



GaPSC Quarterly Highlights

4th 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. This document highlights progress and actions of this state agency during fourth quarter 2020.

A Message from Matt Arthur

Throughout our 2020 communications, we highlighted multiple measures we at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) have taken in response to COVID-19, as well as substantive streamlining and enhancement initiatives. All of this work is aimed at supporting a viable educator pipeline and workforce. You can reference these initiatives in our quarterly reports, GaPSC Connection issues, and other publications in the “News and Announcement” section of our website at <https://www.gapsc.com>.

In fourth quarter 2020, we made significant progress on our streamlining and enhancement initiatives. Below are examples included in this report along with many others.

- The Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures’ (PPEM) public [dashboard](#) was updated;
- A series of [ethics videos](#) on each of the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators’ standards was released;
- We continued to encourage the pursuit of Computer Science full-field and endorsement programs, and Online Teaching Endorsement programs;
- As many school districts are providing instruction through virtual learning environments, we continued to stress the importance of educators carefully considering what they post, especially on social media outlets;
- Progress continued on GaPSC’s website enhancements, and recordings began for the GaPSC webcast series; and
- We continued our extensive focus on providing professional learning, outreach, and technical assistance events.

In this issue, you will also read about several policy changes made through our rulemaking process. In addition to seeking input from representative groups to guide these changes, there is a public comment period for all proposed rule changes. Please watch for our rules notices via email, social media, and our website [here](#).

I recently shared with you it has been one year since I began my new role as GaPSC’s Executive Secretary. Throughout this time together, the staff’s continued focus, flexibility, and contributions remain highly evident, and I look forward to our continued progress. We remain strongly committed to providing outstanding service to our educators, school districts and schools, educator preparation providers (EPPs), educational partners, and others, and will continue to seek your input.

Let’s keep working together to embrace what has worked and improve what has not toward fulfilling the agency’s mission of building the best prepared, most qualified, and most ethical educator workforce in the nation.

As always, please contact us should you have any questions

COVID-19 Updates

Although there were no new COVID-19 policy or guidance changes during fourth quarter, ongoing support for those previously implemented measures remained.

- As many certificates were extended due to COVID-19, we continued to reinforce the importance of completing pending certification requirements by the certificate end validity date. While we are closely monitoring the impact of the pandemic, at this time, GaPSC does not plan to further extend certificates or issue additional COVID-19 flexibility measures.

- All GACE Prometric test sites remained open during this quarter, as did all but one non-Prometric test sites (i.e., colleges and universities, RESAs). Current Prometric test site closure status is available [here](#), and test takers can access the status of non-Prometric test sites through their ETS accounts. COVID-19 safety protocols for GACE testing are in place and are included [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.

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

Policy Changes

Following are substantive policy changes initiated and adopted by the Commission during fourth quarter, which became effective January 1, 2021.

- Revisions were made to all relevant rules to replace the term grandfather and grandfathering with more culturally responsive language, and to update the titles of the Educator Ethics assessments.
- A new certification rule [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.150 Literacy Specialist](#) was created for the field of Literacy Specialist to identify qualified educators who have enhanced knowledge and competency in literacy in grades P-12. This new rule accompanies the educator preparation program rule in this field ([GaPSC Rule 505-2-.66 Literacy Specialist Program](#)).
- The certification rule [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.172 Online Teaching Endorsement](#) was amended to include service and leadership field certificate holders as eligible to add this endorsement field. The standards were updated in the Educator Preparation rule [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.95 Online Teaching Endorsement Program](#), which has an accompanying [Distance Learning Guidance Document](#).
- Changes were made to the educator preparation rule [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.01, Requirements and Standards for Approving Educator Preparation Providers and Educator Preparation Programs](#), which focused on four areas:
 - Preparation for Teaching in a Distance Learning Environment;
 - Administrative Approval for Endorsement Programs;
 - Changes to the Approval Review Cycle for Endorsement Programs; and
 - CAEP Accreditation.

The accompanying [Guidance for Interpreting and Implementing Rule 505-3-.01](#) reflects these revisions.

- The name of the field of Theater Education was changed to [Drama Education](#).
- Standards were updated in the Educator Preparation [Instructional Technology Program](#) rule and the required number of certification field content coursework hours was reduced from twelve or nine (Master's or Ed.S.) to six.

