

Advocacy in Action:

A State Model for Change



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION



General Information

Advocacy in Action: A State Model for Change is published by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) as a resource on how to develop an effective state advocacy program for state speech-language-hearing associations interested in engaging in state-level efforts.

Any opinions contained herein are not to be construed as reflecting any official view of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The State Education Advocacy Team Model1

Section 1

Determining the Agents for Change3

Step 1: Analyzing a State’s Potential for Advocacy
Success—Getting Your Ducks in Order

Section 2

Planning Ahead is Crucial—It’s Not the Issue,
It’s the Strategy That Counts7

Step 2: Developing a State Action Plan

Section 3

Establishing Committee Roles—Who’s on First17

Step 3: Developing Roles for Advocacy Partners

Section 4

Launching a Grassroots Campaign—There is Power in Numbers21

Step 4: Establishing a Grassroots Network

Section 5

Reaching the Media—Getting Your Message Out25

Step 5: Creating a Media Plan

Section 6

Establishing an Effective Communication System—Let’s Be in Touch . . .29

Step 6: Developing Communication Strategies
Between Advocacy Partners

Section 7

Establishing a Sustained Effort—If at First You Don’t Succeed31

Step 7: Considering Key Strategies from Targeted States

Resources37

ASHA Staff Contacts for School Services Information39

Appendices43

Appendix A—Sample State Criterion Template45

Appendix B—Sample Action Plan Template49

Appendix C—Sample Talking Points51

Appendix D—Sample Letter to Legislators57

Appendix E—Sample Media Tip Sheet59

Appendix F—Sample Media Plan61

Appendix G—Sample Advocacy Committee Job Descriptions63

Introduction

The State Education Advocacy Team Model

In 2000, the ASHA Legislative Council identified issues of concern to school-based members. Based on these issues, the ASHA Executive Board developed the Schools Focused Initiative to address concerns expressed by school-based members “that many service programs in the schools require caseloads for SLPs and audiologists that are too high to provide quality services, that salaries are not commensurate with the necessary specialized knowledge and skills, and that many state and local policies impede the ability of SLPs and audiologists to provide quality services in the schools.”

The State Education Action Team (SEAT) was formed as one of the key strategies under the Schools Focused Initiative to address these areas of concern. The SEAT, which consists of an ASHA staff member from school services, and a staff member from state policy, works directly with targeted state associations to support their advocacy activities regarding caseload/workload, salary supplements, and other IDEA related issues. Through this work, a model for advocating for speech-language pathology (SLP) and audiology issues at the state level was created and refined.

From 2001–2003, the SEAT has partnered with five state associations on the issues of caseload/workload and salary supplement using a model or process that the team developed. In a survey of the advocacy committee leadership in the targeted associations (ASHA, 2002), members have expressed positive comments that the model has helped to advance their legislative and regulatory agenda, improved the infrastructure for political advocacy in their targeted state associations, increased active partnership of association membership, and created greater visibility for their issues of concern. In 2003, the ASHA Legislative Council and Executive Board approved the continuation of the SEAT’s work with targeted states through 2004.

This resource was developed to assist state speech-language-hearing associations interested in engaging in state-level advocacy efforts to create an effective state advocacy program. The purpose of this document is to provide a template outlining the state advocacy model or process used by the SEAT and includes sample advocacy tools in the appendices. The model includes seven major steps for advocacy success:

- Step 1: Analyzing a State's Potential for Advocacy Success*
- Step 2: Developing a State Action Plan*
- Step 3: Developing Roles for Advocacy Partners*
- Step 4: Establishing a Grassroots Network*
- Step 5: Creating a Media Plan*
- Step 6: Developing Communication Strategies Between Advocacy Partners*
- Step 7: Considering Key Strategies From Targeted States*

The examples included in this resource are education related but the state advocacy model can be adapted for other state-level issues and elements can be modified for use at the local level. We suggest using this template as a companion to other ASHA resources that have been developed to assist ASHA members with state or local advocacy efforts.

Section 1

Determining the Agents for Change

STEP 1: Analyzing a State's Potential for Advocacy Success—Getting Your Ducks in Order

The first step in the SEAT Advocacy Model is to assess a state's potential to achieve its regulatory or legislative goal. The SEAT developed a criterion template that can be used to evaluate a state's progress on a variety of legislative or regulatory activities and determine a state's opportunity for legislative or regulatory advocacy. It is an "audit" of the state's potential for success by evaluating the factors favorable for success and analyzing factors that may be obstacles to a successful effort. The template suggests that your state examine the following factors in place for change:

- History of issue (past/current state/local efforts)
- Level of support or opposition from key decision makers at the state and local level
- Paid lobbyist
- Communication system (grassroots network)
- Consumer support (parents and support from other professionals)
- Media involvement (visibility or public awareness of issue, communication vehicles available)
- Priority of issue for the state association
- Political climate (budget concerns, state agenda, legislative calendar)
- Process to effect change (legislative, regulatory, state, or local)
- Other factors pertinent to your state or issue

Questions to Consider

Your state association may wish to consider the following questions when completing the various sections of the criterion template.

History of issue: Has your state association worked on this issue before? Have you had any success? If not, why?

Level of support or opposition from key decision makers at the state and local level: Do you have support from key decision makers at the state level such as the governor, key legislators who have jurisdiction for your legislation, or state department of education members? Will your local administrators such as the superintendent or school board members support this effort?

Lobbyist: Does the state association have a paid lobbyist who has knowledge and experience with the state legislature or state decision making process? Does the lobbyist have a proven track record on the state association's issues? What is the lobbyist's opinion about your chance for success at this time?

Communication system: Does your state have an effective grassroots system in place to communicate with members? Do you have a state association Web site, listserv, or state newsletter? Do you have a current database of members with accurate contact information including mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address?

Consumer support: Are there any parent or related professional support groups or unions that would be willing to support the effort?

Media involvement: Has there been any publicity (negative or positive) about the issue in the state or local news media? Is the public aware of school SLP and audiology issues?

Priority of issue for the state association: Is this a priority issue for the state association? Has the membership voted on priority issues for the association? Will the state association provide financial support necessary to sustain the effort?

Political climate: What is the current political climate (e.g., budget concerns, state agenda, legislative calendar) for the state? Budgets are tight in all states however, if education is a priority issue there may be opportunities for your effort.

Process to effect change: What is the process to effect change in the state? Do you need to make a legislative or regulatory change and are you certain that change must occur at the state level? Have you read and clarified the actual regulation or legislation that currently exists for your issue?

Other factors pertinent to your state or issue: Are there other factors pertinent to your state to consider (e.g., recent political scandal or hot potato that would overshadow your effort)? Is the timing favorable for change? Is there data that you need to collect to support your decision?

The audit will allow your state to develop a clear and objective picture of the factors in your state influencing the issue and decide if your issue warrants a state-level approach. For example, in some states caseload/workload caps are mandated through state legislature or regulated through the State Department of Education. In other states caseload policy is a local district decision. It is important to first determine where your issue is controlled in your state and determine your options for advocacy. This is not always as clear-cut as one might think as there can be confusion about the specific intent or language contained in a guideline, regulation, or bill. If your state decides that your issue requires a state advocacy effort, then an organized state plan of action is recommended.

The audit will enable your state to weigh the pros and cons or the support and opposition to the issue. To complete the audit, enlist the assistance of 2–3 state association members who have experience and history with the issue, are interested in participating on a team or committee to work on the advocacy effort, and have knowledge of your state association governance to complete the criterion template. The group completing the template can evaluate the results to determine the areas of action needed and the potential for

success. The SEAT used the following rating scale when rating the targeted states: + if the criterion factor was positive or had support, 0 if it was neutral, and – if it was negative or there was opposition to that factor. The ratings can be tabulated to determine whether the “pluses” outweigh the “negatives” and whether a state approach is warranted or feasible. If the decision has been made to move forward, Step 2: **Developing a State Action Plan** can be implemented.

Go to Appendix A: State Criterion Template.

Step 1: Analyzing a State’s Potential for Advocacy Success

Key Points:

- Complete a State Criteria Template
- Examine Factors in Place for Change
- Evaluate the Template Results
- Determine Areas of Action Needed

Section 2

Planning Ahead is Crucial— It's Not the Issue, It's the Strategy That Counts

Step 2: Developing a State Action Plan

A key component to developing a successful state advocacy program is focusing on developing an organized plan or strategy. The state criterion template explained in Section 1 can identify action areas needing to be addressed to achieve a state's desired goal. Once those areas of action are identified, a long-range plan needs to be developed to help organize the effort. The SEAT developed a template State Action Plan that has been used successfully by the targeted states. **Go to Appendix B: The State Action Plan Template.** The plan divides the advocacy areas into components and includes activity areas, activity status timelines, and persons responsible for completing the tasks or activities.

