

# Georgia Professional Standards Commission



The Code of Ethics for General  
Presentation FY 2020

# Professional Standards Commission

Three Divisions

**Certification**

**Educator Preparation**

**Ethics**



# Legal Authority of the PSC Ethics Division

## **20-2-984.1. Adoption of a Code of Ethics.**

- (a) It shall be the duty of the commission to adopt standards of performance and a code of ethics for educators... which are generally accepted by educators of this state.**

## **20-2-984.1. Adoption of a Code of Ethics**

**The standards of performance and code of ethics adopted by the commission shall be limited to professional performance and professional ethics.**

**The PSC does not care what you do in your personal life as long as it does not carryover into your professional life.**

# Definition of Educator

505- 6 -.01 (2)(d) "Educator" is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

# The PSC

## Committee of 18 Members

- 9 teachers (1 from private school)
- 2 school board members
- 3 business representatives
- 2 administrators
- 2 higher ed-1 from private college and 1 from a state college
- Governor appoints-3 year term

# Teachers on Commission

- Danielle Bruce-Morgan County
- Jeanine Bunn-Henry County
- Barbara Ellingson-White County
- Derek Easterling-Cobb County
- Isiah Hill-Private School
- Teri Schneider-Forsyth County
- Brian Sirmans-Lanier County
- Beth Townsend-Cherokee County
- Jennifer Sheffield-Wade -Lumpkin County

# Code of Ethics for Georgia Educators

- Ten Standards established by the PSC meant to regulate the conduct of educators in the classroom.

“Educator” is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.”

# 3 Main Duties of Educators

- Teach the Children
- Protect the Students
- Act Professionally and Ethically



# What is Ethics?



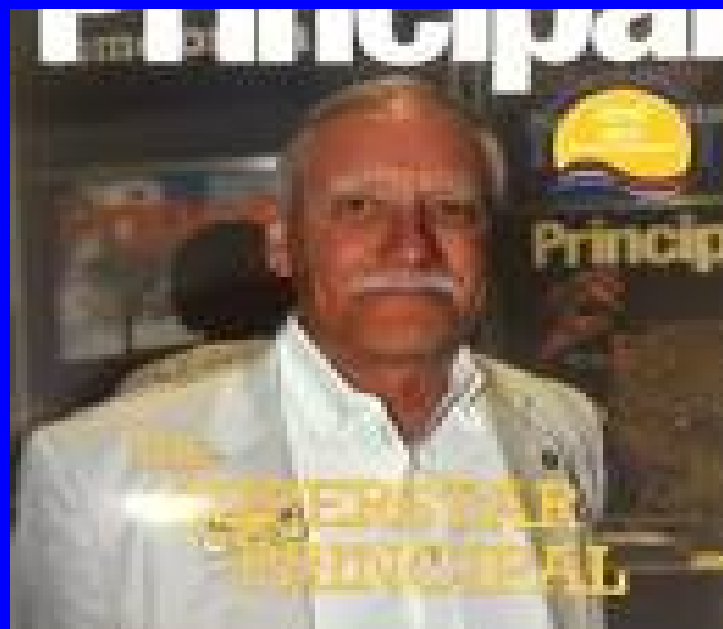
# Ethics

- Knowledge-codes, rules, knowing right from wrong
- Conduct-behavior that aligns with knowledge
- Ethics-courage to execute in the midst of pressure
- Doing what is right when no one is looking

# Complete the following two sentences

- The most ethical person I know is...
- This person is ethical because...

# Hal Beaver



Standard 1

# Legal Compliance

## **Standard 1**

**An educator shall  
abide by federal,  
state, and local laws  
and statutes.**

# Legal Compliance

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the **commission or conviction** of:

- **a felony or any crime involving moral turpitude.**
- **any criminal offense involving a controlled substance or marijuana.**
- **any sexual offense specified in Code Section 16.**
- **any laws applicable to the profession.**

# Standard #1 Legal Compliance

- The educator pled guilty to one count of child pornography. The educator was sentenced to 90 months of confinement and 25 years of supervised release after the confinement. The educator will have to register as a sex offender



# Standard #1 Legal Compliance

- The educator was arrested for shoplifting. She entered a 6-month pre-trial diversion program and paid \$655 in court costs, \$47 in monthly probation fees, completed 40 hours of community service, and reported monthly to the probation officer. The educator never entered a plea and the case was dismissed after completing diversion program. She stated the incident was a mistake. Upon further investigation, it was discovered she had 2 other arrests for shoplifting never reported

# **Conduct with Students**

## Standard 2

An educator shall always  
maintain a

**professional**

relationship with all  
students, both in and  
outside the classroom.