Enhancements

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

- In November, updates were made to the public [Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures \(PPEM\) Dashboard](#), which displays the 2020 teacher preparation program effectiveness measures for state-approved program providers. This tool is designed to first give program providers and their faculty access to data to inform improvement; second, to hold them accountable for the quality of teachers they produce; and third, to provide transparency to the public, including the K-12 education community, about the quality of teachers produced by each provider. The ultimate goal of the PPEM is to improve student learning in Georgia through raising the quality of the teachers responsible for their education. Additional PPEM information, along with the dashboard, is accessible on our website [here](#).
- The [GaPSC Connection](#) publication, an agency-wide communication avenue for informational updates on targeted topics, was published providing updates, reminders, and contact information for Certification, Educator Preparation, Ethics, and Assessment.

- A series consisting of eleven videos on the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators launched. The first video centers on establishing ethical school cultures followed by separate videos on each of the standards within the Code of Ethics. Each video includes interviews with Georgia leaders. The series is available [here](#).
- In addition to ongoing updates of content, development continued on substantive GaPSC website revisions designed to make content easier to find and to support a wide range of devices such as smartphones and tablets.
- Recordings began for the GaPSC webcast series, which will offer a broad menu of specific, separate webcasts to meet the needs of prospective educators (teacher, leadership, and service fields), practicing educators, EPPs, and other audiences. The content is focused on addressing the identified needs of our users to help proactively address the reasons for many calls and emails received, as well as to advocate for the profession and enhance awareness of GaPSC services and policies.
- In addition to presentations at statewide convenings, GaPSC staff provided multiple professional learning and technical assistance events 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. Over 1062 EPP and P-12 representatives took advantage of these learning and support opportunities. Below are examples of these initiatives:

**Examples of GaPSC Support and Professional Learning Events
4th Quarter, 2020**

Ethics

Four orientation sessions for new P-12 employees
Two Principal Academy Presentations
Aspiring Teacher Program Presentation

Certification

New HR Certification Orientation
Certification Updates for EPPs Webinar
P-12 Certification Training Event
Eight Individual EPP Certification Training Meetings

Educator Preparation

Three GaTAPP Coordinators' Meetings
Six P-20 Regional Collaboratives Convenings
Endorsement Professional Learning Community Webinar
Five Technical Support Webinars: (Survey Development, INTASC Standards, Reliability, Key Assessments, Validity)

Assessment

Three Program Admission Assessment (PAA) Faculty Support Workshops
Two Virtual Professional Learning Community Events
Performance Assessment for School Leaders (PASL) EPP Faculty Webinar
Teacher Leadership Performance-based Assessment EPP Faculty Webinar

- Five of the nine P-12 Collaboratives convened during fourth quarter. Designed to strengthen partnerships, regional collaboratives serve as a valuable tool for recruiting educators and developing strategies for retaining them, and they serve as an important venue for bringing together colleges of education, P-12 educators and leaders, and RESAs to improve education in each region. Additional P-12 Collaboratives are scheduled for Spring 2021. Schedules and agendas, as well as additional virtual meeting information, are available [here](#).

- Several Virtual Professional Learning Communities (VPLC) met, which included the following:
 - The GELFA/GaPSC VPLC, designed for Educational Leadership EPPs and their P-12 partners, focused on cultural inclusiveness and equity and featured panels of school leaders discussing challenges and needed actions to prepare leaders to face these challenges.
 - The Georgia Teacher Leadership VPLC, consisting of Teacher Leadership program providers and their P-12 partners, centered its discussion on the [Teacher Leadership Toolkit](#). The Spring 2021 meetings will target how teacher leadership addresses equity gaps.
 - The Endorsement VPLC, designed for EPPs who offer endorsement programs, provides an avenue to consider best practices for addressing program content standards and enhancing the performance of endorsement candidates.
- We continued to encourage school districts and program providers to:
 - Support the teacher pipeline by partnering to provide placements and support of interns/student teachers and field experience candidates. These pre-service educators can be valuable additions to a school's resources and capacity.
 - Engage in delivering professional learning opportunities for each other's faculty.
 - Encourage their pre-service and in-service educators to:
 - Consider pursuing full-field and endorsement Computer Science programs, the Online Teaching Endorsement program, and any of the other 29 GaPSC-approved endorsement programs available to them; and
 - Carefully consider what they post electronically, especially on social media outlets.

Please refer to [1st](#), [2nd](#), and [3rd Quarter](#) GaPSC Highlights for additional enhancements.

Support by the Numbers

During fourth quarter of calendar year 2020, GaPSC:

- Answered 10,893 certification calls, totaling 52, 264 year to date (YTD).
- Responded to 15,707 emails, totaling 88,784 YTD.
- Opened 13,863 certification cases, totaling 86,952 YTD.
- Completed 21,950 certification cases, totaling 88,176 YTD.
- Completed 254 ethics cases, totaling 1,431 YTD.

Throughout calendar year 2020, GaPSC continued approval for 122 existing programs and approved 18 new initial preparation programs and 39 new endorsement programs. 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](#).

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