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# 4C

## Information/Action

### *Educator Preparation Committee*

#### **Potential Adoption of Proposed Revised Program Standards and New Performance Expectations for Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential Programs**

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item brings proposed revised Speech-Language Pathology Services credential program standards and new performance expectations for the Commission's consideration and potential adoption. In addition, it presents a proposed plan and timeline for programs to transition to the new standards and requirements.

**Recommended Action:** That the Commission discuss and consider for potential adoption the revised Speech-Language Pathology program standards and new performance expectations.

**Presenter:** William Hatrick, Consultant, Professional Services Division

### **Strategic Plan Goal**

#### ***Educator Preparation and Advancement***

- **Goal 1.** Education preparation programs hold candidates to high standards and adequately prepare them to support all students by using culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining practices in equitable, inclusive, and safe environments.
  - A. Set and uphold rigorous standards for educator preparation programs.

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# Potential Adoption of Proposed Revised Program Standards and New Performance Expectations for Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential Programs

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## Introduction

This item presents draft revised Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) program standards and new performance expectations (see [Appendix A](#)) for Commission discussion and potential adoption. In addition, it presents a proposed plan and timeline for programs to transition to the new standards and requirements.

## Background

Per [Title 5 CCR 80048.9](#), the minimum requirements to obtain the Preliminary SLP Services Credential for a California-prepared candidate are as follows: (1) hold or have been recommended for a master's degree or higher in SLP from a regionally accredited institution of higher education that is also accredited by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA); and, (2) complete a Commission-approved specialized and professional preparation program in SLP. The CAA's [Standards for Accreditation of Graduate Education Programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology](#) were updated in January 2023.

Since all SLP master's programs must meet the CAA's standards and be in good standing with ASHA, Commission staff began discussion in 2023 of revising the Commission's SLP Services Credential program standards to better align with national accrediting requirements. In continued efforts to strengthen and streamline the accreditation system, the Commission has focused on aligning new program standards and performance expectations with national standards, while still ensuring that the programs prepare candidates for the unique needs of students in California. This eases the process for programs that already have received national accreditation to maintain their accreditation from the Commission, and for new programs looking to complete the initial program review process for SLP program approval. It reduces redundancy for both program and Commission staff while still maintaining high expectations and will eliminate the need for a Commission - ASHA CAA standards crosswalk.

The proposed revisions to the SLP standards are based on work completed by the SLP advisory panel (see [Appendix B](#)) during two virtual meetings held in May and August 2024. The panel built upon the lessons learned and approaches employed by other more recent standards development workgroups such as the Pupil Personnel Services and Preliminary Education Specialist standards revisions. The draft SLP program standards identify the unique requirements that the program must meet while the specifics of what the candidate needs to know and be able to do are identified in the draft performance expectations. The expectation is that each Commission-approved program will teach the content of the CAA standards, SLP

program standards, and give the candidates the opportunity to practice and be assessed on the performance expectations prior to recommending for the credential. The draft standards and performance expectations build on the robust knowledge already required by the CAA's accreditation standards.

### **Draft SLP Program Standards and Performance Expectations**

The existing [Speech-Language Pathology Credential Program Standards](#) were adopted prior to 2011 and have not been updated since. Currently, the SLP program standards are comprised of eight program design standards for Education Specialist and Other Related Services credential programs, and eight SLP standards. At the first meeting, panel members were asked to examine the Commission's current 16 program standards and look for language that is unique from the CAA standards. The panel also identified which additional knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be included in the new SLP standards to address the unique needs of working in California's public schools.

During the second meeting, the panel drafted standards and performance expectation language consisting of three program standards, and eight performance expectations. Upon drafting new standards and performance expectations, a survey was shared in October 2024 to gather feedback from the field and other constituency groups. A total of 166 responses were received. Overall, the feedback on the draft standards and performance expectations was positive (see [Appendix C](#)). Subsequent virtual discussions took place in December 2024 with advisory panel members to discuss the feedback and suggestions received on the survey and to make modifications to the draft standards and performance expectations in response to the feedback.

