

## Recruitment & Retention of Speech-Language Pathologists in Times of Shortage

Prepared by the  
Joint TSHA/TCASE Committee  
December 2006

## National Data

- US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006)
  - National employment rate of SLPs is expected to demonstrate average growth (increase of 9-17%) through 2014
  - 14,000 additional SLPs are needed to fill the demand between 2004-2014

### ■ American Speech-Language-Hearing Assn. Schools Survey (2006) – 2500 respondents

- Job Openings
  - 68% of respondents from public schools reported that job openings were more numerous than job seekers (up from 51% in 2000)
  - Shortage exists in healthcare settings as well – 60% of respondents reported that job openings were more numerous than job seekers
  - Rehabilitation agencies are greatest competition to schools
- Caseloads
  - Median caseload size of 50 (55 for Texas)
  - Larger in rural areas than urban or suburban

### ■ Salaries

- Overall median annual salary for SLPs with CCCs was \$52,000 for 9-10 months, \$57,000 for 11-12 months
- West South Central (including Texas) was \$42,500 for 9-10 months
- Range of \$42,810 for 4-6 years experience to \$60,000 for 22+ years
- Salaries in rural areas lagged behind other areas

### ■ Supplements

- Only 12% reported a salary supplement for CCCs, 17% for other unidentified reasons
- Fewer than 1% received a supplement for being a bilingual service provider
- 68% reported receiving no supplement
- Contract employees who worked 26 or more hours weekly averaged \$40 per hour

### ■ Greatest Challenges to SLPs

- #1 High amount of paperwork
- #2 Lack of time for planning, collaborating and meeting with teachers
- #3 High caseload size
- #4 Lack of others' understanding of the role of the SLP
- #5 Low salary (46% in West South Central States, including Texas)

## State Data

- Texas Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education, Texas Center for Educational Research (2006) – 470 respondents
  - Most critical shortages
    - Teachers working with students in resource and/or content mastery
    - Teachers working with students who have adaptive behavior issues
    - Other professionals, including
      - Educational Diagnosticians
      - Speech-Language Pathologists
      - Bilingual licensed specialists in school psychology
    - Paraprofessionals – greatest number of vacancies

- Turnover for special ed personnel – 14%
  - Teaching position in another district
  - Relocation to another community
  - Retirement
- SLP Vacancies (460 districts responded)
  - SLP – certified or licensed (338 positions) – 8.7%
  - Bilingual SLP – certified or licensed – (61 positions) - 19.1%
  - Combined Vacancies of 9.5%
  - Vacancies by Place of Employment
    - Single Districts – 9.4%
    - Shared Service Arrangements – 17%
- Caseload
  - Most other special ed professionals (including SLPs) worked with 60 students per week

## Additional Joint Committee Findings

- Joint Committee Survey (2006) – 100 districts responded
  - Average number of contract days – 187-220
  - Stipend range - \$1000 to \$8000 (with CCCs)
  - District “Grow Your Own” programs – 27 districts
  - Job sharing/part-time positions – 66 districts

## Barriers to Hiring

- Texas Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (2006)
  - Barriers to Hiring (Other professionals, including SLPs) – HR Administrators responded
    - Insufficient candidates with the requisite certification or licensure
    - Better salary, benefits, or incentives available in other school districts, private agencies, hospitals and other organizations
    - Salaries that are too low

## Results of Shortage

- Joint Committee Findings
  - Increased caseloads resulting in increased paperwork
  - Less opportunity for networking and collaborating with classroom and sp ed teachers
  - Decreased opportunity for individual services for students
  - Reduction in or denial of services to eligible students
  - Filling positions with less qualified personnel
  - Required compensatory services
  - Increased supervision of SLP-Assistants
  - Excessive cost related to contracting services

## Recruitment Strategies

- Texas Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (2006) Other Professionals (including SLPs)
  - Posting information regarding the district on website, positions on the internet, applications by email
  - Providing competitive salaries
  - Providing supplements, stipends or signing bonuses in line with key competitors

