



Current Issues

For additional information, please contact:
Jeanette Janota, Surveys & Information Team
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
800-498-2071, ext. 4175
jjanota@asha.org

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Executive Summary

In the spring of 2006, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted a survey of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in school settings. The survey was designed to provide information about school-based service delivery and to update and expand information gathered during previous Omnibus and Schools Surveys.

This report is based on responses from SLPs in five types of school settings: day/residential, preschool, elementary, secondary, and combined settings.

Overall Findings

- ◆ Greatest challenges:
 - 80% - paperwork
 - 66% - lack of time
- ◆ 12% received salary supplement for having their CCCs
- ◆ 54%: services were provided to ELLs in English only
- ◆ <20% reported SLPAs in their buildings
- ◆ Impact of SLPAs on workload:
 - 52% - increased supervision
 - 38% - more time for direct service
- ◆ Most frequently occurring requirement for SLPAs: Bachelor's in communication sciences
- ◆ SLPA activities:
 - 25% - direct intervention
 - 23% - noninstructional activities

Demographics

Challenges

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Additional Information

Demo- graphics

Respondents to the 2006 Schools Survey were an exact representation on some characteristics of the population of ASHA-certified, school-based SLPs from which they were selected. The vast majority of both groups were female (97%), non-Hispanic (97%), and white (95% in the survey, 94% in the population).

The respondents differed from the population on other characteristics such as the type of school in which they worked. For example, 13% of the survey respondents worked in a preschool as did 17% of the population, and 56% of the respondents worked in an elementary school compared with 46% of the population. Among the respondents, 91% were clinical service providers; in the population, 86% reported this primary function. The respondents were slightly younger than the population (median age of 43 vs. 46 years) but had more experience (16 vs. 10 years).

Challenges

When asked to identify the greatest challenges they faced, more than half selected the high amount of paperwork (80%), lack of time (66%), and high caseload size (58%) from among a list of 14 possible responses (see Table 1).

Table 1. Rank Order of Greatest Challenges

Rank	Challenge
1	High amount of paperwork
2	Lack of time for planning, collaboration, and meeting with teachers
3	High caseload size
4	Lack of others' understanding of my role
5	Low salary
6	Inadequate work space and facilities
7	Lack of parental involvement and support
8	Unfilled positions
9	Lack of administrative support
10	Lack of training for low incidence disorders
11	Lack of training for working with English Language Learners (ELLs)
12	Lack of materials and assessment tools
13	Ethical issues (e.g., Medicaid, supervision, clinical decisions)
14	Use of underqualified personnel

n = 2,561

Type of school facility, geographic region, population density, and years of experience influenced the percentage of respondents who selected the challenges listed above. The following were among the significant findings:

- ◆ Selection of lack of others' understanding of my role ranged from 20% in preschools to 47% in secondary schools.
- ◆ The selection of paperwork as a response ranged from 64% in secondary schools to 84% in elementary schools.
- ◆ Selecting low salary ranged from 17% in the Middle Atlantic states to 46% in the West South Central states.
- ◆ Unfilled positions as a selection ranged from 12% in Middle Atlantic states to 44% in Pacific states.
- ◆ Lack of parental involvement and support was selected by 18% of SLPs in suburban areas but by 30% in rural and 31% in metropolitan/urban areas.
- ◆ Lack of materials and assessment tools was chosen by 25% of SLPs with 1 to 5 years of experience but by only 9% of those with 21 to 25 years.



Salary Supplement

One question on the 2006 Schools Survey asked about salary supplements.

- ◆ Nearly 12% of the SLPs who worked full- or part-time said that they received a salary supplement for having their ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC).
- ◆ Fewer than 1% received a supplement for being a bilingual service provider.
- ◆ Nearly 17% received a supplement for some other, unspecified reason. This response was chosen most frequently in secondary schools (22%) and least often in special day/residential schools (8%).
- ◆ Two thirds (68%) reported that they did not receive any supplement. This response was chosen most frequently in preschools (77%) and least often in secondary schools (64%).

Bilingual Services

More than half of the SLPs stated that services in their district were provided to English Language Learners (ELLs) in English only, and one quarter used trained professional interpreters (see Table 2).

