



GaPSC Quarterly Highlights

1st Quarter, 2021

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 first quarter 2021.

A Message from Matt Arthur

Near the end of first quarter 2020, we were all just learning about the upcoming far-reaching challenges we would soon face together with the pandemic and its profound impact on our work and profession. I remain extremely proud of our school district and schools, educator preparation providers (EPPs), RESAs, educational agencies and organizations, and others for their swift navigation of the unexpected and complex situation. I am also extremely proud of our GaPSC staff for not only their immediate response in implementing substantive flexibility measures while furthering our streamlining and enhancement initiatives, but also their steadfast dedication to quality service.

The shared commitment to strengthen the educator workforce across the professional continuum continues to guide our work. We remain highly focused on ensuring our policy decisions, practices, and guidance support a viable educator pipeline and minimize barriers, while still ensuring effective educators are in Georgia's schools.

In first quarter 2021, although substantive COVID-19 flexibility measures were already in place, we made additional adjustments with input from the field. In this issue, you will learn about additional flexibility measures and multiple enhancements that impact policy and/or practice. Below are some examples:

- A proposed rule change was initiated to further GaPSC's transition to paperless certification, requiring submission of certification applications and supporting documentation through MyPSC, and electronic submission of official transcripts by the institution or parchment service;
- To aid in recruitment, policy decisions were communicated that provide additional options to potential educators to meet Program Admission Assessment (PAA) requirements, effective July 1, 2021. More information is available in the January 19, 2021, issue of [GaPSC Connection](#);
- A four-segment ethics webinar series launched to help all educators avoid missteps in remote learning environments and when using social media;
- Surveys of new teachers and principals, as well as their supervisors, were prepared for an April release. These annual surveys provide helpful program effectiveness feedback to EPPs and inform Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures (PPEMs);
- Progress continued on GaPSC's website enhancements; and
- We further increased our extensive focus on providing professional learning, outreach, and technical assistance events, serving over 2,100 participants, an increase of 1,048 over the previous quarter and over 700 over first quarter 2020.

As shared, it is our hope these efforts are of help to pre-service and in-service educators, educator preparation providers (EPPs), school districts, and schools. Please remind all holders of teaching, leadership, and service field certificates extended through June 30, 2021, to be sure to meet any pending certification requirements by this end validity date.

In closing, please join us on our social media outlets. Also, watch for the communications we send to you, and please share them, all of which are posted on our website under [News and Announcements](#).

We remain committed to seeking your input and working collaboratively with you. Thank you again for all you do, and, as always, let us know how we can support you.

Matt

COVID-19 Updates

In addition to the ongoing support provided to educators, EPPs, and P-12 school districts and schools for the substantive flexibility measures implemented in 2020, the following adjustments were made first quarter 2021:

- To provide Fall 2020 program completers more time to meet the GACE content assessment requirement, GaPSC issued a certificate valid through June 30, 2021, to those who needed the additional time, provided all other required documentation for certification was submitted.
- All but one GACE non-Prometric test sites (i.e., colleges and universities, RESAs) were open during first quarter, and all GACE Prometric test sites remained open during this quarter. COVID-19 safety protocols for GACE testing remained in place and are listed [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.
- As 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 implement additional COVID-19 flexibility measures.

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

Policy Changes

Substantive policy changes adopted by the Commission in December 2020 became effective January 1, 2021. These changes are highlighted in the GaPSC's Quarterly Highlights for 4th Quarter 2020 available [here](#).

Following are substantive Ethics and Certification policy changes initiated in January 2021, adopted in March 2021, and effective April 15, 2021:

- [GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01 The Code of Ethics for Educators](#) was amended, in part, to revise the definition of revocation to include certificate invalidation is permanent.
- The name of the GaPSC Rule 505-6-.02 Reinstatement or Renewal of a Suspended or Revoked Certificate changed to [GaPSC Rule 505-6-.02 Procedures for Invalidated or Denied Certification](#) and now specifies who is eligible to file a petition regarding a GaPSC ethics decision.
- A change was made to [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.187 Dramatic Writing Micro-Endorsement](#) to add completion of the Georgia Department of Education's Dramatic Writing training as an option for adding the endorsement.
- Revisions were made to [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.177 Special Education Preschool Ages 3-5 Endorsement](#) to update the certificate fields eligible to add the endorsement, as well as remove references to previously issued certificates.
- [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 Special Georgia Requirements](#) was revised to update certification information for those who had not yet met the exceptional child course requirement.