Your state association will need to identify an individual willing to chair or coordinate the campaign and a group of members who are interested and willing to work with the coordinator or chair. **Go to Section 3: Establishing Committee Roles.** An advocacy coordinator and an advocacy committee was established in each of the SEAT's targeted states to develop and carry out the State Action Plan. Your state will need to determine and list your major goals and decide which components of the State Action Plan pertain to your effort. For example, if your effort requires the passage of legislation your plan will contain legislative activities. If your goal is to establish new Department of Education guidelines for caseload/workload, your plan might contain regulatory related activities. The components in each state's plan will vary depending on the goals of the effort. The SEAT identified general areas of activities in the State Action Plan Template that would be helpful

The ASHA/KSHA partnership model has been most helpful for our workload/caseload initiative. The nearly weekly telephone contacts and follow-up proved most helpful in continuing to move the effort forward. The grassroots training showed “the how to” make change and provided testimony to the impact of one person’s efforts to make change. As KSHA Coordinator, I know the importance of those weekly contacts and the development of an action plan.

—Dixie A. Heinrich,
Advocacy Committee
Coordinator, Kansas
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association (KSHA)

to consider for any state-wide initiative. One important factor for any plan to consider is its time-frame. Any state-wide effort needs to set a realistic time frame to achieve its goal. The SEAT’s experience with the targeted states indicates that at least a 2–3 year plan is warranted for any state-wide regulatory or legislative effort.

States have indicated that taking the time to develop a plan is crucial to a successful advocacy campaign. Prior to the schools focused initiative state/ASHA partnership, the SEAT often discovered that one or two individuals had worked extensively on a state’s issue with limited success. States expressed frustration with the lack of involvement by individuals in their state, and their efforts often had a limited focus. The State Action Plan has helped states to examine their infrastructure and look at their issue in broader terms. It has provided states with a more inclusive process in identifying individuals who can contribute to the effort. There will inevitably be some overlap within category areas in your state plan because it is difficult to totally separate all areas into distinct categories. However, the State Action Plan has served as a helpful framework and a guide for a state’s effort. We suggest periodically monitoring and revising your plan as needed.

The State Action Plan developed as part of the SEAT Model divides the main areas of activity into:

- Legislative or regulatory activities
- Key decision maker activities
- Grassroots activities
 - Subplans:
 - SLP Subplan
 - Parent Subplan
 - Teacher Subplan
- Media activities
- Meetings/Convention activities
- Oral or written information/presentations
- Training activities
- Other activities

State Action Plan Components

Legislative or regulatory activities

These activities pertain to the legislative or regulatory process in your state. They include such activities as: determining your state's legislative or regulatory process; learning the time frame for your legislative calendar; reviewing the process for introducing a bill or regulation; identifying the key leaders with jurisdiction for your bill or state regulation; identifying potential supporters and opponents; studying the funding mechanisms that can support your effort; examining the language of a current bill, regulation, or guideline; and crafting language to introduce a bill or regulation or to modify an existing bill or regulation.

Key decision maker activities

These activities relate to identifying and meeting with the individuals or groups of individuals in your state who can influence the outcome of your effort. It is important to determine your supporters and also determine who may be opposing your effort. Your state's plan should identify these groups and develop strategies for working with both your supporters and those who may not agree with your goal. You will also need to consider whether your strategy will be to gain support from a group or work to maintain the group's neutrality. It is also important to work with the staff or legislative aides of the various decision makers. Key staff or aides can be very knowledgeable and influential in gaining entry to a key policy maker. The SEAT has identified the following key decision maker groups in our work with the targeted states:

- Legislators
- Governors
- Department of Education/Board of Education
- Administrators/Superintendents
- State teachers union representatives (NEA, AFT)
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) representatives
- Parent support/advocacy groups
- Teachers or other related professional groups/coalitions

A strong and constant presence during all phases of the political process is crucial.

SHAV did its homework, organized behind an issue important to its members, and “sold” that idea to politicians and State Board of Education members.

*—Bet Neale,
Lobbyist, Speech-Language-
Hearing Association
of Virginia (SHAV)*

Grassroots activities

These activities involve organizing the constituents in your state to contact the key groups or individuals that can help achieve your public policy goal. Mobilizing the grassroots community is vital for any successful advocacy campaign. Grassroots involvement encourages increased communication and visibility for your effort and facilitates shared ownership of your goals. It is important that your state association is organized and responsive to your members’ concerns, and that your association advocates on behalf of its members. However, it is even more crucial that decision makers hear from their constituents about the issue. Decision makers are influenced by the people who vote for them and who can vote them out of office. Grassroots advocacy consultant Joel Blackwell states that legislators want the approval of the people who put them in office. The voters are the legislator’s customers and if they don’t listen to their constituents they will be out of business. Blackwell states that in any given election, only 20–40% of all Americans vote, and even less than that ever make meaningful contact with their elected officials (Blackwell, 2001). Those people who take the time to make a visit, phone call, send a letter, or make a donation of time and/or money are the political elite who drive public policy. There are a variety of strategies that members can use to advocate for your issue.

Activities to consider include:

- Contacting key decision-makers through visits, phone calls, letters, faxes, and e-mails.
- Organizing a letter-writing campaign, lobby day, or lobby breakfast
- Providing testimony at public legislative, regulatory, or budget hearings
- Attending key policy maker meetings
- Participating on a union negotiating team or other relevant committees
- Joining an advocacy committee established for the effort
- Fund raising for your political action committee (PAC)
- Campaigning for a key elected official
- Volunteering to work on a legislator’s campaign

SLP, parent, teacher subplans

Your state may wish to divide the grassroots activities into subplans to involve SLPs and audiologists, parents, teachers, professionals, or any other appropriate group. Setting up an effective grassroots advocacy network to mobilize members is an essential component to any grassroots advocacy effort. Additional information about establishing a grassroots network will be addressed in Section 4.

Media activities

Media activities include effectively communicating your messages through the news media—and ultimately to the public. This aspect of an organized state advocacy plan is often overlooked and it can be a powerful tool to help reach consumers, fellow professionals, and decision makers. If time is spent on public relations activities it can yield a considerable pay off because a lot of credibility is gained through the endorsement from a third party such as the news media. The State Action Plan focuses communication through print media but local TV and radio are other avenues of media that can be explored. Additional tips for working with the media will be covered in Section 5.

Suggested media activities include:

- Developing articles, sample letters to the editor, and op-ed pieces for local newspapers in key legislator's districts
- Contacting reporters to provide coverage for lobby day, testimony, or public hearings
- Coordinating media coverage of visits by legislators or administrators to an SLPs program in a local school district

Meetings/Convention activities with colleagues or related professionals

These activities pertain to attending and representing your issue at important meetings or events that are related to your issue. Your state's involvement in meetings and convention events or activities provides the opportunity to gain visibility for your issue and demonstrates your commitment. Attendance at important functions can allow your state to build relationships and form alliances with other

groups and policy makers. We suggest brainstorming possible policy maker meetings to attend that are directly related to your issue such as hearings or committee meetings in which your issue will be debated or discussed or any meetings that might have an impact on your issue such as budget hearings. Your state might also consider joining a committee to support other related issues which will allow you to get to know that group and their position on various issues and eventually provide you with the opportunity to request their support in return. For example, some of the targeted states have served on their state's union legislative committees. Their unions ultimately proposed resolutions to support recognition of national certification and salary supplements for SLPs. Your state may also consider joining a coalition of other related groups with similar interests or goals if you feel that working with additional groups will strengthen your position. In one targeted state, the SLPs joined with the school psychologists to work on their salary supplement effort. In another targeted state, the SLP case-load issue was incorporated into a larger package of recommendations by the Department of Education which included other personnel issues. Strategy meetings with decision makers who support your issue can be very helpful in guiding your approach to your issue. Even arranging meetings with individuals or groups that are opposed to your issue can be helpful as a means to educate those individuals or groups about your issue, learn about their concerns or viewpoints, or to negotiate a more neutral position.

Your advocacy committee should have a presence at your state convention and take advantage of any other regional meetings. The targeted states have set-up advocacy tables at state or regional meetings to promote their effort and provide updated information to members. State conventions and regional meetings are great forums to inform and update your members about the issue and your progress on the effort. They can also be ideal venues for recruiting additional volunteers or for conducting grassroots activities. For example, some of the targeted states have conducted letter-writing campaigns during state or local conventions or workshops.