- Providing more flexibility
  - Hours within the day (Pre-school Speech, Response to Intervention)
  - Weeks within the month (3:1 Model)
  - Months within the year (Clustering Model)
- Job sharing
  - Within district
  - With community rehab/hospital settings
- Part-time employment
- Attending or sponsoring job fairs

- Providing attractive benefit packages
- Using specialized personnel (SLPs) in recruiting efforts
- Streamlining the hiring process – Don't delay in offering a contract!
- Offering financial incentives for personnel to become credentialed/licensed
- Contacting SLP Departments directly and establishing a relationship with in-state colleges and universities

- Additional Joint Committee Recommendations
  - Providing loan forgiveness program
  - Providing "Grow Your Own Programs" for paraprofessionals, teachers seeking a different school related position (especially bilingual teachers), and SLP-As
  - Providing flexibility for access to TWU Distance Learning Program with financial assistance provided

- Providing information in the recruiting process – Answering questions of the applicant
  - What is the caseload size?
  - Who will be my supervisor?
  - Who will be my appraiser?
  - Will I be required to supervise?
  - How many campuses will I serve?
  - What special programs does the district have? Is there a possibility that I may be assigned to one or more?
  - What staff development opportunities will I be afforded?

- Providing a "personal" touch to the interview – follow up with applicants personally
- Providing guidance and information regarding licensure requirements
- Providing district job description for SLPs/SLP-As
- Providing for school placement guarantee in area of interest or specialization

- Forming a relationship with the university closest to your district and providing an Adopt-a-Student program
  - Hiring university SLP students as tutors, aides, clerks
  - Using as recruiters of high school students
  - Hiring same university graduates as SLP-As
  - Providing financial support and flexible hours to accommodate graduate level training
  - Hiring as CFY Intern
  - Promising employment upon completion of Master's degree with agreed upon length of contract

- Providing supplements/stipends
  - CCCs
  - Bilingual
  - Medicare reimbursement paperwork
  - Before and after school programs
  - Supervision of SLP-As and SLP-Interns
  - Supervision of university students completing practicum requirements
  - Mentoring
  - Prospective SLP employment referrals
  - Providing job-shadowing opportunities for high school students
  - Providing presentations regarding the profession to high school career classes

- Considering placement on pay scale
  - Giving full credit for work experience in settings other than schools
  - Paying daily rate for summer employment
  - Paying salary commensurate with diagnosticians and psychologists
- Paying a bonus
  - Sign on - \$3000 for Year 1 - \$2000 for Year 2 - \$1000 for Year 3
  - Additional \$4000 for SLPs in schools having vacancies for at least 2 years
  - Reimbursement of dues to professional organizations

- Providing a comparison of district's compensation package (salary, stipends, contract days, benefits) with other employment entities
- Providing low interest housing loans, housing assistance, closing costs, relocation benefits, moving expenses

## Recruitment Resources

- Accredited Universities with SLP Programs
  - Abilene Christian University
  - Baylor University
  - Lamar University
  - Our Lady of the Lake University
  - Texas State University
  - Stephen F. Austin University
  - Texas A&M at Kingsville
  - Texas Christian University

- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
- Texas Woman's University
- University of Houston
- University of North Texas
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Texas at Dallas
- University of Texas at El Paso
- University of Texas at Pan American
- West Texas A&M

- Regional Education Service Centers
- National, state and regional speech-language-hearing associations
- Online resources
  - ASHA's Online Career Center ([www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org))
  - Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Assn. ([www.txsha.org](http://www.txsha.org))
  - National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Service Providers ([www.Teachers-Teachers.com](http://www.Teachers-Teachers.com))
  - SLP Jobs ([www.slpjobs.com](http://www.slpjobs.com))

