

# The STAMP Report from Texas



Lisa Milliken, MA, CCC-SLP  
Texas StAMP

## ASHA's State Advocates for Medicare Policy (**StAMP**) Network

The mission of the State Advocates for Medicare Policy (StAMP) Network is to enhance and perpetuate the advocacy, leadership, and communication of ASHA members at the state level to influence administrative and public policy decisions that impact Medicare coverage and reimbursement of audiology and speech-language pathology services.

My role in  
our State as  
the ASHA  
StAMP

- Attend monthly ASHA calls with other StAMPs
- Advocate for Medicare coverage and reimbursement of AUDs & SLPs
- Know current status and interpretations of the local Medicare Administrative Contractor
- Share resources with TSHA members
- Always be ready for the next call or request!

Issues I have  
been  
addressing as  
the ASHA  
StAMP

- Educate members
- Work with other TSHA committees and management office on healthcare & Medicare-related projects
- Field calls and emails of members
- Assist university clinics with Medicare billing

## Project Details

- Teach courses at state convention, w/courses on Medicare billing, coding, documentation, etc.
- Work with the TSHA Medical committee to further address billing questions of healthcare members
- Work with Business management committee to address billing issues
- Submit articles to TSHA's Communicologist on Medicare-related topics

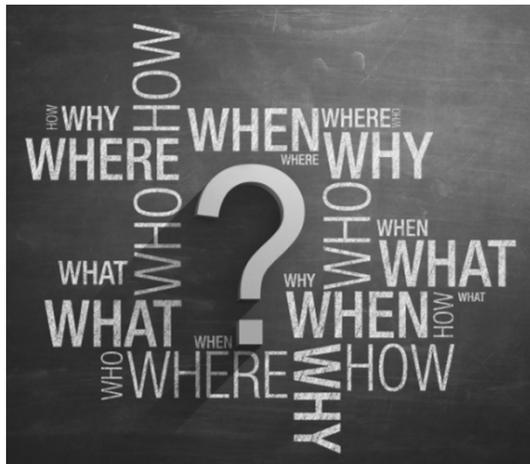
## Projects Continued

- Field calls and email of members throughout the year to address questions
- Assist university clinics with Medicare billing:
  - Survey of needs
  - Planned TSHA sponsored webinar to teach/mentor clinics and supervising clinicians on Medicare billing and documentation protocols
  - Respond to calls from university clinic directors

How I  
communicate  
ongoing projects  
& tasks with my  
State Association  
Board?

This changes, based on the  
current board's requests:

- Quarterly reports to Board
- Update presentation at  
the annual TSHA Executive  
Council Meeting
- Share feedback with  
President and Board  
members upon request



Questions &  
discussion on  
any StAMP  
topics will be  
welcomed at  
our Roundtable  
meetings today  
at 3:30

## Salary Supplement Advocacy

### Background:

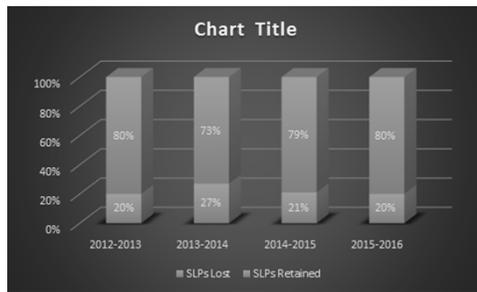
- This advocacy effort began in 1999 when Mississippi secured an annual \$6000.00 salary supplement for the ASHA certified SLPs.
- Informational meetings were held with immediate supervisors and the director of Special Education annually.
- Presentations to the budget committee at the district level occurred in 2005, 2008 and 2010.
- For the past 6 years (and longer), the Exceptional Education Department has been faced with the difficult task of retaining speech-language pathologists and filling positions that become open during the school year

## Funds and time spent to recruiting SLPs to fill vacancies

- interviewing
- attending job fairs
- reaching out to community partners
- providing compensatory services for missed therapy sessions
- Not being able to hire for vacant positions during the school year we have had to increase our contractual therapist costs. The American Speech, Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) survey reported 62% of the SLP respondents reported that job openings are more plentiful than job seekers in their schools.
- Many states, counties, and school districts have implemented salary bonuses for SLPs who hold national certification (ASHA Certificates of Clinical Competence). To date, at least 80 districts in 21 states have achieved a salary bonus for school-based SLPs including our neighboring district in Rutherford County (offers one time supplement of \$4000).