Possible meeting or convention activities include:

- Attending budget or other related education hearings
- Attending Board of Education or school board meetings
- Attending state, regional, or local conventions or workshops
- Participating in Department of Education committees or other state-wide task forces
- Participating in State Teacher Union committees or negotiating committees
- Attending PAC fund raisers for key legislators

Oral or written information/presentations

This aspect of the plan involves preparing written or oral materials, testimony, or presentations to detail your issue's major points and provide supporting data. Your State Action Plan should consider any appropriate opportunities to present your position. Oral or written statements allow you to "go on record" with your views and proposals. There are circumstances when oral or written testimony is needed and should be prepared. Testimony or written statements are sometimes required for hearings or public comment periods. At other times you may need or choose to submit a letter or prepare talking points that highlight your major points for legislator or policy maker visits. Prepared materials should be short, concise, and include relevant data and supporting information. Power point presentations can be effective in carrying your message to decision makers and members at meetings or conventions.

Suggested written or oral communication activities include:

- Testimony
- Executive summary of testimony (1–2 pages)
- Talking points (1–2 pages)
- Letter requesting support
- Power point presentations

Training Activities

I found the grassroots training to be very helpful to me personally. It empowered me to write to my legislators and to initiate contacts. I felt better prepared to do so. It was also important to know that just a few people really CAN make a difference.

—Mary Jo Chretien,
Grassroots Advocacy
Committee Coordinator, Rhode
Island Speech-Language-
Hearing Association (RISHA)

Building in a half day or one-day training opportunity detailing the elements of grassroots advocacy and a separate training activity describing how to communicate with the media is suggested as part of a comprehensive state plan. This component of the State Action Plan involves providing essential training for the advocacy committee members in your state who will be focusing on your issue. The SEAT determined that grassroots advocacy training and media training were two areas that required concentrated training. Some members were not familiar with the legislative or regulatory process in their state and were not comfortable with the term “grassroots advocacy” and what that entails. Members who experienced these training programs in the targeted states have reached a new level of awareness in these areas and have successfully carried out grassroots activities as part of their efforts. ASHA can provide consultation and resources for media efforts.

Go to ASHA Staff Contacts for School Services

Information. The ASHA SEAT can be contacted regarding grassroots training opportunities. Additional information about establishing a grassroots network will be addressed in Section 4 and tips for working with the media will be covered in Section 5.

Important components in training include:

Grassroots training

- Explaining the importance of grassroots advocacy
- Understanding the legislative/regulatory process in your state
- Discussing top influencers for policy makers
- Determining your priorities/strategy
- Establishing a state plan
- Examining the role of the lobbyist
- Establishing an advocacy group/ committee
- Recruiting and motivating members to lobby
- Establishing a database (phone tree, e-mail network)
- Establishing an effective communication system
- Identifying contacts/decision makers (legislators, Department of Education, union leaders, special education administrators)

- Matching grassroots advocates (constituents) with key decision makers
- Developing the message/talking points for key contacts
- Activating the grassroots network
- Delivering the message
- Making visits and other contacts
- Sustaining the effort

Media training

- Understanding the relationship of media to state education advocacy efforts
- Engaging the media
- Identifying goals
- Identifying audiences
- Developing messages
- Understanding the news system
- Creating newsworthy news
- Developing relationships with reporters
- Providing information for reporters
- Developing a news angle
- Creating news opportunities

Other Activities

There may be additional activities that are specific to your effort or issue that you may wish to include in your State Action Plan that were not listed in this template. We suggest that your state association take the time to analyze other areas that may need to be addressed pertaining to your issue and include the specific action steps needed in those areas in your State Action Plan.

Go to Appendix B: State Action Plan Template.

Step 2: Developing a State Action Plan

Key Points:

- Identify Areas of Action Needed
- Identify Activity Timeline, Activity Status, and Persons Responsible
- Develop State Action Plan Components (e.g., legislative/regulatory, grassroots, media)
- Develop Roles/Coordinator and Advocacy Committee
(See Section 3)
- Periodically Modify Plan as Needed

Section 3

Establishing Committee Roles—Who's on First

Step 3: Developing Roles for Advocacy Partners

The state association, lobbyist, constituent members in your state, and ASHA all have essential and integral roles to play in any state advocacy effort. All parties need to collaborate and work together to achieve your goal. Misconceptions about how much influence a particular group actually has or relying on any one group can lead to an ineffective effort. For example, a good lobbyist is critical to a state-wide initiative. However, the lobbyist needs the grassroots support from the state association and its members to demonstrate to the policy makers how vital the issue is to the constituents in the state. Each party in the effort brings important information and expertise and understands the issue from his or her perspective. All partners need to share information and contribute to the campaign in order for it to be successful.

State Association

The state association needs to survey its members to determine their priority issues and confirm that the state advocacy effort is a priority for its members. The volunteer leadership at the state level has knowledge of state issues and understands the state association process for working for policy change. The state association needs to support the efforts with financial and personnel resources and recruit volunteers to work on the issue. It can contribute valuable state data and other state resources and provide a mechanism for promoting the effort at the state convention, and through its Web site and other communication vehicles. The state association as a group can exercise a powerful voice because it represents a large group of individuals with concerns on a particular issue.

Advocacy Committee

The ASHA support was also very helpful. The frequent communication kept the team focused and motivated and our team was well-organized; the duties were well-defined and specific. That made it easy to proceed; my role wasn't that hard to execute. I'd recommend that other groups do the same...specific job descriptions, and recruit people with clear expectations.

—Mary Jo Chretien,
Grassroots Advocacy
Committee Coordinator, Rhode
Island Speech-Language-
Hearing Association (RISHA)

The advocacy committee is an essential player in the effort. The SEAT included the advocacy committee in the SEAT Model to provide a mechanism for a group of members to focus on a state-wide effort. The advocacy committee completes many of the specific tasks needed to sustain the effort. In the State Education Action Team's experience with the targeted states, a committee of 5–6 individuals makes up an effective core advocacy committee. In addition to the core committee members, it is also necessary to recruit a group of member volunteers to participate in grassroots activities. The size and configuration of your advocacy committee will vary in each state depending on the size of your state and your needs. Within the core advocacy committee roles are further defined. An ADVOCACY COORDINATOR/CHAIR is needed to “lead the charge.” A successful state campaign must have a strong coordinator who is willing and able to devote the time, energy, and commitment needed to sustain an effort. Ideally the coordinator is someone with experience with the state association and state policy and has knowledge of the issue. Another important committee member is the GRASSROOTS COORDINATOR. That individual works closely with the coordinator/chair to coordinate the grassroots activities. **Go to Section 2: Grassroots Activities.** The grassroots coordinator should have experience with state legislative and regulatory issues and have the ability to respond to time-sensitive deadlines. The MEDIA COORDINATOR's job is to coordinate the media activities of the advocacy committee. **Go to Section 2: Media Activities.** The media coordinator should have excellent oral and written communication skills and have the ability to respond to time-sensitive deadlines. The job responsibilities for the committee coordinators are further outlined in sample job descriptions that were developed by the SEAT. Depending upon the level of activity, the grassroots and media coordinators may need to establish subcommittees to assist with these areas. **Go to Appendix G: Sample Advocacy Committee Job Descriptions.**

The experience of the SEAT and SHAV’s lobbyists helped our advocacy group coordinate the grassroots efforts across the state of Virginia. ASHA has access to fantastic NOMS data, our lobbyists have the knowledge of what the legislators need to know and the legislative timeline, and SHAV has access to all the members —together it is a great team.

*—Jessica Norton,
Grassroots Advocacy
Committee Coordinator,
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association of Virginia (SHAV)*

Constituent Members

Constituent members are the individuals who reside in the legislator’s or policy maker’s district and who vote for that representative or official. Constituents are needed to participate in such grassroots activities as contacting legislators or policy makers through visits, letters, calls, faxes, and e-mails, or attending and testifying at hearings or other meetings. Policy makers need to hear from individual constituents as well as the state association because elected representatives need to be responsive to the people they are elected to represent. There is power in numbers when policy makers hear from a large number of individual constituents. When policy makers know that there is an issue that concerns many of their constituents, they will more likely be more responsive to the issue. **Go to Appendix G: Sample Job Description, Constituent Member.**

Lobbyist

The lobbyist has the advocacy skills to advocate for your issue with legislators and policy makers and he or she has the knowledge of your state politics, and your legislative/regulatory process. He or she tracks bills and regulations on a daily basis and knows many of the key players who can impact your effort. Your lobbyist can be instrumental in determining the timing of your effort and your strategy for reaching your goal. For example, it may be necessary to reach a compromise with your bill or goal and your lobbyist is in a good position to provide advice concerning whether to accept or reject the compromise position.

