

# Georgia Professional Standards Commission



The Code of Ethics for General  
Presentation FY 2022

# 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

- Jeanine Bunn-Henry County
- Barbara Ellingson-White County
- Derek Easterling-Cobb County
- Jordan Frobos-Gainesville City
- Teri Schneider-Forsyth County
- Brandon Seigler-Private School
- 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

# 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:

- ⑩ **a felony or any crime involving moral turpitude.**
- ⑩ **any criminal offense involving a controlled substance or marijuana.**
- ⑩ **any sexual offense specified in Code Section 16.**
- ⑩ **any laws applicable to the profession.**

# Standard #1 Legal Compliance

- A police officer conducted a traffic stop of the Educator's vehicle and smelled marijuana. He began a probable cause search and located drugs, drug paraphernalia, and a handgun in possession of the educator. She was charged with 3 felonies.

# Standard #1 Legal Compliance

- A pre-service certificate holder self reported she was arrested November, 2020 where she got into a verbal and then physical altercation with co-workers which carried over into the parking lot where she ran over one of the co-workers with her vehicle. She claimed she attempted to put on the brakes but hit the accelerator instead and shattered the restaurant's window.

# **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 participated in inappropriate texting and social media with several students discussing student sexual activity and asking them to go out on lunch dates. The educator claimed he was suffering from numerous mental health issues and was receiving help from a therapist

# Standard #2 Conduct With Students

- The elementary paraprofessional grabbed a 7-year old non-verbal SWD and forcefully jerked him off the bleachers. The ligament attached to the radius was pulled away and attached to the elbow

# Student Relationship Guidelines

~~E-mail~~

~~Phone Calls~~

**Be Friendly,  
Not a Friend.**

~~Gossip~~

~~Parties~~

~~Inappropriate Jokes~~

~~Photographs~~

# Student Relationship Guidelines

~~Home~~

**Choose**

~~Auto~~

**Appropriate  
Settings**

~~Dark Room~~

~~Closet~~

## **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 high school teacher, was suspected of possessing and consuming alcohol while at school. A breathalyzer test returned a .259 reading. The educator enrolled in an alcohol treatment center for six months

# Standard #3 Drugs and Alcohol

- The Educator tested positive for marijuana (THC) on November 13, 2020 following a random drug test. The Educator is a teacher and a motor vehicle driver for athletic events for students. The Educator admitted to consuming edibles containing THC that he received from a friend in order to help him sleep

# 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 PSC Certification Division personnel alleged the educator submitted a falsified Approved Program Completion Form to their division. The Certification Division personnel learned the educator sent the Form to a college, and a college employee signed the form but left Section 2 of the form blank at the educator's request. The educator then submitted the Form to the Commission with all sections completed. educator denied forging the approval form

# Standard #4 Honesty

- The educator failed to report her criminal history by answering “No” to the personal affirmation questions regarding criminal history on multiple applications. The disposition revealed the educator was arrested for possession of marijuana less than 1 oz. and possession of alcohol (underage) on 10/05/2003. Later, the educator was arrested for and pled guilty to DUI drugs on 04/09/2008. He served 12 months of probation and paid \$1501

## **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 paraprofessional, served as a class advisor responsible for selling tickets to collect money for prom. In early April, the principal cancelled prom and the school's bookkeeper found the educator had only deposited checks to the prom account. The educator said she was keeping cash in her home safe that she would return once she reconciled it with prom notebook

## Standard #5 Public Funds and Property

- The Educator used his school-issued laptop, while at school and during school hours, to attempt to access various pornographic sites. The Educator admitted to the allegation. The employer school system suspended the Educator without pay for three days and issued a letter of reprimand.

## **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, a high school teacher and cheer coach, violated the school district's code of conduct when she allowed a company owned and operated by her and her husband to provide cheer team services and accept reimbursement from a school booster club, in violation of the school district's policy against it. Her husband received approximately \$15,000

## **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**

- ⑩ 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 is an elementary school teacher. The educator had technical difficulties printing documents at the school. She emailed IEP documents to her husband at his work so he could print them and bring them home to the educator.

