



SAC Update



Please complete
the SAC
Engagement &
Feedback Survey



Friday, April 17, 2026

Interested in Joining SAC?





SAC Committee Chairs



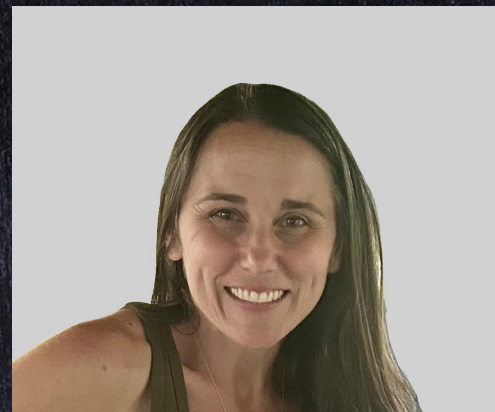
KATE BORUTA,
CHAIR



MARIA NORDELO,
CO-CHAIR



SARAH TODE,
CO-CHAIR



Today's Agenda

01.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Presented by
NJSHA's Lobbyist,
Jacy Lance

””

02.

ASHA SEAL UPDATE

Presented by
Stacey Palant

””

03.

SAC TO DATE

What's
happened this
year

””

MEET YOUR NJSHA LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS TEAM & LEARN WHAT WE DO IN NJ!



Lynn Nowak
Lobbyist



Jacy Lance
Lobbyist



Donna Spillman-Kennedy
Legislative Chair

Liaisons to the NJSHA Legislative Committee



Dr. Sandler,
Audiology Liaison



Kate Boruta,
School Affairs Liaison



Barbara Schwerin-Bohus,
Healthcare Liaison

- Work collaboratively with the Legislative Chair to support advocacy and legislative efforts on the state level.
- Liaisons also designate specific committee members based on level of expertise to work with the lobbyist and legislative chair to identify advocacy priorities and initiatives, attend meetings, and assist in generating written and oral testimony.

NJ Representative to the ASHA Committee of Ambassadors

- Act as Ambassadors of ASHA by providing advocacy on and communication about the priorities of the Association to officials, constituents, peers, and the general public at the workplace, local, state, and national levels.
- Committee of Ambassadors Composition-54 member AuDs and 54 member SLPs who represent each state; Washington, DC; International constituents (members who reside outside the United States); U.S. territories; and the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA).



Dr. Christina Luna

State-Based Advocacy Networks



- Three critical networks that support ASHA's ongoing advocacy efforts on behalf of audiology and speech-language pathology.
- ASHA member AuDs and SLPs appointed by their state association president.
- Partner with ASHA staff, ASHA volunteer leaders, other ASHA members, and state association members on ASHA's advocacy objectives and related efforts.
- Engage in direct advocacy with lawmakers, policymakers, and external partners.
- Serve as an information conduit between ASHA and state associations.

State Education Advocacy Leaders (SEALs)

Provide leadership, guidance, and support on topics related to the funding and delivery of services in school-based settings.



Stacey Palant

State Advocates for Medicare Policy (StAMPs)



Barbara Schwerin-Bohus



Dr. Maryrose McInerney

Provide leadership, guidance, and support on topics related to coverage, reimbursement, and the delivery of services under Medicare.

State Advocates for Reimbursement (STARs)



Dr. Christina Luna



Barbara Schwerin-Bohus

The STARs provide leadership, guidance, and support on topics related to coverage, reimbursement, and the delivery of services under state Medicaid programs and private payers.



01. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Lynn Nowak and Jacy Lance,
NJSHA Lobbyists



Student Lobby Day

March 23,
2026

Cursive Handwriting Legislation

Requires a school district to incorporate instruction on cursive handwriting into the curriculum for students in grades three through five.

The curriculum is required to include activities and instructional materials that help students become proficient in reading cursive and legibly writing in cursive by the end of the grade five.

Strongly supported by Karen Kimberlin on behalf of NJSHA, throughout the legislative process. Signed into law on January 19, 2026. P.L. 2025, c 284.



