

# Georgia Professional Standards Commission



The Code of Ethics for GAEL  
AP Program FY 2021

# 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

# 3 Main Duties of Educators

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

# What is Ethics?





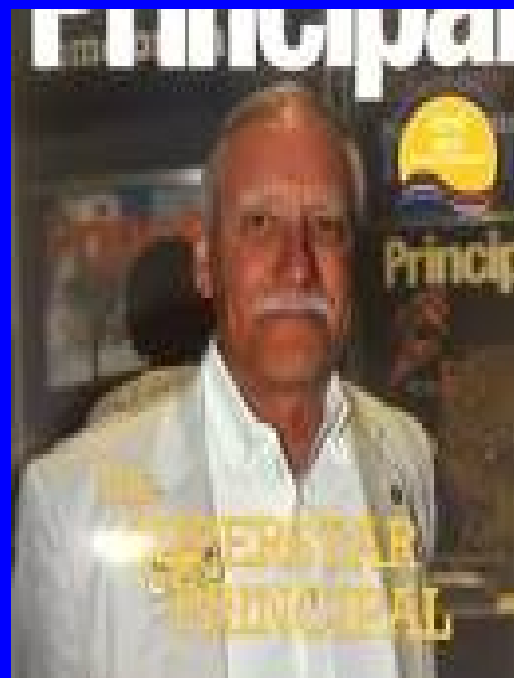
# Ethics

- 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



# Code of Ethics for Georgia Educators

- How many Standards?
- Ten Standards
- Established by the PSC to regulate the conduct of educators in the classroom.

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 was in his vehicle on the side of the road when a deputy stopped to assist him. The deputy smelled marijuana and the educator handed him a small bag of marijuana. Upon conducting a search of the vehicle, a small bottle of five ecstasy pills was found.



# Standard #1 Legal Compliance

- The educator was criminally charged with Pandering (soliciting prostitution). The educator did not voluntarily report his arrest to the school system. He stated he was going to sell someone a scanner. The police report stated the educator willingly engaged with an undercover law enforcement personnel disguised as a prostitute. The educator initiated contact, met the "undercover" at a hotel, exchanged money and touched each other's private parts prior to the arrest

# Standard #1 Legal Compliance

- The educator, a high school paraprofessional, failed to scan several items in the self-checkout lane at Wal-Mart. She was arrested and charged with theft by shoplifting. The amount of merchandise not scanned totaled \$58.

# **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 student was acting out and screaming excessively. The educator, a special education paraprofessional, popped the 5-year old SWD in the mouth and held his head down on a desk.

# Standard #2 Conduct With Students

- The educator, a high school teacher, engaged in grooming behaviors and had inappropriate conversations with multiple students. He spread rumors about a female student making a sexual offer to him and it was reported he made jokes about a student's miscarriage. He made comments about his "pull out game" and a female student reported he made inappropriate comments and touching her while serving as an athletic trainer.

# Standard #2 Conduct with Students

- The educator and another teacher struggled to escort a noncompliant student to the classroom. The student bit the educator on the hand and then the educator bit the student on the hand leaving visible bite marks.

# Student Relationship Guidelines

~~Email~~

~~Phone Calls~~

Be Friendly,  
Not a Friend.

~~Gossip~~

~~Parties~~

~~Photographs~~

~~Inappropriate Jokes~~

# 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

- The educator, a middle school teacher, was suspected of possessing and consuming alcohol while at school. Two teachers reported the educator smelled strongly of alcohol. A bottle containing what smelled like alcohol was found in the educator's desk. A breathalyzer test returned a .04 BAC at 2:12 pm. The educator claims she had mixed drinks the night before and the two witnesses set her up!

# Standard #3 Drugs and Alcohol

- The educator was involved in a single car accident while leaving the parking lot. She drove her car over the roundabout, through the trees and plants, and into the curb. The police interviewed the educator. She admitted to having one drink at lunch and then said she had 3 drinks. After the accident, she drank one more, pouring wine into her Yeti. Later, she recanted her story, stating she consumed wine only after the accident

# Standard #3 Drugs and Alcohol

- The educator was reported to administrators for having changes in her behavior and emotional state after arriving at school. The SRO conducted two field sobriety tests which indicated being under the influence. Administrators asked if they could search her purse and she agreed. They found 3 empty bottles of vodka.

