



# GaPSC Quarterly Highlights

4th 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 fourth quarter 2023.**

## A Message from Matt Arthur

First, please be sure to register for GaPSC Ethics Symposium scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup> (1pm-4pm) and March 27<sup>th</sup> (8:30am-4:00pm) at Middle Georgia State University's Robert F. Hatcher, Sr. Conference Center, in Macon. The conference theme is *Prevention and Correction: Fostering Professional Practice*, and the target audience includes school administrators, school district personnel (e.g., superintendents, HR directors, certification officials, PL directors, principals), and educator preparation provider (EPP) deans/chairs, program directors, and faculty. This symposium is another initiative of ours to work collaboratively with districts, schools, EPPs, and others toward the goal of fostering an intentional focus on ethics to help educators avoid missteps.

Our emphasis on reading continues and is marked by significant progress. GaPSC staff reviewed program providers' submitted Action Plans describing their work to fully implement the new reading standards outlined in [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.03 FOUNDATIONS OF READING, LITERACY, AND LANGUAGE](#), and provided formative feedback to EPPs to further inform plans for full implementation. EPPs were also provided implementation guidance, as well as curriculum resources, to support their efforts. Beginning in the fall of 2025, GaPSC approval reviews will require evidence of full implementation, to include candidate assessment data. To our charge of ensuring all initial teaching field GACE assessments align to the new standards by July 1, 2025, an RFP was issued for the GACE assessment program.

It is always important to me to recognize GaPSC's outstanding staff, all of whom work diligently to provide outstanding customer service, helpful technical assistance, and ongoing professional learning. Following are just a few examples of their service in this past calendar year:

- The agency conducted over 100 presentations and professional learning sessions, reaching over 6,300 P-12 school district, school, and program provider staff.
- Certification staff completed over 103,321 certification cases and handled over 91,400 calls and emails.
- Ethics staff closed 1,977 ethics cases.
- Educator Preparation staff facilitated new or continuing approval reviews for a total of 21 program providers. Staff work led to Commission approval of 15 existing initial preparation programs, 5 new initial preparation programs, and 22 new endorsement programs.

We do invite you to follow us on social media as we post regularly, with helpful reminders, tips, etc. We appreciate your ongoing help in sharing our quarterly reports, updates, reminders, and notices, and the service you provide to all.

We look forward to your continued input and involvement in our collaborative work. Let us know how we can support you.

Matt

## Reminders

### Certification

- Beginning July 1, 2024, Waiver certificates will be issued for one year only and will not be extended.
- Charter/Strategic Waiver districts are advised to use their flexibility to waive certification when possible until educators meet requirements to qualify for a Provisional or other type certificate.
- Waiving certification using a charter/strategic waiver requires the educator to hold a Clearance Certificate, which requires a passing score on the GACE Educator Ethics Assessment (Test Code 360). Requesting a Paraprofessional

License for these educators and placing them in a teaching position to avoid the ethics assessment is out of compliance and unethical. We will be contacting districts using this practice and closely monitoring their submissions to our office.

- Educators should utilize the [GaPSC Certificate Upgrade Advisor](#) prior to enrolling in an advanced degree program for a certificate level upgrade to ensure the selected program leads to certification.
- 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, or their clinical practice may not be accepted for certification. Updated guidance is in development.
- Please be reminded the Certification Division has new contact 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](#).

### **Educator Preparation**

- EPPs are reminded of the following implementation dates for the new standards in [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.03](#):
  - By August 2024, the new standards must be fully implemented in all teacher certification programs.
  - By October 23, 2024, EPPs will submit evidence of full implementation.
  - Beginning in the fall of 2025, GaPSC approval reviews will require evidence of full implementation, to include candidate assessment data.

GaPSC staff are providing support to EPPs via webinars and guidance. Contact your GaPSC Education Specialist for more information.
- Revised GaPSC Approval Standards were adopted January 10, 2024, and they are effective Fall 2024. [Guidance for Interpretation and Implementation](#) is available on the GaPSC Resources for EPPs webpage.
- Several program-specific guidance documents were recently updated and added to the GaPSC Resources for EPPs webpage.
- 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.
- Plans are underway for the HBCU Collaborative Summit, scheduled for April 17 and 18, 2024, at Fort Valley State University. Focused on the theme of The Ethos of Care, the Summit will give EPPs and their P-12 partners opportunities to learn together and share strategies for increasing teacher preparation program enrollment and completion.

