



State Board for Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology
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BOARD MEETING NOTES

Date: Friday, September 19, 2025
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: Albany Office and via WebEx

In Attendance:

Heather Pyke, Speech-Language Pathologist, Chair
Joe Pellegrino, Audiologist
Denise Cruz, Speech-Language Pathologist
Nathalia Fonseca, Speech-Language Pathologist
Brianna Hammerle, Speech-Language Pathologist
Melissa Fenice, Speech-Language Pathology (Remote)
Ianthe Dunn-Murad, Audiologist (Absent)
Michael Curro, Audiologist (Absent)

Renee McLean, Office of Special Education
Elina Tsenter, Office of Special Education
Callee Carpenter, Office of Special Education
Kellie Murphy, Executive Secretary
Christina Amato, Education Program Assistant
Eric Andrus, Education Program Analyst

Meeting was called to order at 10:00am.

Introductions were given including our new board member Brianna Hammerle, and Murphy explained we added another audiologist, Michael Curro, who was unable to attend today as he was only just recently appointed.

The Office of Special Education joined the meeting for a presentation from the preschool policy unit. The presentation focused on their role of providing assistance related to services and programs for disabilities including policy and guidance; technical assistance; professional development, and; monitoring. Mainly the discussion focused on Indicator 6 of the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report which are required to be in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities and Education Act (IDEA). Indicator 6 speaks to when a child with a disability aged 3, 4, and 5 enrolled in a preschool program may be removed from the classroom to receive services. The targets for 2025 include more than 50% of students attending a regular early childhood program receive the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program with less than 20% of students attending separate special education classes, separate schools or residential programs. Pull out services do not count toward indicator 6.

The Board agreed that when able it is best for the student to remain with their peers and push in services can provide social and emotional benefits; however, there are some services that need to be pulled out for speech specifically articulation and apraxia. There were recommendations that pull out for services to learn and then transition to push in may assist schools in meeting the indicator. Creating more collaborative spaces between teacher and service provider to allow for special class integrated setting programs. The board recommended more support for professional development in

this area for both professionals and teachers. Those who provided services to students in this targeted population would require a teacher credential and license. Further, anyone who offers bilingual services would need the teacher certification- bilingual extension. The Office of Special Education provided contact information to provide direct feedback, and the conversation will remain ongoing as needed.

The meeting minutes from November 8, 2024, February 8, 2025, and May 2, 2025, were reviewed; The minutes were moved to approval by Pellegrino with a second by Cruz. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously with Hammerle abstaining.

Murphy provided updates on joint efforts to remove the requirement for the practical examination for the Hearing Aid Dispenser license for NYS Audiologists. This also removes the fee for the practical exam for those who hold a NYS Audiologist license. Murphy also shared that over the summer the Center for Medicaid Services stopped accepting the Limited License for reimbursement purposes but reversed this decision due to ASHAs advocacy efforts.

The Board discussed a statement regarding bilingual services which provided guidance and best practices for Speech Language Pathologists to provide bilingual services. Some changes were recommended. Murphy will make those changes and share the revised statement with the Board ahead of the next meeting.

Murphy shared that the Professional Assistance Program (PAP) is seeking new members. The Professional Assistance Program is a confidential, treatment-based alternative to disciplinary program available to professionals whose actions have not resulted in patient harm. It allows the licensee to voluntarily surrender their license(s) while seeking substance abuse treatment. Further information was shared with the Board regarding the PAPs recruitment efforts in the event they may know of a licensee who would like to become a committee member.

Murphy shared some of the number of new licenses issued in Speech and Audiology for 2022, 2023, and 2024. It appears for both professions the number of new licenses issued is trending downward although the number of new graduates within New York State Audiology programs is stable, new graduates in Speech are also trending downward. The Board noted that SUNY Buffalo is not accepting a new cohort for their Audiology program, although this may be due to the re-working of the curriculum. Some of the issues that were discussed that may contribute to this trend are: difficulty finding placements for Clinical Fellows, awareness of the professions and the services they provide, lack of eligibility for graduate loans as these professions are not seen as professional programs to exceed the graduate loan cap, and student's return on investment. Conversations will continue as the Board seeks to address this trend while the state suffers from a workforce shortage in these areas.

Resources were shared and reviewed as a board regarding professional discipline and the Board Members role. The Board expressed interest in having a member of the Professional Discipline team come and speak to them regarding the process for further board member development.

The Board discussed the role of a Teacher of Students with Speech and Language Disabilities in Early Intervention Services. Currently, to provide speech services in early intervention, a Speech-Language Pathologist license is required. Due to the workforce shortage, there was discussion about the use of TSSLDs or Speech Assistants. Speech Therapy Assistants are not a recognized title in New York State and Teacher of Students with Speech and Language Disabilities are designed to be utilized in teaching environments including center-based 4410 schools. A statutory change would be required to either acknowledge and use assistant personnel or to allow TSSLDs to provide services in early intervention.

Murphy provided an update on Limited Licenses. At the time of the meeting our Division of Professional Licensing Services reviewed applications and worked on documents received September 10th. Once all documents are received a limited license is typically issued within 1-2 weeks. Currently there are 206 active limited licenses and 277 were issued within the past year; however, some of those applicants received their full license and no longer required the limited license.

During open discussion it was shared that the State of Oregon professionals are no longer paid per visit but are required to be salaried.

A question arose regarding observation hours and the ability to complete these hours virtually. Currently ASHA requires 25 observation hours, 12 can be virtual. It was unclear if Audiologists have the same observation hour requirement. Murphy will follow-up with ASHA regarding this question and report back to the board at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00pm. Next meeting is scheduled for December 5th 2025.