# 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, an elementary teacher, falsified her sick leave reports by claiming her father had a heart attack and required emergency surgery. The educator submitted falsified doctor's excuses which were later verified as forgery.



# Standard #4 Honesty

- The educator, a middle school SWD teacher, signed a student's IEP as attending an IEP meeting for a the student. She created the IEP, modified it a week later, and the document was never signed by the parent which indicated she did not attend. Other school personnel listed in the IEP document stated they had no recollection of attending the meeting.

## 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, a high school music teacher, started a school for the music program and failed to manage it properly. He obtained 94 snack boxes from a private company and was billed \$ 5,899. He disseminated the boxes to students and eventually paid the company \$1100. The school district eventually paid the balance after the educator resigned.

## Standard #5 Public Funds and Property

- A high school teacher and coach used a booster club debit card on multiple occasions for personal use. The educator admitted to using the debit card for personal use and promised to repay the booster club but got preoccupied.

## Standard #5 Public Funds and Property

- A mobile device was synced to the educator's school system laptop. Human Resources requested a forensic analysis and the analysis revealed several inappropriate images on the laptop, including the educator with her breasts exposed.

**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, an elementary music teacher, started private tutoring of one of her students without getting approval of the BOE or administration.
- She told the parent she was not allowed to accept money but she could accept tips
- When questioned, she initially lied about it.

# Standard # 6 Remunerative Conduct

- The educator, a teacher at a private academy, contacted parents and students at the school to let them know she was opening a charter school next year and solicited their enrollment in her school for the next year.
- It was also discovered that she was privately tutoring some of the students and charging a fee.

## 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 invited and allowed his students to view a class list which contained students' names, GPAs, GTIDs, and class rank order.
- A student took a picture of the list and posted it on social media.
- According to the educator, he wanted students to see where they stood amongst their peers so they could apply for scholarships

# Standard # 7 Confidential Information

- A special education teacher posted inappropriate comments about a student on social media
- The educator stated the student was the son of a celebrity and had autism.



## Standard 8

# Required Reports

# 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 rape after a student reported to her that she had been raped by another student.
- Counselor chose not to report it to DFCS because the mother knew about the rape and said the student was receiving treatment

# Standard # 8 Required Reports

- The educator was a high school principal who failed to report alleged inappropriate communication and touching between a teacher and a student while on a field trip to New York
- The teacher kept referencing a movie about two movie characters in a romantic relationship with an age difference of 15 yrs.
- Also, he took the student to a museum exhibit that contained nudity, while talking about penis size.

**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 educator, an elementary teacher, took two selfie photos of her nude breasts in her classroom after school
- She provided the photos to an adult social media website for people with a “teacher fetish”
- It is also alleged she offered to sleep with men in her classroom on the weekends



# Standard #9 Professional Conduct

- The educator, an elementary special education teacher, was caught on an audio recording engaging in unprofessional conduct with two paraprofessionals in a classroom with students present
- She allowed students to wear wet pants for an extended period of time, engaged in conversation about sex and vacations, used profanity, and failed to instruct for hours.

## 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, a high school assistant principal, served as the school test coordinator for EOC testing.
- She failed to follow proper district and state protocol resulting in multiple testing violations.

# Standard # 10 Testing

- The educator, a middle school math teacher, created and distributed to students formula sheets with notes immediately prior to their Georgia Milestone assessment to be used as a guide.
- She stated she did not know it was prohibited for students use these guides.
- The test scores were invalidated.

# 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 Violations

# Other

- A routine check of the NASDTEC database was conducted.
- The Georgia educator's South Carolina certificate was under suspension.
- He failed to report this sanction to the GaPSC
- Upon further investigation, it was determined that he also received a sanction in Maryland

# Other

- On a Georgia application, the educator checked yes to the question, “While under investigation, have you ever left an employment position?”
- The GaPSC asked the educator to provide an explanation.
- No response was received from the educator

# 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
<b>FY 2008</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>FY 2009</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>FY 2010</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>FY 2011</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>FY 2018</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>160</b>

# Sanctions-October 2019- October 2020

- Legal compliance - 44
- Conduct with Students - 156
- Alcohol and Drugs - 39
- Honesty - 110
- Public Funds and Property - 17
- Remunerative Conduct - 2
- Confidential Information - 5