# Standard # 7 Confidential Information

- The educator was employed in an administrative capacity at the charter school system and her contract was non-renewed for the 2020-2021 school year. Following the separation of employment, the school discovered evidence that the educator had transferred a number of confidential documents to her personal email when she accessed Infinite Campus

## **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

- The educator was a paraprofessional assigned to a Pre-K teacher. The educator was aware that the elementary school teacher intentionally left a special needs 5-year-old student in feces-soiled undergarments. Witnesses indicated the teacher stated that the reason for doing so was to teach the student a lesson about going to the restroom. The educator failed to intervene and failed to notify the school's administration.

# Standard # 8 Required Reports

- The educator, a high school teacher, failed to properly report the sexual assault of a student by an adult male to the school system. The educator sponsored a band fundraising event at a local public sports stadium. On September 16, 2019, while working at the sports stadium retail shop, an adult male touched a female student's breast twice.

## **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, high school teacher, engaged in a physical altercation with a student over a cell phone. The educator confiscated the student's cell phone, and when the student was leaving the class, he asked to have it returned. When the educator refused, the student reached for the phone, which was in the educator's hands. A struggle ensued which resulted in a cut knuckle and scratched arm.

# Standard #9 Professional Conduct

- The educator, a high school special education teacher, was under contract with the complainant school system during the time frame in question. The educator submitted a letter of resignation on 11/30/20, to be effective 12/18/20. The educator was informed that she would not be released from the contract. The educator's last day of attendance was 12/18/20.

## **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 teacher and test examiner, compromised the integrity of the American Literature and Composition End of Course test. Statements show the educator administered the test without a Test Administration Manual and nine (9) of 25 students tested longer than the allotted time of 90 minutes

# 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

# 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 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
FY 2019	26	134	32	192
FY 2020	28	97	35	160

# Sanctions-June 2020- June 2021

- Legal compliance - 36
- Conduct with Students - 105
- Alcohol and Drugs - 32
- Honesty - 87
- Public Funds and Property - 17
- Remunerative Conduct - 5
- Confidential Information - 4

# Sanctions-June 2020-June 2021

- Required Reports - 18
- Professional Conduct - 111
- Testing – 10
- Other-28 (sanction of license in another state, from another licensing agency, other good and sufficient cause)
- Total – 453
- During Covid-35% decline in cases

# RESA Totals

## FY 2021

- CSRA-33
- Chattahoochee-38
- Coastal Plains-45
- First District-95
- Griffin-89
- Heart of Georgia-22
- Metro-316
- Middle Georgia-64
- North Georgia-22

## 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 2021

- NE Georgia-42
- NW Georgia-60
- Oconee-14
- Okefenokee-14
- Pioneer-32
- SW Georgia-21
- West Georgia-15
- RESA Avg-57.6
- RESA Total-922
- w/o Metro-40.4

