

## School employed SLPs (Applicable CA Ed Codes)

CSHA proposed legislation (SB 377) earlier this year attempted to clarify the existing California Education Code 44831 (see below), which has been interpreted by some school districts as allowing employment for licensed speech-language pathologists (SLPs) on a year-by-year basis -- versus a permanent employment basis provided to credentialed SLPs (*i.e.*, *tenure after a two-year waiting period for school districts or three-year waiting period by County Offices of Education*).

When the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) staff raised issues with amendments proposed by the California Teachers' Association (CTA) for SB 377, CSHA altered the focus of the legislation and amended SB 377 to require CTC to issue a SLP credential to those with a SLP license. The resulting amended version of SB 377 raised additional issues and questions as to unintended consequences resulting in CSHA dropping SB 377 for this year. CSHA then sent representatives to various stakeholder groups (*i.e.*, CTA, CTC, State SELPA Directors, SLPAB, *etc.*) to continue to discuss the overall objectives of simplification for SLP personnel standards as well as solutions to help ease SLP shortages. Discussions are ongoing as this article is being published.

Existing California Education Codes as to school employed SLPs are re-printed below.

**EC 44265.3** (a) *the Commission on Teacher Credentialing shall issue the following credentials:*

(1) A **preliminary credential in speech-language pathology**, to an individual who has been recommended by a commission-accredited program sponsor and who holds or has been recommended for a master's degree in speech-language pathology from a program accredited by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Council on Academic Accreditation. The preliminary credential shall be valid for a period of two years.

*(Editor's note: This credential was previously labeled the "Clinical or Rehabilitative Services Credential")*

(2) A **professional clear credential in speech-language pathology** to an individual who satisfies all of the following criteria:

(A) The individual holds a master's degree in speech-language pathology from a program accredited by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Council on Academic Accreditation, or an equivalent degree or academic program, as determined by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

(B) The individual has achieved a passing score, as determined by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's certification requirements on the Educational Testing Service's national teachers' Praxis series written test in speech-language pathology or a successor exam.

(C) The individual has completed a mentored practical experience period, in the form of a 36-week, full-time mentored clinical experience, or an equivalent supervised practicum, as deemed by the commission.

(D) The individual satisfies other typical commission credentialing processing requirements, including, but not limited to, forms, fees, and fingerprint clearances.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this section to align the state credentialing requirements for personnel standards for California speech-language pathologists with standards for Medi-Cal local educational agency reimbursement, in order to ensure continued funding for the Local Education Agency (LEA) Medi-Cal Billing Option Program.

(c) **A credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing on or before January 1, 2007, authorizing speech, language, and hearing services, shall continue to be valid, subject to commission renewal requirements.**

(d) Upon renewal of a credential initially issued on or before January 1, 2007, the credential holder shall have the option of renewing the credential under the standards applicable prior to January 1, 2007, or to update the credential to satisfy the requirements of subdivision (a). **At any time after January 1, 2007, the credential holder may update his or her credential**, upon submission of an application and fee, and verification of requirements met in accordance with subdivision (a).

**EC 44831** *Governing boards of school districts shall employ persons in public school service requiring certification qualifications as provided in this code, except that the governing board or a county office of education may contract with or employ an individual **who holds a license** issued by the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board and has earned a masters degree in communication disorders to provide speech and language services if that individual meets the requirements of Sections 44332.6 (fingerprint clearances) and 44830 (CBEST) before employment or execution of the contract.*