



February 15, 2023

RE: HB124

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I write to support HB 124, with recommended amendments, which makes certain speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists eligible for the Teacher Salary Supplement Program providing an annual \$4,100 supplement.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 223,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students. Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. SLPs identify, assess, and treat speech, language, swallowing cognitive communication disorders. Over 1,700 ASHA members reside in Utah.¹

ASHA supports the language in Section 3F-2-504, Teacher Salary Supplement Program, which adds SLPs with a master's degree or higher in speech-language pathology, as well as audiologists with a master's degree or doctoral degree in audiology, to those categories of individuals eligible to receive an annual salary supplement. However, ASHA does not support the language in this Section under B (v) providing the supplement to SLPs with a "bachelor's degree major" and recommends removing this language.

SLPs and audiologists working in school settings often face high caseloads and high volumes of paperwork while working with a range of students that may be facing complex communication disorders or may be considered medically fragile.² Additionally, in school settings these practitioners may have to take on duties outside of their normal scope due to personnel shortages.³ Schools may have challenges with recruitment and retention because of the daily challenges these professionals face in this workplace setting.

SLPs are uniquely educated and trained to assess and treat speech, language, swallowing, and cognitive communication disorders in children and adults. These services help children acquire language and enable people 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.

ASHA maintains that all SLPs should complete the comprehensive educational requirements below, which does not apply to those with a bachelor's degree, meeting rigorous standards of practice based on objective methodology:

- 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.
- 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 professional development hours every three years.⁴

For audiologists, ASHA maintains that these professionals should meet the following standards:

- A doctoral degree in audiology from a program accredited by the Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA), a program in CAA candidacy status, or equivalent, which qualifies them for the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC).
- Pass the national examination adopted by ASHA.
- Completion of a supervised clinical practicum to meet the requirements of the CCC.
- State licensure (audiologists are regulated in all 50 states and the District of Columbia).
- Completion of 30 professional development hours every three years.⁵

Providing an annual \$4,100 supplement helps to ensure enhanced recruitment and retention of highly qualified professionals who serve those most in need in the Utah schools.

Thank you for considering ASHA's support and recommended amendments to HB 124. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director, state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Augustine, PhD, CCC-SLP
2023 ASHA President

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *Utah* [Quick Facts].

<https://www.asha.org/siteassets/uploadedfiles/advocacy/state-fliers/utah-state-flyer.pdf>.

² American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). 2022 School Survey: SLP Caseload and Workload Characteristics. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/surveys/2022-schools-survey-slp-caseload.pdf>.

³ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). 2022 School Survey: SLP Workforce and Work Conditions. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/surveys/2022-schools-survey-slp-workforce.pdf>.

⁴ Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2018). *2020 Standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology*. www.asha.org/certification/2020-SLP-Certification-Standards.

⁵ Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2018). *2020 Standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology*. www.asha.org/certification/2020-Audiology-Certification-Standards/.