



**ASHA**  
American  
Speech-Language-Hearing  
Association

March 8, 2024

The Honorable Julia Kirt  
Oklahoma Senate  
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Room 5152  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

**Note:** ASHA also sent this letter to the following Oklahoma representatives:

- The Honorable [Jacob Rosecrants](#), Oklahoma House of Representatives
- The Honorable [John Waldron](#), Oklahoma House of Representatives
- The Honorable [Daniel Pae](#), Oklahoma House of Representatives
- The Honorable [Randy Randleman](#), Oklahoma House of Representatives

RE: HB 1037

Dear Senator Kirt:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I write to express support for HB 1037, which would provide an annual \$5,000 salary bonus to public school-based audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who possess the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 234,000 members, certificate holders, and affiliates who are audiologists; SLPs; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students. Over 2,600 ASHA members reside in Oklahoma.<sup>1</sup>

Audiologists and SLPs working in school settings often face high caseloads and high volumes of paperwork while working with a range of students who may be facing complex communication disorders or may be considered medically fragile.<sup>2</sup> These practitioners may also have to take on duties outside of their normal scope due to personnel shortages.<sup>3</sup> As such, schools may have difficulty recruiting and retaining these professionals because of the challenges they face in this workplace setting. Salary supplements may incentivize professionals to work in or remain in schools. HB 1037 may also cut down on the many contractors who are temporarily filling vacant positions at higher costs.

Audiologists are trained professionals who diagnose, manage, and treat hearing and balance disorders. Educational audiologists provide a wide variety of services to children in school settings while collaborating with fellow multidisciplinary team members to effectively facilitate student listening, learning, and communication access. Audiologists who are ASHA-certified meet high educational standards – including three to four years pursuing a doctoral degree and passing a praxis exam – and must also meet continuing education requirements.<sup>4</sup>

SLPs are uniquely educated and trained to assess and treat speech, language, swallowing, and cognitive communication disorders in children and adults. These services help children acquire language and enable people to recover essential skills to communicate about their health and safety, to swallow adequate nutrition safely, and to have sufficient attention, memory, and organizational skills to function in their environment. ASHA-certified SLPs also meet high educational standards – including a master’s degree, a praxis exam, and completion of a clinical fellowship – and must meet continuing education requirements.<sup>5</sup>

Thank you for considering ASHA’s support for this bill. HB 1037 will help to ensure enhanced recruitment and retention of highly qualified, ASHA-certified professionals who serve those most in need in Oklahoma schools. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA’s director of state association relations, at [ecrowe@asha.org](mailto:ecrowe@asha.org).

Sincerely,



Tena L. McNamara, AuD, CCC-A/SLP  
2024 ASHA President

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<sup>1</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). Oklahoma [Quick Facts].

<https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-fliers/oklahoma-state-flyer.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). 2022 School Survey: SLP Caseload and Workload Characteristics. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/surveys/2022-schools-survey-slp-caseload.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). 2022 School Survey: SLP Workforce and Work Conditions. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/surveys/2022-schools-survey-slp-workforce.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Ensure Your District Provides Mandated Hearing Special Education Evaluation and Services. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/alternative-hq-educator-credential-audiology.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Ensure Your District Provides Mandated Speech-Language Special Education Evaluation and Services. <https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/alternative-hq-educator-credential-slp.pdf>.