ASHA National Office

The ASHA National Office can offer the “big picture.” ASHA can be an important resource for national data and can provide the national perspective about your state’s issue. The ASHA Web site at www.asha.org has information about federal legislation and regulations that may impact your state effort. ASHA can share information from other states who have worked on your issue or a similar issue. The SEAT can serve as a resource by providing consultation,

practice policy documents, or other resources that have been developed to facilitate state advocacy efforts. **Go to Resources.** Other ASHA National Office staff can provide assistance on school related issues. **Go to ASHA Staff Contacts for School Services Information.** Periodically ASHA has state grants available to provide financial assistance to states to help with advocacy efforts. Contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA director of state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org to obtain additional information concerning this ASHA benefit.

STEP 3: Developing Roles for Advocacy Partners

Key Points:

- State Association (Surveys members' priorities, recruits volunteers, provides state resources and data)
- Advocacy Chair and Committee (Focuses on state-wide effort, communicates with members and lobbyist, coordinates grassroots and media efforts)
- Constituent Members (Contacts policy makers, participates in grassroots and media advocacy efforts)
- Lobbyist (Tracks legislation/regulations, determines legislative/regulatory strategy, consults with advocacy committee)
- ASHA (Consults with state association and advocacy committee, provides national data and resources)

Section 4

Launching a Grassroots Campaign—There is Power in Numbers

STEP 4: Establishing a Grassroots Network

As SHAV's Advocacy Chair, I've learned a lot about the legislative process and that we, as voters, really do have influence and a voice. I've also learned that this can be a long, hard road—legislative successes are often a series of baby steps and little successes before you reach your ultimate goal.

—Jessica Norton,
Advocacy Committee
Coordinator, Speech-Language-
Hearing Association of
Virginia (SHAV)

One of the major components of your State Action Plan is grassroots activities. Your state initiative will benefit greatly if your state formulates a focused grassroots advocacy plan and develops an organized grassroots network. Your state association and lobbyist have vital roles to play in advocating for your issue, but it cannot be emphasized enough that policy makers must hear from their constituents—the people who will be directly impacted by the issue. Constituents should include parents or other consumers whenever appropriate and possible. Your advocacy committee will need to motivate and mobilize your members to participate in your grassroots efforts and encourage members to make contacts with your policy makers. Research conducted by grassroots consultant Joel Blackwell indicates that the top two most powerful influences on members of the legislature are face-to-face conversation and an original letter from a constituent. (Blackwell, 2001). Grassroots networks involve organizing your member database, matching members with key legislators or policy makers, developing a communication system to quickly mobilize members into action, and producing advocacy materials for members to use when they are contacting key decision makers. ASHA has several resources on the ASHA Web site that provide good tips for making visits, writing letters, or testifying before your legislators. **Go to the ASHA Web site at: <http://www.asha.org/about/legislation-advocacy/grassroots/takeaction.htm>**

Creating a Database

A good place to start your state's grassroots network is by organizing your state association's database. Your state association needs to determine a system for maintaining a current member list. Member lists need to be updated once or twice each year to correspond with your state's membership recruiting efforts. All available contact information including e-mail addresses should be requested in your membership database. The SEAT's experience with targeted states demonstrated that keeping membership lists current is not always routinely accomplished making it more difficult to reach members. ASHA certified members in your state can also be accessed through the ASHA membership database. **Go to Section 3: ASHA National Office.**

Establishing Key Contacts

Once your state's membership list is current, your state can match your constituent members with the key legislators or policy makers you have identified for your effort. There are software programs available for purchase that can match members by their legislative district. Your lobbyist should be able to assist your state association in deciding whether to purchase a software package. One of the smaller targeted states used their state's legislative Web site to match their members to their legislators. Once members are matched with key decision makers, your grassroots advocacy committee coordinator can target action alerts or other updates to those members.

Getting the Word Out

This step involves communicating to your constituent members and general membership to encourage them to become active and involved in your effort. Once your state has a reliable and current database and key members identified for your campaign, your grassroots coordinator can communicate with your members using an e-mail listserv or telephone tree. Short, concise, targeted action alerts or general updates can be e-mailed stating the issue, action needed, relevant deadlines, and method for reporting outcomes. The message or action needed can also be reinforced in your state association Web site and/or state newsletter.

Making Legislator/Policy Maker Visits

The most successful part of the process was forming a grassroots committee. With assistance from ASHA, we have formed a state-wide grassroots committee that is willing and ready to work. Previous attempts at forming a grassroots network were not successful.
 —Mona Ryan,
 Advocacy Coordinator,
 Oklahoma Speech-Language-Hearing Association (OSHA)

Research has demonstrated that to successfully motivate a policy maker to make a change it is necessary to convince him/her that a lot of people in his/her district care about the issue and they care a lot. The most powerful way to accomplish your goal is to have your members speak directly to the policy makers you are trying to influence. This can be difficult to accomplish because people often feel uneasy or anxious visiting legislators or policy makers. Providing your members with grassroots training concerning how to make visits, and how to deliver a message effectively can make their contacts go smoothly. Suggesting that they partner with other SLPs, parents, or other supporters when making visits can also alleviate their stress. Some common do's and don'ts for visits are:

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be positive • Be accurate • Be brief • Be polite • Practice your message • Learn about the policy maker's background and position • Make a specific request (e.g., ask for support, cosponsor a bill) • Follow-up with any questions that you cannot answer • Write a thank you note • Inform your committee of the results of the meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be confrontational • Get off message • Use jargon • Overstay your welcome

Go to Section 2: Grassroots Training Activities.

Developing talking points and legislative packets

This step includes preparing user-friendly information for your members for visits with policy makers. Develop talking points that are 1–2 pages long and include pertinent data and facts about your issue, describe the impact of the issue on your services, students, clients, and professionals, and if possible include real-life stories that will help to dramatize the issue and bring your issue to a more personal level.

Go to Appendix C: Sample Talking Points. Legislative packets can be provided that identify your state association and issue, and contain talking points, brochures, or other relevant information. If possible all members should use the same information and packets for your contacts. This will help your effort to appear organized and professional, and will assure that a consistent message is delivered to policy makers.

Other Grassroots Efforts

Follow-up and constancy are crucial. Our presence at the Virginia Board of Education's Standards of Quality subcommittee meetings was very important to our being included in the final package. The other point I would make is that it is very important to understand that this is a process—political at that—and we cannot afford to get discouraged and give up and let our message disappear.

—Bet Neale,
Lobbyist, Speech-Language-
Hearing Association of Virginia
(SHAV)

Other grassroots networking efforts can also be influential and effective. These include: telephone calls, form letters, e-mails, faxes, rally or lobby day, testifying at public hearings or budget meetings, attending key policy maker meetings, hosting site visits at your school or facility, and contributing to or attending Political Action Committee (PAC) fund raising activities for elected officials. Although visits or personal letters have often been found to be the most influential for legislators, elected officials can be impressed or influenced when they receive a large response or volume of messages about an issue. One targeted state used a combination of methods to get members involved in their issue. They conducted a letter-writing campaign during their state association convention using a form letter but provided space for members to write personal messages about how the issue impacted their program and the students they serve. They collected more than 100 letters and delivered them to their state board of education members and key legislators.

Go to Appendix D: Sample Letter to Legislators.

STEP 4: Establishing a Grassroots Network

Grassroots Advocacy Tips

- Create a Database
- Establish Key Contacts
- Get the Word Out (Listserv, Web site, newsletter)
- Make Legislator/Policy Maker Visits
- Develop Talking Points and Legislative Packets
- Conduct other Grassroots Efforts (Letters, e-mails, faxes, testimony, key meetings, site visits, PAC events)

Section 5

Reaching the Media— Getting Your Message Out

STEP 5: Creating a Media Plan

Working with the media through available communication vehicles (e.g., newspapers, newsletters, TV, radio, or the Web) can provide important visibility for the profession and your issue, which can enhance your state's advocacy effort. This aspect of a State Action Plan is not always considered but can be a powerful tool to help sway decision makers in your favor. Your state's media plan should be realistic so that it is manageable for your advocacy committee media coordinator and other volunteers. Your initial goal may be directed toward gaining general visibility for the professions by establishing relationships with key reporters or editors, and getting stories published in the media that will promote the professions. This is an important first step toward eventually getting articles printed in the media that specifically address your state's issue. The media tips outlined in this resource are primarily directed to working with the print media, but other media avenues can be explored. ASHA has helpful resources and information on media strategies and tools on the ASHA Web site at: <http://www.asha.org/about/news/Tipsheets/> and a Public Relations Handbook that is available free of charge to ASHA members (**Go to Resources**). Your media coordinator will need to be persistent because attempts at media coverage may not always be successful, but good media relationships built over time can yield positive and worthwhile results for your state's effort. **Go to Appendix F: Sample Media Plan.**

In Rhode Island, we discovered that a media/public relations campaign as part of the overall strategic plan is extremely beneficial. We worked to get two segments aired on WJAR Channel 10, located in Providence, RI. One segment covered the expanding role of the SLP in all settings. A second segment called the 'Coffee Cup Salute,' featured RISHA's fall convention. This positive media coverage has helped us set the stage for more targeted media coverage if needed during our 2004 legislative session. I think that a media/public relations plan is a critical component of a state advocacy plan.

