



SPECIAL REPORT: WORKFORCE AND WORKING CONDITIONS TRENDS

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Introduction

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted the 2006 Schools Survey to gather information about professional issues related to school-based services. Results from this survey are presented in a series of reports, including this report on workforce and working conditions trends. In this trend report, findings are presented on the following topics:

- job market
- effect of shortage of clinical service providers
- impact and activities of speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs)
- greatest professional challenges

Findings from the 1995, 2000, and 2004 ASHA Schools Surveys are also included in this report for comparative purposes.

The statistic that is presented as the “average” in this report is the median (i.e., middle or 50th percentile) unless otherwise noted.

Job Market

In 2006, as in 2004, the majority of survey respondents reported that **job openings** for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in their type of school and geographic area were **more numerous** than **job seekers** (68% and 62%, respectively; see Table 1).

Table 1: Job Market, 2004 and 2006

Response	2004	2006
Job openings more numerous than job seekers	62%	68%
Job openings in balance with job seekers	28%	24%
Job openings fewer than job seekers	10%	8%

n = 2,658 (2004); *n* = 2,538 (2006)

Source: 2004 and 2006 ASHA Schools Surveys

**Job Market by
Type of
Community**

In 2006, 73% of the survey respondents in **urban** areas reported that job openings exceeded job seekers, compared with 67% in **suburban** areas and 63% in **rural** areas.

In 2004, 64% of the respondents in urban areas reported that job openings exceeded job seekers, compared with 63% in suburban areas and 59% in rural areas.

**Job Market by
Geographic Area**

In 2006, the majority of survey respondents in each geographic area of the United States reported that job openings **exceeded** job seekers in their area. In 2006, as in 2004, job openings exceeded job seekers most acutely in the **Mountain** and **Pacific** states (see Table 2).

Table 2: Where Job Openings Exceed Job Seekers, 2004 and 2006

Geographic Area	2004	2006
New England	59%	73%
Mid-Atlantic	42%	53%
East North Central	50%	63%
West North Central	43%	66%
South Atlantic	57%	79%
East South Central	45%	54%
West South Central	50%	58%
Mountain	64%	86%
Pacific	73%	90%

n = 2,636 (2004); *n* = 2,327 (2006)

Source: 2004 and 2006 ASHA Schools Surveys

Geographic Areas

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

Effect of Shortage

SLPs who said there was a shortage of clinical service providers in their type of school and geographic area were asked what effect this had on them. “**Increased caseload**” was the most frequently selected impact in 2006 (79%), as it was in 2004 (83%).

“Decreased quality of service” and “Decreased opportunities for individual services” were selected by the majority of survey respondents in 2006, as they were in 2004.

“Less opportunity for networking and collaborating” was selected **less** frequently in 2006 (39%) than it was in 2004 (53%; see Table 3).

Table 3: Effect of Shortage of Clinical Service Providers, 2004 and 2006

Effect of Shortage	2004	2006
Decreased opportunities for individual services	64%	55%
Decreased quality of service	53%	56%
Increased caseload	83%	79%
Increased number of staff without ASHA certification/master’s level training	32%	27%
Increased use of assistants	22%	23%
Less opportunity for networking and collaborating	53%	39%
Some students receiving partial services or no services	*	38%
Students not receiving mandated services	18%	*
Students not receiving services who should be receiving services	30%	*

*Item not included in survey.

n = 1,604 (2004); n = 1,644 (2006)

Source: 2004 and 2006 ASHA Schools Surveys

SLPAs

Impact on Clinical Service Provider's Workload

In 2006, as in 2000 and 1995, the majority of survey respondents reported that speech-language pathology assistants **were not** employed by the schools they served (80%, 75%, and 69%, respectively).

The respondents who **did** have SLPAs in their schools could identify various impacts - possibly perceived as either positive or negative - of SLPAs on their workload. "**Increased supervisory duties**" was the most frequently selected impact in 2006, as it was in 2000 (52% and 48%, respectively).

"**More time for direct service**" was the second most frequently selected impact in 2006, as it was in 2004 (38% and 47%, respectively).

"More time for planning/consultation" was selected **more frequently** in 2006 (32%) than in 2000 (23%; see Table 4).