IEP Legislation and Working Group

In March 2025, a bill (S3982, Ruiz) was introduced that would require parents of students with special needs to be provided with a copy of the child's IEP at least two days prior to the annual IEP meeting. Subsequently, the bill was amended to add the creation of an IEP Improvement Working Group in DOE. The original language regarding membership on the Working Group called for a "related services provider" (in addition to a school psychologist, a school social worker and a LDTC), but NJSHA worked to replace "related services provider" with specifically a "speech-language specialist." The amendment was accepted by the Senate Majority Leader and has been incorporated into the bill. The bill, with the inclusion of an SLS, was signed by the Governor on July 22, 2025.

NJSHA leadership had determined that Stacey Palant would be our recommendation to fill the SLS role on the Working Group and we are happy to report that Stacey was selected to participate as the SLS member of the working group.

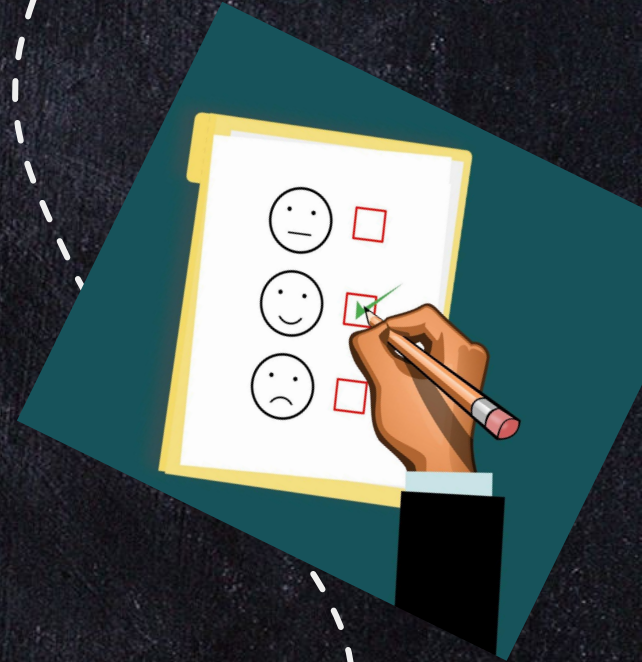


N.J.A.C. Update Survey

In July, Porzio notified NJSHA's SAC of an opportunity presented by the Department of Education's Office of Special Education for stakeholders to participate in a survey regarding the review of N.J.A.C. 6A:14, which governs the provision of special education and related services in New Jersey. The chapter is scheduled to sunset in September 2027, and as part of the early stages of this review, the NJDOE sought input from individuals and organizations who support students with disabilities across the state.

Under the leadership of Robin Kanis and Kate Boruta, SAC coordinated the NJSHA response to the survey, which asked the respondents to comment on clarity, implementation ease, identify challenges, and provide improvement recommendations for each of the ten subchapters of N.J.A.C. 6A:14.

A copy of NJSHA's compiled responses shared with the DOE were also kept on file internally and shared with Jacy and Lynn. These comments will be useful to help identify our top priorities for when this Chapter comes up for review in the future.



Statute Language Updates through LRC

NJSHA's work with the NJ Law Revision Commission (LRC) concluded on July 17, 2025 with the creation of a Final Commission Report **supporting NJSHA's requested updates that various statutes related to Special Education and Child Study Team membership use correct Code references.** This endeavor also includes removal of the term "speech correctionist" which still exists in Statute.

The Final Report was presented to, and approved by, the LRC on July 17, 2025. Since that time, Barbara Rivera, the attorney who worked on our project, has been promoted to Executive Director of the LRC. As such, she contacted the Office of Legislative Services to explore a more effective way for the LRC's final reports to be reviewed and considered by the Legislature. Subsequently, the Report was sent to the non-partisan OLS aides that staff both the Assembly and Senate Committees for Education and Health.



Next Steps

NJSHA met with Assemblywoman Lisa Swain, chair of the Assembly Appropriations Committee and member of the Assembly Education Committee.

We requested that she introduce our legislation, keeping in mind that we also plan to incorporate some new language regarding solidifying the SLS's role on the Child Study Team and addressing the circumstances in which a school district is able to utilize contracted SLSs.

