

## TTA Position: Speech Language Pathologist Caseload and Stipend for holding a State License

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### *TTA's position is based on the following guiding principles:*

- All stakeholders should have a place to offer feedback and professional expertise.
- Concerns and questions should be encouraged and viewed as critical information that is positive and central to the process rather than seen as a sign of dissent.
- True educational debate and discussion provides a broad base for clarification of purpose and products for the highest good.
- Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) represent a huge wealth of “in the trenches” professional expertise that should always be consulted in matters of educational performance.
- Speech Language Pathologists are contributors to the Special Education Team as they are responsible for administering assessments, report writing, Special Education eligibility/determination, speech and language service, case management, and LEA billing.
- Speech Language Pathologists have expertise in communication disorders, learning, and helping students succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. Speech Language Pathologists partner with families, teachers, school administrators, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen the connections between home, school, and the community. Their extensive knowledge of educational law and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is invaluable and deserves full recognition. Speech language Pathologists are the largest contributors to LEA billing funds received by the district.

*TTA believes Speech Language Pathologists require revised caseload maximums. Excessive numbers of assessments to administer, the increasing requirements for legally defensible reports to write, general speech and language services to provide, Augmentation and Alternative Communication (AAC) implementation, increasing services to provide especially in the area of pragmatic language, caseloads to manage, and billing to complete, is creating significant stressors on Speech Language Pathologists and negatively impacting their ability to perform roles and responsibilities in a timely manner.*

*TTA supports the Speech Language Pathologists in the area of revised caseload maximums and state license stipends and believes and recommends the following solutions:*

- The revision in ARTICLE XII SPECIAL EDUCATION of I.- Based on the California Teachers Association (CTA) guidelines, TTA supports maximum caseload numbers to meet the CTA guidelines- a maximum of 40 K-12 and/or Adult Transition Program (18-22 years of age) students with Mild Disabilities; and a maximum of 25 Preschool-TK students and/or students with Moderate-Severe Disabilities, regardless of age. For SLPs serving **BOTH** K-12 and Adult Transition Program (18-22 years of age) students with Mild Disabilities **AND** Preschool-TK students and/or students with Moderate-Severe Disabilities, the caseload number shall be reduced proportionally. This number should reflect the amount of the SLP's assignment devoted to Moderate-Severe Disabilities and Preschool/TK students. The caseload maximum of 40 shall be reduced by two (2) students for every one (1) Preschool/TK student and/or student with Moderate/Severe Disabilities. For example, if an SLP's

caseload is primarily K-12 students with Mild Disabilities but they also have 2 TK students and 2 students with Moderate-Severe Disabilities, their maximum would be 36.

Mild Disability is defined as one or more of the following: can function independently in daily activities, achieve functional literacy and/or numeracy skills. Moderate-Severe Disability is defined as one or more of the following: a student that has physical or medical conditions that significantly limit life activities, are harmful to themselves or others, elopes, uses Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC), has consistent outbursts/tantrums or requires paraeducator support.

The maximum caseload numbers are based on the number of students for whom the SLP completes assessments for, provides therapy to and/or writes IEPs for including duplicated and unduplicated on SLP SEIS caseloads. If it is determined that the caseload maximum is exceeded or that a caseload with a number lower than the maximum has a comparable workload, then the Special Education Administration shall address the situation to ensure that the requirements of the caseload(s) are aligned with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

- TTA supports the revision of Item #5 on the Speech Language Pathologist Salary Schedule to replace the current language of “\$4,346.29 per year will be paid for BCC/BCLAD” with revised language stating, “\$4,346.29 per year will be paid for “State License” for full time employees. Part-time employees will receive an amount equal to their percentage of employment.”

Rationale: SLPs are unable to meet the requirements for obtaining a BCLAD as the credential must have a Special Class Authorization (SCA). The SCA is for academic instruction in a classroom. The state license that SLPs hold is required for SLPs to bill for Medi-Cal funds received by TUSD. SLPs are the largest contributor to LEA billing funds received by the district. The state license is not required to work for the district. This license is optional for SLPs; however, the state license is required for SLPs to bill Medi-Cal for their assessments and services. In order to hold the state license, SLPs must adhere to professional standards. SLPs are required to obtain 24 hours of professional development funded by the SLP every two years. SLPs must fund payment for the license fee in order to maintain the state license.

It would benefit the district to add language stating “Must maintain the state license and participate in LEA billing to receive the stipend.”