Table 4: Impact of SLPAs on Clinical Service Provider's Workload, 2000 and 2006

Impact of SLPAs	2000	2006
Increased supervisory duties	48%	52%
Larger caseload	25%	26%
Less time for direct service	6%	10%
More time for direct service	47%	38%
More time for planning / consultation	23%	32%
More paperwork	25%	28%
Smaller caseload	*	19%
Other	18%	*

*Item not included in survey.

n = 503 (2000); n = 372 (2006)

Source: 2000 and 2006 ASHA Schools Surveys

SLPA Activities

In 2006, survey participants who had SLPAs in their schools were given a list of 11 activities and asked to identify which of them SLPAs were allowed to perform. Approximately three quarters (78%) selected “provide direct intervention”; 74% selected “carry out noninstructional activities.”

In 1995, survey participants who had SLPAs in their schools were given a list of 6 activities and asked to identify which of them support personnel performed. Approximately two thirds (63%) selected “provide direct intervention”; 61% selected “keep records/paperwork” (see Table 5).

Table 5: SLPA Activities, 1995 and 2006

SLPA Activity	1995	2006
Assist SLPs with English Language Learners (ELLs)	*	22%
Assume responsibility for their own caseloads	*	11%
Attend meetings**	33%	*
Carry out noninstructional activities (e.g., prepare materials, collect data)	*	74%
Conduct assessments	*	8%
Conduct screenings	26%	22%
Counsel parents	*	6%
Develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs)	*	7%
Develop intervention goals	*	7%
Independently work with ELLs	*	11%
Keep records/paperwork	61%	*
Perform diagnostic evaluations	11%	*
Plan and prepare for intervention	46%	*
Provide direct intervention	63%	78%
Represent the SLP at IEP meetings***	*	7%
Don't know	*	12%

*Item not included in survey.

** See “Represent the SLP at IEP meetings” category for 2006 data on “Attend meetings.”

***See “Attend meetings” category for 1995 data on “Represent the SLP at IEP meetings.”

n = ≤ 991 (1995); n = 415 (2006)

Source: 1995 and 2006 ASHA Schools Surveys

Greatest Challenges

In 2006, as in 2004 and 2000, the majority of survey respondents reported that “**high amount of paperwork,**” “**high caseload size,**” and “**lack of time for planning, collaboration, and meeting with teachers**” were their greatest professional challenges.

In 2006, “use of underqualified personnel” was selected **least often** by survey respondents. In 2000 and 2004, “lack of union support” was selected least often.

Respondents reported that “lack of parental involvement and support” was a **lesser** challenge in 2006 than it was in 2000 and 2004 (see Table 6).

Table 6: Greatest Professional Challenges of Clinical Service Providers, 2000, 2004, and 2006

Professional Challenge	2000	2004	2006
Ethical issues (e.g., Medicaid, supervision, clinical decisions)	*	19%	15%
High amount of paperwork	88%	82%	80%
High caseload size	60%	61%	58%
Inadequate work space and facilities	35%	34%	29%
Lack of administrative support	25%	23%	21%
Lack of materials and assessment tools	18%	20%	16%
Lack of others’ understanding of my role	41%	40%	34%
Lack of parental involvement and support	41%	32%	25%
Lack of time for planning, collaboration, and meeting with teachers	81%	73%	66%
Lack of training for low incidence disorders	*	*	18%
Lack of training for special populations	26%	23%	*
Lack of training for working with ELLs	*	*	17%
Lack of union support	14%	12%	*
Limited access to technology	26%	16%	*
Low salary	37%	37%	32%
Unfilled positions	*	*	23%
Use of underqualified personnel	*	*	10%

*Item not included in survey.

n = 2,067 (2000); *n* = 2,602 (2004); *n* = 2,561 (2006)

Source: 2000, 2004, and 2006 ASHA Schools Surveys

**Response
Rate**

The 2006 Schools 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.

Of the original 4,140 SLPs in the sample, 70 were retired, 66 were not 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.

Demographics

On some characteristics, respondents to the 2006 Schools Survey were an exact representation 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 or their primary function. They were also slightly younger than the population (average age of 43 vs. 46 years) but had more experience (16 vs. 10 years).

**Electronic
Copy**

An electronic copy of this report (and other, more detailed survey reports) is available on the ASHA Web site at www.asha.org/members/slp/schools/resources/schools_resources_data.

**Additional
Information**

For additional information regarding this report or school services generally, please contact Kathleen Whitmire, Director, School Services, at kwhitmire@asha.org or 800-498-2071, ext. 4137. To learn more about how the Association is working on behalf of school-based, ASHA-certified members, visit its Web site at <http://www.asha.org/members/slp/schools>.