

From Matt Arthur: GaPSC Updates, Reminders, and More

First, I hope each of you knows how much all the work that you do each and every day is valued. You, in your respective roles at P-12 school districts and schools, educator preparation providers (EPPs), and organizations, have a staggering responsibility. The emergence of COVID-19 has certainly been a test for all of us in flexibility, tenacity, innovation, and perseverance. Please know your work and dedication are recognized and appreciated.

I also thank you for your ongoing input that has greatly informed our decisions at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) as we address the emerging needs brought on by the pandemic. Our responsive process relies heavily on that input in this highly collaborative work.

The purpose of this communication is to provide important GaPSC updates and reminders from Certification, Educator Preparation, Ethics, and Assessment. Please read the information carefully and share it with others.

As general updates and reminders:

- While GaPSC is not moving its offices, the agency does have a new office suite number (Suite 1712). The full mailing address is on the GaPSC homepage at www.gapsc.com.
- Please watch for notices of GaPSC proposed rulemaking, which summarize proposed changes to GaPSC rules. Proposed rules, once initiated, are posted for public comment for thirty (30) days [here](#). When initiated rules are adopted, a final notice is sent on the date the rules become effective.
- We do invite you to stay informed by reading and sharing our communications, including following us on our social media outlets. Issues of *GaPSC's Quarterly Highlights*, the *GaPSC Connection* newsletter, memos, and more are available under "News and Announcements" on our [homepage](#).
- If you missed the September 14, 2020, [GaPSC Connection](#) issue, please refer to it for information about the status of GaPSC's decisions regarding COVID-19 flexibility measures.

Again, thank you for your work, input, collaboration, and for your commitment to this profession.

Certification

Updates and Reminders

- This summer, the Certification Division manually processed over 25,000 certificates, many of which were a result of COVID-19 flexibility, with the total soon exceeding 35,000. As of the date of this communication, the Certification Division's processing time for complete application packages is seven (7) days. Educators should monitor their MyPSC account for updates.
- Effective July 1, 2020, a passing score on the GACE Educator Ethics Assessment (test code 360) is required for issuance of initial Clearance certificates if in-field certification is waived using charter or strategic waiver flexibility. The Clearance certificate is not issued to individuals in positions that do not require certification, such as short-term substitutes, bus drivers, nurses, etc.

October 7, 2020

- Certification renewal for employed educators is available beginning December 1st. Educators must make adequate progress on a professional learning plan or professional learning goals for renewal. Completion of MyPSC Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) by educators will allow for faster renewal upon submission of the renewal request by HR.
- The Certification Division is moving to a paperless process. Documentation should be submitted through an educator's MyPSC account or by the school district using ExpressLane. Official transcripts may be submitted via ExpressLane or emailed directly from the institution to mail@gapsc.com, not through MyPSC.
- As the Certification Division moves toward increased automation, completion of MyPSC Personal Affirmation Questions is essential in order to expedite the processing of certain certification transactions.
- The Georgia Troops to Teachers team can assist with filling vacant teaching positions. Please reach out to troopstoteachers@gapsc.com for more information.

Helpful Tips, Resources, and Assistance

- Educators seeking a certificate level upgrade are strongly encouraged to use the Certificate Upgrade Advisor prior to enrolling in an advanced degree program in order to ensure the degree is acceptable.
- Priority is placed on complete application packages. Submitting incomplete applications will significantly delay processing.
- For assistance, please use the electronic Certification Contact Form [here](#). Complete contact information, certification information, and resources are available [here](#).

Educator Preparation

Updates and Reminders

- A new endorsement approval review process was recently 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. Twenty Georgia program providers are now approved to offer the Online Teaching Endorsement. Take advantage of this opportunity to help teachers gain new skills and strategies for distance teaching and learning. The list of state-approved program providers for this and all endorsement programs, including the nine Georgia program providers recently approved to offer the new Dyslexia Endorsement, is available [here](#).
- State-approved educator preparation program providers (EPPs) wishing to add a new endorsement program can complete and submit the Endorsement Program Approval Application (available [on the Resources webpage](#) under the heading, *Approval Review Information and Procedure Documents*).
- Due to the 2019 passage of SB108, demand is increasing for Computer Science teachers and more preparation programs are needed to meet this demand. By academic year 2022-23, each local school system is required to provide a course in computer science in at least one high school, an exploratory

October 7, 2020

course in all middle schools, and an optional exploratory course in elementary schools. The number of schools offering courses is required to increase annually, until 2024-25 when all high schools must offer a computer science course. 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 or universities. All of Georgia's 23 GaTAPP providers offer Computer Science certification for career changers.

