

AMERICAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION

# Schools Survey Report:
# SLP Workforce and Work Conditions Trends 2006–2026

Jeanette Janota, Surveys and Analysis
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
2200 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3289
surveys@asha.org
November 3, 2026

# *Contents*


Introduction ..... 1

Survey Report Highlights ..... 1

Employment Status ..... 2
- Full Time or Part Time ..... 2
- Salaried Employee, Contractor, or Self-Employed ..... 3

Job Market ..... 3

Initiatives To Retain SLPs ..... 4

Greatest Professional Challenges ..... 5

Survey Methodology ..... 6

Response Rates ..... 6

Suggested Citation ..... 6

Additional Information ..... 6

Questions? ..... 6

Acknowledgment ..... 6

Appendix ..... 7
- Key of Geographic Regions/Divisions and Corresponding States ..... 8
- Appendix Table 1 ..... 9

Figures:
- Figure 1 ..... 2
- Figure 2 ..... 3

Tables:
- Table 1 ..... 3
- Table 2 ..... 4

## Introduction

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted the *2026 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 speech-language pathologist (SLP) workforce and work conditions trends.

Findings from the 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2024 *ASHA Schools Surveys* are included in this report for comparative purposes. Questions differ among surveys, so data on all topics are not available for all survey years.

## Survey Report Highlights

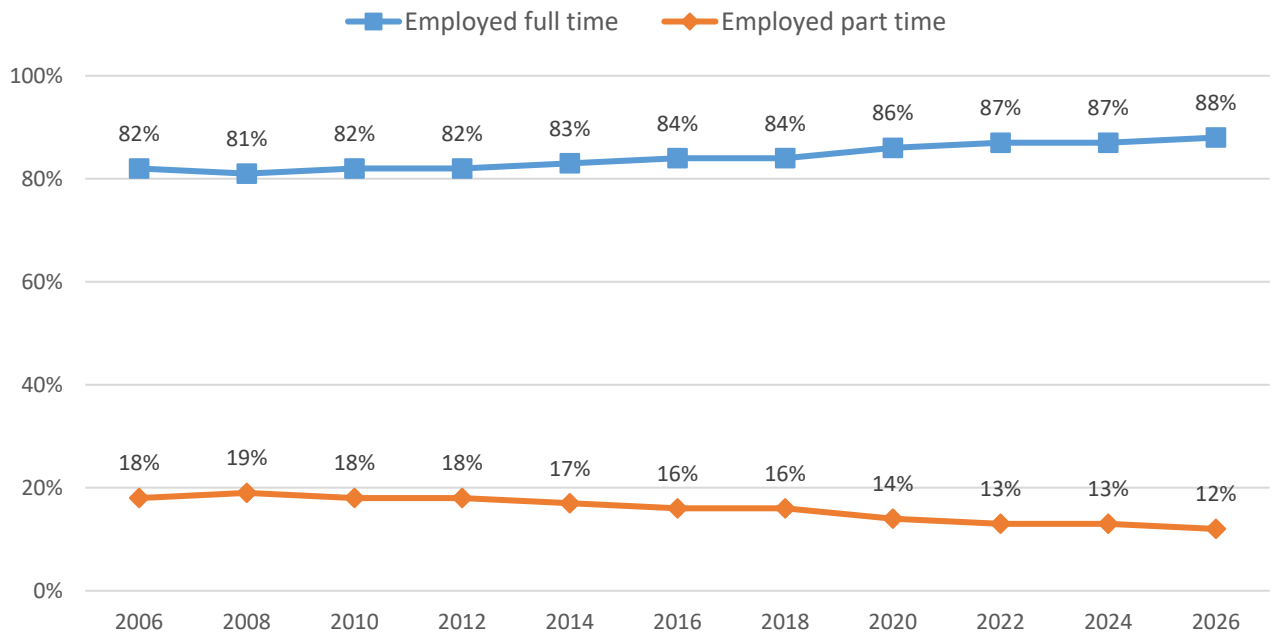
- In 2026, 88% of survey respondents who were employed as SLPs worked full time—continuing the steady increase during past years (81%–87% from 2008 to 2024).
- In 2022, 2024, and 2026, 86% of survey respondents who were employed full- or part time as SLPs were salaried employees—the same or about the same as in recent years (87%–88% from 2014 to 2020). Most of the remainder were contractors.
- In 2026, 68% of SLPs reported that the number of job openings for clinicians exceeded the number of job seekers in their type of school and geographic area—a decline from 79% in 2024.
- The percentage who said that job openings and job seekers were in balance was highest in 2012 (32%). It rose to 21% in 2026 from its lowest in 2024 (14%).
- In 2024 and 2026, *placing SLPs on a separate schedule from teachers* was identified by at least half of the clinical service providers as a helpful initiative to retain SLPs.
- In 2006 and in every survey year since then, clinical service providers selected *large amount of paperwork* more frequently than any other option as their greatest challenge. The percentages ranged from 73% to 83% and have been declining since 2020.
- From 2006 to 2024, the second highest chosen challenge was consistently *high workload/caseload size.* However, in 2026, *volume of meetings* overtook *high workload/caseload size* as the second most chosen challenge—with 59% of clinicians selecting it. This was the first time (since its 2020 addition to the list) that *volume of meetings* replaced *high workload/caseload size* as the number two most selected challenge.
- In 2026, 58% of SLPs reported that *high workload/caseload size* was one of their greatest professional challenges—this was the third most selected challenge. The percentage of clinicians who have selected this option has ranged from 55% to 71% between 2006 and 2024.