At all advisory panel meetings, clinical practice for school-based SLPs was discussed. Currently, SLP program standard 6: School Field Experience states that "each candidate will complete the equivalent of a semester/quarter field experience in the schools." Based on feedback from the panel and survey responses, a new clinical practice standard was drafted that better aligns with ASHA and state board requirements. ASHA requires that candidates complete 400 supervised clinical practice hours in "different work settings with different work populations" and specifies that "only direct contact with the client (student) or the client's (student's) family in assessment, management, and/or counseling can be counted toward the practicum requirement." The Commission's draft standard language proposes that of the 400 hours required by ASHA, a minimum of 100 hours of direct service take place in the California public school setting. Candidates would also accumulate additional hours completing other duties of a school-based SLP during their practicum. By requiring that 100 of the 400 hours required by ASHA be in direct services in the public school setting, it will be easier for programs to track the required supervised clinical practice hours and experiences.

### **Proposed Timeline for Program Transition**

As with all other standards revisions, staff are proposing a transition timeline upon adoption of the revised standards and performance expectations. This will allow programs time to understand the changes, align their program requirements to the new standard language, and

complete their internal institutional processes to address and implement these changes. Staff suggest that once the draft standards and performance expectations are adopted, the 2025-26 academic year would be for institutions to align their programs with the revised standards, and beginning in the 2026-27 academic year, programs should be fully aligned.

Activity	Timeline
Commission adopts proposed draft SLP program standards and performance expectations.	February 2025
Staff issues Program Sponsor Alert notifying institutions of revised standards, post changes on website.	March 2025
Technical assistance is provided to programs to understand the revised SLP program standards and performance expectations.	Beginning July 1, 2025
Technical assistance is provided to programs as they transition to the revised SLP program standards and performance expectations.	September – December 2025
Institutions submit a Transition Plan identifying the planned modifications to meet the updated program standards and performance expectations.	January – March 2026
No new candidates may be enrolled in programs under the former SLP standards.	July 1, 2026
All programs are aligned with the revised SLP program standards and performance expectations.	Academic Year 2026-27

### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the revised program standards and performance expectations for the SLP Services Credential.

### Next Steps

If the Commission takes action to adopt the SLP program standards and performance expectations, staff will notify the approved program sponsors and implement the plan for transitioning to the new standards and performance expectations as described in this item.

## **Appendix A**

### **Draft Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential Program Standards and Performance Expectations**

**Special Note:** Throughout this document, reference is made to "all students". This phrase is intended as a widely inclusive term that references all students attending California public schools. Students may exhibit a wide range of learning and behavioral characteristics, as well as disabilities, dyslexia, intellectual or academic advancement, and differences based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, and/or geographic origin. The range of students in California public schools also includes students whose first language is English, English learners, and Standard English learners. This inclusive definition of "all students" applies whenever and wherever the phrase "all students" is used in the standards and performance expectations.

#### **Program Standard 1: Program Design and Curriculum**

The program curriculum is grounded in theoretical and empirically supported practices for Speech-Language Pathology that address cultural and linguistic diversity, neurodiversity, and inclusion for the care and education of all students. Key curriculum elements include typical and atypical child growth and development from ages birth - 22; understanding learning trajectories of young children to young adults; designing and implementing linguistically, culturally, and neurodiverse affirming assessment and intervention services; implementing instructional strategies to develop early literacy skills; understanding and analyzing student achievement outcomes to improve learning; and understanding the range of factors affecting student learning including social determinants of health.

#### **Program Standard 2: Foundations of Speech-Language Pathology Practice**

The program ensures that SLP candidates have received training and/or exposure in a wide variety of specialized academic instructional settings, including but not limited to: the home, virtual education settings, classrooms and programs for students ages 3-22, and public/nonpublic school programs. The program allows candidates to experience service delivery options within one or more of these settings that may include consultation, collaboration, professional development, telepractice, individual, small-group, whole-group, pull-out, and push-in services. The program prepares candidates in case management practices and strategies for students with disabilities and for those referred for special education services. This includes eligibility requirements, and an understanding of federal and state laws related to Speech-Language Pathology services for all students. The program provides candidates with training and opportunities for collaborating effectively with families to support their student's development and learning.

