

# Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement Professional Qualifications/ESSA In-Field Quick Guide



### Is it true 'highly qualified' is gone?

Highly Qualified is no longer required by or reported to United States Department of Education (USDE).

### What does ESSA say about qualifications?

- 1) ESSA says that State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must ensure teachers meet applicable state certification requirements [Sections 1111(g)(2)(J), 1112(c)(6)]. In Georgia, under OCGA § 20-2-2065, state certification can be waived for most teachers, meaning that each LEA that waives certification must establish professional qualifications (PQ) for their teachers.
- 2) ESSA says the SEA must report information on the qualifications of the teachers including out-of-field.

### How can my LEA ensure that teachers meet PQ and ESSA In-Field?

Establish professional qualifications that take subject matter competency into consideration either by requiring certification or the GaDOE accepted equivalent.

**OUT-OF-FIELD**  
Teachers who do not hold state certification (or, for strategic waiver or charter LEAs, the equivalent) in the subject and/ or grade level(s) assigned

**EQUIVALENT**  
Degree OR  
Coursework OR  
Content Area Test OR  
Verified Credentials

## Teachers of Special Education Students

ESSA Sec. 1112, IDEA Sec. 612(a)(14)(C), OCGA §20-2-80, 20-2-2065, SBOE 160-4-9-.04, 160-4-9-.05, 160-4-9-.06, 160-5-1-.33

- **Special Education:** Teachers required to hold special education certification **must** hold a clearance certificate **and** certification in adapted or general special education curriculum that aligns to the course(s) being taught and the IEPs of the students being served. They may NOT waive certification in adapted or general special education curriculum.
- **Content:** All special education teachers issuing grades are required to hold content area certification in the subject field and grade level bands for which the teacher is assigned (K-5), (4-8), (6-12) in accordance with the cognitive level specified in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- **Charter and SWSS Waivers:** In Georgia, **only** teachers in LEAs that **waive certification** may verify content through degree, coursework, or content test; this must be in compliance with the LEA certification waiver procedures outlined in the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP).
- **Emergency/ Provisional:** In accordance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), special education teachers in Georgia may not hold emergency or provisional special education credentials. This means that a special education teacher holding a GaPSC Non-Renewable Professional (N), Waiver (W), or Supplemental Induction (SI) certificate may not meet Georgia's Professional Qualification Requirements.

## Professional Qualifications for Paraprofessionals

ESSA Sec. 1111(g)(2)(M); GaPSC Certification Rule 505-2-.18

The State of Georgia ensures that it has professional standards for all paraprofessionals working in any school, including qualifications that were in place on the day before the date of enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act. In Georgia, a paraprofessional employed by a Georgia LUA, must hold a clearance certificate **and** must meet one of the following requirements:

- **Degree:** Hold an associate's degree or higher in any subject from a Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC)-accepted accredited institution; **or**
- **Coursework:** Have completed two (2) years of college coursework (sixty [60] semester hours) at a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution; **or**
- **Content Area Test:** Have passed the GACE Paraprofessional Assessment. If eligibility is established through the assessment, the applicant must also hold a minimum of a high school diploma or GED equivalent.

### GaPSC Portal Updates

- GaPSC.org 'In-Field' application will be made available to LEAs annually in January. At that time, the "In-Field" portal will reflect **ALL** teachers reported in certification records (updated nightly), CPI and Student Class in Cycle A . The In-Field portal will be updated in May following submission of CPI and Student Class Cycle B and will be updated in late summer following the submission of CPI and Student Class Cycle C and Student Record.

### Monitoring & Reporting Out-of-Field

- Out-of-Field will reflect the entirety of the school year using 1) Certification Records, 2) all three CPI cycles, 3) all three Student Class cycles, and 4) Student Record.
- LEAs may check out-of-field status using the GaPSC In-Field portal and local documentation.
- To be 'ESSA In-Field' a teacher must meet GaPSC requirements 1) degree in the subject area assigned, OR 2) coursework in subject area assigned– 21 semester/ 35 quarter hours, OR 3) a passing score on a content area test in subject area assigned.

### HOUSSE – Special Education, Life, DUAL Immersion

- Highly Qualified is no longer required under ESSA - the HOUSSE rubric is eliminated.

### How will GaDOE monitor PQ and ESSA In-Field?

GaDOE will monitor compliance with LEA-established professional qualifications during cross-functional or program monitoring. Failure to adhere to LEA PQ may result in a finding.

GaDOE will monitor ESSA In-Field using state level reports. This data is reported annually to the public and USDE.

### Parent's Right to Know Notification

*ESSA Sec. 1112(e)(1)(A)*

- In Georgia, notification requirements apply to all LEAs and schools/ programs within each LEA.
- LEAs must notify parents annually at the start of school (within 30 calendar days of the start of school).
- LEAs must use the language of the law.
- LEAs must maintain records of the notifications.
- In Georgia, the following are considered best practices when notifying parents: (1) notifying parents in multiple formats in order to ensure accessibility and, (2) to the extent practicable, notifying in a language the parent may understand.
- For additional notification requirements and best practices, see the ESSA PQ & In-Field Implementation Guide or contact GaDOE Staff.

### 20 Day Notification of Professional Qualifications

*ESSA Sec. 1112(e)(1)(B)(ii)*

- In Georgia, notification requirements apply to all teachers in all LEAs and schools/ programs within each LEA.
- LEAs must notify parents if a teacher has not met subject or grade level requirements for professional qualifications in compliance with state law for more than four consecutive weeks. In Georgia, this means either GaPSC certification requirements, or, if certification is waived under the Official Code of Georgia 20-2-80, 20-2-2065 or State Board Rules 160-5-1-.33, 160-4-9-.07, the minimum qualifications established by each LEA.
- In Georgia, this notification must be made within 10 business days following the four consecutive weeks.
- For additional notification requirements and best practices, see the ESSA PQ & In-Field Implementation Guide or contact GaDOE Staff.

### Reporting Professional Qualifications

*ESSA Sec. 1111(h)(1)(c)(ix), FY18 CNA Data Guide*

**The LEA Report Card** shall include the professional qualifications of all Georgia educators (SEA, LEA and School level data), including information (that shall be presented in the aggregate and disaggregated by high poverty compared to low-poverty schools) on the number and percentage of:

#### Inexperienced teachers, principals, and other school leaders;

- In Georgia, an 'inexperienced' teacher is an induction-level teacher with 0-3 (less than four) years of experience.
- In Georgia, an 'inexperienced' leader is a leader with 0-3 (less than four) years of experience.

#### Teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials; and,

- In Georgia, this may apply to teachers who hold a GaPSC issued certificate "W," "N," or "SI."

#### Teachers who are not teaching in the subject or field for which the teacher is certified or licensed

- In Georgia, "out-of-field" teachers are those who are not teaching in their field of certification.

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

**SPECIAL EDUCATION:** GaDOE Special Education Staff  
**CHARTER:** GaDOE Charter Division Staff

*Assigned District Liaisons*  
*lerste@doe.k12.ga.us*

**CERTIFICATION:** GaPSC Portal  
**OUT-OF-FIELD & PQ\*:** GaDOE Staff

*mail@gapsc.com*  
*professionalqualifications@doe.k12.ga.us*