**A student is  
anyone under  
the age of  
18.**

**OR, a student  
enrolled in  
grades Pre-K to  
12 in a public or  
private school.**

**For the purposes of  
the Code of Ethics,  
the enrollment period  
for a graduating  
student ends on  
August 31 of the year  
of graduation.**

# Sexual Abuse of Students

## Revocation

# Sexual Relationship with Students

- O. C.G. A.--16-6-5.1
- Person who has supervisory or disciplinary authority over a student who engages in sexual contact with students...
- New thing in Georgia



# Sexual Relationship with Student



## Standard #2 Conduct With Students

- The educator was driving with a student and got into a vehicular accident in the early morning hours the night of the school prom. The educator did not obtain permission to transport the student and failed to report the incident to his administrator. The educator later lied to his administrators about transporting the student.

# Standard #2 Conduct With Students

- The educator escorted an autistic, non-verbal elementary student to the restroom. The student was crying while sitting on the toilet. The educator recorded the student crying with his phone and posted it to his Instagram account with a caption that included the student's name.

# Standard #2 Conduct with Students

- The educator sent multiple pictures of herself in bra and panties to a student. She also made offers to meet the student outside of class.

# Student Relationship Guidelines

~~Email~~

~~Phone Calls~~

Be Friendly,  
Not a Friend.

~~Gossip~~

~~Parties~~

~~Inappropriate Jokes~~

~~Photographs~~

# Student Relationship Guidelines

~~Home~~

**Choose**

~~Auto~~

**Appropriate  
Settings**

~~Dark Room~~

~~Closest~~

**Standard 3**

# **Alcohol or Drugs**

## **Standard 3**

**An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice.**



# Alcohol

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

2. **being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages.**

**20-2-984.1.** The ... code of ethics ... **shall be limited to professional performance and professional ethics.**

# Standard #3 Drugs and Alcohol

- An elementary paraprofessional had her minor son bring an alcoholic beverage to her on school grounds and during the school day.

# Standard #3 Drugs and Alcohol

- The educator was missing from her duty location at school. A school administrator found her inside the classroom with manifestations on intoxication. Her blood alcohol test was .331. Several “water bottles” were found in the educator’s classroom and the bottles contained a clear liquid that had a strong alcoholic odor.

# Question

- How many Educators are guilty of going to a restaurant on a Friday evening and consuming a bottle of beer or a glass of wine with their meal, and then going to a high school football game?
- What level of intoxication is acceptable when an educator is interacting with students or community members at school events?

## Standard 4

# Honesty

## Standard 4

An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice.

# Honesty

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

- 1. professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;**



# Honesty

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

- 2. information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;**

# Honesty

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

**3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;**

# Honesty

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

**4. reasons for absences or leaves;**

# Honesty

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

**5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and**

# Honesty

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

**6. information submitted in the course of professional practice.**

# Standard #4 Honesty

- The educator and the teacher were classmates in the same Teacher Leadership Program. The educator completed the assessment and ETS reported substantial similarities between the educator and another teacher who had sent her work in at an earlier time. The educator's scores were cancelled and she received a sanction from the PSC.

# Standard #4 Honesty

- The educator failed to disclose her criminal history by answering “no” to a personal affirmation question on the PSC application. A review of the educator’s records revealed a theft by shoplifting in which the educator received a 12 month probation and paid a \$600 fine.

# Standard #4 Honesty

- The educator failed to hold appropriate meetings for student IEPs. The educator claimed to have met with parents over the phone due to parents being unable to attend.



## **Standard 5**

# **Public Funds & Property**

## Standard 5

An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility.

# **Public Funds & Property**

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- 1. misusing public or school-related funds;**
- 2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;**
- 3. submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay;**
- 4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and**
- 5. using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.**

## Standard #5 Public Funds and Property

- The educator was responsible for the management of funds for both the football and basketball cheerleading programs. When loose cash was found in the educator's possession, the school administration began to investigate . Throughout the investigation, the educator was not able to produce appropriate documents. The audit revealed a deficit of 4,247.80.

**Standard 6**

# **Remunerative Conduct**

## Standard 6

An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.

