

From: Richard Woods <rwoods@doe.k12.ga.us>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 4:22 PM
To: K12 Superintendents <superintendents@list.doe.k12.ga.us>
Subject: Important: Change to Special Education PQ Requirements

Superintendents,

This note is to inform you of a change to the Georgia Department of Education's requirements for Special Education teachers' Professional Qualifications (PQ).

As you know, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require Georgia to ensure that all teachers meet state certification requirements. Georgia law allows LEAs to waive certification requirements in Title 20 if the LEA has an approved Charter System or Strategic Waiver contract. LEAs that waive state certification must establish PQ for their teachers and report the requirements in their annual ESSA application - the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP).

Since 2017, special education teachers have been required to meet full state certification requirements in both service and content. In Georgia, PQ requirements apply to all public education teachers serving students.

Effective immediately, Georgia's PQ requirements for Special Education will be as outlined below:

- **Service**
 - **Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) Special Education certification in alignment with the students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)**
- **Content (if applicable)**
 - **Charter System/SWSS LEAs – content certification only as outlined in the LEA's PQ requirements**
 - **No Waiver Systems - GaPSC Academic Content Concentrations in alignment with the students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)**

This update is intended to provide LEAs the same level of flexibility that is currently afforded in content areas for non-special education teachers. The Georgia Department of Education has collaborated with the U.S. Department of Education to ensure that this procedural change will meet IDEA requirements for special education teacher certification.

Please note that state and LEA professional qualification requirements are not the same as reporting out-of-field for ESSA. It is possible for a special education teacher who is providing special education services and issuing grades in content to meet the district's professional qualifications and not meet in-field criteria. Teachers are not required to be in-field. Professional Qualifications are checked in monitoring on a four-year monitoring cycle. Out-of-Field status is reported annually on the State and LEA report cards.

For assistance and support with both PQ and In-Field, please visit the [PQ/In-Field webpage](#) on the GaDOE website. For resources related to certification and course alignment, please visit the [Georgia Professional Standards Commission Website](#), or contact the GaPSC at certhelp@gapsc.com.

If you have any questions, please contact professionalqualifications@doe.k12.ga.us.

Sincerely,

Richard Woods
State School Superintendent