## 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 2021

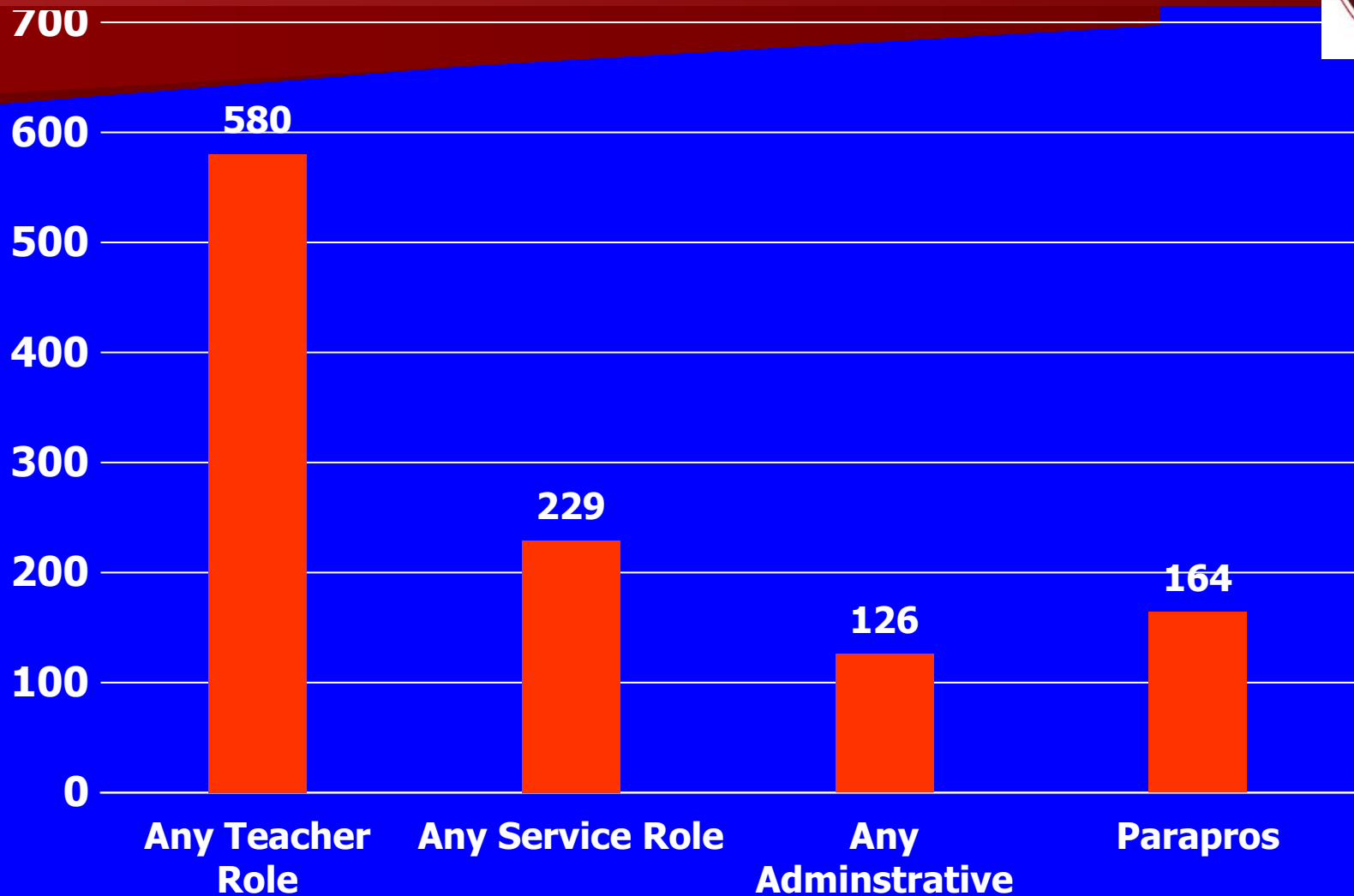
- CSRA-0.5
- Chattahoochee-0.9
- Coastal Plains-1.0
- First District-0.8
- Griffin-1.0
- Heart of Georgia-1.2
- Metro-0.5
- Middle Georgia-1.1
- North Georgia-0.4
- NE Georgia-0.6
- NW Georgia-0.6
- Oconee-1.2
- Okefenokee-0.6
- Pioneer-0.5
- SW Georgia-0.5
- West Georgia-0.3

