

MEMORANDUM

TO: Institutions of Higher Education Deans, Institutions of Higher Education Committee Members, Intermediate School District Superintendents and Directors of Special Education, Local Educational Agency Superintendents and Directors of Special Education, Chief Executive Officers of Public School Academies, and Michigan Association of School Personnel Administrators

FROM: Jacquelyn J. Thompson, Ph.D., Director
Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services

DATE: February 11, 2003

SUBJECT: Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS), will recognize the credential of registration for speech-language pathology assistants through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) effective January 1, 2003. This means that under the guidelines provided by the ASHA, schools may hire a speech-language pathology assistant.

Individuals who are seeking this credential must have an associate degree with a program of study designed to prepare the student to be a speech-language pathology assistant. The technical training programs must be approved by the ASHA. All applicants for registration must be referred for registration by the program director of the associate degree technical training program for speech-language pathology assistants where they have earned the degree and completed the field and course work requirements. Michigan currently does not have an ASHA-approved program for speech-language pathology assistants. However, Baker College, Muskegon Campus, has submitted their speech-language pathology assistant program for review to the ASHA.

The hiring of a speech-language pathology assistant will not affect current caseload standards for an authorized provider of speech-language impaired services, or a teacher of students with speech-language impairment. The OSE/EIS will be conducting a study with an advisory group on how the hiring of a speech-language pathology assistant for these services may affect caseloads for speech-language providers in schools.

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All approved waivers that have been granted for caseload variances before this time will remain applicable. At this time we will not process new applications for rule waivers or modifications to the Intermediate School District Plan for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services to increase caseloads for speech-language service providers based on the use of speech-language assistants. Once the OSE/EIS has completed the study we will look at the option of a variance in caseload size.

Speech-language pathology assistant positions are to be reported under Function Code 215 and Object Code 1290. A speech-language pathology assistant position with a split assignment is only reimbursed under Section 388.1651(a) of the State School Aid Act for the percentage of time working with special education individualized education programmed pupils.

For more information regarding speech-language pathology assistants, please visit the ASHA web site: www.asha.org. If you have specific questions, please contact Dr. Joanne Winkelman, Coordinator, Policy, Planning, and Compliance Program, OSE/EIS, at (517) 373-1696, or via e-mail at winkelmanj@michigan.gov.

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