*—Sheryl Amaral,
Grassroots Advocacy
Committee Coordinator, Rhode
Island Speech-Language-
Hearing Association (RISHA)*

Tips for Media Plans

- Develop a list of potential news outlets. Determine which newspapers or newsletters are influential or are widely read by decision makers and consumers. For example, in one targeted state that is working on reducing caseload size based on total workload, the media plan included getting articles published in the various state administrator newsletters (e.g., school boards association, school superintendents). In another small targeted state working to gain salary supplements, the state focused on getting articles printed in the largest state newspaper that is most widely read by the state legislators. In a third targeted state working to achieve a state-wide salary supplement, committee members published articles in local newspapers promoting their SLPs who had recently earned their CCC.
- Compile a list of reporters most likely to cover education/health related issues in the targeted news outlets. Determine what types of stories the reporter prefers and facilitate an ongoing relationship with the reporter. Contact the reporter and introduce yourself as an available and valuable resource for issues pertaining to the SLP and audiology professions. Find out the best mode for keeping in contact with the reporter (e.g., e-mail, fax, phone).
- Follow the stories covered in the targeted news outlets and call and offer yourself as a source for further information on the topic or related topics.
- Follow “hot topics” in the news such as recent treatments or breakthroughs, or celebrities (national or local) who may have been impacted by a communication disorder.
- Develop a calendar of events related to the profession or to your effort that can be publicized. Events such as state association conferences or meetings, Better Hearing and Speech Month, back to school, or other special events may be potential opportunities for publicity. For example, one targeted state was able to publicize their fall state association convention on their local TV station. Another state was able to get coverage for testimony presented at a state board of education hearing. Other media opportunities may include coverage for lobby day, important meetings, or public hearings.

- Publicize your calendar of events on your state association Web site or newsletter so that members can contact local or weekly newspapers in their area to try to obtain coverage about the profession or your issue or event.
- Develop a newsworthy story or tip sheet for reporters or editors. Develop a story or one-page tip sheet that provides facts and supporting data about your issue. Consider the target audience when you develop your story or tip sheet (e.g., parents, administrators, legislators). Your message will be tailored differently depending on your audience. Consider your message and purpose. Printed information can serve many purposes (e.g., inform, educate, explain, defend, entertain). Consider what type of story is newsworthy. Stories that are new, compelling, exclusive, timely, entertaining, or have a unique angle are desirable for reporters. Use a story or case history to make the article more personal. **Go to Appendix E: Sample Media Tip Sheet.**
- Consider other avenues for media attention such as sample letters to the editor and op-ed pieces for local newspapers in key legislator’s districts.
- Coordinate media coverage of visits by legislators or administrators to an SLP’s program in a local school district.

Step 5: Creating a Media Plan

Key Points:

- Work to Gain General Visibility for the Professions and for Your Issue
- Establish Relationships With Key Reporters or Editors
- Become a Valuable Resource for Issues Pertaining to the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Professions
- Develop a Calendar of Events Related to the Profession or to Your Effort That Can Be Publicized
- Develop a Newsworthy Story or Tip Sheet for Reporters or Editors
- Consider Other Avenues For Media Attention

Section 6

Establishing an Effective Communication System— Let's Be in Touch

Step 6: Developing Communication Strategies Between Advocacy Partners

The facilitation of communication among advocacy members at the state level has been terrifically helpful. Phone conferences allowed advocacy team members to have input and learn about crucial junctures in the process of moving our bill forward during a legislative session. That and the state advocacy e-mail list have been great assets in the advocacy efforts in West Virginia.

—Connie Breza,
Advocacy Coordinator, West
Virginia Speech-Language-
Hearing Association (WVSHA)

Establishing an effective communication system between your advocacy partners is an important ingredient for sustaining any advocacy effort. Regular ongoing communication among the partners is needed to monitor progress, solve issues that may arise, discuss strategy, and maintain momentum for the initiative. Ongoing communication with your members and other interested or related groups is needed to keep the partners energized and informed and to encourage continued support for your effort. **Go to Appendix G: Sample Advocacy Committee Job Descriptions.**

Communication System for Advocacy Committee

The advocacy coordinator needs to maintain consistent communication with its advocacy committee members and this can be accomplished through weekly or biweekly telephone conference calls, and e-mail communication. A group e-mail list can be established for committee members to facilitate communication. The advocacy committee coordinator, grassroots coordinator, and lobbyist need to discuss lobbying and grassroots activities on an ongoing basis especially during your legislative session when the outcome of your bill is being considered. Periodic conference calls with state association leadership is also suggested for further support or resources. It is also recommended that 1–2 face-to-face strategy meetings be held during the year with your committee members, lobbyist, and state association leadership to review the status of your initiative, and to discuss future activities.

Communication System for Members

The main lesson I learned was to keep the members informed about the process of the effort so they would not be disappointed and feel unneeded. I also learned that when more people are involved in the planning process, it is easier to get the committee formed and to keep the support going.

—Mona Ryan,
Advocacy Coordinator,
Oklahoma Speech-Language-
Hearing Association (OSHA)

Your members can and should be kept abreast of your progress by posting regular progress updates on your state association Web site, and by publishing articles in your state association newsletter. A column or page can be designated for your advocacy effort. ASHA can publish periodic updates in *The ASHA Leader* and ASHA Web site to provide national attention on your effort. Messages, action alerts, or updates can be posted on your state association e-mail listserv. Your state association can work with ASHA to designate an individual who can obtain access rights to ASHA’s database to post messages for state advocacy activities. Contact Eileen Crowe, ASHA director of state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org to obtain additional information concerning this ASHA benefit. Regional or annual conventions provide an excellent opportunity to inform and update members about your progress. Your business meeting or annual luncheon or dinner is a good forum for such updates.

Step 6: Developing Communication Strategies Between Advocacy Partners

Key Points:

- Advocacy Committee* Conduct weekly or biweekly calls, post regular e-mails on listserv, conduct periodic strategy meetings)
- Lobbyist* Participate in periodic conference calls and meetings
- State Association Members* Post regular progress updates on state Web site, post action alerts on listserv, publish articles in state association newsletter, and periodic updates in *The ASHA Leader*

Section 7

Establishing a Sustained Effort—If at First You Don't Succeed...

Step 7: Considering Key Strategies From Targeted States

The SEAT's experience with the targeted states has demonstrated that a successful advocacy effort requires certain key ingredients including: support from the state association, a careful analysis of factors affecting state change, a state plan of action, a coordinator and committee willing to dedicate time and effort to the issue, grassroots support, a media presence, and an effective communication system. Effecting change at the state level also necessitates a sustained effort, persistence, and patience. A state must establish realistic goals and time frame for achieving its goal. Your state association will need to commit to a 2–3 year campaign at a minimum to achieve legislative or regulatory success. The wheels of change turn slowly especially during a challenging budget climate, but change can occur if a state is willing to maintain focus, establish priorities, and devote resources to the effort. We suggest that you devote your first year to educating your committee members, state association leaders and members, your lobbyist, and the key decision makers in your state about your issue. In the subsequent years the effort focuses on establishing key relationships, building credibility and visibility, and demonstrating your commitment to the issue. It is easy to bow out during tough times, but key decision makers need to see that your association is determined to “stay the course” and that you are serious about securing your goal.