# 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



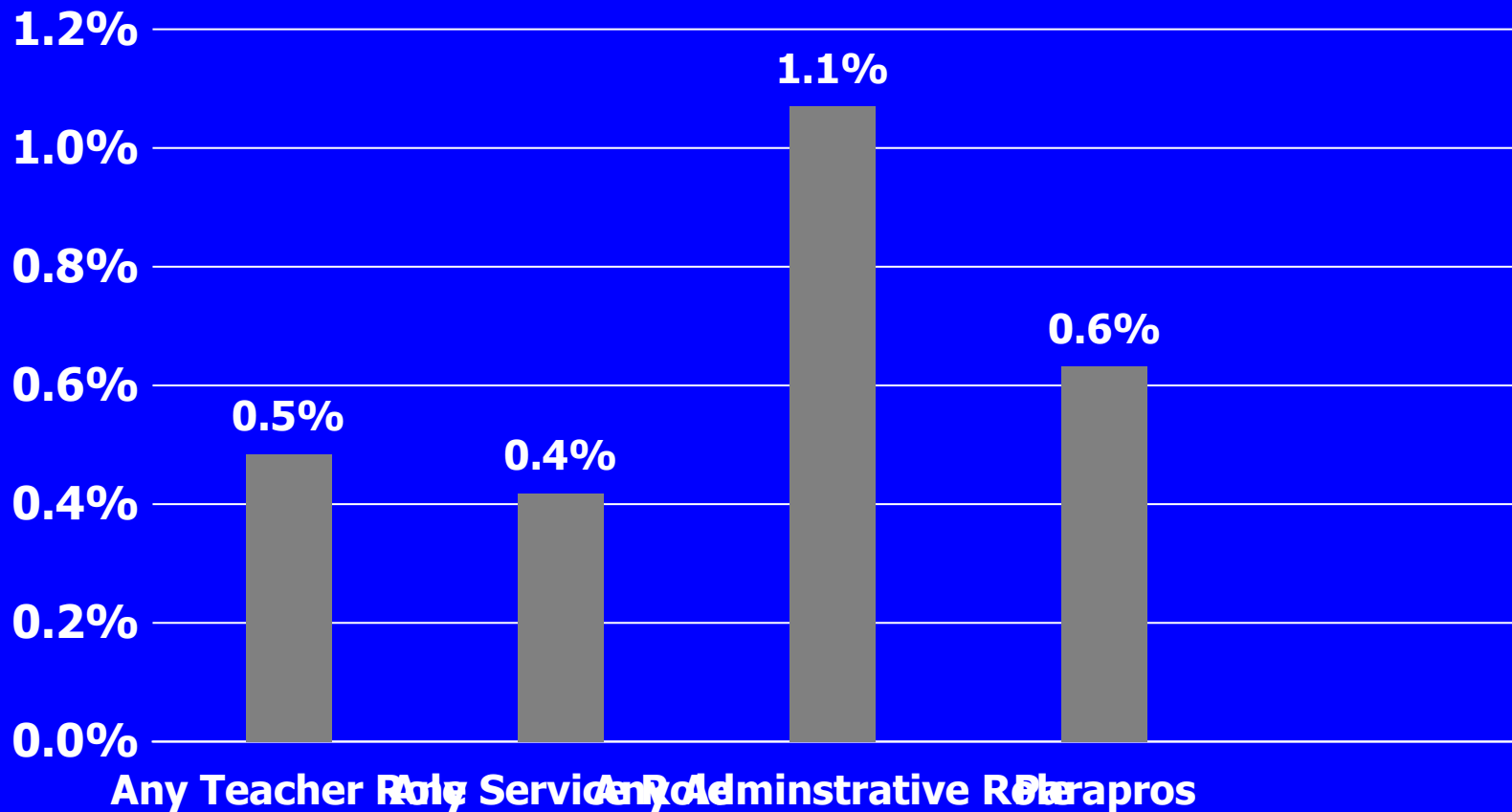
# New Cases Opened in FY2021 by Job Role





