



# GaPSC Quarterly Highlights

3rd Quarter, 2024

**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 third quarter 2024.**

## A Message from Matt Arthur

As we approach this time of Thanksgiving, I extend to you our sincere gratitude for the work you do each and every day and for your close collaboration with us. Each of you has such an important and impactful role in ensuring effective education in Georgia, and we remain committed to supporting you. We are especially appreciative of the responsiveness of school districts, schools, educator preparation providers (EPPs), RESAs, and others in helping to inform policy and guidance, serving on our many committees and task forces, honoring critical submission timelines, and efforts together to ensure quality customer service to you and your educators.

As an example, we are extremely pleased with the turnout of Georgia educators and those who prepare Georgia educators who applied to serve on GACE development and fairness reviews this fall. Over 50 separate committees met in person to determine the frameworks for each assessment, review test items, and ensure fairness. We greatly appreciate our school districts, schools, and EPPs for supporting this very important time of program development, helping us to ensure the GACE program meets Georgia's needs.

With this gratitude comes an invitation for another opportunity to serve. In Spring 2025, there will be another round of in-person GACE committees focused on standard setting recommendations. Their work will inform the Commission's decisions regarding where to set passing standard for each assessment. Educators and EPP faculty who previously applied to serve in GACE development activities do not need to reapply. For educators and EPP faculty who have not yet applied, the link to nominate others or apply to serve is on GaPSC's website or at <https://www.garecruit.nesinc.com>.

As another example, we thank our GaPSC-approved EPPs for their work to implement the new Foundations of Reading, Literacy, and Language standards in all teacher preparation programs by August 2024, and for their reports to GaPSC providing evidence of implementation. Reviews of those reports are underway, and EPPs will receive feedback in mid-February 2025. Implementation of these standards will ensure all newly prepared teachers are ready to improve reading outcomes for Georgia children. This is an exciting time in Georgia as the focus on literacy continues, and GaPSC is proud to work alongside other state agencies to support this vitally important statewide initiative.

We also thank you for the increased attention on the prevention of educator missteps, including the use of GaPSC-developed new and growing resources available on our website. Our concentration on both prevention and correction remains a laser focus.

As a final example, we greatly value your close collaboration with our certification staff as they support you and your educators. The turnaround time to process certificates is one of the quickest in the nation, and the cost of a certificate application is also among the very lowest. We thank you for your work with certification and all GaPSC staff.

Lastly, we thank each of you for the trust you put in us as educational partners.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours,  
Matt

### **30<sup>th</sup> Annual GaPSC Certification and Program Officials Conference**

Representatives of school districts, schools, EPPs, RESAs, and educational organizations are invited to register for the 30th Annual GaPSC Certification and Program Officials Conference, which will be hosted virtually the mornings of December 5 and 6, 2024. The conference will open Thursday with a keynote address by GaPSC Executive Secretary, Matt Arthur, followed by two concurrent blocks. Friday, the conference will feature two concurrent blocks. During each concurrent block, participants may choose from up to four sessions focused on the areas of Certification, Assessment, Educator Ethics, and Educator Preparation. Contact [Eden Mabry](#) for more information and registration.

## **Reminders**

### **Certification**

- The certification rule for the new field of Speech Language Associate became effective October 15, 2024. Individuals certified in this field are allowed to provide related educational support or direct intervention for all students whose individual education plan (IEP) indicates instructional needs in the area of communication disorders under the direct supervision of a certified Speech and Language Pathologist. Programs for this field are anticipated to begin admitting candidates in Summer 2025. The rule is available at [https://www.gapsc.com/Rules/Current/Certification/505-2-.151.pdf?dt=%3C%#Eval\('strTimeStamp'\)%20%3E](https://www.gapsc.com/Rules/Current/Certification/505-2-.151.pdf?dt=%3C%#Eval('strTimeStamp')%20%3E).
- When enrolling educators in an endorsement program, please ensure they hold the correct certificate type for admission. Educators holding a Provisional certificate are not eligible for admission into any endorsement program. Those who are admitted in error and complete the endorsement program will not be eligible for certification in the endorsement field until the Provisional certificate in the base field is converted.
- 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.

### **Educator Preparation**

- Educator Preparation staff are facilitating the work of Literacy Focused Review teams, which are charged with evaluating EPP reports on implementation of the new Foundations of Reading, Literacy, and Language (FRLL) standards in all teacher preparation programs. By mid-February 2025, EPPs will receive feedback on their reports.
- Beginning in Fall 2025, all GaPSC approval reviews will require evidence that teacher candidates are meeting the FRLL standards appropriate for their field of preparation.
- Three new Educator Preparation Rules are pending adoption by the Commission at the December 12, 2024, meeting. Two of the new rules represent innovative approaches to preparing entry-level school leaders, and they allow EPPs to offer master's degree programs resulting in two fields of certification (Teacher Leadership and Educational Leadership Tier I, and Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership Tier I). If adopted, the third new rule will allow non-traditional EPPs to offer an Alternative Preparation for Speech Language Associate Program for individuals with a bachelor's degree in Communication Disorders or a closely related field. For more information on these rules, see the [GaPSC Rules webpage](#).