Another key factor for success is a cadre of committed volunteers. Your issue will require time, commitment, and work. You must have a core group of volunteers willing to work on the effort and a coordinator willing to lead the

charge. Along with a group of core volunteers you need member constituents who will make their needs and concerns known to decision makers. **Go to Section 3: Advocacy Committee.**

A third ingredient for success is communicating and keeping members informed of your progress. You will need to sustain your volunteers and recruit new volunteers along the way. Maintaining ongoing communication will help retain committed volunteers. We suggest taking the time to celebrate your achievements, no matter how small, because it will help to motivate your volunteers and provide acknowledgement of your committee's hard work. One targeted state provided certificates of appreciation to its committee members. Another targeted state listed the names of its volunteers in its state newsletter and Web site. A third targeted state established an advocacy column in its state association newsletter to highlight advocacy committee members. Successful efforts can be recognized at your state convention, or in your newsletter or Web site. **Go to Section 6: Communication System for Members.**

Pitfalls to Avoid

When your state engages in an advocacy effort, it is inevitable that there will be some decisions made along the way or some actions taken that in hindsight you would have done differently. There will be a natural learning curve throughout the process as there is with any long-term project or goal. The SEAT's experience with the targeted states may provide helpful insight regarding possible common pitfalls to avoid when launching and engaging in a state-wide advocacy effort.

One common pitfall to avoid is unclear state association priorities. It is important that your state association surveys its members to determine your membership's top issues. Resources and volunteers are usually scarce so it is not realistic or practical to work on more than one or two issues at one time. Consensus is needed from your Executive Board and your members as to what issues you want to tackle and then we suggest prioritizing those

I have also learned throughout this process that legislative advocacy is a year-round strategic process. State leaders must possess a level of commitment that will pull them through the ups and downs of the process. I think the reason that the RISHA/ASHA partnership has been successful to date is due to the fact that the partnership is both dedicated and committed to achieving positive legislative advocacy outcomes for our profession.
 —Sheryl Amaral,
 Advocacy Committee
 Coordinator, Rhode Island
 Speech-Language-Hearing
 Association (RISHA)

issues. Once you have received consensus it is suggested that you clearly publicize those priorities so everyone understands your state association’s goals. Members must be willing to compromise on their issues and work together for the common good of the professions. **Go to Section 3: State Association.**

Another common drawback to a successful advocacy campaign is lack of leadership by the chair of your advocacy committee. One state’s campaign became derailed when a very well-meaning committee coordinator was not able to follow-through on commitments made. A committed and energetic chair is essential for a positive outcome. **Go to Section 3: Advocacy Committee.**

A third situation that can cause negative or delayed outcomes for your issue, is limited follow-through and support by the association and its advocacy committee members. Once your priority has been established it is critical to carry-out your State Action Plan and engage your members throughout the effort. Your state association, committee members, and volunteers must be willing to sustain the effort and follow-through on tasks when requests are made by the advocacy chair or the lobbyist. Volunteers need to realize that although there may be peak activity times such as during a legislative session, an advocacy effort continues throughout the year.

Members also need to be kept well informed of your activities and how they can be involved in the effort. If volunteers are not kept “in-the-loop” they can easily lose interest or momentum. **Go to Section 6: Communication System for Members.**

Inconsistent messages to policy makers by your committee members and association volunteers is a final condition that can hamper your desired results. It is critical that you develop cogent messages in your campaign and that these messages are used consistently by your committee members, lobbyist, state association volunteers, parents, consumers, or other supporting partners. Confusing or mixed messages can dilute the impact that you are trying to achieve with policy or decision makers. Individuals

participating in the advocacy effort should practice or role play the message. All participants should use the same talking points, supportive documentation, and packets of materials when meeting with legislators or other policy makers. **Go to Section 4: Establishing a Grassroots Network.**

Step 7: Considering Key Strategies From Targeted States

Successful Strategies

Key Points:

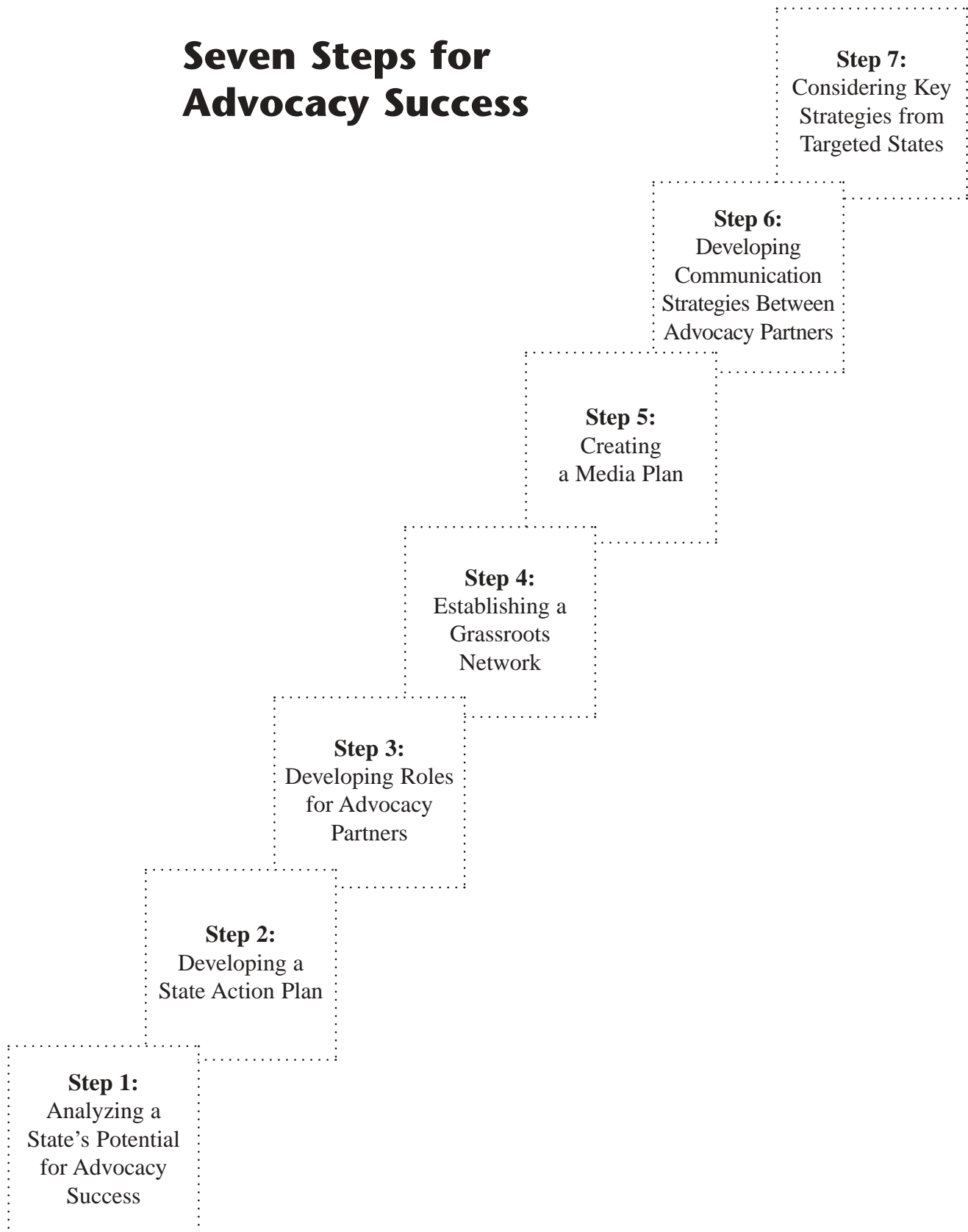
- Effecting Change at the State Level Requires:
- Sustained Commitment
- Coordinator and Cadre of Volunteers
- Keeping Members Informed and Recognizing Accomplishments

Pitfalls to Avoid

Key Points:

- Unclear State Association Priorities
- Lack of Leadership by the Chair of the Advocacy Committee
- Limited Volunteer Support and Follow-Through by the Association and Its Advocacy Committee Members
- Members Not Kept Well Informed of Activities
- Inconsistent Messages by Committee Members and State Association Volunteers

Seven Steps for Advocacy Success



Resources

Working for Change: A Guide for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists in Schools. Contact ASHA's Action Center, 800-498-2071

State Advocacy Guidebook for the Salary Supplement Initiative (revised 2001). Contact Michelle Mannebach at ASHA's GRPP Unit mmannebach@asha.org

Public Relations Handbook A Guide to Reaching the Media. Contact Greg Weimann at ASHA's Public Relations Unit gweimann@asha.org

A Workload Analysis Approach for Establishing Speech-Language Caseload Standards in the Schools. Contact ASHA's Action Center, 800-498-2071

A Workload Analysis Approach for Establishing Speech-Language Caseload Standards in the Schools: Implementation Guide. Contact ASHA's Action Center, 800-498-2071

Local Initiative Guide—A Web-based product for members interested in advocating at the local level. Check the ASHA Web site at: www.asha.org/advocacy/schools.htm

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2001). Scope of practice in speech-language pathology. ASHA Desk Reference (vol. 1). Rockville, MD: Author.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. National Outcomes Measurement System (NOMS). Rockville, MD: Author.

