

Georgia revamps degree programs for principals

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ATLANTA --- Starting next fall, it will take more than a graduate degree to become a school principal or superintendent in Georgia.

The University System of Georgia has revamped the requirements for graduates from the state's 11 programs for school leaders to include less "seat time" in college classes and more time training in schools. Graduates will have to complete an education specialist degree within five years of getting a master's to receive a principal's license.

The changes are part of a statewide push to improve student achievement and scores on state tests used to comply with the No Child Left Behind law, said Jan Kettlewell, an associate vice chancellor for the university system.

Georgia students mostly scored better this year on the state Criterion Referenced Competency Tests. But math scores remain weak, and Georgia still lags the rest of the country on nationally administered tests.

Graduates under the new program will "have the knowledge and the skills to actually drive change in the school and be able to move the needle from here to there," Ms. Kettlewell said.

For a long time, school leaders simply had to complete a master's degree to become a licensed principal or superintendent in Georgia. But educators say that model no longer works.

"Principals can no longer just sit in the office and make sure the bells are ringing and the buses are leaving," said Jim Puckett, the executive director of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders. "They have to be a curriculum expert, a public relations specialist, an employment coordinator."

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Beginning next fall, the 650 people who graduate from Georgia's school leadership programs each year will have to complete an additional education specialist degree within five years of getting a master's to receive a principal's license from the state.

New administrators will be trained to work actively with teachers to address holes in class lessons that leave children unprepared for tests and advancement to the next grade. They will work one-on-one with mentors who are longtime school administrators to learn lessons that can't be taught in textbooks.

-- **Associated Press**