Data suggests a trend of roughly 20% SLP staff loss each year due to, resignations and retirements resulting in service lapses requiring for compensatory services. These compensatory services have historically been rendered during summer months. This requires the Speech/Language department to employ SLPs past the traditional school year. In addition to this, bus routes have to be established for many students which adds another expense. Important to note is the fact that few SLPs volunteer for summer work. Summer staff shortages require the use of contracted professionals to fill service requirements.

While compensatory services meet the legal requirement of making up lapses of therapy sessions and in most situations occur during extended school year, the question of student impact remains.



Compensatory Services 2014-Present		
School Year	# of schools	# of students
2014-2015	13	123
2015-2016	5	38
2016-2017	13-14	400

In the 2015-16 school year, 13-14 schools have experienced service gaps due to an inability to cover positions and/or leaves. These gaps have impacted approximately 400 students for at least one month. Each of these students will be offered compensatory services. Should each family respond to compensatory offerings, the following expenses are expected to be incurred.

10 full-time SLPs will be required (40 students per caseload) to serve students. Traditionally buses provide services once in the morning and once in the afternoon. This means, students who are not being seen for small group therapy must be managed by other professionals during the day. 20 full-time paraprofessionals will be needed to monitor students opposite their time in therapy (20:1 ratio).

<b>LINE ITEM</b>	<b>COST</b> (figures calculated for 6 weeks duration)	<b>EXTENSION</b> (figures calculated for 6 weeks duration)
10 full-time SLPs	\$8,244 (per SLP)	\$82,440 (10 SLPs)
1 Site Administrator	\$8,244	\$8,244
20 Paraprofessionals	\$594.45 (per paraprofessional)	\$11,889 (20 paraprofessionals)
Certified Mail	\$6.47/per 1 ounce letter	\$2,588 (400 letters)
Assistive Tech Set-up/Retrieval	2 days (1 for set up delivery, 1 day for pick up)	\$630.00
14 Bus Drivers	\$2,353.20 (per driver)	\$32944.80 (14 drivers)
	Total	\$138,735.80

Staff earnings configured using daily rate of pay plus mandatory benefits

## Exit Factors

Upon exiting MNPS, SLPs list the following top five reasons for leaving the district:

- Salary
- Work Demands (both compliance and instruction)
- Work Conditions
- Lack of support at the building level (administrators, special education teachers, parents, etc.)
- Moving
- Returning to School

## SLP- Highly Qualified Professionals:

- SLPs are highly qualified professionals who undergo extensive training prior to servicing students. Master's degree is required.
- Coursework: graduate coursework SLPs plus 400 practicum hours across a variety of settings and complete comprehensive examinations at the university level.
- Practicum/Internship: clinical fellowship under the supervision of a certificated SLP for nine months
- Praxis: national exam validated by the Educational Testing Service.
- SLP receives their Certificate of Clinical Competence/CCCs.
- Only after this certification has been obtained can an SLP work as an independent practitioner

Many highly qualified teachers are able to access salary supplements via NBPTS certification. Unfortunately speech-language pathology is not one of the 24 areas for which NBPTS offers certification and there are no plans for developing a speech-language certification in the future. The requirements for NBPTS and CCC are equally rigorous with CCC requirements exceeding that needed for NBPTS. Given the valuable contributions made by SLPs across the continuum of service from prevention through intervention, it is disheartening to know SLPs do not qualify for incentives that could prove vital to retention.

MNPS offers a \$4,000 yearly salary supplement to highly qualified school psychologists via recognition of Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) Certificate. Retention issues have been an issue with these professionals as well in our district. The Coordinator for psychological services reports the supplement to be one of the most effective recruiting and retention tools in place. The eligibility requirements are no more rigorous than those for earning the Certificate of Clinical Competence. The requirements for NCSP certification are:

- Coursework: Completion of coursework from an organized program of study. Transcripts are approved by the National Association of School Psychologist (NASP).
- Practicum: Completion of a sequence of supervised experiences that occurred prior to and exclusive of the internship.
- Internship: Completion of 1,200 hours in a school psychology with at least 600 hours in a school setting.
- Praxis: Take the Praxis test for School Psychology and achieve a passing score of 147.

60% of the total SLP staff have fewer than 5 years' experience with MNPS. This speaks volumes to retention. There are many work related factors contributing to overall school climate that cannot be controlled. Salary enhancements are a proven method for increasing SLP retention. MNPS is a district that is committed to exceeding student expectations and we need to ensure that we are doing this for students with disabilities.

An annual salary supplement of \$4000 to nationally certified and state licensed Speech-Language Pathologists in order to retain highly qualified SLP professionals in Metro Nashville Public Schools was approved for 2017-18 school year.

Paulette W. Gentry MA CCC-SLP  
paulette.gentry@mnps.org  
CSAP  
Los Angeles CA  
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