Additional resources available on the ASHA Web site, www.asha.org, and the ASHA Products Catalog.

Personal Political Power, Joel Blackwell, 2001, Issue Management Company.

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For information on school issues related to academic affairs,
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Appendices

Appendix A	
Sample State Criterion Template	45
Appendix B	
Sample Action Plan Template	49
Appendix C—Sample Talking Points	
Sample Talking Points for Salary Supplement	51
Talking Points for Use with Decision Makers: Speech-Language Pathology Caseloads/Workload	53
Appendix D	
Sample Letter to Legislators for Salary Supplement	57
Appendix E	
Sample Media Tip Sheet for Salary Supplement Initiative	59
Appendix F	
Sample Media Plan for Caseload/Workload for the Speech-Language-Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV)	61
Appendix G—Sample Advocacy Committee Job Descriptions	
Chair, Advocacy Committee	63
Chair, Grassroots Advocacy Committee	65
Media Coordinator	67
Constituent Member	69

Appendix A

State Criterion Template

State: _____

Evaluators: _____

Date: _____

Criterion Factors	Status	Rating (+ 0 -)	General Comments/Contacts
1. History of Issue Past/Current State/Local Efforts (e.g., bill introduced, data collected, surveys conducted, testimony presented)			
2. Level of Support or Opposition From Key Decision Makers			
STATE LEVEL			
• Governor			
• Legislators, staff			
• Union (NEA/AFT)			
• Related/pupil service providers			
• State Board/Department of Education			
LOCAL LEVEL			
• Union (NEA/AFT)			
• District/Local Board of Education (superintendent, principal, special ed director)			
• Local/regional SLP/A group			
3. Paid Lobbyist			
4. Communication System–Grassroots Efforts (e.g., Web site, mailings, listserve)			

Criterion Factors	Status	Rating (+ 0 -)	General Comments/Contacts
5. Consumer Support			
• Parent organizations			
• Union			
• Professional support groups			
6. Media/Public Awareness Activities/Communication Vehicles			
7. State Association Involvement/State Association Priority			
• Active SEAL			
• School Affairs Committee			
• Committee willing to work on issue			
8. Political Climate			
• Legislative calendar			
• Budgetary concerns			
• Education agenda			
9. Notes			

Issue Specific Considerations

Caseload/Workload	General Comments/Contacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total workload time versus caseload number 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current caseload data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> caseload average caseload cap caseload average of neighboring states caseload determined at local versus state level 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic staff shortage 	
Salary Supplement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NBPTS certification # of master teachers/# of certified SLPs and audiologists SLP salary scale (teacher versus related service personnel) State evaluation of ASHA versus NBPTS certification Teacher requirements versus SLP entry level requirements 	

Other Factors

Process to Effect Change	General Comments/Contacts
Legislative	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor Legislature 	
Regulatory	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Board of Education 	
Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Board of Education Local school board/district Individual school 	
Other Data to Support Efforts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDEA funds to state Medicaid funds to state 	

APPENDIX B

State Action Plan Template

Date: _____
 State: _____
 Issue: _____

Major Goals:

-
-
-
-

Activity Step	Activity Status	Person/s Responsible	Activity Completed
<p>I. Legislative or Regulatory Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 			
<p>II. Key Decision Makers</p> <p>a. Decision Maker _____ Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>b. Decision Maker _____ Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • <p>c. Decision Maker _____ Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			

Activity Step	Activity Status	Person/s Responsible	Activity Completed
III. Grassroots Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			
1. SLP Subplan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 			
2. Parent Subplan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 			
3. Teacher Subplan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 			
IV. Media Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			
Meetings/Convention Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			
Oral or Written Information/Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			
Training Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			
Other Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			

Appendix C

Sample Talking Points for Salary Supplement

Student and Professional Investment Initiative
Oklahoma Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Oklahoma School Psychologists Association

Purpose of Bill

Provides an incentive to recruit and retain highly qualified speech-language pathologists (SLPs), audiologists, and school psychologists who provide quality services for children attending Oklahoma's public schools.

Rationale

As with classroom teachers, attracting highly qualified, nationally certified professionals to optimize the potential of our children should be the number one priority of the state. National outcomes research data supports that early intervention by SLPs, audiologists, and school psychologists is essential to increased academic achievement and improved educational outcomes. Further, current federal legislation including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997 and No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) require districts to employ highly qualified professionals. IDEA further states that individuals hired by the state must meet the highest requirements in the state for their profession.

Professional Standards

The national certification requirements in speech-language pathology, audiology, and school psychology exceed requirements for national teacher certification. A master's degree is the requirement to qualify for national certification in speech-language pathology, audiology, and school psychology. In addition, neither profession is eligible for certification under the master teacher program, yet each is

required to meet education requirements in addition to their professional training for employment in the school system. (See attached comparison and credentialing requirements.)

Fiscal Impact

Currently there are 570 certified speech-language pathologists and audiologists, and 35 school psychologists in the Oklahoma public schools. The estimated cost of a \$5000.00 annual bonus would be \$3,025,000.00. Speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and school psychologists all generate funds for the education system through Medicaid reimbursement for their services totaling over 3.5 million dollars per year. (Source: Oklahoma Health Care Authority Fiscal Year Report, 2000.)

Shortages

Oklahoma is losing qualified professionals to other states, health care, and private practice due to non-competitive salaries. Persistent vacancies remain in many districts across the state.

References

Supporting information regarding the above is attached hereto and provided by the Oklahoma Speech-Language-Hearing Association (OSHA), the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

Talking Points for Use with Decision Makers: Speech-Language Pathology Caseloads/Workload

(Adapted from A Workload Approach for Establishing Speech-Language Caseload Standards In The Schools: Implementation Guide, ASHA 2003.)

These talking points may be used to present SLP workload issues to staff, union representatives, and decision makers. They come from the ASHA policy documents on school-based SLP workloads (ASHA, 2002).

- Education agencies must set caseload standards that allow SLPs to engage in the broad range of professional activities necessary to implement appropriate and effective service options, and to tailor intervention to meet individual student needs.
- Each student added to the caseload increases the time needed, not only for direct and indirect services and evaluations, but also for mandated paperwork, multidisciplinary team conferences, parent and teacher contacts, and related responsibilities.
- SLPs report that the time it takes to provide face-to-face intervention services to large numbers of students leaves little or no time for the use of an array of service delivery options and the myriad of other indirect and compliance-related activities necessary to support students' education programs.
- Caseloads must be of a size to allow SLPs to provide appropriate and effective intervention, conduct evaluations, collaborate with teachers and parents, implement best practices in school speech-language pathology, carry out related activities, and complete necessary paperwork and compliance tasks within working hours.
- Without consideration of the entire workload, school-based SLPs may be placed in the position of offering only services that are administratively convenient, forming treatment groups that are too large to ensure meaningful student progress, or filling all available time slots with face-to-face intervention services.

- SLPs, teachers, administrators, union representatives, parents, and others should work in partnership to ensure that caseload size does not negatively affect SLPs' ability to meet the needs of their students.

Additional Talking Points

The research on effects of caseload and group size supports several conclusions. Education teams must consider these results when determining which service options can best meet individual student needs (from ASHA NOMS).

- Large caseloads affect available service options. Large caseloads result in less individual treatment, more group treatment, and an increase in the size of treatment groups.
- Larger caseloads appear to minimize opportunities for individualization of interventions.
- When instructed in smaller instructional groups, students with a wide range of disabilities are more engaged and have better outcomes. Among desired student outcomes, communication skills, in particular, appear to be positively influenced by small treatment group size, and to be negatively influenced by larger treatment group size. This includes students with severe disabilities who verbalize and use gestures to communicate more in small group settings.
- Students on large caseloads appear to take longer to make progress on communication skills.

The Scope of Practice for Speech-Language Pathology (ASHA, 2001) has also continued to expand and evolve in response to significant changes in the severity and complexity of disabilities of students currently enrolled in schools. These changes have exerted a strong influence on the workloads and roles played by school-based SLPs. The Scope of Practice reflects the new knowledge bases and clinical skills necessary to fulfill these expanded SLP roles. For example, SLPs in schools must now have expertise in areas that include, but are not limited to

- Language and literacy development
- Articulation and phonology development and disorders

- Stuttering
- Voice disorders
- Language-based learning disabilities including reading and writing disorders
- Expressive and receptive language disorders (oral expression and listening comprehension)
- Feeding and swallowing disorders
- Augmentative/alternative communication and assistive technology
- Auditory processing disorders
- Traumatic brain injury
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Neurogenic disorders including cognitive impairment
- Physical disorders including cerebral palsy and syndromes
- Deafness and hearing impairment
- Linguistic and cultural diversity

Appendix D

Sample Letter to Legislators for Salary Supplement

Writer's name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Dear Delegate/Senator:

I am a speech-language pathologist and/or audiologist working in the public schools in the state of West Virginia. I am writing to you to ask for your support of legislation that would provide a \$2,500.00 annual supplement for nationally certified school-based speech-language pathologists and audiologists. While national certification requirements for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) are different yet equally rigorous, only teachers in West Virginia are compensated for attaining national certification.