## Barriers to Retention

- Texas Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (2006) Other professionals (including SLPs)
  - Overwhelming amount of required paperwork
  - Legal complexities of working in sp ed
  - Job stress due to conflicting demand of the job and work overload
  - Excessive class size or caseloads
  - Multiple-campus assignments

- Lower salary and/or benefits relative to fields outside education
- Lower salary and/or benefits relative to that available in other LEAs
- Inadequate stipends or supplements for assignment
- Geographic location of district
- Attractiveness of administrative positions and opportunity for advancement
- Feelings of professional isolation

- Additional Joint Committee Findings based on input of SLPs

- Lack of understanding of role of SLP
- Lack of administrative support
- Inadequate work space and materials
- Limited technology for communication, management of paperwork, support of instruction and accommodations for students
- Insufficient planning/meeting time
- Stress related to changing demographics in schools
- Increase in severity/complexity of communication disorders
- Lack of professional growth opportunities

## Retention Strategies

- Texas Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (2006) Other professionals (including SLPs) – Sp Ed Administrators responded
  - Adequate support from paraprofessionals
  - Adequate access to “current” instructional resources and materials
  - Adequate space and equipment
  - Support relative to legal issues

- Adequate access to reliable computer technology to assist with paper work responsibilities
- Opportunities to meet and discuss common issues
- Release time for professional development
- Informative, rather than evaluative, feedback regarding job performance
- Clerical support to assist with paperwork responsibilities
- Mentoring programs for new personnel

- Additional Joint Committee Findings
  - Opportunity to work in area of specialization
  - Reduction of non-teaching duties
  - Non-traditional work schedules
    - Flexible scheduling
    - Part-time positions
    - Job sharing
  - Opportunity to utilize a variety of service delivery options
  - Continuing education provided in region or district

## Additional Resources

*Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Speech-Language Pathologists in the Schools*, ASHA. Online professional consultation packet includes data, reports, successful models and resources to recruit and retain qualified speech-language pathologists in school settings.

Members: [www.asha.org/members/slp/schools/prof-consult/slp\\_recruitment](http://www.asha.org/members/slp/schools/prof-consult/slp_recruitment)

Non-members:  
[www.asha.org/about/career/slp\\_recruitment](http://www.asha.org/about/career/slp_recruitment)

*Reward Yourself With a Career as a School-Based Speech-Language Pathologist*, ASHA brochure. Brochure highlights the benefits of choosing a career as a school-based SLP and why schools are an attractive work setting.

ASHA members may request up to 25 free copies from ASHA's Action Center at 800-498-2071 (Item #0804366)

[www.asha.org/about/legislation-advocacy](http://www.asha.org/about/legislation-advocacy)

Scroll down to Additional Resources and click on Schools Recruitment brochure (PDF format)

*Reward Yourself with a Career as a School-Based Speech-Language Pathologist*, ASHA on-line PDF presentation.

Presentation contains 17 slides and is adapted from the Reward Yourself brochure. It describes the role of the SLP in school settings, and is a good tool to promote school practice and to recruit prospective employees.

Members:

[www.asha.org/about/career/rd-rewardyourself](http://www.asha.org/about/career/rd-rewardyourself)

Non-members:

[www.asha.org/about/career/slp\\_recruitment](http://www.asha.org/about/career/slp_recruitment)

Scroll down and double click on: Reward Yourself with a Career as a School-Based Speech-Language Pathologist (PDF Format)

*Innovative Programs to Address Personnel Shortage Issues*, ASHA. Table of innovative programs highlights collaborative partnerships at the state and local level underway to address personnel shortages.

[www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

Search on Innovative Programs to Address Personnel Shortage Issues

Scroll down and double click on Innovative Programs (10.3/06)

*Forum on Strategizing Solutions to Personnel Shortages in Speech-Language Pathology*, ASHA. Provides information from Sept. 28-30, 2006 Forum which assembled stakeholders from across the country to brainstorm ideas for partnering and taking actions to address personnel shortages in speech-language pathology.

[www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

Search on forum06

Double click on Forum Overview (10/19/06)