# Sanctions-October 2019- October 2020

- Required Reports - 19
- Professional Conduct - 146
- Testing – 17
- Other-49 (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 2020

- CSRA-43
- Chattahoochee-48
- Coastal Plains-42
- First District-106
- Griffin-90
- Heart of Georgia-9
- Metro-556
- Middle Georgia-68
- North Georgia-14

# 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 2020

- NE Georgia-34
- NW Georgia-44
- Oconee-28
- Okefenokee-10
- Pioneer-28
- SW Georgia-32
- West Georgia-27
- RESA Avg-73.7
- RESA Total-1179
- w/o Metro-42.5

# RESA Percentage 2020

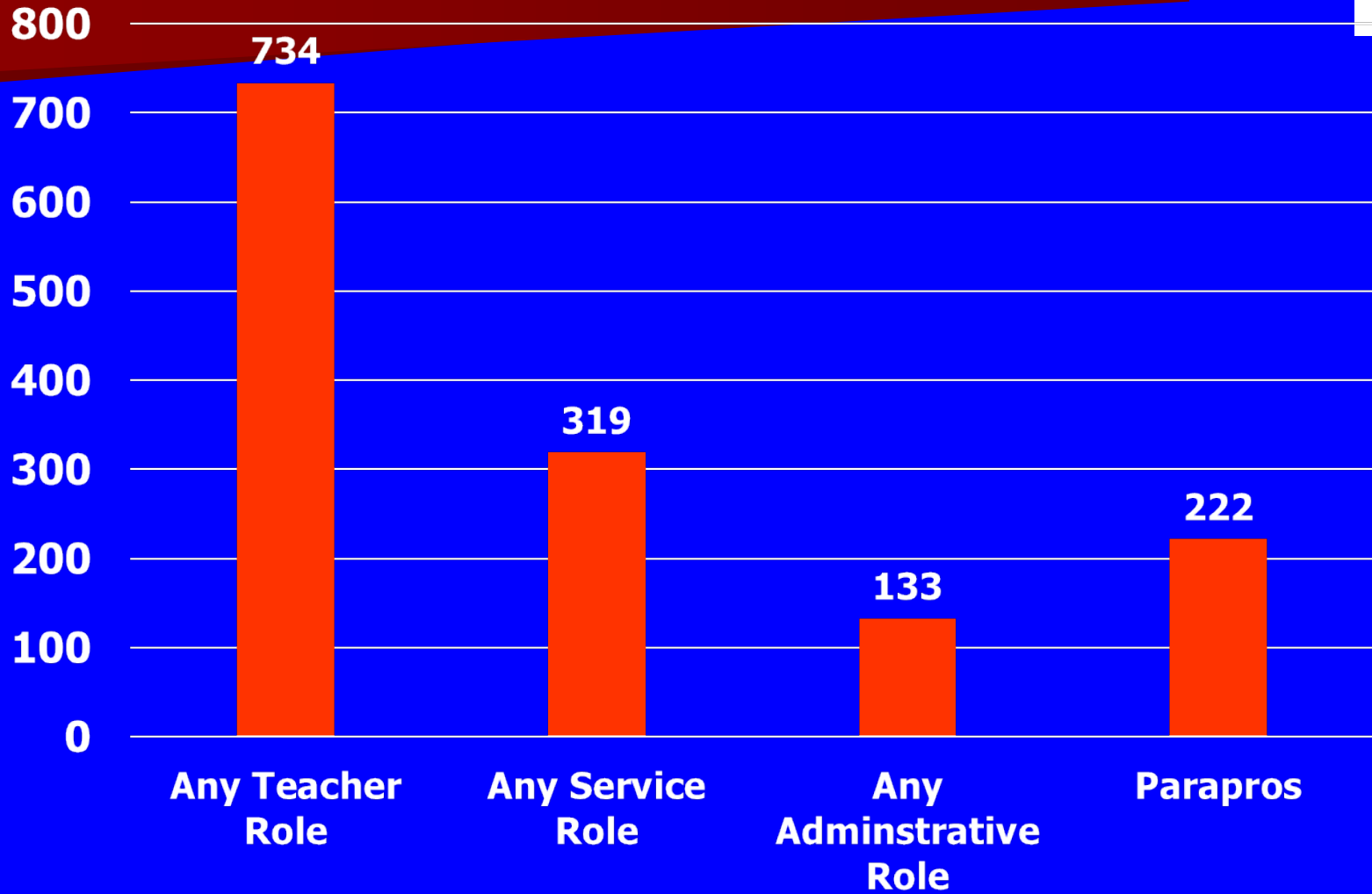
- CSRA-0.7
- Chattahoochee-1.1
- Coastal Plains-0.9
- First District-0.9
- Griffin-1.1
- Heart of Georgia-0.5
- Metro-1.0
- Middle Georgia-1.2
- North Georgia-0.2
- NE Georgia-0.5
- NW Georgia-0.4
- Oconee-2.5
- Okefenokee-0.4
- Pioneer-0.4
- SW Georgia-0.7
- West Georgia-0.5