- Now more than ever, it is critically important to support the teacher pipeline by hosting interns/student teachers and field experience candidates, even if instruction is virtual. In addition, these pre-service educators can be valuable additions to your school's resources and capacity. [GaPSC Guidance for Field and Clinical Experiences for Academic Year 2020-2021](#) provides flexibility for program providers and P-12 school partners navigating the uncertainties surrounding the pandemic.
- In mid-November, the public dashboard for the Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures (PPEMs) will be updated to reflect 2020 program performance data. In late July, PPEMs were released privately to GaPSC-approved educator preparation providers (EPPs) via the GaPSC secure portal. Be sure to carefully review the PPEMs before the 90-day PPEM Data Reconciliation period ends on October 26th so that we can make any needed corrections before the public dashboard is updated next month. Information about the PPEM Data Reconciliation Process is available [here](#). Email questions about your EPP or program measures to PPEMS@gapsc.com and be sure to copy your GaPSC Education Specialist.

Helpful Tips, Resources, and Assistance

- A GaPSC six-part webinar series on validity and reliability of key assessments is underway. Remaining webinars are scheduled as follows. Contact your GaPSC Education Specialist for more information.
 - October 16, 11:00 – 12:00; Session 3: Validity Training: A Hands-on Workshop
 - November 13, 11:00 – 12:00; Session 4: EPP Reliability Examples
 - December 4, 11:00 – 12:00; Session 5: Reliability Training: A Hands-on Workshop
 - January 22, 11:00 – 12:00; Session 6: Survey Development
- Regional P-20 Collaboratives remain an important venue for collaboration and support of the teacher and leader pipeline. Fall 2020 convenings are being held online. Find your regional collaborative and register for the fall convening [here](#). Teachers, principals and assistant principals, and central office administrators are welcome!
- For assistance, EPPs are asked to contact their GaPSC Education Specialist. More about the Educator Preparation Division is available [here](#).

Ethics

Updates and Reminders

- As many school districts are providing instruction through virtual learning environments, remind educators to carefully consider what they post, especially on social media outlets.
- Educators are mandated reporters if they believe a standard of the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators has been violated.

October 7, 2020

- An educator under investigation is free to discuss the circumstances of his/her case with employers, potential employers, etc.
- Remind educators and potential educators to be honest in completing Personal Affirmation Statements when applying for certificates.

Helpful Tips, Resources, and Assistance

- The Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators is available [here](#).
- For ethics assistance, please email ethics@gapsc.com.
- Ethics resources are available [here](#), with GaPSC Ethics Symposium resources available [here](#).

Assessment

Updates and Reminders

- The recently posted September 2020 issue of the *Latest on GACE* newsletter, as well as previous issues, is posted [here](#). Subscribe to receive this free source of information and support via email [here](#).
- All Prometric test centers are open, and all but three non-Prometric test centers are open. Information about GACE test center status and test center safety protocols is available [here](#). The regular GACE testing schedule is posted on the GACE website [here](#).
- While there are available testing slots at all open testing centers, there is reduced capacity at each site due to social distancing protocols. Test takers will want to plan ahead, registering well in advance to ensure a preferred testing date and site. ETS, the testing supplier, has temporarily waived all rescheduling fees should an issue arise.
- If test takers have any difficulty in securing a testing slot or need any other assistance, they should contact ETS at gace_inquiries@ets.org.

Helpful Tips, Resources, and Assistance

- GaPSC, in collaboration with ETS, is hosting a seven-part series for EPP faculty and staff as they work with potential educators and conditionally admitted candidates to prepare for the Program Admission Assessment (PAA). Please contact gace_inquiries@ets.org for more information.
 - October 22, 1:00pm – 2:30pm; Session 4: Writing
 - November 12, 1:00pm – 2:30pm; Session 5: Reading
 - January 28, 1:00pm – 2:30pm; Session 6: All Tests within the PAA
 - February 25, 1:00pm – 2:30pm; Session 7: All Tests within the PAA
- Preparation for state-approved certification assessments is critically important to help ensure success. Test preparation resources are available at [here](#), including access to the free, instructional Khan Academy tool for GACE PAA.
- For assistance, please contact gace_inquiries@ets.org. More information about all state-approved certification assessments is available [here](#).