A draft of the language was provided to NJSHA by the Office of Legislative Services in late March, and we are working together to make final edits before requesting that the legislation be introduced in May.



Importance of the NJSHA Political Action Committee (PAC)

The New Jersey Speech Language Pathology and Audiology PAC funds have allowed NJSHA to support New Jersey legislators who are sensitive to your issues related to our fields and the people we serve. **In order to continue our important work, we ask for your financial support.**

Please consider donating \$20 or more to the NJ SLP & Audiology PAC. *If everyone donated just \$10, our PAC would be in a very strong position for advocating on our priorities.*

With your support, NJSHA's voice can be very loud and make a difference to our professions and those we serve. Thank you for your support!

Visit the NJSHA PAC page [here](#)! Find answers to your questions and ways to donate!

02.

SEAL UPDATE

Stacey Palant,
ASHA SEAL



Meet Your ASHA SEAL



Stacey Palant, M.A., CCC-SLP

Stacey4njsha@gmail.com

State Education Advocacy Leaders (SEALs) are appointed by ASHA-recognized state speech-language-hearing associations to advocate on education issues. These issues may include:

- caseload/workload,
- salary supplements, and
- maintenance of personnel standards in school settings

Mission

To enhance and perpetuate the advocacy, leadership, and clinical management skills of school-based ASHA members at the state and local levels to influence administrative and public policy decisions that affect the delivery of speech-language pathology and audiology services in school settings.

SEAL Update

School SLP Office Hours

Registration for the May and June sessions opens April 21. Recordings and additional details are available online. www.asha.org/slp/schools/school-slp-office-hours



2026 ASHA Schools Survey

The 2026 ASHA Schools Survey is open through May 15. Please share with school-based SLPs-broad participation helps strengthen key data, especially related to salary and caseloads.

www.surveymonkey.com/r/2026SchoolsSurveyCommunities



ASHA at the CEC Convention

ASHA joined the Council for Exceptional Children Convention in March, presenting a hot topics session on Navigating Workload in Schools and connecting with school-based SLPs at the SLP Meet Up.

www.linkedin.com/posts/...

Autism: Communication and Connection

Online conference 4/17 - 5/4

www.asha.org/events/autism



SEAL Update

**ASHA Schools Learning Exchange: Empowered Service Delivery for SLPs,
Saturday, July 11, 2026 | ASHA National Office, Rockville, MD**



ASHA's 1-day, in-person Schools Learning Exchange will take place on July 11 at the ASHA National Office in Rockville, MD. Registration is now open!

www.asha.org/events/ASHA-Schools-Learning-Exchange

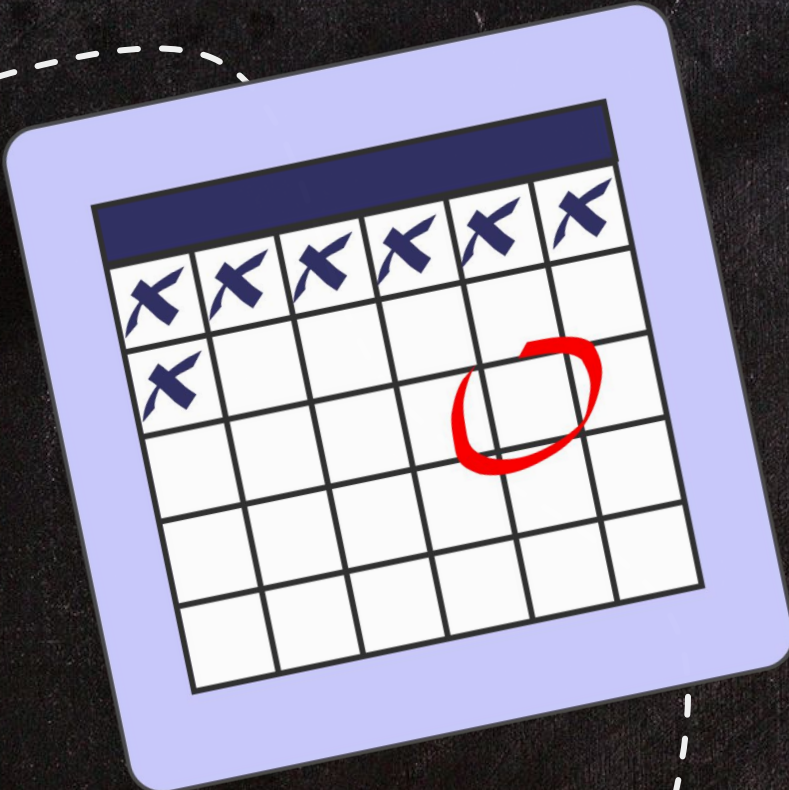


This one-day, in-person workshop is designed to meet you, a school-based SLP in the early years of your career, exactly where you are.