## Employment Status

### Full Time or Part Time

In 2026, 88% of *ASHA Schools Survey* respondents who were employed as SLPs worked full time. This continued a gradual increase in full-time employment since a low of 81% in 2008 (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** *Employment status of ASHA Schools Survey SLP respondents, by year.*




*Note.* These data are from the 2006–2026 biennial *ASHA Schools Surveys.* Surveys did not define *Employed full-* and *Employed part time*. $n$ = 2,427 (2006); $n$ = 2,420 (2008); $n$ = 2,418 (2010); $n$ = 2,420 (2012); $n$ = 1,862 (2014); $n$ = 1,806 (2016); $n$ = 2,109 (2018); $n$ = 1,720 (2020); $n$ = 2,955 (2022), $n$ = 3,731 (2024); $n$ = 5,011 (2026).

### Salaried Employee, Contractor, or Self-Employed

In 2026, 86% of *ASHA Schools Survey* respondents who were employed full- or part time as SLPs were salaried employees—the same or about the same as in recent years (87% in 2014, 2016, and 2018; and 88% in 2020). The remainder were mostly contractors (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** *Percentage of ASHA Schools Survey SLP respondents who are salaried employees, contractors, or self-employed, by year.*

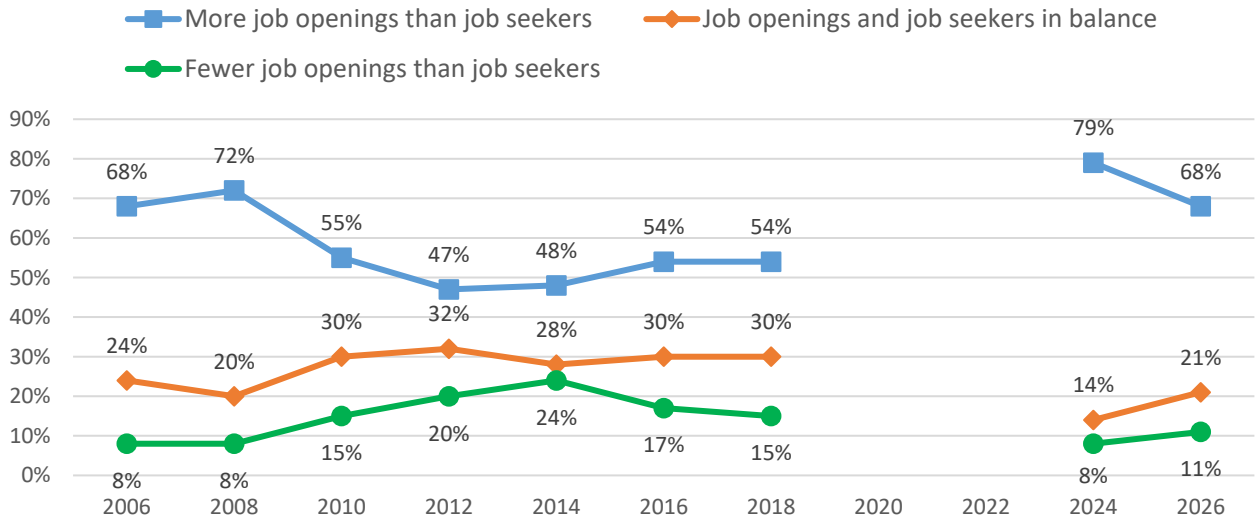
| Designation | % | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2014 (*n* = 1,666)** | **2016 (*n* = 1,798)** | **2018 (*n* = 2,099)** | **2020 (*n* = 1,701)** | **2022 (*n* = 2,932)** | **2024 (*n* = 3,710)** | **2026 (*n* = 4,988)** |
| Salaried | 87 | 87 | 87 | 88 | 86 | 86 | 86 |
| Contractor | 13 | 13 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Self-employed | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |

*Note.* These data are from the 2014–2026 biennial *ASHA Schools Surveys.* Dash indicates that the item was not included in the survey.