# Standard # 6 Remunerative Conduct

- The educator admitted to tutoring two of her students for pay without getting approval of the BOE or administration.

## **Standard 7**

# **Confidential Information**



## **Standard 7**

**An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information.**

# **Confidential Information**

- **Annual performance evaluation records of school personnel**
  - Health services provided to an insured
- Individual student performance data, information and reports
  - School records of students with disabilities
  - A student's education record

# Standard # 7 Confidential Information

- The Educator admitted to providing a high school student his data system access information and hiring her to assist with data entry of confidential special education student data.

## **Standard 8**

# **Required Reports**

An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse, or any other required report.

# Requirement

- The law states an educator shall make a report on suspected child abuse immediately and no later than 24 hours

# Standard # 8 Required Reports

- A school counselor failed to report a suicidal ideation. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, who had just returned from mental health treatment, asked the counselor, "If I killed myself, would it be on the news?" The next day at school, the student superficially cut her wrists and neck. The educator said she did not take the comments seriously.

# Standard # 8 Required Reports

- The educator failed to report a student's outcry that the custodian exposed his penis to him in a private room at the school gymnasium. The educator stated she was busy and forgot what the student had told her.



**Standard 9**

# **Professional Conduct**

## Standard 9

An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the teaching profession.

# Standard #9 Professional Conduct

- The teacher and an educator were employed at the same school. The teacher stated the educator contacted her via Face Time at 8:14 A.M. and exposed his private parts. The educator was uncooperative in providing access to his phone messages.

# Standard #9 Professional Conduct

- After signing an employment contract in April, the educator emailed a resignation letter effective immediately (July 29). She did not respond to school administrator messages. She was terminated for failure to fulfill her contract and reported to the PSC.

## **Standard 10**

# **Testing**

## **Standard 10**

**An educator shall  
administer state mandated  
assessments fairly and  
ethically.**

# Major Testing Violations

- Breach of Test Security
- Fail to provide or attend training
- Fail to follow directions specified in the manual
- Coach, prompt, alter or provide answers to students during the test
- Interpret, explain, or paraphrase test items
- Copy or take notes on test items

# Standard # 10 Testing

- The Educator failed to report a student's need for a read-aloud accommodation for the Georgia Milestone Test.



# Standard # 10 Testing

- Multiple students stated the educator helped them complete their Georgia Milestone assessments by pointing to areas on the test that needed correcting, giving hints, or giving answers .

# Teacher's Role

- Attend training
- Ensures security of test booklets before, during, and after testing
- Follow directions
- Arrange seats to promote individual work
- Circulate about the classroom to prevent cheating and other violations
- Be familiar with allowable student accommodations
- Account for all testing materials

# Lessons Learned

- Establish an environment conducive to student learning and test score improvement
- Require training for all participants with similar information and format at all training sessions
- Require available staff to monitor during testing
- Test security is paramount

# Lessons Learned

- Investigate all allegations and complaints thoroughly - consider involvement of outside investigators
- Large increases in student test scores are a red flag
- Having knowledge of testing violations and failing to report jeopardizes teaching certificate
- Superintendents, Principals, and Test Coordinators are ultimately responsible

# Other

- On a Georgia application for certification, the educator checked yes to the application's personal affirmation question that asked about drug offense convictions. The educator failed to respond to multiple requests from PSC investigator for additional information.

# Other

- The educator accepted a written reprimand from the state of Florida for not allowing her students the entire time allotted to take an Algebra exam. The educator, who is also certified in Georgia, failed to notify the PSC of the reprimand within the 90 day time frame.

# PSC

- Any resident of Georgia can submit a complaint against any educator. The PSC requires complaints to be written and signed with contact information.
- The PSC deals with approximately 250+ ethics issues each month
- Between 45 - 50 educators are sanctioned each month

# **Enforcing Sanctions**

**The superintendent and the superintendent's designee for certification shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GAPSC certification.**



# Revocation and Denials

Year	Denied	Revoked	Voluntary Surrender	Total
FY 2006	42	72	17	131
FY 2007	23	76	26	125
FY 2008	33	54	16	103
FY 2009	25	71	27	123
FY 2010	13	67	28	108
FY 2011	18	58	20	96
FY 2012	18	92	25	135
FY 2013	14	86	28	128
FY 2014	18	99	26	143
FY 2015	26	81	29	136
FY 2016	56	86	24	166
FY 2017	20	101	37	158
FY 2018	30	179	29	238