# 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



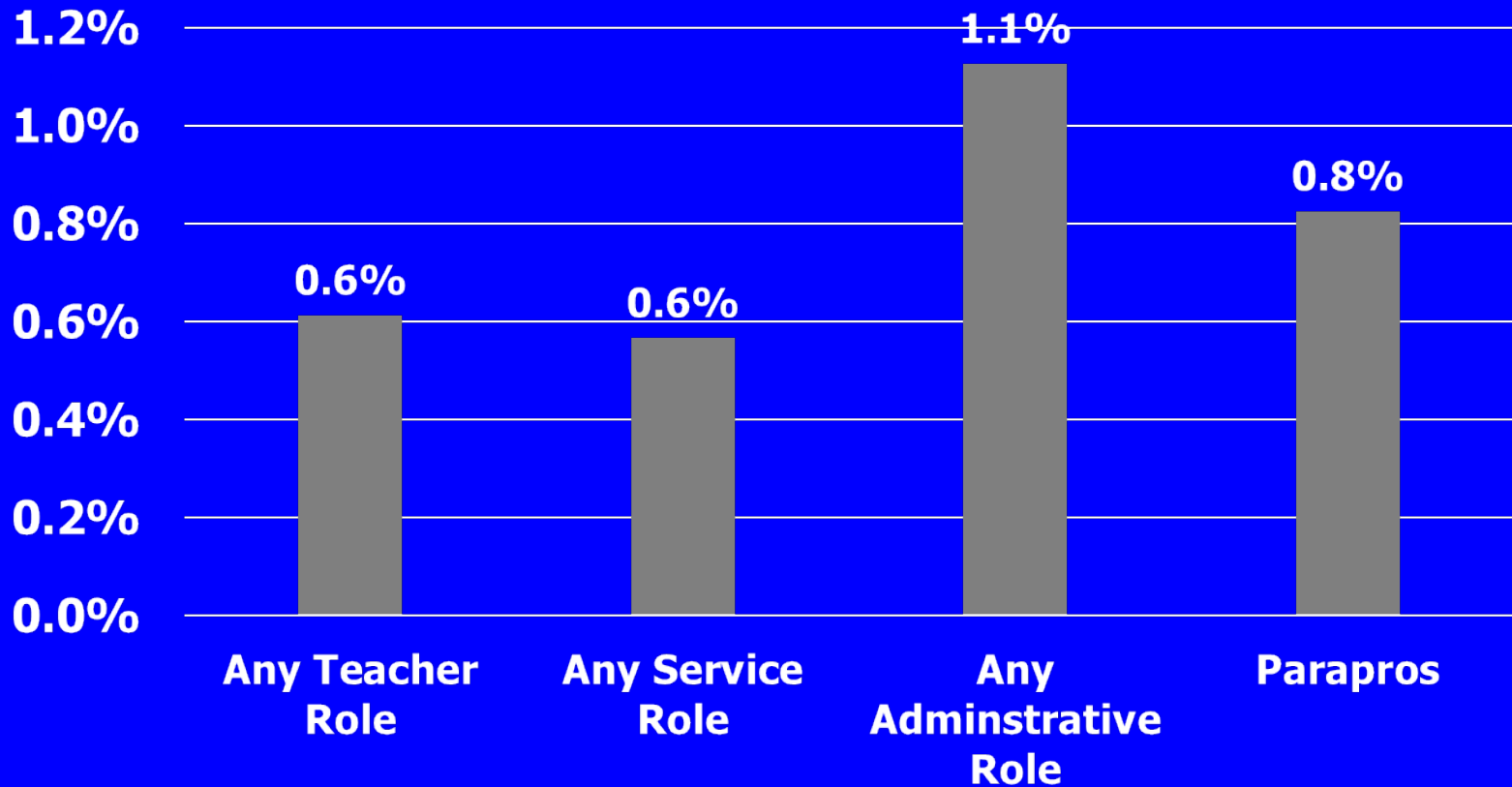
# New Cases Opened in FY2020 by Job Role





