



Establish an Office of Specialized Instructional Support Services within the U.S. Department of Education.

ASHA urges Congress, under the ESEA, to direct the Secretary of Education to establish an Office of Specialized Instructional Support Services and to appoint a director and appropriate staff.

Specialized instructional support personnel (currently "pupil services") encompass a large number of staff categories with a broad set of responsibilities in schools. A number of State education agencies (SEAs) already provide leadership for pupil services by employing departments and/or coordinators for all or various subsets of these professions.

Specialized instructional support personnel more accurately describes the direct instructional services provided to students and consultative services provided to student's teachers by these school-based professionals. With a growing emphasis on early intervening services, it is extremely important to have an office coordinating efforts affecting student achievement.

The Assistant Secretaries for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and for Elementary and Secondary Education have authority over these personnel through the IDEA and the ESEA. However, no specific point of contact – office or individual – is assigned to work with State pupil services coordinators or with SEAs in general on issues related to pupil services. The U.S. Department of Education should have an office and staff dedicated to providing technical assistance and a specific point of contact on these services for State and local education agencies.

Recommended Legislative Language Office of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel

"Sec. XXX. Establishment.

- (a) Establishment.—There shall be, within the Office of the Deputy Secretary in the Department of Education, an Office of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (hereafter referred to as the "Office").
- (b) Purpose.—The purpose of the Office shall be to administer, coordinate, and carry out programs and activities concerned with providing specialized instructional support services in schools, delivered by trained, qualified specialized instructional support personnel.

- (c) Director.—The Office established under subsection (a) shall be headed by a Director who shall be selected by the Secretary and report directly to the Deputy Secretary of Education.
- (d) Activities.—In carrying out subsection (b), the Director shall support activities to-
- 1) improve specialized instructional support services in schools in order to improve academic achievement and educational results for all students;
 - 2) identify scientifically based practices in specialized instructional support services that support learning and improve academic achievement and educational results for all students;
 - 3) provide continuous training and professional development opportunities for specialized instructional support personnel and other school personnel in the use of effective techniques to address academic, behavioral, and functional needs;
 - 4) provide technical assistance to local and state educational agencies in the provision of effective, scientifically based specialized instructional support services; and,
 - 5) coordinate specialized instructional support services programs and services in schools between the Department of Education and other federal agencies, as appropriate."

For more information please contact Neil Snyder, ASHA's Director of Federal Advocacy, by phone at 202-624-7750 or via e-mail at nsnyder@asha.org.