# Sanctions-October 2018- October 2019

- Legal compliance - 42
- Conduct with Students - 152
- Alcohol and Drugs - 40
- Honesty - 139
- Public Funds and Property - 12
- Remunerative Conduct - 3
- Confidential Information - 3

# Sanctions-October 2018- October 2019

- Required Reports - 17
- Professional Conduct - 117
- Testing – 25
- Other-54 (sanction of license in another state, from another licensing agency, other good and sufficient cause)
- Total - 604

# RESA Totals

## **FY 2019**

- CSRA-43
- Chattahoochee-64
- Coastal Plains-33
- First District-86
- Griffin-84
- Heart of Georgia-17
- Metro-631
- Middle Georgia-71
- North Georgia-25

## **FY 2018**

- CSRA-50
- Chattahoochee-29
- Coastal Plains-44
- First District-57
- Griffin-114
- Heart of Georgia-14
- Metro-542
- Middle Georgia-75
- North Georgia-24

# RESA Totals

## FY 2019

- NE Georgia-56
- NW Georgia-54
- Oconee-25
- Okefenokee-26
- Pioneer-47
- SW Georgia-47
- West Georgia-33
- RESA Avg-83.7
- RESA Total-1342
- w/o Metro-47.4

## FY 2018

- NE Georgia-52
- NW Georgia-46
- Oconee-22
- Okefenokee-23
- Pioneer-38
- SW Georgia-53
- West Georgia-38
- RESA Avg-79.5
- RESA Total-1272
- w/o Metro-48.66

# Sanctions

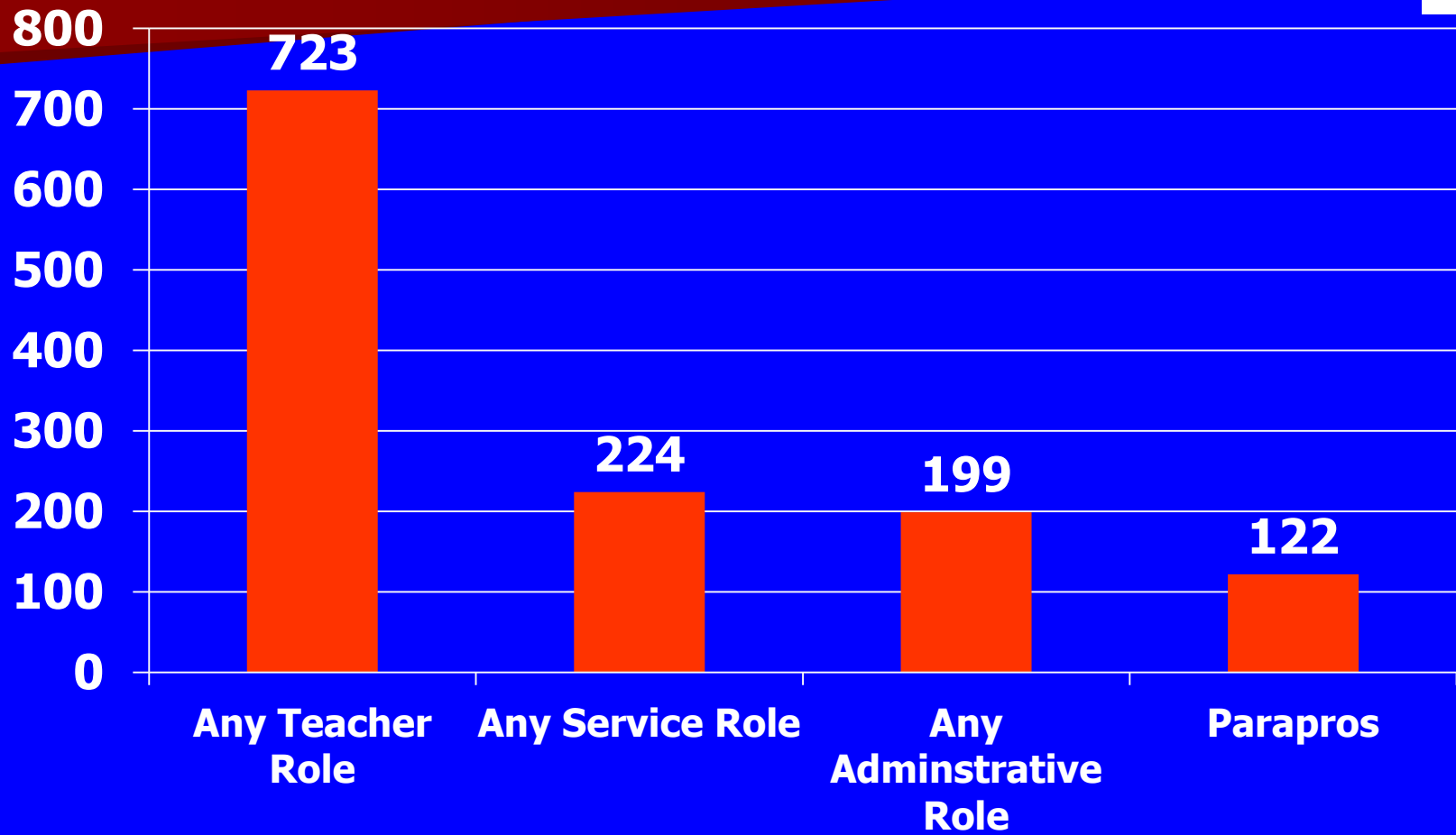
- Warning
- Reprimand
- Suspension-1 day to 3 years
- Revocation
- Denial
- Sanctions are permanent and remain on the certificate
- Suspensions and higher are reported to national database