You'll work with peers and thought leaders to **practice** using decision-making frameworks, **cultivate** meaningful relationships, and **discuss** how to respond to real-world clinical and ethical challenges. The goal? Leave feeling confident in making high-stakes decisions related to:

- navigating the IEP process,
- service delivery models,
- scheduling,
- eligibility, and
- when to reduce or dismiss services.





03.

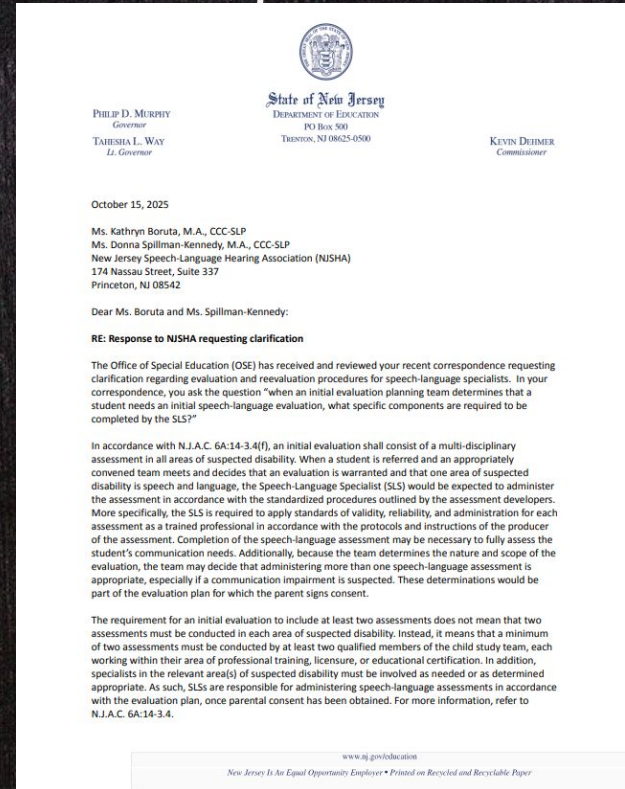
SAC TO DATE

October 2025 Clarification Letter

In August 2025, SAC reached out to the NJDOE OSE for clarification on the following questions:

- When an initial evaluation planning team determines that a student needs an initial speech-language evaluation, what specific components are required to be completed by the SLS?
- For reevaluations, must the same criteria be met for continued eligibility as in an initial speech-language evaluation?

The full response can be accessed through the Member Portal under School Affairs Resources.



October 2025 Clarification Letter

TL;DR:

- For **initial evaluations**:

The Office of Special Education says SLSs must conduct speech-language assessments **based on the team's evaluation plan**, following standardized procedures and professional guidelines.

- The evaluation is **multidisciplinary** (not just SLS).
- **At least two assessments by two professionals** are required overall - not two speech tests specifically.
- The team decides if **multiple speech-language assessments** are needed.

- For **reevaluations**:

- Done every 3 years (unless waived) and based on **team review of existing data first**.
- The team decides if **additional testing is needed** and who conducts it (including SLS if appropriate).
- **Same criteria as initial eligibility are NOT required** for continued eligibility.



