



MISSOURI COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Speech-Language Pathology Licensure Law Senate Bill 107 - *What Schools Should Know*

Senate Bill (SB) 107 passed in the 2015 Missouri legislative session and becomes law on August 28, 2015. The bill makes a number of changes to the licensure of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) and to the registration of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLP-A) that are important to school personnel, e.g. special education administrators, human resource staff, and others.

SB 107 made two major changes to SLP licensure --

- Effective August 28th, the Board of Healing Arts (BHA) will no longer require applicants for licensure to complete a 9 month clinical fellowship and will no longer issue a provisional license for this period. When the law becomes effective, individuals with a Master's degree in SLP who have passed the Praxis exam will get a full license from the BHA. With this full "unencumbered" license, they will be able to get an initial SLP Student Services Certificate from DESE. This will eliminate the need for SLP's to first get a Temporary Authorization Certificate because they have a provisional license. With a full license these individuals will be able to bill Medicaid. (Medicaid does not recognize a provisional license.)

Because the law is not effective until August 28th, students who graduated in May will need to first obtain a provisional license and a TAC. However, as soon as the law becomes effective the end of August, those individuals should be able to apply for their full license without completing the 9 month fellowship period. It is recommended that schools encourage and remind SLP employees to obtain the full license and full DESE SLP Student Services certification as soon as possible.

- Effective January 1, 2016, all individuals applying for a DESE SLP Student Services Certificate for the first time must hold a BHA license and they must keep that license current. This does not impact individuals who already hold a DESE SLP credential without a BHA license – they may continue to practice in Missouri public schools with just their DESE certificate. This change aligns with current DESE rules that requires SLPs to have a license to obtain the DESE SLP Student Services credential and will eventually create universal licensure for SLPs in all work settings in Missouri.

SB 107 made three important changes to SLP-A registration –

- Effective August 28th, individuals who hold a DESE only SLP certificate can supervise an SLP-A. Current law only allows those with a BHA SLP license to supervise. Both DESE certified and BHA licensed SLPs must have one year work experience to supervise. Eventually this provision will be unnecessary when universal licensure is in place, but is needed now to encourage schools to use an SLP-A rather than a Speech Implementer.
- The new law clarifies that the practical hour requirement for SLP-A registration may be done separate from the bachelor's degree coursework. This will allow individuals who graduate with a bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders or SLP or equivalent to obtain practical hours needed for SLP-A registration from schools if those hours were not offered as part of their undergraduate program. (Some Missouri SLP programs offer those hours, others do not.) When these changes become effective August 28th, there will be more options for individual with a bachelor's degree in Communication Disorders, SLP or equivalent to get registered as an SLP Assistant.
- As of August 28th, the new law authorized the BHA and the Advisory Commission for SLP and Audiology to establish continuing education unit (CEU) requirements for SLP Assistants. Adding a CEU requirement for SLP Assistants will ensure that these individuals remain current and qualified in their profession.