# Number of Cases by CPI 2019

- CSRA-.007
- Chattahoochee-.015
- Coastal-.007
- First District-.008
- Griffin-.001
- Heart-.009
- Metro-.011
- Middle-.012
- North-.004
- NE-.008
- NW-.005
- Oconee-.02
- Okefenokee-.011
- Pioneer-.007
- SW-.011
- W Ga-.007



# New Cases Opened in FY2019 by Job Role

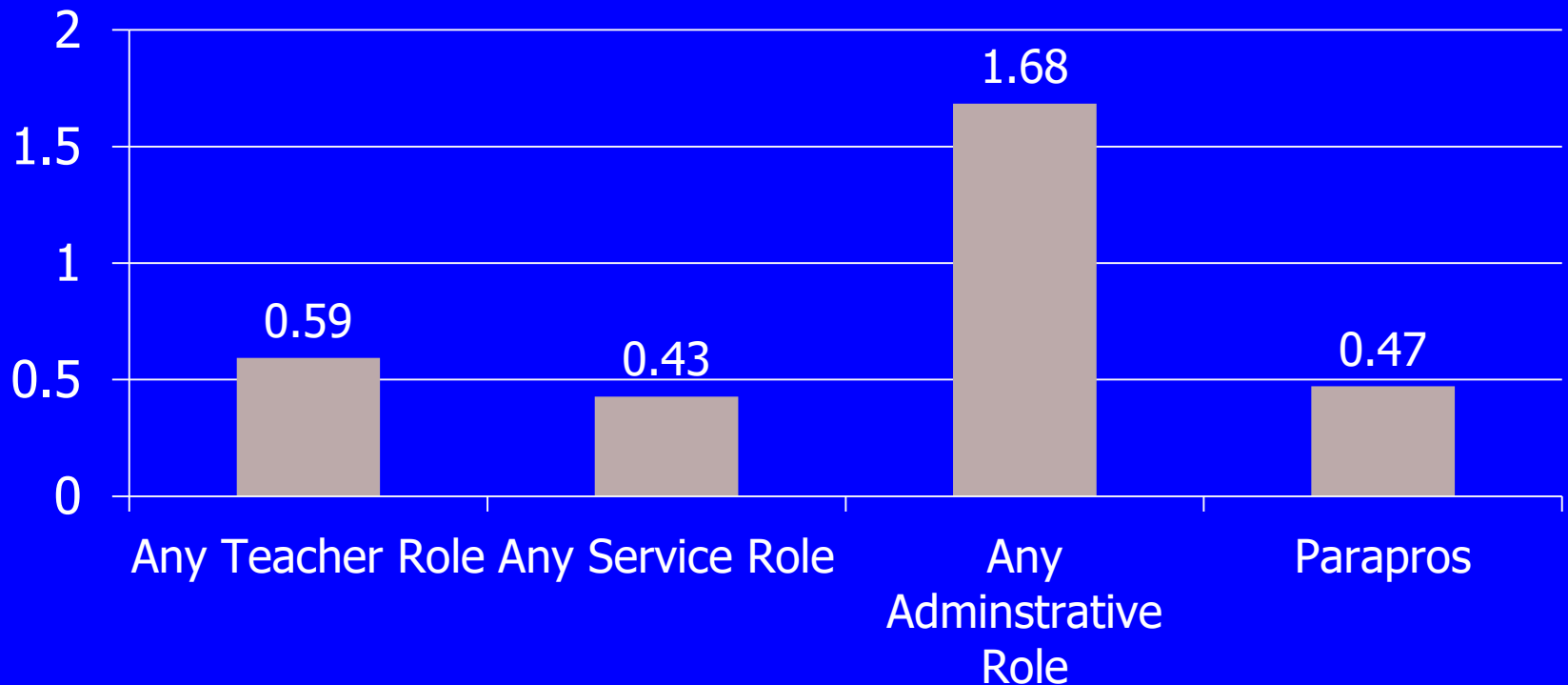






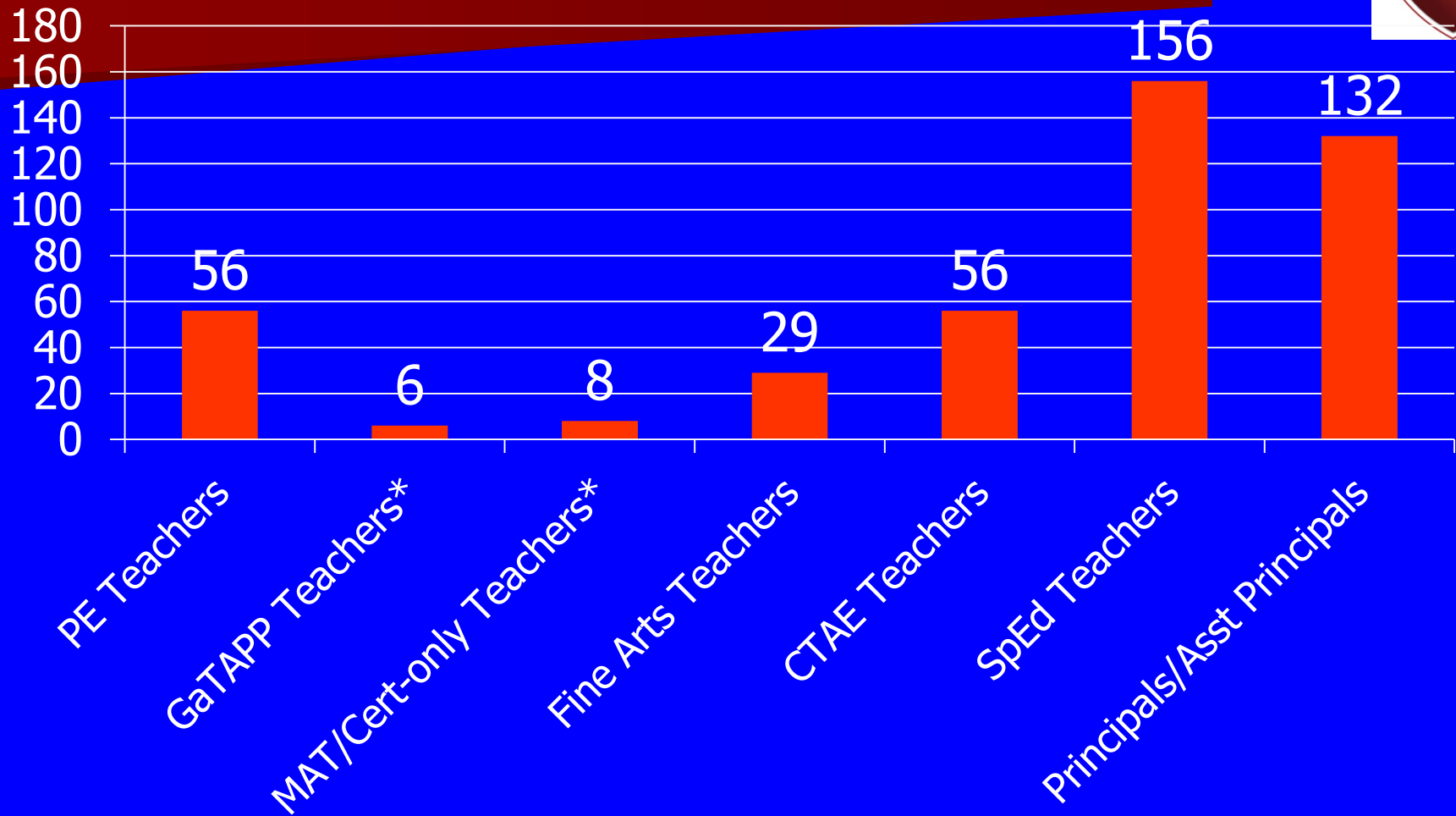
# New Cases Opened in FY2017 by Job Role