### **Ethics**

- If an applicant checks "Yes" on a Personal Affirmation Question (PAQ), the applicant has 45 days to provide the required documentation to the Ethics Division; otherwise, the applicant will need to reapply. Any subsequent application will trigger an investigation into the original issue, as well as any new issues. Please be aware of and stay in contact with applicants in your district who are not responsive to inquiries from the Ethics Division.
- 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.
- The 2024-25 Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators (COE) presentation, available under *Presentations* on the [Ethics Resources webpage](#), includes common violations, scenarios, and takeaways for each of the ten COE standards. It is designed so that school districts, EPPs, and others can customize the presentation to meet their needs.

**Assessment**

- As shared in this issue's *Message From Matt Arthur*, we are seeking educators and those who prepare educators to assist with GACE standard setting committees in Spring 2025. Those who previously applied to serve in GACE development activities do not need to reapply. For educators and EPP faculty who have not yet applied, the link to nominate or apply to serve on standard setting committees is on GaPSC's website or at <https://www.garecruit.nesinc.com>.
- To stay updated on the GACE program, please visit the [Latest on GACE](#) page on our website.

## Policy Changes

At the July 11, 2024, Commission meeting, proposed Certification, Educator Preparation, and Ethics rules were initiated. These rules were adopted September 12, 2024, with an effective date of October 15, 2024. Below is a summary of actions for these rules.

**Certification**

- 505-2-.08 PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATE was amended to include Speech-Language Associate as a field for which the Provisional certificate may be issued.
- 505-2-.151 SPEECH-LANGUAGE ASSOCIATE was adopted to create a new certification field to align with GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.70 SPEECH-LANGUAGE ASSOCIATE PROGRAM.

**Educator Preparation**

- 505-3-.02 EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER ANNUAL REPORTING AND EVALUATION was amended to incorporate a reference to Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) reporting deadlines specified in GaPSC Rule 505-3-.01 REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR APPROVING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS. Additional changes were made for clarification.
- 505-3-.08 INNOVATIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAMS was repealed as this rule was outdated and not compatible with GaPSC data collection and reporting systems.

**Ethics**

- 505-6-.03 CHANGE OF ADDRESS and 505-6-.09 INVESTIGATION INSTITUTED BY REFERRAL were repealed as the rules were a restatement of the law and did not add or expound on the law.

Public Comment is now open through November 30, 2024, for the Certification and Educator preparation rules initiated at the October 10, 2024, Commission meeting. The notice of public comment, along with the proposed initiated rules and accompanying summaries, is posted at <https://www.gapsc.com/Commission/Rules/home.aspx>.

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 third-quarter GaPSC actions aimed at enhancing the quality of our service:

- Work began on an HBCU Teacher Recruitment Initiative aimed at recruiting minorities and males to the teaching profession. The work currently involves gathering input on existing recruiting efforts, barriers to entering the profession, and teacher attrition. Focus groups will be conducted with prospective educators, educators, parents, high school students, and more. The work will culminate in a plan for an awareness campaign and a statewide, multi-year teacher recruitment plan. A Teacher Recruitment Summit is scheduled for April 22, 2025.
- Sessions were conducted at statewide and national convenings to share information about Georgia's Safe Schools Act (pursuant to HB147), in which GaPSC partnered with Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Georgia Public Safety Training Center, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Georgia Department of Education to create the School Safety and Anti-Gang Endorsement. This endorsement

provides educators and school personnel with online and in-person training in multidisciplinary best practices for promoting and preserving safe schools and for identifying and deterring youth gangs.

- Progress continued on the completion of ten separate prevention videos, each on one of the ten standards in Georgia's COE. Six videos have been produced and are available at [GaPSC Video Series](#).
- In addition to conducting sessions 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 1,523 individuals during third quarter.

### Examples of GaPSC Support and Professional Learning Events 3rd Quarter, 2024

#### Certification

- 1 RESA Directors Presentation
- 1 ESOL Directors Presentation
- 4 Technical Assistance Meetings
- 1 New CTAE Educator Conference Presentation
- 4 Technical Assistance Meetings

#### Educator Preparation

- 2 GaTAPP Provider Meetings
- 13 EPP Orientations
- 4 Literacy Trainings
- 1 Webinar (Peer Strategies for Enrollment, Pre-Service and Initial Certification)
- 10 Data Conversations with EPPs
- 51 Technical Assistance Meetings

#### Ethics

- 8 Code of Ethics Trainings for New and Current Employees
- 1 Ethics Investigations Training for Aspiring Principals

#### Assessment

- 3 Title II/HEOA Webinars
- 5 GACE Assessment Presentations
- 1 RESA Directors Presentation

## Support by the Numbers

During the third quarter of calendar year 2024, GaPSC:

- Answered 10,433 certification calls, totaling 28,385 year to date (YTD)
- Responded to 17,160 certification emails, totaling 43,858 YTD
- Opened 24,192 certification cases, totaling 86,558 YTD
- Completed 25,397 certification cases, totaling 85,953 YTD
- Completed 578 ethics cases, totaling 1,702 YTD

Between July 1 and September 30, 2024, GaPSC approved two new initial preparation programs for a total of two 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](#).