In March 2021, the Commission initiated Certification and Educator Preparation rule changes. After the 30-day public comment period, the Commission will consider the adoption of these rules at its May 13, 2021, meeting. If adopted, these rules will become effective July 1, 2021. Highlights of the proposed initiated rules include:

- [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 Special Georgia Requirements](#) - It is proposed out-of-state educators applying for reciprocity must have completed a state-approved program containing pedagogy and clinical practice.
- [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27 Certification Application Procedures](#) - If adopted, the online application and supporting documentation must be submitted through MyPSC when applying for certification, and submission of official transcripts must be submitted electronically from an institution or by a secure parchment service.

- [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.163 Computer Science Endorsement](#) - With the proposed revisions, holders of Elementary (P-5) and/or Middle Grades Education (4-8) certification will be able to add the Computer Science Endorsement to their professional certificates.
- Updates are proposed to all 31 [endorsement program](#) rules to include an in-field statement, which describes the grade levels and/or subjects and roles in schools for which the program prepares individuals.
- In addition, revisions are proposed to the following rules:
 - [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.142 Instructional Technology](#) - The rule was initiated to amend a field name.
 - [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.164 Coordinated Career Academic Education \(CCAE\) Endorsement](#) - If adopted, updates will be made to the certificate types issued.
 - [GaPSC Rule 505-2-.180 Student Support Team Coordinator Endorsement](#) - If adopted, the rule name will change to *Multi-Tiered System of Supports Facilitator* to align with the educator preparation rule, and will also update the certificate types issued.
 - Two program rules are proposed to be repealed as state-approved programs are not offered in these fields:
 - [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.09 Requirements and Standards for Training Pre-Candidates, Candidates, and Facilitators in Georgia's National Board Certified Teachers Program](#)
 - [GaPSC Rule 505-3-.97 Safety and Driver Education Endorsement Program](#)

Enhancements

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

- A four-segment series launched first quarter on the topics of *Appropriate Use of Social Media* and *Ethical Considerations for Remote Teaching*. The purpose of this virtual professional learning is to advance ethical understanding in these critical areas to help prevent potential missteps by educators. Over 850 superintendents, district and school leaders, and EPPs registered for the first two segments, which were held in March 2021. In addition to a guest speaker, the recorded series features panels of P-12 teachers and leaders and will conclude in April 2021.
- Preparations began for the GaPSC surveys of new teachers and leaders, as well as their supervisors. Near the end of each academic year, GaPSC administers surveys of first-year teachers and leaders, and their employers, to gather feedback on their preparation programs. These surveys account for a combined 20% of the annual Teacher Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (TPPEM) for GaPSC-approved program providers. More importantly, the surveys provide detailed and valuable insights on program quality. Since their inception, program providers have reported using survey responses to enhance programs and the services they provide to prospective educators.
- Two virtual professional learning communities (VPLCs), co-hosted by the GaPSC, focused on equity in schools.
 - Featuring EPP and P-12 panels, the Georgia Teacher Leadership VPLC, designed for Teacher Leadership program providers and their P-12 partners, conducted a two-part panel series consisting of EPPs and P12 educational leaders and teacher leaders on how effective teacher leadership addresses equity gaps.
 - The GELFA/GaPSC VPLC, designed for Educational Leadership program providers and their P-12 partners, concluded its cultural inclusiveness and equity series. Challenges and needed actions to prepare leaders to face these challenges were discussed in a P-12 educational leader panel format.
- The seven-part series of the Program Admission Assessment (PAA) Faculty Support Workshops concluded. Its Spring 2021 convenings featured 17 program providers from across the state sharing their strategies of how they support potential candidates and conditionally-admitted candidates to be successful on the PAA.
- Significant progress continued on the development of substantive GaPSC website revisions. In addition to supporting a wide range of devices such as smartphones and tablets, there will be organizational enhancements to ensure users can easily find information. Additional design and navigation features will also be added.