## Cases as Percent of Educators in Role



# New Cases Opened in FY2017

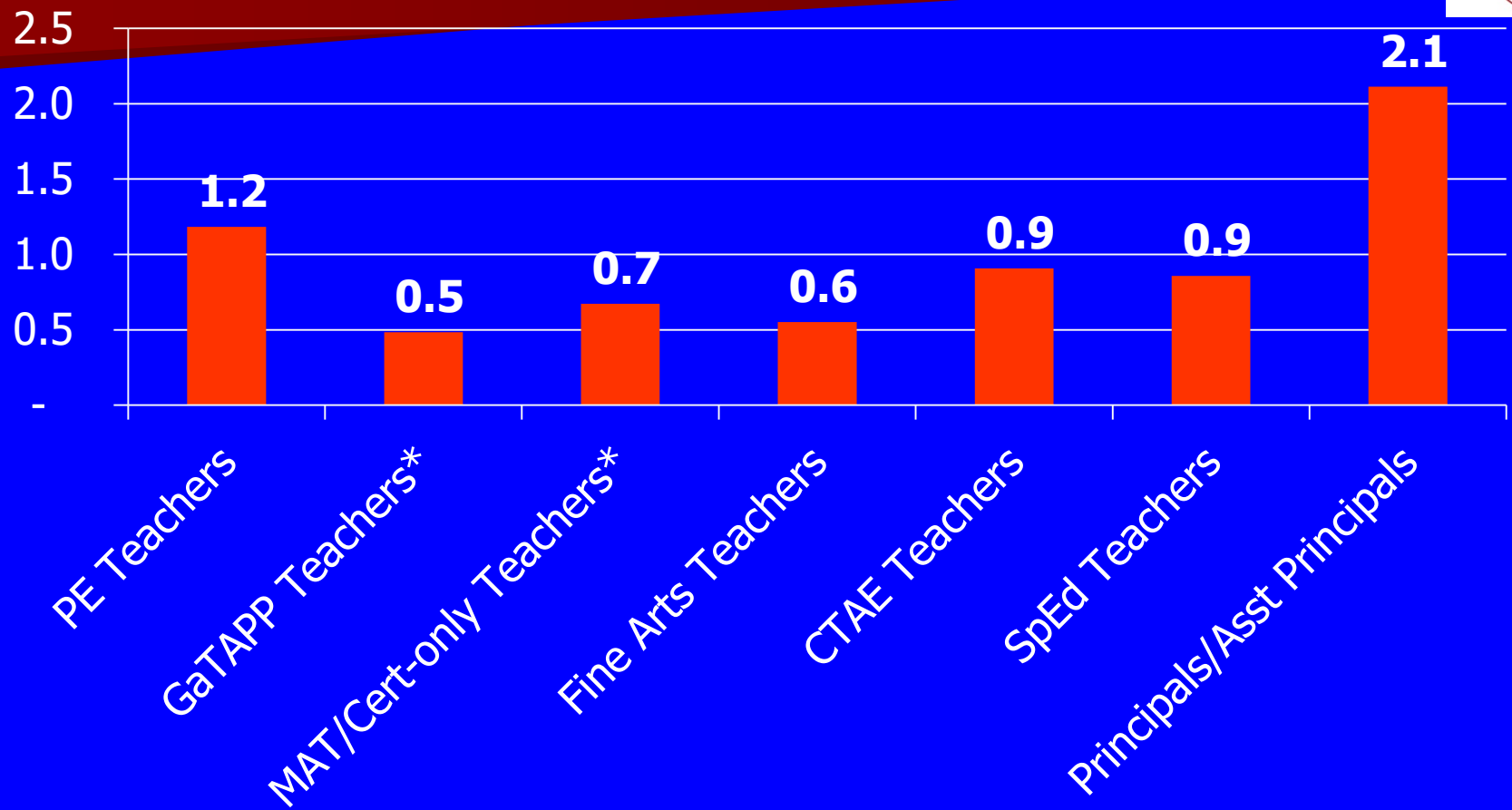
## Select Group



\*Teachers employed in a classroom while enrolled in GaTAPP or in a traditional program pursuing a MAT degree or certification only.