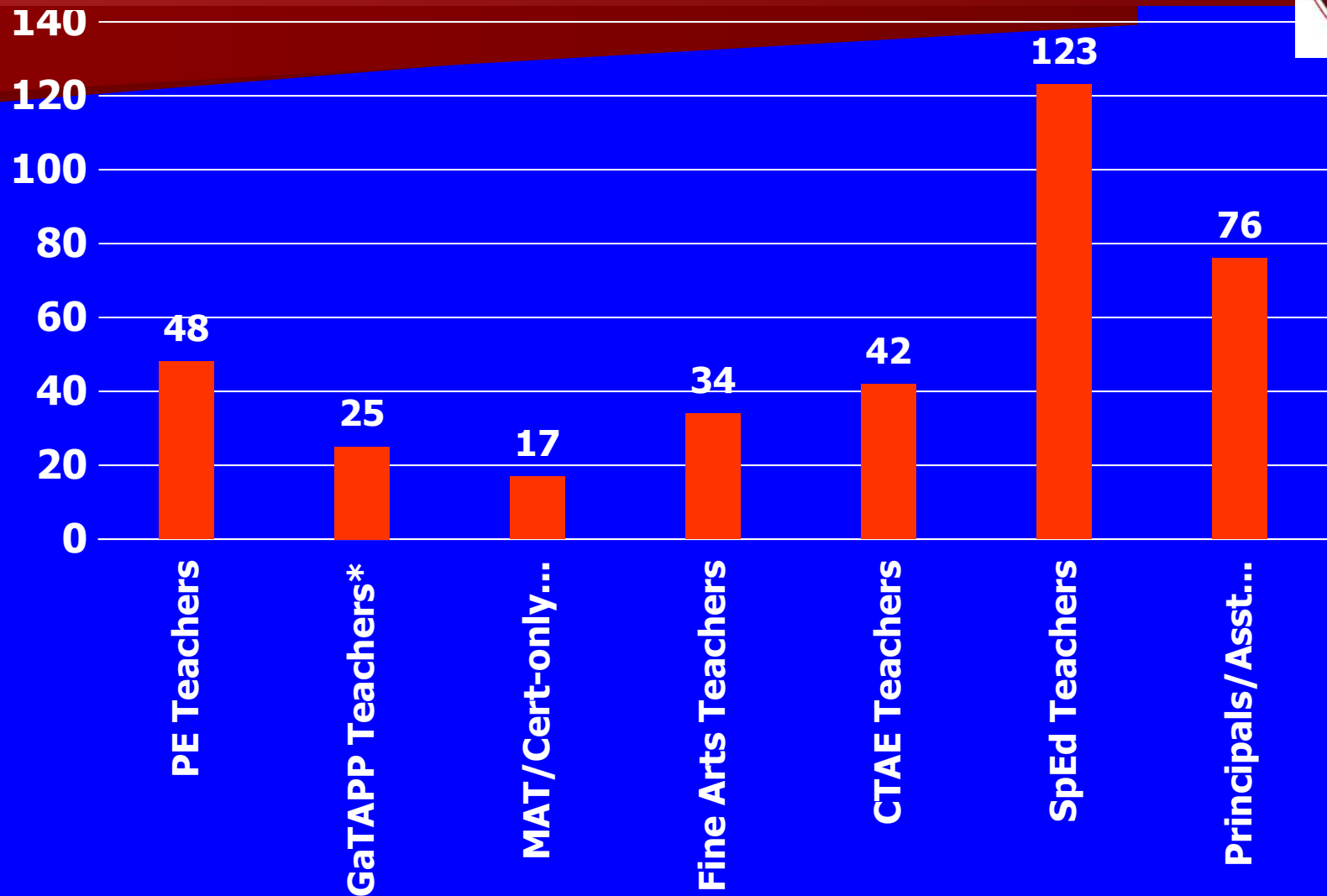
# New Cases Opened in FY2021 by Job Role

