



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

Schools Survey Report:
SLP Workforce and Work Conditions Trends
2004–2018

Gail Brook, Surveys and Analysis
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
2200 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3289
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Introduction

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted the *2018 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 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 *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

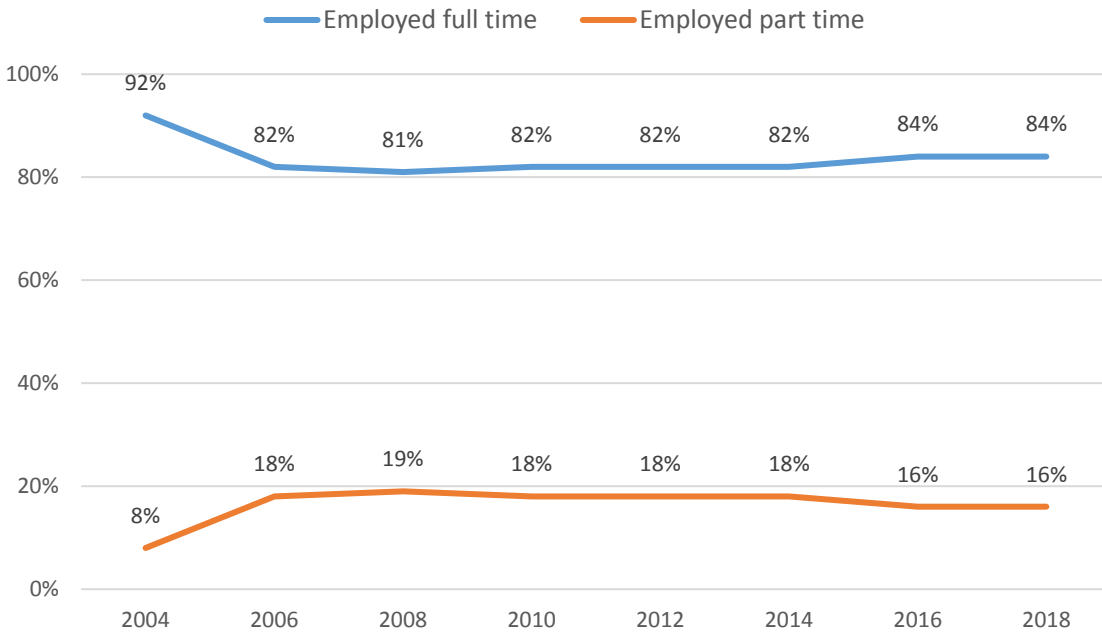
- In 2018, 84% of survey respondents who were employed as SLPs worked full time—the same or about the same as in past years (81%–92% from 2004 to 2016).
- In 2018, 87% of survey respondents who were employed full or part time as SLPs were salaried employees—the same or about the same as in recent years (87%–89% from 2012 to 2016). The remainder were contractors.
- In 2018, overall, 54% of SLPs reported that job openings for clinicians exceeded job seekers in their type of school and geographic area—the same or about the same as in recent years (47%–55% from 2010 to 2016).
- In 2016 and 2018, SLPs in administrative offices were more likely than SLPs in other school settings to report that job openings for clinicians exceeded job seekers.
- From 2004 to 2018, SLPs from the western region of the United States were more likely than SLPs from other regions to report that job openings for clinicians exceeded job seekers.
- In 2018, survey respondents were asked if they supervised speech-language pathology assistants or aides (SLPAs). Of those who did, the median number they supervised was 1—the same number as in 2014 and 2016.
- In 2018, 79% of SLPs reported that *large amount of paperwork* was their greatest/one of their greatest professional challenges—about the same as in past years (80%–83% from 2004 to 2016).
- In 2018, 71% of SLPs reported that *high workload/caseload size* was their greatest/one of their greatest professional challenges, compared with 55%–70% from 2004 to 2016.
- In 2018, 41% of SLPs identified *compromising quality of services* as an issue that presented them with significant ethical challenges—about the same as in 2016 (43%).

Employment Status

Full Time or Part Time

In 2018, 84% of ASHA Schools Survey respondents who were employed as SLPs worked full time—the same or about the same as in past years (81%–92% from 2004 to 2016; see Figure 1).