The Reevaluation Conundrum

By Sue Goldman, MA, CCC-SLP

SAC Advocacy Updates

November 2025

SAC met with NJDOE OSE to present three key issues impacting school-based SLPs

March 2026

SAC submitted a clarification request regarding:

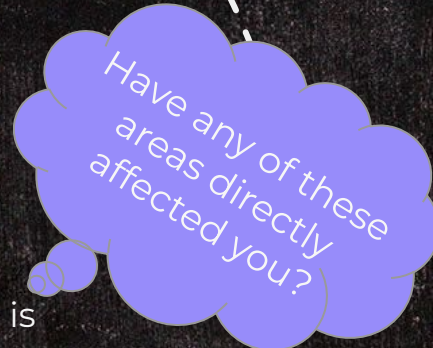
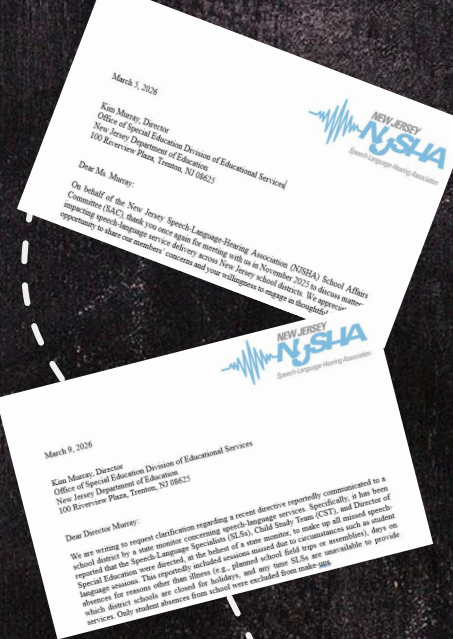
- Use of 504 Plans in place of ESERS/ESLS IEPs
- Administrative direction for SLPs to conduct targeted screenings
- Ongoing vacancies in SLP positions following retirements/resignations

Additional Action

- A second letter was sent requesting guidance on state monitor directives related to make-up requirements for missed speech-language sessions

Status

- Responses are pending; updates will be shared with members as guidance is received

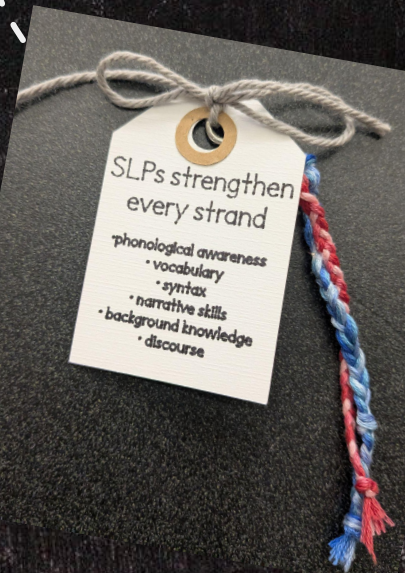


Sip & Chat with SAC

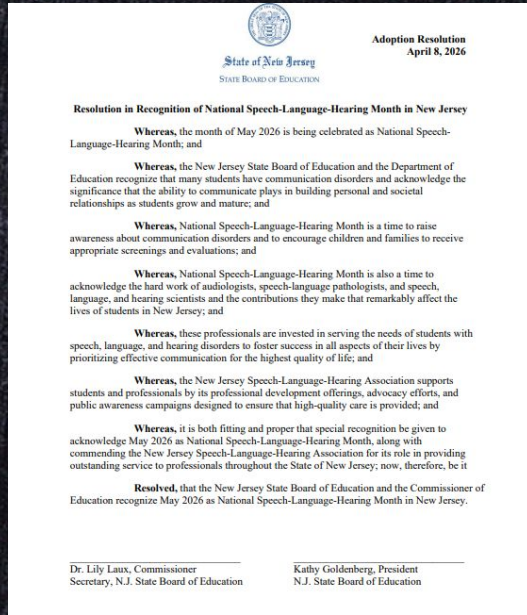


SAC successfully held an in-person professional development opportunity last month. We were happy to have Dr. Karen Kimberlin speak to the group about the updates to literacy legislation, including changes in the law, terminology, district responsibility, and New Jersey's new reading screening process.

Attendees also received a tour of the new NJSHA website and were shown the various resources available through the Member Portal.



May is National Speech-Language-Hearing Month



The NJ State Board of Education has officially recognized May as National Speech-Language-Hearing Month! The resolution was accepted by Donna Spillman-Kennedy on behalf of NJSHA.