### **Ethics**

- 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 is available on GaPSC's website, under Ethics Resources. In addition, if a system releases an educator from a contract, the educator does not need to be reported.
- Educators who have had their certificates revoked, denied, or suspended are not allowed to work in the school in any capacity (sub, volunteer, para, aide). It is the responsibility of the superintendent/designee to ensure such individuals are not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.
- Schools can request consent orders and case summaries on educators who have had a disciplinary action with the GaPSC.

### **Assessment**

- 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. We look forward to keeping you posted on our progress.

## Policy Changes

Substantive policy changes initiated by the Commission on October 12, 2023, and adopted on December 14, 2023, became effective January 1, 2024. These changes are highlighted in the [GaPSC's Quarterly Highlights, 3rd Quarter 2023](#).

At the December 14, 2023, Commission meeting, proposed Certification, Educator Preparation, and Ethics rule changes were previewed that subsequently came before the Commission for their consideration to initiate on January 11, 2024, as summarized below:

### Certification

- The following rules were proposed to be amended to update certification field terminology from *Foreign Language* to *World Language* to align with Educator Preparation Program Rules:
  - 505-2-.02 CLASSIFICATION
  - 505-2-.10 PERMIT
  - 505-2-.14 ENDORSEMENTS
  - 505-2-.22 CERTIFICATION BY STATE-APPROVED PROGRAM
  - 505-2-.26 CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE ASSESSMENTS
  - 505-2-.57 TEACHING FIELDS

### Educator Preparation

- 505-3-.65 MEDIA SPECIALIST PROGRAM was proposed to be replaced with a new rule to change the title to School Librarian Program. As recommended by a task force comprised of subject-matter experts, the new rule incorporates standards adapted from those published in 2019 by the American Association of School Librarians.
- 505-3-.77 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM was proposed to be amended to clarify Tier II program admission requirements and determination of leadership positions, and to remove references to an outdated set of guidelines.

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 fourth quarter GaPSC actions aimed at enhancing the quality of our services:

- The 29th Annual GaPSC Certification and Program Officials Conference was held on November 30, 2023, and December 1, 2023. This statewide virtual meeting featured a keynote presentation and 14 concurrent sessions covering a range of topics specific to Certification, Educator Preparation, Ethics, and Assessment. Each day of the conference began with a virtual meet and greet, providing time for this audience of EPPs, school districts and school personnel, and others to meet and discuss topics of interest.
- GaPSC's support of transitioning military veterans and their spouses continued with staff specifically devoted to recruiting these individuals, working with five of the seven military bases across the state. Opportunities for in-person recruitment briefings are expected to increase this year. Please monitor the [Military Support](#) webpage for the base briefing schedule
- Work began on a ten-part video series covering each of the [Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators](#) standards, which will be available as part of the GaPSC Video Series at <https://www.gapsc.com/VideoSeries/home.aspx>.
- A call for presentation proposals was issued to EPPs, P-12 districts and schools, RESAs, and other organizations for GaPSC's Ethics Symposium, scheduled for March 26-27, 2024.

- 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. In total, GaPSC presented to over 650 individuals during fourth quarter.

### Examples of GaPSC Support and Professional Learning Events 4th Quarter, 2023

#### Certification

- 2 New HR Certification Training Meetings
- 2 EPP Candidate Presentations (Undergraduate and Graduate)
- 1 Cultural Exchange/International Presentation
- 1 School District Presentation

#### Educator Preparation

- 3 GaTAPP Provider Meetings
- 1 Alternative Leadership Provider Meeting
- 1 Orientation for New EPP Personnel
- 1 Session for EPPs on Certification Upgrade Rules

#### Ethics

- 1 Aspiring Leaders Training

## Support by the Numbers

During fourth quarter of calendar year 2023, GaPSC:

- Answered 4,113 certification calls, totaling 39,480 for the calendar year (CY)
- Responded to 8,853 certification emails, totaling 51,997 (CY)
- Opened 14,375 certification cases, totaling 102,928 (CY)
- Completed 15,805 certification cases, totaling 103,321 (CY)
- Completed 573 ethics cases, totaling 1,977 (CY)

Between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, 2023, GaPSC approved one new initial preparation program and four new endorsement programs. During this quarter, work was conducted on approval reviews for a total of five 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](#).