Cases as Percent of Educators in Role



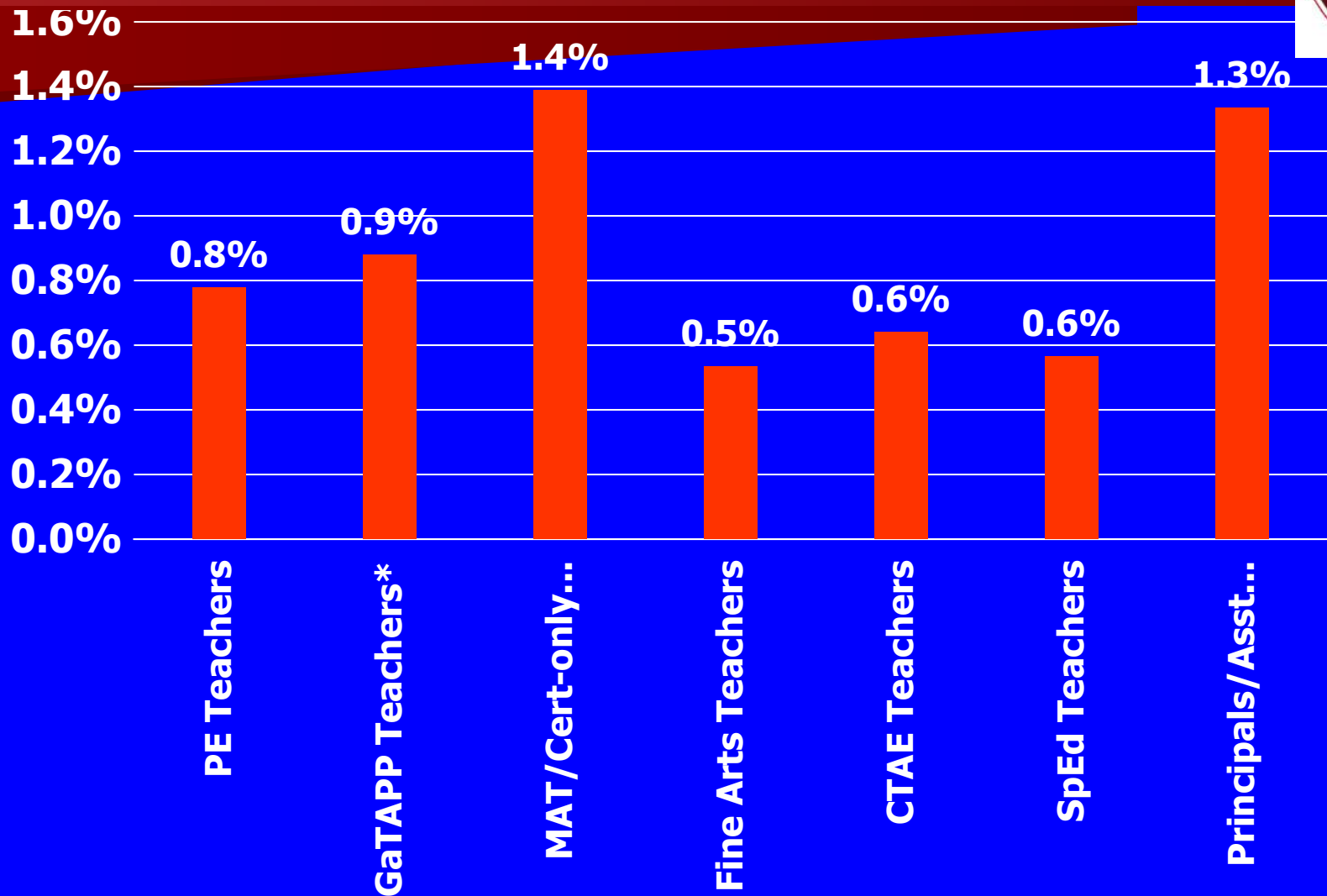
# New Cases Opened in FY2021

## Select Groups



# New Cases Opened in FY2021

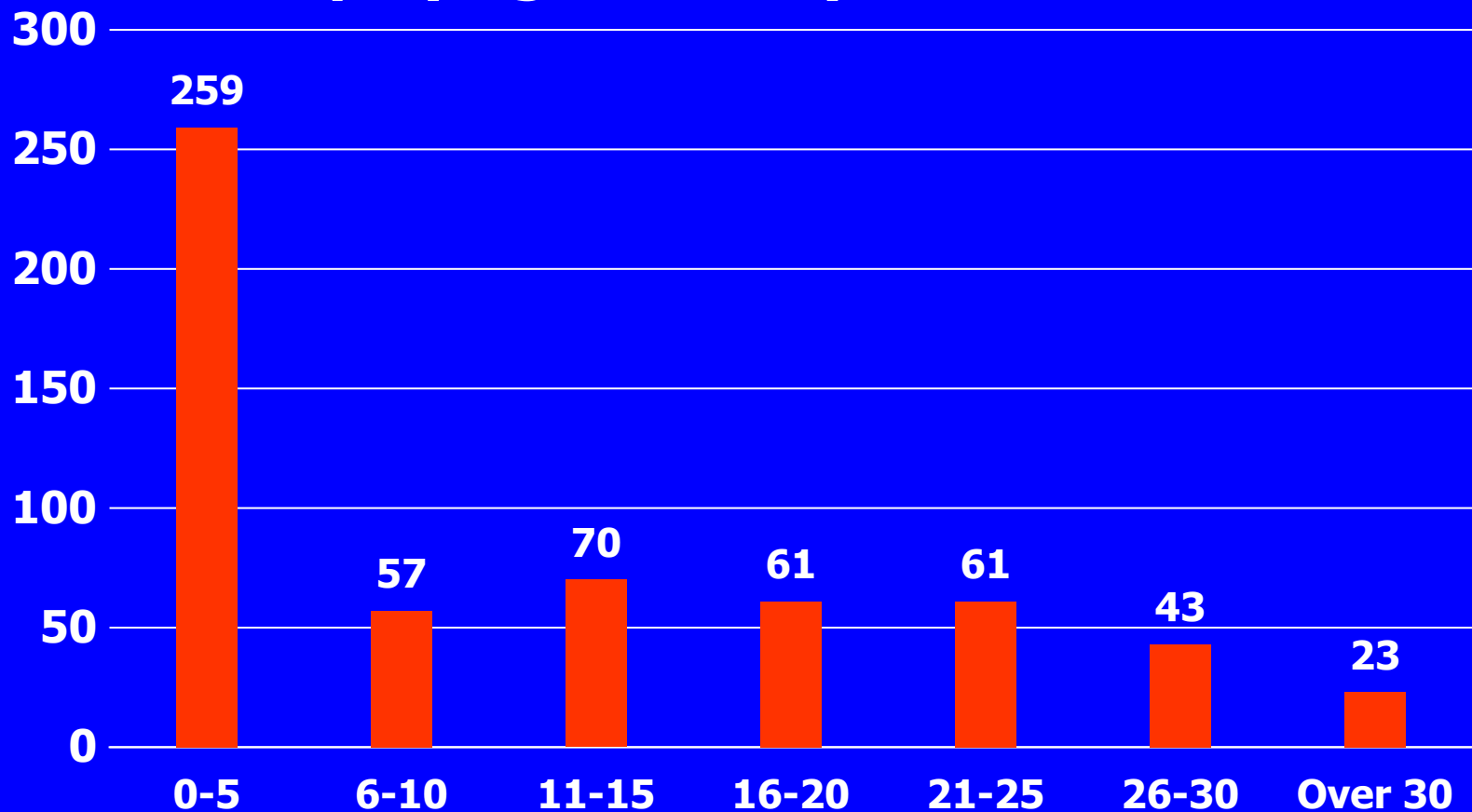
## Percentage of Group



# New Cases Opened in FY2021 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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