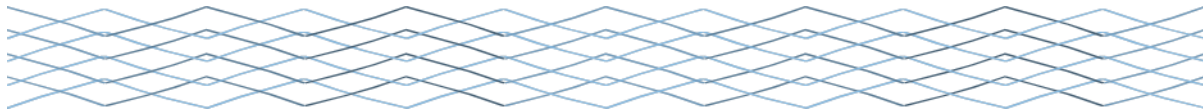
Figure 1. *Employment status of ASHA Schools Survey SLP respondents, by year.*



Note. These data are from the 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 ASHA Schools Surveys. *Employed part time* was not defined in the surveys. $n = 2,602$ (2004); $n = 2,427$ (2006); $n = 2,420$ (2008); $n = 2,418$ (2010); $n = 2,420$ (2012); $n \geq 1,690$ (2014); $n = 1,806$ (2016); $n = 2,109$ (2018).

Employee or Contractor

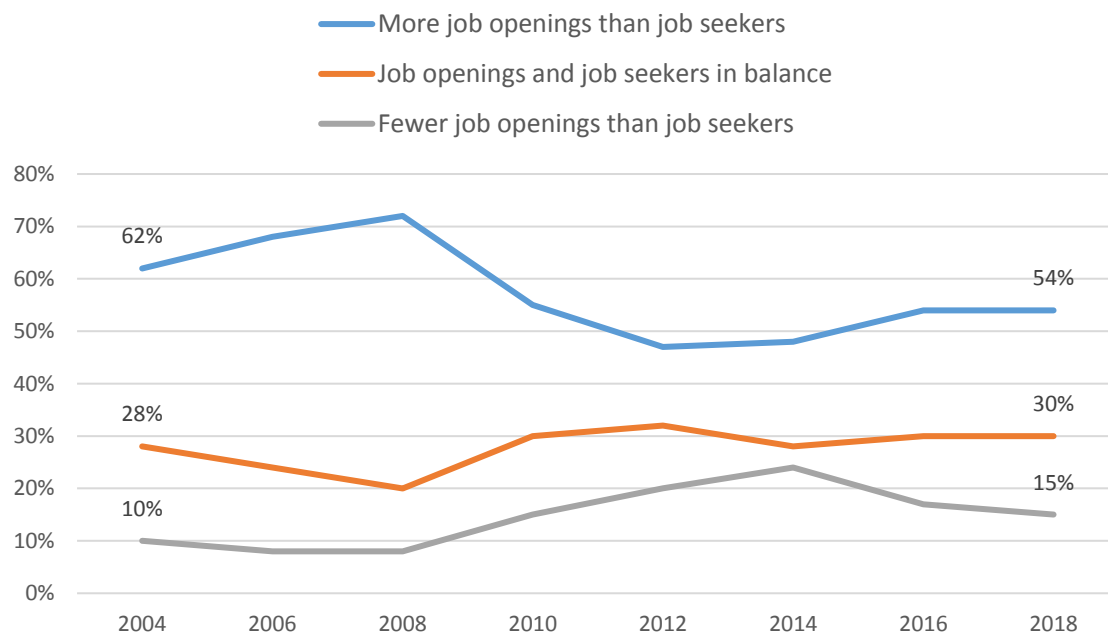
In 2018, 87% of ASHA Schools Survey respondents who were employed full or part time as SLPs were salaried employees—the same or about the same as in recent years (89% in 2012 and 87% in 2014 and 2016). The remainder were contractors. (These data are not shown in any figure or table.)



Job Market

In 2018, overall, about half (54%) of SLPs reported that job openings for clinicians exceeded job seekers in their type of school and geographic area—the same or about the same as in 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 (47%–55%; see Figure 2).

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



Note. These data are from the 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 ASHA Schools Surveys. $n = 2,658$ (2004); $n = 2,538$ (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).

Job Market by School Setting

In 2016 and 2018, SLPs in administrative offices were more likely than SLPs in other school settings to report that job openings for clinicians exceeded job seekers. In 2018, 66% of SLPs in administrative offices reported that job openings for clinicians exceeded job seekers, up from 62% in 2016. (These data are not shown in any figure or table.)

Job Market by Geographic Region

From 2004 to 2018, across all school settings, SLPs from the western region of the United States (mountain and Pacific states) were more likely than SLPs from other regions to report that job openings for clinicians exceeded job seekers. In 2018, approximately 80% of SLPs in the mountain and Pacific states reported that job openings for clinicians exceeded job seekers—about the same as in 2016. (These data are not shown in any figure or table.) See page 8 of the appendix for a key of geographic regions/divisions and corresponding states.

