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.

**All LEAs**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

Special Education teachers must hold special education certification aligned with teaching assignment (general, adapted, visual impairment, etc.).

**SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS ISSUING GRADES IN CONTENT AREA COURSES**

If the teacher issues grades, the teacher must hold content certification in the corresponding content areas and grade level bands in alignment with LEA PQ.

**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 service certification for Special Education teachers.  ALL teachers MUST have a clearance certificate.  

LEAs must follow GaPSC certification requirements, State Board of Education rules, and program-specific delivery model requirements.  
*O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-200, 20-2-984, SBOE Rules*

**Professional Qualifications v. ESSA 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, which 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 ESSA In-Field qualifications.  For LEAs that waive content area certification, teachers may demonstrate equivalent In-Field qualifications by degree, coursework, or content area test.  'Out-of-Field’ will be reported for the entirety of the school year using Certification Records and 2 CPI and 3 Student Class data collections cycles.

Paraprofessionals must hold state certification and a clearance certificate.  
*ESSA Sec.1111(g)(2)(M)*;  
*O.C.G.A. §20-2-211.1, GaPSC Rules*
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 four 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. 

**The Requirement**

ESSA Sec. 1112(e)(1)(A)  
In Georgia, all LEA schools are required to notify parents at the beginning of the school year of their ‘right to know’ the professional qualifications of the student’s classroom teacher(s) and paraprofessional(s).

**The Notification**

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act, parents may request the following information:

1. Whether the student’s teacher—
   - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
   - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
   - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

**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

**Professional Qualifications**

- OUT-OF-FIELD & PQ*: GaDOE Staff  
- CERTIFICATION: GaPSC Portal  
- SPECIAL EDUCATION: GaDOE Special Education Staff  
- ESOL: GaDOE Title III Staff  
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