#### **Program Standard 3: Clinical Practice**

The program ensures that each candidate completes a supervised clinical practicum in the California public school setting. During this time, candidates (1) acquire a minimum of 100 hours in direct services, (2) participate in speech and language evaluation and intervention, (3)

write, present, and implement IEPs/IFSPs, (4) assist classroom teachers in providing modifications and accommodations of curriculum for students, and (5) monitor student progress. The program ensures that candidates acquire communication assessment and intervention experiences within the population of all students ranging in age from birth - 22.

#### **Program Standard 4: Preparing Candidates to Master the Speech-Language Performance Expectations (SLPEs)**

The program's organized coursework and clinical practice provide multiple opportunities for candidates to learn and apply each SLPE. As candidates progress through the curriculum, faculty and other qualified supervisors assess candidates' performance in relation to the SLPEs and provide timely performance feedback regarding candidates' progress toward mastering the SLPEs.

### **Speech-Language Performance Expectations**

#### **Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential candidates will:**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of developmental and behavioral milestones for California students from ages birth - 22 required to access the core curriculum.
2. Collect relevant information regarding individuals' past and present status and family and health history.
3. Use knowledge of communication disabilities to determine the potential educational impact.
4. Appropriately select, administer, interpret, and document the results of least-biased assessment measures<sup>1</sup> for all students.
5. Appropriately select, implement, and document intervention services for all students.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the principles and processes of assessment, selection, and treatment for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).
7. Demonstrate written communication skills needed to document performance and progress of students.
8. Engage in interprofessional practice with teachers and other relevant personnel.
9. Demonstrate relevant methods of consultation and collaboration with teachers, families, and additional members of the educational team to support students' learning across education contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> See California Education Code [Section 56320](#)

## Appendix B

### SLP Services Credential Advisory Panel

Name	Organization	Primary Role
Heather Thompson	CSU Sacramento	SLP higher education faculty
Mary Kubalanza	CSU Los Angeles	SLP higher education faculty
Laura Epstein	San Francisco State University	SLP higher education faculty
Marcella McCollum	San Jose State University	SLP higher education faculty
Karen Mainess	Loma Linda University	SLP higher education faculty
Lamitra Baez	Loma Linda University	SLP higher education faculty
Brooke Findley	CSU Fresno	SLP higher education faculty
Amber Hogan	Los Angeles Unified School District	School-based SLP
Kerrie Chitwood	CSU Monterey Bay	SLP higher education faculty
Mary Ellen Hood	Chapman University	SLP higher education faculty
Summer Puskas	Downey Unified School District	School-based SLP

## Appendix C

### Summary of Survey Responses

Respondent's Role (mark all that apply)	Number	Percentage of Total Respondents (n=166)
School-based SLP	98	59%
SLP higher education faculty	42	25%
SLP master's program candidate	8	5%
SLP assistant (SLPA)	4	2%
CSHA (California Speech Language Hearing Association) member	50	30%
ASHA member	86	52%
Parent	26	16%
School district administrator	9	5%
Special Education teacher	4	2%
Other	27	16%

Proposed Language is Clear	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral (Neither Agree nor Disagree)	Total
Program Standard 1	87%	8%	95%
Program Standard 2	92%	6%	98%
Program Standard 3	91%	8%	99%
Performance Expectations	96%	3%	99%

Proposed Language is Appropriate	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral (Neither Agree nor Disagree)	Total
Program Standard 1	91%	7%	98%
Program Standard 2	92%	7%	99%
Program Standard 3	87%	7%	94%
Performance Expectations	96%	3%	99%

Are there additional concepts that should be included?	Yes	No	Total
Program Standard 1	9%	91%	100%
Program Standard 2	10%	90%	100%
Program Standard 3	17%	83%	100%
Performance Expectations	11%	89%	100%