

Cirrus Academy Charter School Professional Qualifications/ESSA In-Field FY 2023 - 2024

Highly Qualified is no longer required by or reported to United States Department of Education (USDE). Cirrus Academy Charter School follows ESSA 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.

Cirrus waives certification requirements in Title 20 because Cirrus has an approved Charter or Strategic Waiver Application. Cirrus waives state certification for teachers who has a bachelor's degree or higher and is working toward obtaining a degree in a GAPSC approved program or is enrolled in a TAPP program to establish professional qualifications (PQ) for their teachers. Cirrus will report the requirements in their annual ESSA application - the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). Professional qualification requirements apply to all teachers except for Special Education teachers. Certification that is waived, meets in-field requirements using equivalent qualifications (degree, coursework, or content area assessment). ESSA also requires SEAs and LEAs to report annually the qualifications of teachers including those teachers who are out-of-field. The CPI team reports this information three times a year on the CPI.

Cirrus will create a master schedule for their school and identify class needs. Prior to assigning a teacher to a specific class or course, Cirrus will check with HR to see if the teacher holds the appropriate certification. If not, the principal will contact the Federal Programs' Director to see if the teacher meets the district's minimum professional qualifications. If it is a special education teacher or EIP teacher, the federal program director and HR will work with these coordinators to develop a plan to change the schedule or ensure the teacher becomes certified. Principals will assign the teacher to the course if the teacher is professionally qualified or meets State Certification requirements. If the teacher is not professionally qualified and there is no other professionally qualified teacher available, the principal will work with Human Resources to identify the steps needed for the teacher to become professionally qualified. A certification plan will be created with specific steps to gain professional qualified status. The principal will provide a list of courses with assigned teachers to the school registrar once this step has been completed. The registrar will enter the teaching assignments into the student information system and will notify the Federal Programs Director when this step is completed. In July and December, the

Federal Programs Director will ensure that teachers are either professionally qualified or have a certification plan in place. The Federal Program Director will provide technical assistance to principals during monthly leadership meetings throughout the year.

Teachers of Special Education Students

- 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 Waivers: In Georgia, only teachers in LEAs that waive certification may verify content through degree, coursework, or content test; this must be following 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 special education teachers cannot be waived. When principals assign teachers to special education classes, they must work with the Federal Programs Director and Special Education Director to ensure that the teacher has the required certification(s) to teach the students with disabilities in the class. Certification will also be checked when there is a schedule change for special education students. Special attention is given to adapted curriculum certification and courses. In the instance that a professionally qualified teacher is not available to teach the class, a certification plan is developed that outlines steps to achieve professionally qualified status or the schedule is changed.

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 Every Student Succeeds Act. In Georgia and at Cirrus Academy Charter School a paraprofessional employed by Cirrus, must hold a clearance certificate and must meet one of the following requirements:

- Degree: Hold an associate 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.

The Federal Programs Director is responsible for monitoring in-field reporting and correcting data if needed. Both content and service area (EIP, ESOL, Gifted, SPED) will be checked for in-field status for every teacher and teaching assignment. In-field reports will be checked in the GA PSC In-Field Portal each time the portal data is available. The reports will be reviewed with principals in the district's leadership team and principal meetings to address out-of-field teachers. The Federal Programs Director is responsible for working with the HR/CPI Coordinator and Student Class Coordinator to correct data as needed.

Parent's Right to Know Notification

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

- Cirrus Academy Charter School notification requirements apply to all programs within the LEA.
- Cirrus notifies parents annually at the start of school (within 30 calendar days of the start of school).
- Cirrus uses the language of the law.
- Cirrus maintains records of the notifications.
- Cirrus uses what Georgia considers best practices when notifying parents: (1) notifying parents in multiple formats to ensure accessibility and, (2) to the extent practicable, notifying in a language the parent may understand.

20 Day Notification of Professional Qualifications ESSA Sec. 1112(e)(1)(B)(ii)

Cirrus notification requirements apply to all teachers in programs within each LEA.

- Cirrus notifies 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 Cirrus Academy is a Clearance Certificate with either content or coursework.
- At Cirrus and 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.

Cirrus Academy Charter School uses charter/strategic waiver plans to establish minimum professional qualification requirements. The minimum professional requirements are a

bachelor's degree with course work, academic degree, or content with 21 semester hours in the content area they are teaching or 35 quarter hours in the content area they are teaching. Some teachers may hold a degree but lack the GACE to suffice for a GAPSC certificate. All teachers at Cirrus hold a GAPSC clearance except for Special Education Teachers who meet full GAPSC certification.

Notifications are sent for any teachers who do not meet applicable State and/or LEA professional qualification are reported to the Director of HR and the CPI team three times a year and annually to GAPSC.