## Job Market

In 2026, the same percentage of SLPs as in 2006 (68%) reported that the number of job openings for clinicians exceeded the number of job seekers in their type of school and geographic area (see Figure 2). In the years between 2010 and 2018, 47% to 55% selected this response. The percentage of respondents identifying number of job openings and number of job seekers as being *in balance* increased from 14% in 2024 to 21% in 2026.

**Figure 2.** *Assessment of the job market for school-based SLP clinical service providers, by year.*




*Note.* These data are from the 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2024, and 2026 *ASHA Schools Surveys.* *n* = 2,538 (2006); *n* = 2,525 (2008); *n* = 2,458 (2010); *n* = 2,508 (2012); *n* = 1,684 (2014); *n* = 1,847 (2016); *n* = 2,110 (2018); *n* = 3,081 (2024); *n* = 4,119 (2026).

## Initiatives To Retain SLPs

In 2024 and 2026, we asked clinical service providers to select the top two initiatives—from a list of seven possibilities—that their employer could offer to help retain SLPs. In 2024, their task was only to identify no more than two initiatives, without regard to whether their choice would be in first or second place.

In 2026, we refined the question, asking specifically which initiative they would select for first place and which for second place (see Table 2). In 2024, half (50%) of the clinical service providers identified *place SLPs on a separate schedule from teachers* as the most helpful initiative. In 2026, more than half (55%) selected this option (i.e., 47% rated it as initiative #1, plus 8% rated it as #2). Clinical service providers in both survey years also frequently selected *reimburse SLPs for their ASHA dues* as a helpful initiative.

**Table 2.** *Percentage of ASHA Schools Survey clinical service providers who selected retention initiatives, by year.*

| Initiative | % | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **2024 (*n* = 3,273)** | **2026 (*n* = 2,261)** | |
| | **Initiative #1 or Initiative #2** | **Initiative #1** | **Initiative #2** |
| Place SLPs on a separate schedule from teachers | 50 | 47 | 8 |
| Provide money for materials | 15 | 6 | 12 |
| Provide professional development funding | 15 | 6 | 12 |
| Provide step increases | 15 | 12 | 13 |
| Reimburse SLPs for their ASHA dues[a] | 32 | 15 | 23 |
| Reimburse SLPs for their state licensure fees[b] | 11 | 4 | 10 |
| Supplement SLPs' salaries for Medicaid billing[c] | 33 | 11 | 18 |

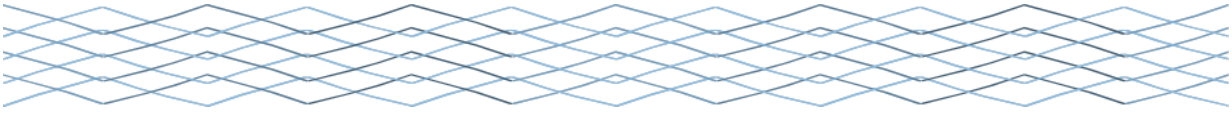
*Note*. [a]In 2024, this item was *Reimburse ASHA dues.* [b]In 2024, this item was *Reimburse state licensure fees.* [c]In 2024, this item was *Supplement salaries for Medicaid billing.*

## Greatest Professional Challenges

We have been asking SLPs to identify the greatest challenges that they face as school-based SLPs for at least 20 years. The list of available options from which they may select varies from year to year (see Appendix Table 1).

In 2026:

- Most (73%) of the SLPs reported that *large amount of paperwork* was their greatest professional challenge—this represents the smallest percentage since we began asking the question in 2006. It was, however—as in every survey between 2006 and 2026—the most frequently selected challenge out of all the possible options.
- In 2026, *volume of meetings* ranked in second place at 59%, the highest percentage since we added the item to the survey in 2020.
- In 2026, more than half (58%) of the SLPs selected *high workload/caseload size* as their third highest ranking challenge. This challenge ranked second in every survey year between 2006 and 2024 (55%–71%).
- Nearly half (47%) of the SLPs selected *out-of-pocket professional expenses* as a challenge in 2026. This percentage decreased from 53% in 2024 but was higher than the percentages seen in the years between 2010 and 2022 (34%–39%).
- The percentages of SLPs who selected *low salary* as a challenge varied from a low of 27% in 2010 to a high of 45% in 2024. In 2026, 42% selected this option as a challenge.
- In 2026, 41% selected *incorporating optimal service delivery models* as a challenge. Responses to this item have been relatively stable since 2014 (ranging from 36% in 2014 to 44% in 2018).
- In 2026, fewer than 40% of the SLPs selected any of the other options that were included in the list of 13 challenges.



