



GaPSC Quarterly Highlights

1st 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. The purpose of this document is to highlight progress and actions of this state agency during the first quarter of 2020.

A Message from Matt Arthur

When I began my new role as Executive Secretary at the GaPSC in January 2020, I was very fortunate to inherit an excellent GaPSC staff who is highly focused on quality service, strong collaboration, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Throughout our brief time together and as evidenced in the following first quarter highlights, the staff's continued focus, flexibility, and contributions are highly evident as together we, as an agency, strive to do what makes the most sense for those who serve and, most importantly, those who are served by this profession. I look forward to our continued progress.

The first quarter brought the beginning of the impact of COVID-19. Throughout this challenge, GaPSC continues to be highly responsive to the emerging needs of our educators, educator preparation providers (EPPs), and P-12 districts and schools, providing flexibility where we can. To help guide our policy and guidance decisions, we continue to seek input from diverse and representative groups. This process is ongoing, and adjustments are made accordingly. We update our COVID-19 guidance as needed, which is posted on our homepage at www.gapsc.com.

I am appreciative of the hard work, adaptability, and professional response to this crisis by our staff and our colleagues across the education profession. As always, please contact us should you have any questions.

COVID-19 Response

With input from educator preparation providers (EPPs) and P-12 districts and schools, GaPSC has issued specific guidance, available at www.gapsc.com, to provide as much flexibility as possible with regard to certification, educator preparation, and assessment requirements.

Below are highlights of substantive policy and guidance changes that were implemented during the first quarter as a response to the impact of COVID-19.

- Certification extensions to be granted through June 30, 2021, for:
 - teaching, leadership, and service candidates scheduled to complete their educator preparation programs in Spring 2020, who were not able to complete certification requirements due to school and/or test site closures;
 - certain certificate types that expire in 2020; and
 - educators, on a case-by-case basis, applying by reciprocity who are unable to provide essential certification documentation.
- EPPs were encouraged to provide virtual opportunities for field and clinical experiences, and continue coursework through online instruction.
- All assessment submission deadlines were extended, additional opportunities to test were added to the summer testing schedule, and accommodations for submission of assessment materials resulting from virtual P-12 learning environments were implemented.
- Virtual program approval reviews were implemented, replacing scheduled on-site reviews.
- A certification COVID-19 response team was formed to assist educators.

- An “at-home” testing option was explored for the Program Admission Assessment (PAA) to enhance test access.

COVID-19 guidance documents, published to keep educator preparation providers (EPPs) and P-12 districts and schools informed, include:

- [COVID-19 Certification Guidance](#)
- [COVID-19 Certification Table](#)
- [Guidance for Addressing Educator Preparation Program Disruptions Caused by COVID-19.](#)

Subsequent COVID-19 updates and guidance are posted [here](#).

Streamlining

In addition to flexibility measures implemented due to COVID-19, following are the most significant streamlining measures implemented during first quarter 2020:

- Condensed 66 certification teaching field rules to one rule.
- Eliminated one of the two ethics assessment requirements.
- Introduced a one year non-renewable induction certificate option for teachers who had not met all assessment requirements, instead of the employing district requesting a waiver.
- Eased reciprocity of educators coming to GA by accepting five years of experience earned at any time in an educator’s career to exempt certain certification requirements, including the content assessment and others.
- Moved from three years to one year of required experience to pursue upgrades to certificates in the fields of Teacher Leadership, Instructional Technology, and Curriculum and Instruction.
- Discontinued the review and approval of out-of-state Educational Leadership programs and national non-profit organizations to focus solely on Georgia program providers.
- Eliminated the Preparation Program Approval Annual Report (PAAR), saving time for EPPs and staff.
- Reduced the frequency of approval reviews for endorsement programs, eliminating one review.
- Reduced from two to one the number of content fields required of post-baccalaureate middle grades programs.
- Made certification easier to navigate by aligning teaching, leadership, and service certificate types.
- Automated the certificate renewal process for employed educators that takes only 1.2 seconds.

Enhancements

The following are examples of GaPSC’s actions to enhance quality:

- Implemented an electronic MyPSC Assistance contact tool to streamline the assistance request process.
- Added the requirement to take the instructional ethics assessment for issuance of new Clearance Certificates, International Exchange certificates, and Permits, as well as for out-of-state educators applying for an Induction certificate based on reciprocity.

- Launched the Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures (PPEMs) public dashboard, available [here](#). PPEMs indicate how well state-approved educator preparation providers (EPPs) are preparing teachers for the classroom and provide contextual data for each program provider, including program enrollment and employment trends.
- Updated policy to align state-approved programs with the latest standards on meeting the needs of English Language Learners.
- Added new endorsements including Dyslexia and a new Reading Education Master’s degree program, which results in a certificate-level upgrade and prepares certified teachers at any grade level to diagnose and address students’ reading and literacy challenges.
- Expanded the Troops to Teachers program outreach, made possible by the grant funding awarded to Georgia in 2018 aimed at supporting retiring service members and military spouses interested in a second career in teaching.
- Updated MyPSC to include a “Personal Affirmation” page, where educators may answer the ethics-related questions for their certification, allowing for certain certification transactions to be completed without an application.

Support by the Numbers

During first quarter of 2020, GaPSC logged the following:

- Answered 13,507 certification calls.
- Responded to 23,035 emails.
- Opened 25,514 certification cases.
- Completed 25,306 certification cases.
- Completed 427 ethics cases.
- Conducted over 40 external outreach events, including Day with GaPSC, certification outreach sessions, instructional and support webinars, program approval technical assistance meetings, ethics training, assessment training, etc.
- Conducted six virtual Professional Learning Community meetings focused on edTPA, Teacher Leadership, and Educational Leadership.
- Participated in eight P-20 regional collaborative meetings, which involves nine regions meeting twice annually to facilitate communication and resource sharing among EPPs and P-12 partners. P-20 Collaboratives schedules and agendas are available [here](#).
- Conducted approval reviews for 10 program providers and 72 educator preparation programs, resulting in the addition of six new preparation programs.

Stay Connected

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