The roles and responsibilities of the school-based speech-language pathologist and audiologist have changed dramatically with the enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997. Increasing numbers of children with complex educational and medical disorders are being served in the schools. These children often require intensive long-term intervention that can only be provided by highly skilled, uniquely qualified, nationally certified speech-language pathologists.

In addition, recently enacted No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation requires states to demonstrate annual improvement in children's academic performance. The National Outcomes Measurement System (NOMS) created by ASHA is developing a database to measure children's outcomes subsequent to intervention by a certified speech-language pathologist. Results of this ongoing study reveal:

- 75% of classroom teachers surveyed reported that students receiving speech, language, and hearing services demonstrated improvement in reading and reading comprehension skills.
- 93% of parents whose children received speech, language, or hearing services from speech-language pathologists felt that their children's communication skills improved.

Finally, there has been a recognized shortage of speech-language pathologists in the West Virginia public schools since 1999. Currently there are 13.5 unfilled vacancies in 34 counties. In a recent report by the West Virginia Department of Education there is at least one vacancy each in 25 counties, requiring the Department of Education to hire private contractors, at considerable expense, to provide necessary speech, language, and hearing services. Offering a salary bonus will ensure that the state will be able to attract and retain qualified professionals.

I hope that you will support salary supplement legislation for nationally certified school-based speech-language pathologists and audiologists in the upcoming legislative session. The more than 16,000 children and their families receiving speech, language, and hearing services in West Virginia's public schools and the dedicated professionals who serve these children deserve nothing less!

Sincerely,

Appendix E

Sample Media Tip Sheet for Salary Supplement Initiative

News:

The West Virginia Speech-Language-Hearing Association supports passage of legislation to provide a salary supplement to nationally certified speech-language pathologists and audiologists who work in West Virginia's public schools. Currently only teachers with national certification are awarded a \$2500.00 annual stipend.

Nationally certified speech-language pathologists and audiologists are uniquely qualified to serve children with speech, language, and hearing needs in our schools. They provide assessment and intervention services for more than 16,000 school-aged children across the state, ensuring a quality education for all. National certification standards for speech-language pathologists and audiologists and teachers are equally rigorous, yet only teachers are compensated for their certification. Offering a salary bonus to certified speech-language pathologists and audiologists will ensure that districts across the state will be able to attract and retain qualified professionals.

Providing quality services for all of the states' children requires a high level of competence and commitment. The legislature has previously awarded teachers for their competence and dedication. Don't dedicated speech and hearing professionals deserve the same?

Appendix F

Sample Media Plan for Caseload/ Workload for the Speech-Language- Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV)

Action Items for Media Coordinator/s:

External Media

- Develop a media calendar of events.
 - Determine a list of possible pertinent media events in the state (e.g., Lobby Day, SHAV Convention).
 - Identify other possible “Hot Topics” to piggy-back onto issue (e.g., shortage of qualified providers in state, NCLB, Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs)).
- Develop tip sheets on pertinent issues.
- Identify contact with Richmond Times-Dispatch reporter and one other state newspaper.
 - Develop contact with the education reporter/s or other relevant reporter/s.
 - Pitch timely and appropriate stories.
- Identify a local newspaper in a key legislative district.
 - Locate a constituent to develop contact with education or relevant reporter.
 - Pitch timely and appropriate stories.
 - Invite a legislator/policy maker to visit school and obtain newspaper coverage.
 - Plan legislative visits enlisting coverage of local reporters and those covering the capitol.
- Write articles for other relevant newsletters and audiences (e.g., parents, special education teachers, administrators).

Internal Media

- Publish articles in SHAV newsletter about effort and partnership.
 - Post information on SHAV Web site.
 - Update legislative information on SHAV web site.

Other

- Consider creating a permanent media position on SHAV Executive Board.

Appendix G

Sample Job Description Chair, Advocacy Committee

Qualifications

- Active in state association activities.
- Experienced with state legislative issues.
- Willing to commit time and energy to achieve responsibilities (average time: 5 hours/week).
- Enthusiastic, motivated, and energetic.
- Able to handle time-sensitive deadlines.

Responsibilities

Organizational Activities

- Coordinate activities of advocacy committee.
- Act as a liaison between state association executive committee, advocacy committee, and lobbyist.
- Appoint subcommittee chairs for grassroots and media.

Legislative and Grassroots Activities

- Keep abreast of state association priorities and legislative initiatives.
- Assist lobbyist and grassroots coordinator in identifying key legislators/legislative districts.
- Assist committee members with identifying key state association contacts.

Communication

- Communicate regularly with committee members and lobbyists.
- Participate in periodic conference calls with lobbyists and advocacy committee members.
- Provide periodic written summaries of state progress to state leadership and advocacy committee.

Other

- Participate in grassroots and media training.
- Participate in state convention and local meetings as needed.

Sample Job Description Chair, Grassroots Advocacy Committee

Qualifications

- Active in state association.
- Experienced with state legislative issues.
- Willing to commit time and energy to complete responsibilities (average time: 3 hours/week).
- Excellent written language skills.
- Able to handle time sensitive deadlines.

Responsibilities

Legislative and Grassroots Activities

- Keep abreast of state association priorities and legislative initiatives.
- Assist advocacy committee chair and lobbyists in identifying key legislative districts.
- Organize list of state association key contacts.
- Develop with lobbyists, and committee members talking points, fact sheets, and other materials for key contacts to use during legislative visits.
- Develop sample letter(s) to send to legislators, parents, and administrators.

Communication

- Establish regular communication with advocacy committee chair.
- Establish communication system with key contacts to distribute action alerts and grassroots information on a periodic basis.
- Develop reporting system for key contacts to report results of contacts (ie., visits, letters, phone calls, etc).

Other

- Participate in the state convention and local meetings, as needed.

Sample Job Description Media Coordinator

Qualifications

- Interested in and familiar with state association priorities and legislative initiatives.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Able to handle time-sensitive deadlines.
- Familiar with Web-based technology.
- Willing to commit time and energy to achieve responsibilities (average time: 1–2 hours per week).

Responsibilities

- Coordinate media activity of the advocacy committee.
- Keep abreast of state association priorities and legislative initiatives.
- Draft articles for state publications, state association newsletter, state Web site, local newspaper, etc.
- Develop contacts with local newspaper reporters.
- Work with *The ASHA Leader* staff to develop state news articles for *The ASHA Leader* for national coverage.
- Establish regular communication with advocacy committee chair.
- Develop promotional/media plan.
- Participate in the state convention and local meetings, as needed.

Sample Job Description Constituent Member

Objective

The constituent member contact will build and maintain a positive relationship with his/her state Senator or House member (or other appropriate policy makers) through direct face-to-face contact and through written communication when requested by state association leadership.

Specific Responsibilities

The constituent member will:

- Keep abreast of the association's legislative priorities and specific initiatives through newsletters, e-mail updates, and action alerts.
- Arrange to meet with his/her legislator 2—3 three times per year in a mutually agreed upon location.

Preparations for this meeting will include

- Identifying a group of three supporters to take along to the meeting, including a consumer (e.g., a parent of a child receiving services, teacher, and any other individual who may have a personal relationship with that legislator).
- Preparing what each member of the group will say (refer to the legislative packet and talking points developed by your state association). Prepare a 1–5 minute presentation depending on the time allocated for the meeting.
- Bringing a camera for a group photo with the legislator before departing.

During the meeting

- Share personal experiences and success stories.
- Ask the legislator for his/her position on the issue.
- Leave a packet of informational materials including contact information with the legislator for follow-up.

Following the meeting

- Send a thank-you note and provide any follow-up information requested.

- Invite the legislator to visit his/her school to see firsthand the quality services that children in the SLP program receive.
- Send no more than 4–5 e-mail messages, letters, or other written methods of communicating with the legislator each year, requesting support of the state association's initiatives.
- Report results of contacts with designated legislator to _____. This report should include legislator's position and comments on the issue.