SLPA Supervision

In 2018, *ASHA Schools Survey* respondents were asked if they supervised speech-language pathology assistants or aides (SLPAs). Of those who did, the median number they supervised was 1—the same number as in 2014 and 2016. (These data are not shown in any figure or table.)

Greatest Professional Challenges

In 2018, 79% of SLPs reported that *large amount of paperwork* was their greatest/one of their greatest professional challenges—about the same as in past years (80%–83% from 2004 to 2016; see Appendix Table 1). Nearly three-quarters (71%) of SLPs reported that *high workload/caseload size* was their greatest/one of their greatest professional challenges in 2018, compared with 55%–70% from 2004 to 2016.

Issues That Present Ethical Challenges

In 2018, nearly half (41%) of SLPs identified *compromising quality of services* as an issue that presented them with significant ethical challenges—about the same as in 2016 (43%; see Table 1).

Table 1. *Issues that present significant ethical challenges to school-based SLPs, by year.*

Issue	%	
	2016 (<i>n</i> = 1,894)	2018 (<i>n</i> = 2,170)
Adhering to administrative or regulatory mandates	25	21
Completing Medicaid billing	14	18
Compromising quality of services	43	41
Feeling pressured by an employer, administrator, or supervisor to provide or deny a service, report scores, etc., that would be in violation of the ASHA Code of Ethics	—	13
Reading confidential or inappropriate information about a student posted by an audiologist or SLP on social media	—	2
Supervising support personnel, Clinical Fellows, etc.	3	2
Working with unqualified providers	9	—
None of the above	34	40

Note. These data are from the 2016 and 2018 *ASHA Schools Surveys*. Dash indicates that the item was not included in the survey.

Survey Methodology

The survey was mailed in February 2018 to a random sample of 4,500 ASHA-certified SLPs and 500 ASHA-certified audiologists employed in school settings in the United States. The sample was stratified by state. Small groups, such as SLPs and audiologists in Wyoming, were oversampled. A survey notification email was sent at the time of the mailing. Second and third mailings followed, at approximately 3- or 4-week intervals, to individuals who had not responded to earlier mailings.

Response Rates

Of the original 4,500 SLPs in the sample plus four other SLPs who returned surveys without any identifying number, six had incorrect mailing addresses, nine had retired, 29 were employed in other types of facilities, six were not employed in the profession, and four were ineligible for other reasons, which left 4,450 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 2,170—a 48.8% response rate.

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

- 2004: 69.7%
- 2006: 64.9%
- 2008: 64.0%
- 2010: 64.8% (overall); 65.5% (among SLPs)
- 2012: 63.6% (overall); 64.7% (among SLPs)
- 2014: 46.0% (overall); 47.0% (among SLPs)
- 2016: 47.4% (overall); 47.9% (among SLPs)

Suggested Citation

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2018). *Schools survey report: SLP workforce and work conditions trends, 2004–2018*. Available from www.asha.org.

Additional Information

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

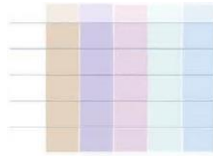
Questions?

For additional information regarding this report or school services generally, please contact Jaumeiko Coleman, director of school services, at jcoleman@asha.org.

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	%							
	2004 (n = 2,602)	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)
Budget constraints	—	—	—	—	—	—	44	47
Ethical challenges	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	14
High workload/caseload size	61	58	56	60	61	55	70	71
Inadequate work space and facilities	34	29	28	25	25	21	30	33
Incorporating optimal service delivery models	—	—	—	—	—	36	42	44
Lack of training to work with specific disorders or special populations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	21
Large amount of paperwork	82	80	80	81	81	80	83	79
Legal challenges (e.g., due process)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13
Limited parental involvement and support	32	25	24	27	28	28	28	31
Limited support from the administration	23	21	22	21	21	21	26	23
Limited time for collaboration	—	—	—	—	—	51	50	54
Limited understanding of my role by others	40	34	34	37	38	38	40	38
Low salary	37	32	33	27	31	29	36	36
Medicaid billing	—	—	—	—	—	—	32	34
Out-of-pocket professional expenses	—	—	—	34	39	30	35	35
Personnel shortage	—	—	—	—	—	—	22	23
Travel/distance between schools	—	—	—	—	—	9	8	7

Note. These data are from the 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 *ASHA Schools Surveys*. Dash indicates that the item was not included in the survey.