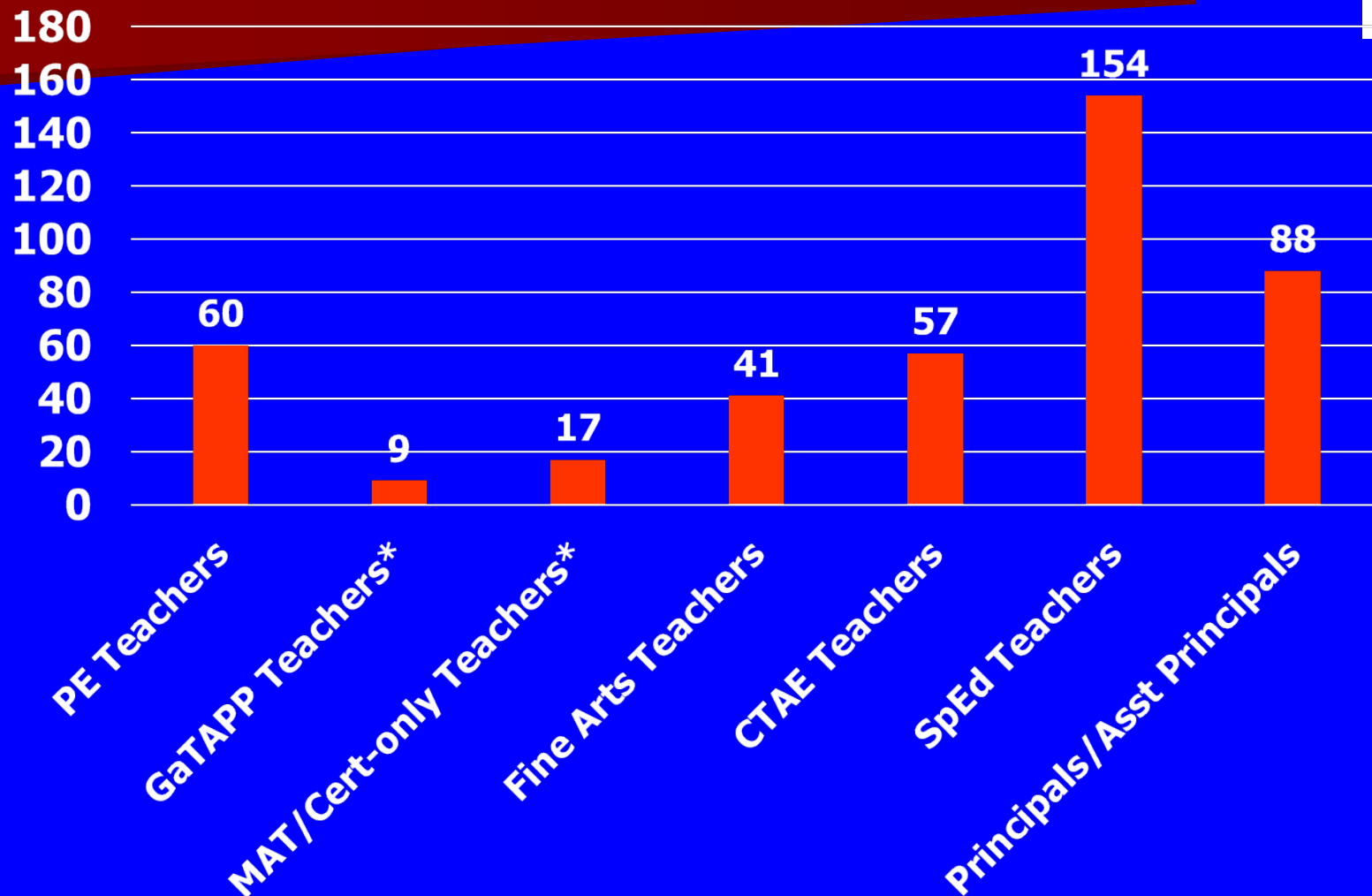
# New Cases Opened in FY2020 by Job Role

