www.gapsc.com/Commission/Rules/home.aspx>. All Commission meeting minutes are available at <https://www.gapsc.com/Commission/CommissionInfo/Minutes.aspx>.

## Enhancements

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

- Please refer to Page 1 of this *GaPSC Quarterly Highlights* Issue regarding GaPSC progress updates on the requirements outlined in 2023’s HB 538, the Georgia Early Literacy Act.
- A new video *GACE Registration Steps for Content Assessments* was added to GaPSC Video Series available at <https://www.gapsc.com/VideoSeries/home.aspx>. This series, aimed at assisting educator navigate GaPSC systems and processes, now includes thirteen (13) Certification and Ethics videos.
- The Ethics Division continued its targeted focus on closing old cases and decreasing the number of extended cases, all of which allows increased time to focus on current cases.
- GaPSC’s Certification Division published new contact center hours, which are 8:00 am to 11:30 am and 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays, excluding state holidays. Certification may also be contacted via the online form at [Contact Certification](#).
- The *2023-24 Avoiding Ethical Missteps: Georgia’s Code of Ethics for Educators* PowerPoint was made available to school districts, schools, and EPPs to use when conducting ethics training. This instructional resource is available at [GaPSC - Resources](#).
- The [Guidance for Interpreting and Implementing Rule 505-3-.01 Requirements and Standards for Approving Educator Preparation Providers and Educator Preparation Programs \(Rule Effective Date June 15, 2023\)](#), was updated to reflect recent amendments.
- Four additional guidance documents for EPPs, were produced.

- In addition to presenting at statewide conferences, GaPSC staff provided multiple professional learning and technical assistance events to assist school districts, schools, and EPPs as they work with their in-service educators, and EPP faculty as they work with their pre-service educator candidates. GaPSC presented to 2,645 individuals during third quarter.

### Examples of GaPSC Support and Professional Learning Events 3rd Quarter, 2023

#### Ethics

- 2 Aspiring Principal Training Events
- 1 Ethics Training for Career Path Students
- 3 New Teacher Orientations
- 1 Ethics Training for Leaders
- 1 Ethics Training for Agriculture Education Teachers
- 1 Financial Pitfalls Training

#### Certification

- 6 New HR Certification Training
- 1 HR Directors' Meeting
- 1 Charter School Meeting

#### Educator Preparation

- 2 GaTAPP Provider Meetings
- 1 Endorsement Provider Meeting
- 1 Teacher Leadership Providers Meeting
- 1 GaPSC Orientation

#### Assessment

- 3 Title II/HEOA Webinars
- 2 RESA Meetings

## Support by the Numbers

During third quarter of calendar year 2023, GaPSC:

- Answered 11,456 certification calls, totaling 35,367 year to date (YTD)
- Responded to 14,160 certification emails, totaling 43,144 YTD
- Opened 22,939 certification cases, totaling 88,553 YTD
- Completed 25,049 certification cases, totaling 87,516 YTD
- Completed 464 ethics cases, totaling 1,404 YTD

Between July 1 and September 30, 2023, GaPSC approved three (3) new endorsement programs, and approved three (3) new initial preparation programs. During this quarter, work was conducted on new or continuing approval reviews for a total of four (4) 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](#).