## Survey Methodology

The survey was fielded on February 19, 2026, to a random sample of 27,500 ASHA-certified SLPs employed in school settings in the United States. One group of 5,000 SLPs received a postal survey; the remaining 20,000 received an electronic survey (via SurveyMonkey). The sample was stratified by state. Small groups, such as SLPs in Wyoming, were oversampled. Everyone received a survey notification email on February 16. Subsequent fieldings followed, at approximately 3- or 4-week intervals, to individuals who had not responded to earlier mailings.

## Response Rates

The response rate was 28.3% for the postal version, 12.7% for the electronic version, and 17.0% when the versions were combined.

Past *ASHA Schools Survey* response rates among SLPs were as follows:

- 2006: 64.9%
- 2008: 64.0%
- 2010: 65.5%
- 2012: 64.7%
- 2014: 47.0%
- 2016: 47.9%
- 2018: 48.8%
- 2020: 40.1%
- 2022: 37.9%
- 2024: 25.6%
- 2026: 17.0%

## Suggested Citation

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2026). *Schools survey report: SLP workforce and work conditions trends, 2006–2026.* Available from www.asha.org.

## Additional Information

Companion reports are available on the ASHA website at www.asha.org/research/memberdata/schools-survey/.

## Questions?

For additional information regarding this report or school services generally, please email schools@asha.org or call ASHA's Action Center (800-498-2071) and ask to be connected to a School Services staff member.

## Acknowledgment

Without the generous cooperation of the members who participate in our surveys, ASHA could not fulfill its mission to provide vital information about the professions and discipline to the Association membership and public. Thank you!

# Appendix



*Key of geographic regions/divisions and corresponding states.*

| Geographic region/division | Corresponding states |
|---|---|
| Northeast | |
| New England | CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT |
| Mid-Atlantic | NJ, NY, PA |
| Midwest | |
| East North Central | IL, IN, MI, OH, WI |
| West North Central | IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD |
| South | |
| 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 |
| West | |
| Mountain | AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY |
| Pacific | AK, CA, HI, OR, WA |

**Appendix Table 1.** *Greatest professional challenges of school-based SLPs, by year.*

| Professional challenge | % | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2006** (*n* = 2,561) | **2008** (*n* = 2,556) | **2010** (*n* = 2,492) | **2012** (*n* = 2,538) | **2014** (*n* = 1,786) | **2016** (*n* = 1,894) | **2018** (*n* = 2,170) | **2020** (*n* = 1,497) | **2022** (*n* = 2,618) | **2024** (*n* = 3,273) | **2026** (*n* = 4,476) |
| Budget constraints | — | — | — | — | — | 44 | 47 | 32 | 27 | 36 | 38 |
| High workload/ caseload size | 58 | 56 | 60 | 61 | 55 | 70 | 71 | 57 | 58 | 66 | 58 |
| Inadequate work space and facilities | 29 | 28 | 25 | 25 | 21 | 30 | 33 | 30 | 30 | 35 | 30 |
| Incorporating optimal service delivery models | — | — | — | — | 36 | 42 | 44 | 41 | 38 | 41 | 41 |
| Large amount of paperwork | 80 | 80 | 81 | 81 | 80 | 83 | 79 | 82 | 79 | 76 | 73 |
| Limited family/ caregiver involvement and support* | 25 | 24 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 31 | 43 | 35 | 34 | 36 |
| Limited support from the administration | 21 | 22 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 26 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 30 | 28 |
| Limited time for collaboration | — | — | — | — | 51 | 50 | 54 | 50 | 50 | 45 | 43 |
| Limited understanding of my role by others | 34 | 34 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 40 | 38 | 41 | 38 | 44 | 47 |
| Low salary | 32 | 33 | 27 | 31 | 29 | 36 | 36 | 30 | 35 | 45 | 42 |
| Out-of-pocket professional expenses | — | — | 34 | 39 | 30 | 35 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 53 | 47 |
| Personnel shortage | — | — | — | — | — | 22 | 23 | 24 | 31 | 42 | 36 |
| Volume of meetings | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 54 | 51 | 55 | 59 |

*Note.* These data are from the 2006–2026 biennial *ASHA Schools Surveys.* Dash indicates that the item was not included in the survey. *From 2006–2018 this item was *Limited parental involvement and support.*