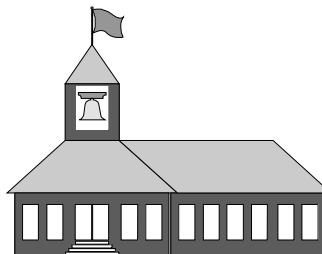
Table 2. Services to ELLs

%	Service Provision Method
54	Services provided in English only
27	Trained professional interpreters
21	Bilingual SLPs
17	Untrained interpreters (e.g., family members)
14	We have no ELL students.
7	Bilingual SLP assistants

n = 2,426

Type of school facility, geographic region, population density, and years of experience influenced the percentage of respondents whose districts use various methods to provide service to ELL students. For example:

- ◆ Having no ELL students occurred most frequently in day/residential schools (43%) and least often in preschools (10%).
- ◆ Service provision from bilingual SLPs was most often chosen in the Mountain states (32%) and least often in East South Central and West North Central states (5%).
- ◆ The greater the population density, the greater the percentage of SLPs who said that services were provided by bilingual SLPs: 41% in metropolitan/urban areas, 16% in suburban areas, and 8% in rural areas.
- ◆ Providing services in English only varied by years of experience from a low of 50% with 16–20 years of experience to a high of 62% with 26 or more years.



SLP Assistants

Impact

Fewer than one fifth of the SLPs reported that there were any SLP assistants (SLPAs) employed in the building(s) they served. The median number of SLPAs was 0, and the mean was 0.4.

The clinical service providers who did have SLPAs in their buildings could identify up to seven impacts of SLPAs on their workload. Half reported increased supervisory duties, followed by having more time for direct service and more time for planning/consultation (see Table 3).

Table 3. Impact of SLPAs on Workload

%	Impact
52	Increased supervisory duties
38	More time for direct service
32	More time for planning/consultation
28	More paperwork
26	Larger caseload
19	Smaller caseload
10	Less time for direct service

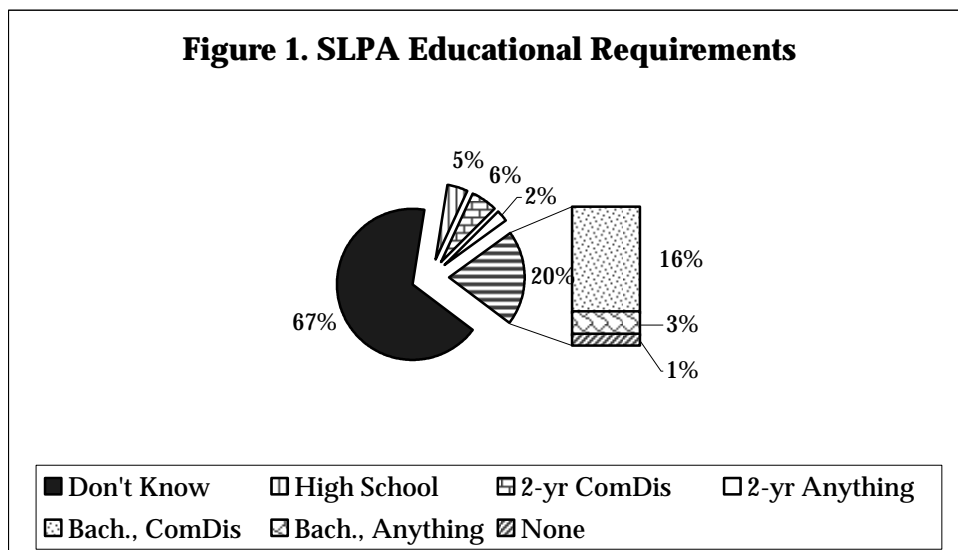
n = 372

Neither the type of school facility nor population density was significantly related to any of the seven effects, but geographic region and years of experience were. For example:

- ◆ In the Middle Atlantic states, only 7% reported an increase in supervisory duties compared with more than 60% in the East North Central (61%), New England (64%), Mountain (68%), and West South Central (69%) states.
- ◆ More paperwork was an effect noted by 0% in the Middle Atlantic states and 47% in the West North Central states.
- ◆ Larger caseloads ranged from 0% in the Middle Atlantic states and 3% in the South Atlantic to more than 35% in the East North Central (36%), Pacific (36%), and Mountain (37%) states.
- ◆ The only one of the seven items that showed significant differences related to years of experience was having more time for direct service. The range was from 22% of those with 11 to 15 years of experience to 53% with 26 or more years.

Educational Requirements

Two thirds of the SLPs (whether they did or did not report having SLPAs in their buildings) did not know what the educational requirements were for SLPAs in their buildings. Among those who did know, the most common (16%) response was a bachelor’s degree in communication sciences (see Figure 1).



n = 1,820

- ◆ The percentage who selected a bachelor’s degree in communication sciences varied from a low of 3% in the Middle Atlantic and 4% in the Pacific states to a high of 34% in the West South Central states.
- ◆ Don’t Know responses were higher in suburban areas (73%) than in metropolitan/urban (61%) or rural (63%) areas.
- ◆ Don’t Know responses were highest for those with the least amount of experience (77% with 1 to 5 years) and lowest for those with the most experience (55% with 26 or more years).

