



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

April 16, 2018

The Honorable Dan Blade Morrish
Chair, Education Committee
119 W Nezpique Street
Jennings, LA 70546-5356

RE: H.B. 676

Dear Senator Morrish:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, I write to recommend an amendment to H.B. 676, which establishes an Early Childhood Care and Education Commission.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 198,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Over 2,900 of our members reside in Louisiana.

ASHA recommends that a speech-language pathologist (SLP) be added to the public member component of the commission created in HB 676. SLPs are uniquely educated and trained to provide services to families and their children who are at risk for developing, or who already demonstrate, delays or disabilities in language-related play and symbolic behaviors, communication, language, speech, emergent literacy, and/or feeding and swallowing behavior. These services help children acquire language and enable individuals to recover essential skills to communicate about their health and safety, to swallow adequate nutrition safely, and to have sufficient attention, memory, and organizational skills to function in their environment.

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, only 29% of America's 8th grade public school students meet the National Assessment of Educational Progress standard of reading proficiency for their grade level.¹ ASHA's Ad Hoc Committee on the Roles and Responsibilities of the School-Based Speech-Language Pathologist noted that SLPs contribute significantly to the literacy achievement of students with communication disorders, as well as other learners who are at risk for school failure or those who struggle in school settings.²

SLPs complete a comprehensive education program that meets rigorous standards of practice based on objective methodology, which includes the following:

- A master's or doctoral degree with 75 semester credit hours in a course of study addressing the knowledge and skills pertinent to the field of speech-language pathology, as determined, validated, and systematically updated using a skills validation process.

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- A minimum of 400 clock hours of supervised clinical experience in the practice of speech-language pathology, with supervision provided by individuals holding the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC).
- A passing score, determined by a cut score analysis, on a national examination administered and validated by the Educational Testing Service.
- Completion of a supervised Clinical Fellowship to meet the requirements of the CCC, the recognized standard in the field.
- State licensure (SLPs are regulated in all 50 states and the District of Columbia).
- Completion of 30 hours of professional development activities every three years.

For all of the above reasons, ASHA recommends that an SLP be added to the public member component of the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission.

Thank you for your consideration of ASHA's recommendation to H.B. 676. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director of state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,



Elise Davis-McFarland, PhD, CCC-SLP
2018 ASHA President

¹ Alliance for Excellent Education. (2009). *Adolescent literacy fact sheet*. Retrieved from www.all4ed.org/publication_material/fact_sheets/AdLit_FactSheet.

² American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2010). *Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists in Schools*. Retrieved from <https://www.asha.org/policy/PI2010-00317/>.