Donna Spillman-Kennedy pictured with Kathy Goldenberg (left), President of the New Jersey State Board of Education, and Dr. Lily Laux, Commissioner Secretary of the New Jersey State Board of Education

NJSHA Membership: Why Join?

Becoming a member of NJSHA offers a wide range of professional, advocacy, and legislative benefits, many of which directly impact your day-to-day work as an SLS or audiologist.



Membership Benefits

1. Strong Advocacy at the State Level

One of the most important benefits of NJSHA membership is its active role in advocacy. The organization works to protect and advance the profession by:

- Monitoring legislation and regulations that impact SLPs and audiologists
- Responding to proposed laws that affect service delivery, workload, licensure, and scope of practice
- Providing members with advocacy resources (e.g., contract language, salary support guidance)

NJSHA's Legislative Committee collaborates with leadership and members to identify priorities and take action on behalf of the field.



2. Dedicated Lobbyists & Governmental Affairs Support

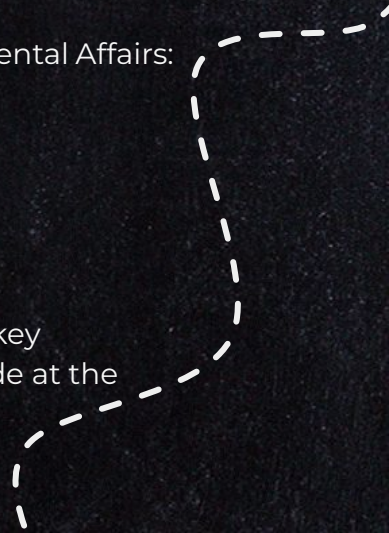
A major advantage of NJSHA is that it retains two professional lobbyists through Porzio Governmental Affairs:

- Lynn Nowak
- Jacy Lance

These lobbyists:

- Represent NJSHA at the state level
- Track and influence legislation in real time
- Advocate directly with lawmakers on issues affecting your profession

This means NJSHA members have a voice at the legislative table, which is critical because many key decisions (e.g., school policies, special education regulations, healthcare reimbursement) are made at the state level.



3. Legislative Oversight & Professional Protection

Membership ensures you are not navigating changes alone. NJSHA provides:

- Ongoing updates about legislative and regulatory changes
- Interpretation of how new laws impact practice
- Coordinated advocacy efforts so the profession speaks with a unified voice

Without this infrastructure, individual clinicians would have little influence on policy decisions.

4. Relationship with the New Jersey Department of Education

NJSHA maintains an ongoing, collaborative relationship with the New Jersey Department of Education. This relationship is extremely valuable because it allows:

- Direct communication when concerns arise in schools or practice settings
- Clarification on special education code, implementation, and compliance
- Guidance for members navigating complex or unclear situations

Rather than relying on interpretation alone, NJSHA can help seek clarification directly from the DOE, which strengthens both advocacy and professional decision-making.

5. Access to Expertise & Professional Community

Through committees and leadership structures, members can:

- Engage in specialized groups (e.g., school affairs, audiology, multicultural issues)
- Help monitor legislation and respond to emerging issues
- Collaborate with peers across settings and disciplines

This creates a strong, informed professional network that actively shapes the field in New Jersey.

6. Professional Development & Resources

In addition to advocacy, NJSHA offers:

- Discounted continuing education (40+ hours annually)
- Conferences and conventions
- Timely updates via newsletters, email blasts, and online resources
- Networking and mentorship opportunities



Why This Matters

State-level decisions directly affect your:

- Caseload/workload
- Service delivery models
- Licensure and certification requirements
- Compensation and working conditions

Being a member of NJSHA means you are not just informed - you are represented.

Bottom Line

Joining NJSHA is more than a membership - it's an investment in:

- Your professional voice (through advocacy and lobbying)
- Your protection (through legislative oversight)
- Your clarity and support (through DOE relationships and guidance)
- Your growth (through education and networking opportunities)



Good of the Order



Join our final SAC
meeting of the
school year!
Tuesday, June 2 at
6:30.
Email
info@njsha.org



Questions?
Concerns?



Please complete the SAC Engagement &
Feedback Survey