Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement
LEA Professional Qualifications Decision Guide
under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Federal Requirements - ESSA

ESSA requires SEAs and LEAs to ensure that teachers meet state certification requirements

*ESSA Sections 1111(g)(2)(J), 1112(c)(6)*

Traditional LEAs

Georgia law authorizes GaPSC to establish certification requirements.

*O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984*

All LEAs

**SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**
Special Education teachers must hold special education certification.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS ISSUING GRADES IN CONTENT AREA COURSES**
If the teacher issues grades, the teacher must hold certification or the equivalent in the corresponding content areas and grade level bands.

*GaDOE Board Rule*

Charter & Strategic Waiver LEAs

Georgia law allows charter and strategic waiver systems to waive some provisions of Title 20, including certification; however, LEAs may not waive certification for Special Education teachers. ALL teachers MUST have a clearance certificate.

*O.C.G.A. § 20-2-80, 20-2-211.1 § 20-2-2065*

LEAs must follow GaPSC certification requirements, State Board of Education rules and program-specific delivery model requirements.

*O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984*

**Professional Qualification v. In-Field**

Federal law requires states and LEAs to ensure ALL teachers meet state certification requirements. In Georgia, state law allows LEAs to waive certification. Accordingly, LEAs must establish the professional qualification requirements for ALL LEA teachers. This is monitored for compliance.

In addition, federal law requires states to publicly report the number of teachers who are not teaching in the subject or field for which the teacher is certified. GaDOE will use GaPSC in-field rules to determine in-field qualifications. For LEAs that waive content area certification, teachers may demonstrate equivalent in-field qualifications by degree, coursework or content area test as reported in Fall CPI Cycle 1.

Paraprofessionals must hold state certification or the equivalent.
In Georgia, in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, all LEA schools are required to provide timely notice to parents when students have been assigned or taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned. ESSA Sec. 1112(e)(1)(B)(ii)

**Federal Requirement – 20 Day Notification**

**Traditional LEAs**

LEAs must send notifications for teachers who do not meet the GaPSC certification ‘in-field’ requirements.

**Teacher meets LEA Professional Qualification Requirements and is ‘In-Field’**

Notification is not required.

**Teacher meets LEA Professional Qualification Requirements but is NOT ‘In-Field’**

Notification is not required.

**Teacher Does NOT Meet LEA Professional Qualification Requirements**

Notification is required.

**Charter & Strategic Waiver Systems**

LEAs must use charter/strategic waiver plans to establish professional qualification requirements. Notifications must be sent for any teachers who do not meet the LEA’s professional qualification requirements.

**Guidance and Sample**

Parents’ Right to Know guidance and sample letter are available on the Title II, Part A Resources page of the Georgia Department of Education website.

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**Who do LEAs call with questions about educator qualifications?**

OUT-OF-FIELD & PQ*: GaDOE Staff
CERTIFICATION: GaPSC Portal
SPECIAL EDUCATION: GaDOE Special Education Staff
ESOL: GaDOE Title III Staff
GIFTED: GaDOE Gifted Staff
CHARTER: GaDOE Charter Division Staff
DUAL IMMERSION: GaDOE Teaching & Learning Staff

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