Cases as Percent of Educators in Role



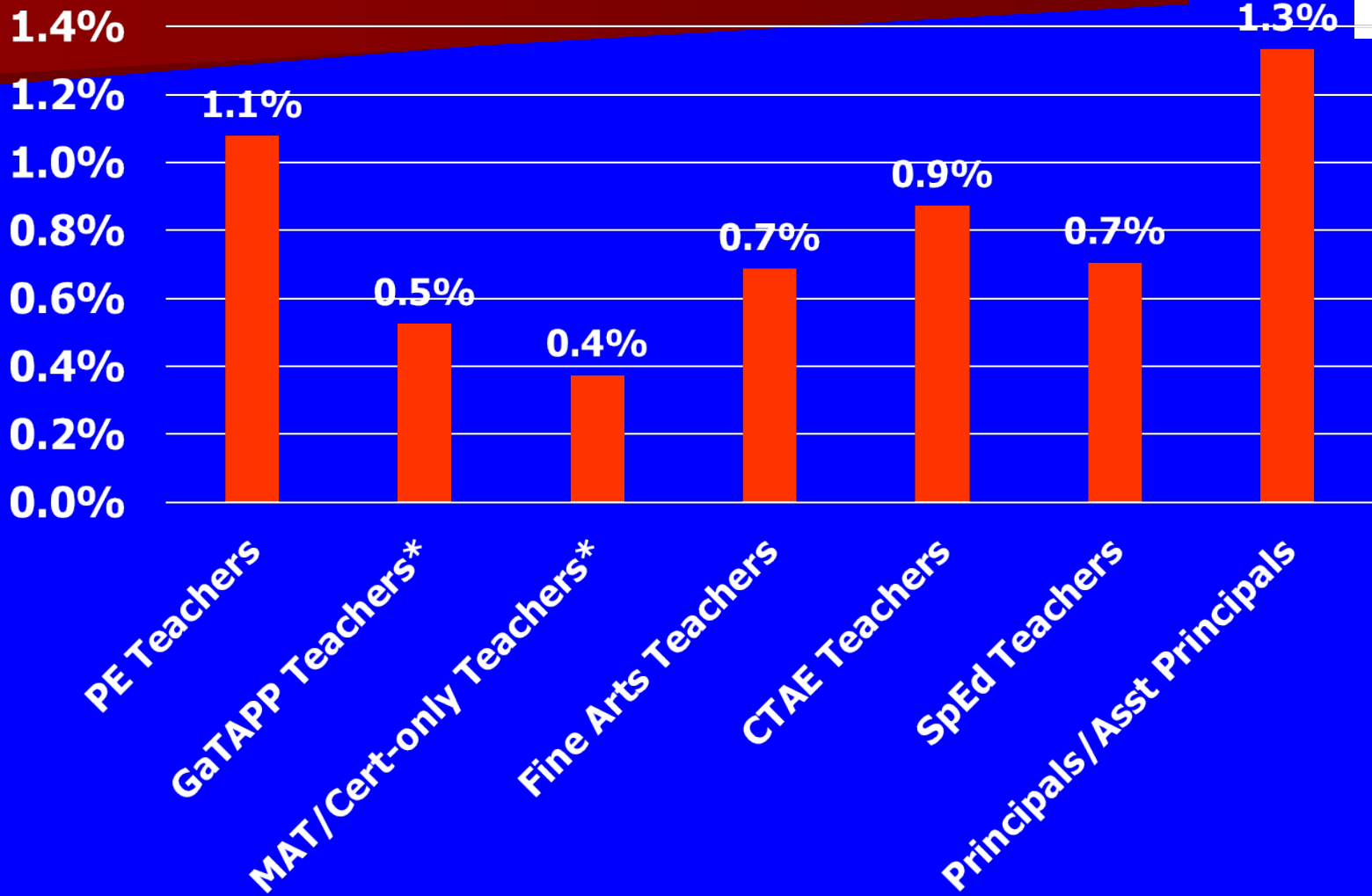
# New Cases Opened in FY2020

## Select Groups





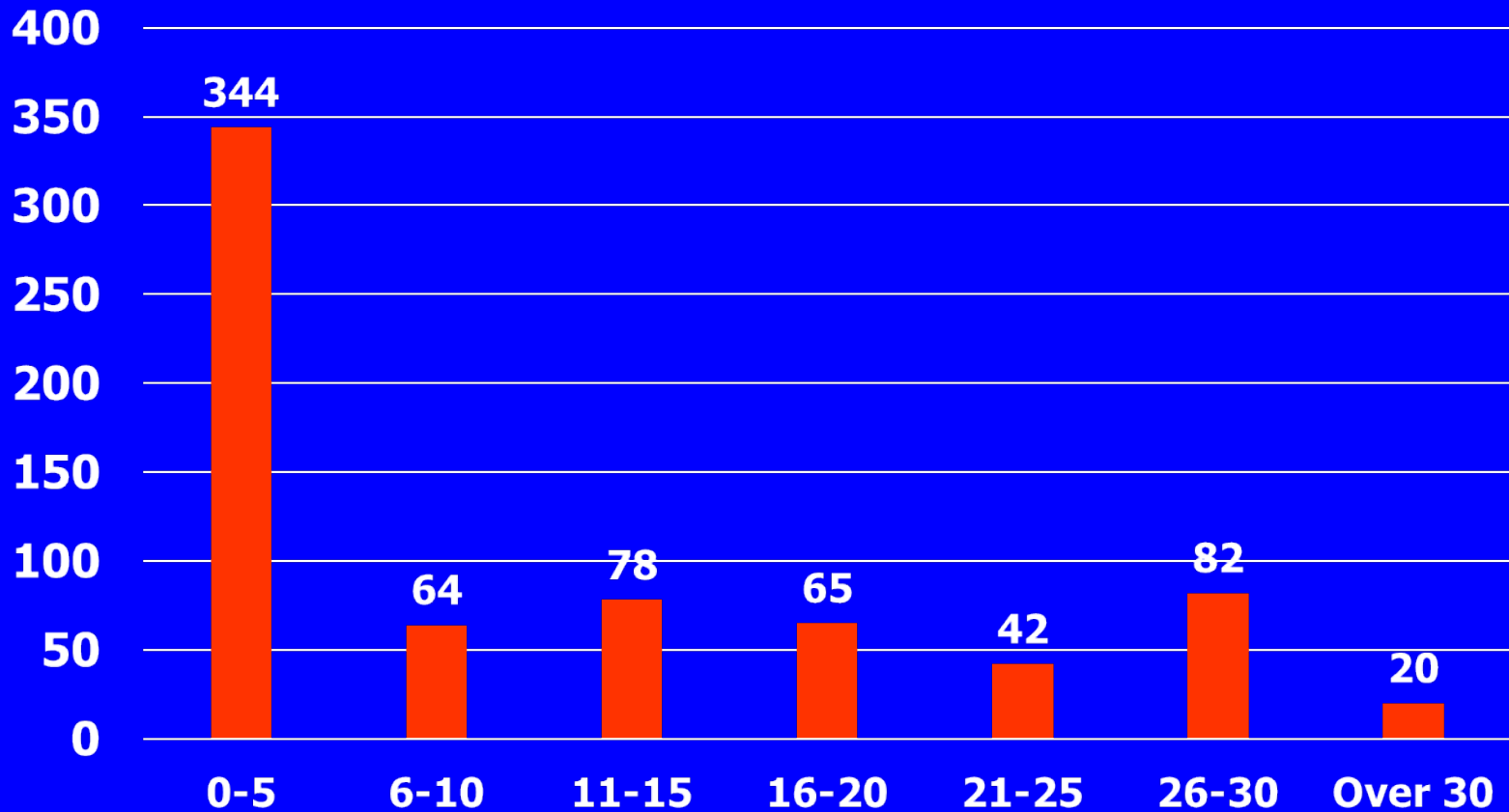
# New Cases Opened in FY2020 Percentage of Group



# New Cases Opened in FY2020 By Years of 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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