# New Cases Opened in FY2017

## Percentage of Group

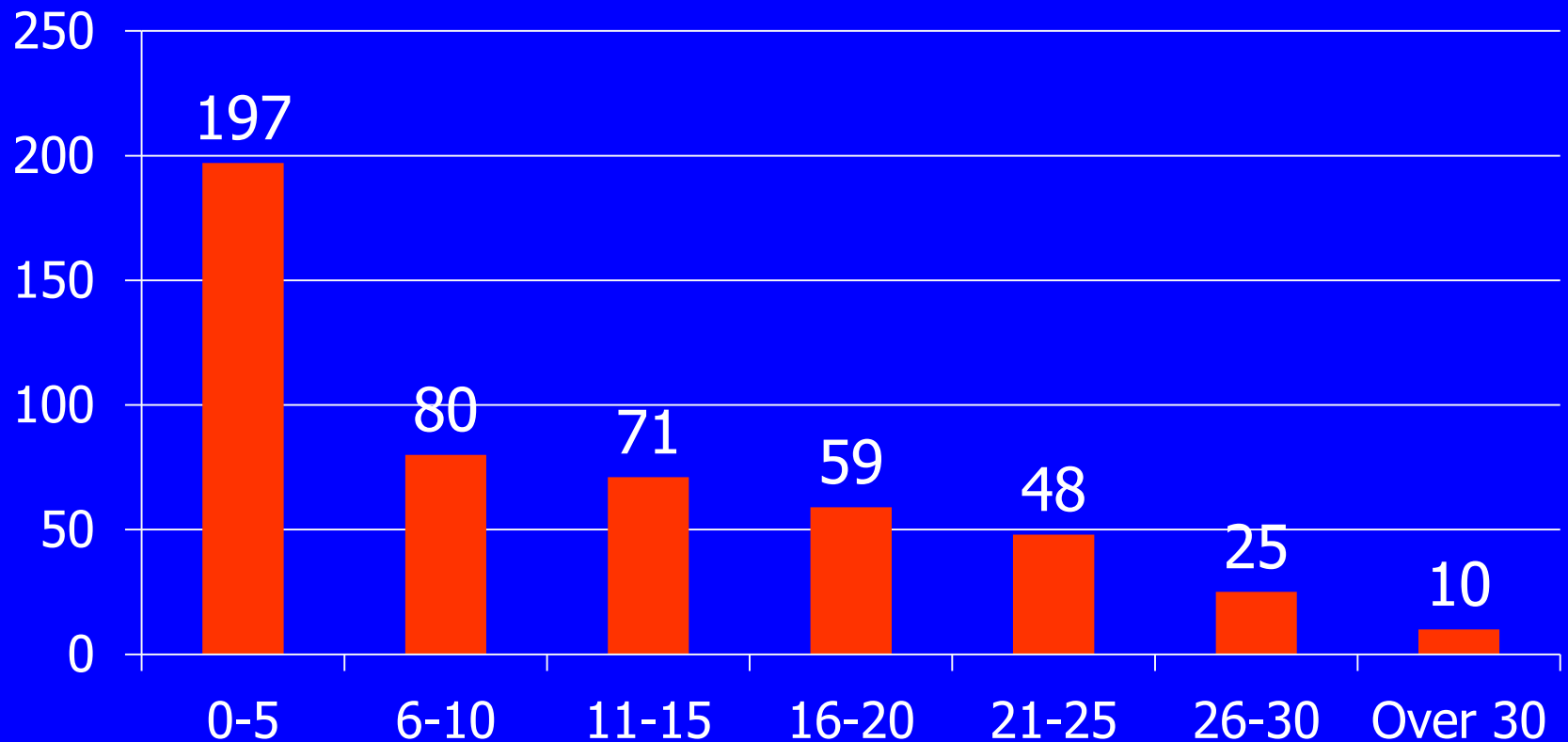


\*Teachers employed in a classroom while enrolled in GaTAPP or in a traditional program pursuing a MAT degree or certification only.



# New Cases Opened in FY2017 by Experience

## Years of Experience Reported by Employing School System



# Test

- Name the 3 richest people in the world
- Name the MVP in last year's super bowl
- Name the most recent winner of the Miss America Beauty contest
- Name the 2 most recently appointed Supreme Court justices
- Name 2 teachers who have impacted your life

# Contact Information

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