- The PPEM Advisory Council, comprised of representatives of GaPSC-approved program providers and other education agencies, met to provide feedback on the [Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures](#). Currently, the representative group is exploring future expansion of these measures, which are designed first to 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.
- A diverse standard-setting committee met to formulate a recommended passing standard for the revised Educational Leadership GACE. Changes to the assessment will be effective July 1, 2021, and are necessary to align to changes in national and GaPSC program standards.
- 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 2130 P-12 and EPP representatives took advantage of these learning and support opportunities. Below are examples of these initiatives:

**Examples of GaPSC Support and Professional Learning Events
1st Quarter, 2021**

Ethics

Two Webinars on Appropriate Use of Social Media
Aspiring Teacher Program Presentation

Certification

Four Statewide Certification Outreach Events
P-12 Certification Training
Two Individual EPP Certification Training
World Language Job Fair

Educator Preparation

Three GaTAPP Coordinators' Meetings
Nine P-20 Regional Collaborative Convenings
Endorsement Professional Learning Community Webinar
HBCU Collaborative Meeting
Three Technical Support Webinars:
(InTASC Standards Training, Survey Development, and Intern Keys)

Assessment

Two Program Admission Assessment (PAA) Faculty Support Workshops
Two PAA Policy Changes Webinars
Five Virtual Professional Learning Community (VPLC) Meetings
Special Education and GACE Webinar
Two Title II/HEOA Webinars

- As of April 1, 2021, almost 15,000 potential educators have selected the PAA "At Home" testing option since its May 2020 launch. This option enables educators to take the assessment at home or another secure location, instead of having to go to a test site.
- Task forces began to consider updates and enhancements to the Educator Preparation Approval Standards, first adopted by the Commission in 2016 and adapted from the standards published by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

- A new issue of the [Latest on GACE](#) newsletter was published, which covers the Performance Assessment for School Leaders (PASL), the Teacher Leadership performance-based assessment, and program updates.
- Preparations continued on the new PAA Composite Score option and the expanded Limited Flexibility Exemption (LFE) option, scheduled to launch July 1, 2021. With the composite scoring option, potential candidates can meet the PAA requirement by scoring a combined minimum of 750 on three tests within the PAA (reading, writing, and math). The LFE option, already in policy, allows program providers to admit a limited number of potential candidates into their programs who have passed only two parts of the PAA, and have attempted the part not passed at least twice. Additional flexibility will be added to the LFE eligibility criteria effective July 1, 2021. More information is available in the January 19, 2021, [GaPSC Connection](#).
- In 2018, GaPSC staff began a collaborative to provide support to deans and faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) with continuous improvement strategies relative to candidate quality and program impact. After a highly successful Summit on the campus of Clark Atlanta University in December 2019, the HBCU Collaborative reconvened virtually in 2020 and early 2021 to continue its focus on preparation program effectiveness outcomes, and to consider new strategies and practices to promote increased enrollment and completion in response to pandemic-induced setbacks.

Please refer to all GaPSC Quarterly Highlights, available [here](#), to learn more about the agency's enhancement initiatives.

Support by the Numbers

During first quarter of calendar year 2021, GaPSC:

- Answered 10,683 certification calls
- Responded to 16,835 certification emails
- Opened 29,374 certification cases
- Completed 29,056 certification cases
- Completed 337 ethics cases

Between January 1 and March 31, 2021, GaPSC continued approval for 103 existing programs and approved one new initial preparation program and ten new endorsement programs. During this quarter, work was conducted on new or continuing approval reviews for a total of 12 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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