SLPA Activities

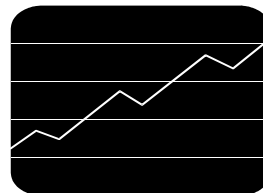
The participants were given a list of 11 activities and asked to identify which of them SLPAs were allowed to perform. Nearly half of the SLPs, regardless of whether they did or did not have SLPAs currently in their buildings, did not know. Nearly one quarter selected providing direct intervention and carrying out noninstructional activities. Fewer than 1 in 10 selected any of the remaining activities (see Table 4).

Table 4. SLPA Activities

%	Activity
48	Don't know
25	Provide direct intervention
23	Carry out noninstructional activities (e.g., prepare materials, collect data)
8	Conduct screenings
8	Assist SLPs with ELLs
3	Assume responsibility for their own caseloads
3	Independently work with ELLs
2	Develop IEPs
2	Conduct assessments
2	Represent the SLP at IEP meetings
2	Develop intervention goals
2	Counsel parents

n = 2,426

- ◆ Carrying out noninstructional activities was selected most often in combined school settings (32%) and least often in special day/residential schools (15%).
- ◆ There were strong differences in responses based on geographic area. The extremes tended to be in the Middle Atlantic and Pacific states:
 - 3% in the Middle Atlantic vs. 54% in the Pacific states selected providing direct intervention.
 - 2% in the Middle Atlantic vs. 54% in the Pacific states selected carrying out noninstructional activities.
 - 1% in the Middle Atlantic vs. 21% in the Pacific states selected assisting SLPs with ELLs.
- ◆ Providing direct intervention was selected by 20% in suburban areas, 28% in rural, and 30% in metropolitan/urban areas.
- ◆ Don't Know as a response decreased in a nearly straight line with increasing years of experience from 62% of SLPs with 1 to 5 years of experience to 36% with 26 or more years.



Survey Notes and Methodology

Response Rate

The 20-year-old ASHA Omnibus Survey has been retired, replaced by surveys specific to work settings and/or professions to better meet affiliates' needs. This 2006 Schools Survey is one of the replacements and melds topics from both the Omnibus Surveys and previous Schools Surveys.

The survey was mailed in February 2006 to a random sample of 4,140 ASHA-certified SLPs who were employed in school settings in the United States. Second and third mailings followed, at approximately 3- or 4-week intervals, to individuals who had not responded to earlier mailings.

The sample was a random sample, stratified by state. States with relatively small populations, such as Idaho and Wyoming, were oversampled. Therefore, where totals are reported, either in text or tables, they have been weighted to reflect the actual distribution of ASHA-certified SLPs in each state. The number of respondents (*n*) shown in the figure and tables is the weighted number who responded to the question.

Of the original 4,140 SLPs in the sample, 70 were retired, 66 were no longer working in the field, and 57 were ineligible for other reasons, leaving 3,947 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 2,561, resulting in a 64.9% response rate. The results presented in this report are based on responses from those 2,561 individuals.

Geographic Divisions

Middle Atlantic	NJ, NY, PA
New England	CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT
East North Central	IL, IN, MI, OH, WI
West North Central	IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD
East South Central	AL, KY, MS, TN
South Atlantic	DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV
West South Central	AR, LA, OK, TX
Mountain	AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY
Pacific	AK, CA, HI, OR, WA

Other Reports

Results from the 2006 Schools Survey are reported in a series of reports:

- Caseload Characteristics
- Current Issues
- Salaries
- Workforce
- Frequency Report
- Survey Methodology, Respondent Demographics, and Glossary

Suggested Citation

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2006). *2006 Schools Survey report: Current issues*. Rockville, MD: Author.

Supplemental Sources

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (1999). *Guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of the school-based speech-language pathologist*. Rockville, MD: Author.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2006). *Occupational outlook handbook, 2006-07 edition, speech-language pathologists*. Available from <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos099.htm>

Additional Information

For additional information regarding the 2006 School Survey, please contact Kathleen Whitmire, Director of ASHA's School Services, at 301-897-5700, ext. 4137, kwhitmire@asha.org. To learn more about how the Association is working on behalf of school-based ASHA-certified members, visit ASHA's Web site at <http://www.asha.org/members/slp/schools>