FRAMING A STRATEGY:
A Dialogue on the Issues

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Professional Summit: Provider Roles
Setting: Irving Independent School District (TX)

Characters:
- Children First
- Licensed SLPs
- Licensed Assistants in SLP

Problem – Critical Shortage of SLPs

Response – Developed Strategy for Use of SLP-A

Ending (of Episode) – Improved Quality of Service
Irving Independent School District – Shifting Demographics

- 34,000 Students – 69% Hispanic, 14% White, 13% African American
- Economically Disadvantaged (78%)
- Limited English Proficient/English Learners (39%)
- At Risk of Dropping Out (66%)

Challenge for Texas Public Schools

- A Decade-Long Critical Shortage of SLPs
Our Story

The Problem

- Irving ISD 2003-2004
  - 7 of 25 positions unfilled
  - $500,000 for contracted services in excess of payroll costs (i.e. transferred payroll amount for 7 unfilled positions to contracted services plus $500,000)
  - Response: Developed an Action Plan
    - Adjusted salary schedule for SLPs
    - Developed salary schedule and proposal for SLP-A
    - Developed Recruitment & Retention Plan
Our Story
The Problem

- Problem: Shortage of SLPs
  - Difficulty hiring; Difficulty finding contract SLPs with knowledge & skills for school-based practice

- Another Problem: Rapidly increasing number of English Learners ~ **Critical** Shortage of Bilingual (Spanish) SLPs

- Biggest Problem: Restricted capacity to serve students well
Every Challenge an Opportunity – Texas License for Speech-Language Pathology

- Two Levels of Licensure
  - Licensed Speech-Language Pathologist
  - Licensed Assistant in Speech-Language Pathology (Bachelor degree)

- Our Opportunity: Finding a way to use flexibility in licensure law to address the problem
  - Irving...Where Children Come First
Typical Day for an SLP-A
Irving Schools
School-Based Practice (in Texas)

SLP-A Roles & Responsibilities
Our Story
The Response

- Designed a Way to Add Licensed SLP-As to Staffing
  - Looked at licensure roles & responsibilities for SLPs and SLP-As
  - Updated Licensed SLP Job Description to include supervision of SLP-A
  - Developed SLP-A Job Description
  - Started small
  - Critical conversations
    - HR
    - Principals
    - Special Ed Staff, especially supervising SLPs
Our Story
The Response

Built Infrastructure

- Annual explanation/reminders to HR about the difference in hiring SLPs and SLP-As
- Staffing Formula (added .25 SLP FTE for each SLP-A hired)
- Approved by School Board with other staffing recommendations
  - Staffing Formula
  - Salary Schedules ~ SLP and SLP-A
- Professional Development
  - For SLP-As
  - For Supervisors
Staffing for SLP Services

- Requires capacity for flexibility to meet students’ needs and to respond to the marketplace

- 2007-08: 23.75 SLP 3 SLP-A
- 2008-09: 24 SLP 4 SLP-A
- 2009-10: 24 SLP 4 SLP-A
- 2010-11: 25 SLP 5 SLP-A
- 2011-12: 25 SLP 6 SLP-A
OUR STORY
THE RESPONSE

Flexibility in Hiring and School Assignments

- Good Fit
  - SLP/SLP-A and school assignment/s
  - Between SLP-A and Supervising SLP
- Bilingual SLP-A at Early Childhood Centers
- SLP-A in Masters Programs
  - Need all-level experiences during course of program
Our Story
Ending (of the Episode)

How thing’s have changed/improved
Quality of Service Issues
How SLP-As help children
Being Supervised
Reflections
The Next Chapter

- We think the use of a continuum of service providers can work well for children.
- We agree that this dialogue is pivotal.
- We encourage a communications strategy about quality services and service providers.
  - With Parents & Students
  - With District Staff: HR, Principals, Teachers, SpEd MDT members, Related Service Providers (OT/PT/School Nurses)
  - With Public
  - With SLPs
Reflections
The Next Chapter

- Training for SLP-As
  - Big Complex Issue!
  - Continuum of Credentialing: Continuum of Training Programs
- ASHA grant to Texas: TSHA SLPA Modules Framework
  - Interesting Option: Online training modules & 50 hours of supervised field work
  - To prepare SLP-A for working in schools
Reflections
The Next Chapter

- Training for SLP Supervision in Schools
  - Different Types of Supervision
    - Licensed Assistants in SLP
    - CF/Licensed Intern
    - Paraprofessionals (Instructional Aides)

- Beware of Log Jam...Texas Issue
  - More Bachelor Level Graduates than Spaces Available in Graduate Programs
  - More Bachelor Level SLP-As needing jobs with continued shortage of SLP-CCC
Challenge with Change

- States with SLP-A provisions in existing licensure laws will face the challenge of incorporating differently credentialed SLP-As into work force

- This is important work – what can we learn from other disciplines/industries?

- Articulate changing roles & responsibilities of supervising SLPs
Reflections
The Next Chapters

- Compensation Issues
  - Salary Schedules
  - Length of Contract
  - Job Classification Issues
    - Professional / Paraprofessional
    - Exempt/Non-Exempt
Reflections
The Next Chapter

Suggestion for ASHA Support

- Provide Crosswalk Documents for Utilization of SLP-As in Schools
  - Added Flexibility for Using Workload Approach
  - Increased Options for a Continuum of Service Delivery
  - Increased Capacity for Individual Sessions
  - Increased Capacity for language stimulation of young children in naturally occurring environments
  - Literacy Connections
Let’s Get Started!