

Understanding Administrative Expectations: A Guide for School-Based SLPs (from a past life SLP)

*An Assistant Superintendent's Framework to Thriving
in the School Setting*

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Today's Agenda



NJ Certification & Licensure



Supervision: Who's Watching & Why



Being Evaluated Through a School Lens



Data, Documentation & Meaningful IEP Goals



Case Management & Student Advocacy



Scheduling Models: PushIn, Pull-Out & Beyond

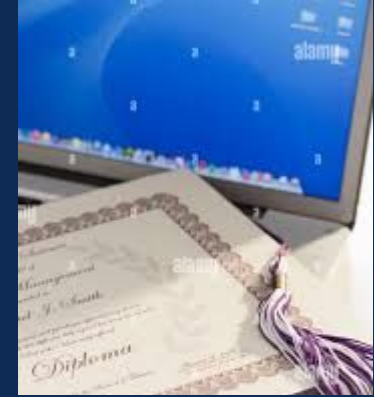


ID the Right Support & Consulting Strategically



Sustainability & Professional Wellness

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NJ Certification & Licensure

Knowing Your Credentials and Why They Matter

Certification & License

NJDOE Educational Services Certificate

- Required to work as an SLP in an NJ public school
- Issued by the NJ Dept. of Education
- Tied to your school employment — not a clinical license
- Requires completion of approved program + passing Praxis exam
- School-specific scope: language, articulation, fluency, voice, AAC in the educational setting
- Does NOT require ASHA CCC — but many SLPs hold both

NJDOH Clinical License (Optional but Valuable)

- Issued by NJ Division of Consumer Affairs
- Required for private practice or clinical settings
- Allows billing insurance independently
- Broader scope of practice than the school certificate alone
- Useful if you supervise CF-SLPs or clinical fellows
- ASHA CCC-SLP is a professional credential — not legally required in NJ schools

Essentials to Keep Current

NJ public school SLPs hold an Educational Services Certificate — not a teaching certificate and not the same as a clinical license.

- NJDOE certificate renewal every 5 years — requires 100 hours of professional development
- ASHA CCC (if held): 30 CEU hours per 3-year cycle — includes 1 hr ethics + 2 hrs DEI per cycle
- NJDOH license (if held): 20 CE hours per 2-year renewal cycle — jurisprudence orientation required
- Supervision endorsement: If you supervise CF-SLPs, confirm your NJDOE authorization in NJEdCert
- Key tip: Your building principal may not know the difference between your licenses
- Always carry your certificate number
- NJEdCert Portal (apply/renew): nj.gov/education/certification/apply/
- SLP Standard Certificate: nj.gov/education/certification/edsrvs/endorsementsedsrvs/3462S.shtm |
- NJ Consumer Affairs (NJDOH license): njconsumeraffairs.gov/aud/ | NJSHA: njsha.org

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Supervision & Evaluation

Who's Watching and How to Navigate It

Three Layers of Oversight Most School SLPs Navigate

Building Principal

Responsible for your day-to-day functioning in the school building.

May conduct informal walkthroughs, monitor attendance/punctuality, and co-sign evaluations.

Often does not have clinical expertise — may need context about SLP practice.

Special Services Director / Supervisor

Clinical and programmatic oversight of your SLP practice.

Reviews IEPs, caseloads, service delivery decisions.

More likely to understand your scope of practice.

Key ally in advocating for appropriate caseload size.

Assistant Superintendent Central Office

Policy, compliance, and district-wide program alignment.

Oversees budget decisions that affect your program.

May review systemic data (LRE, classification rates, outcomes).

Less day-to-day contact — but significant influence on resources.

How to Thrive Under Multiple Supervisors

- Communicate proactively: don't wait to be asked; share updates, celebrate wins, flag challenges
- Know who decides what: IEP disputes → Director; scheduling conflicts → Principal; caseload legal/financial → Central Office
- Keep a running professional portfolio: data, family feedback, progress notes, professional learning
- Inquire expectations in writing at the start of each year: especially if you are new to the district
- When two supervisors give conflicting guidance, respectfully ask them to align before you proceed
- Invest relationships with your principal (and supervisor): they advocate for you at the budget table when they know your value
- You are a specialist: educate your evaluators about what you do rather than waiting to be misunderstood

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Being Evaluated Through a School Lens

Translating Your Clinical Work Into Educator Language

Understanding the NJ Educator Evaluation Framework as an SLP

Your evaluator may never have observed a therapy session before. Prepare them — and prepare yourself — to make the observation meaningful.

- NJ districts use Stronge, Danielson, McRel, or a locally framework: all built around teaching domains
- As a non-classroom Ed Specialist, you're evaluated on educator standards: same rigor, different lens
- Domain 1 (Planning): Your IEP goal development, service delivery decisions, data systems, plans
- Domain 2 (Learning Environment): Rapport with students, therapy environments, family engagement
- Domain 3 (Instruction): Your therapy sessions, progress monitoring, evidence-based interventions
- Domain 4 (Professionalism): Collaboration, compliance, professional learning, ethical practice
- NJPEPL (NJ Professional Standards): You are held to these even as a related service provider

Before, During & After Your Observation

How to Prepare

- Submit a pre-observation conference summary — describe the student, goal, and why this session matters
- Explicitly name the Stronge/Danielson domain your lesson reflects
- Include a data collection tool your observer can follow along with
- Share one family communication or progress note as supporting evidence
- Invite your observer to understand, not judge — frame it as a partnership

How to Follow Up

- Write a post-observation reflection — what went well, what you would change
- Connect your session back to the student's IEP and school curriculum goals
- Share a brief 'SLP explainer' if the observer had questions about your methods
- Keep the observation artifact in your professional portfolio
- Use the conversation to build your observer's literacy about communication disorders
- Request written feedback and respond in writing — creates a record of professional dialogue

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Data, Documentation & IEP Goals

Meaningful Goals, Clear Data, Real Breaks

Writing Goals That Actually Drive Progress

- Goals must be educationally relevant — tied to curriculum access, social participation, or academic performance
- Avoid goals written in clinical language only — 'produce /r/ in words' without a school context misses the point
- Better: 'Student will use correct /r/ production in oral reading and classroom discussion in 3 of 4 opportunities'
- Use the SMART framework: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant to school function, Time-bound
- Each goal should answer: What will the student do? Under what conditions? With what level of accuracy?
- Progress monitoring must occur at regular intervals — quarterly at minimum per NJAC 6A:14
- Data doesn't have to be complex: tallies, probes, rubrics, or work samples all count

Communicating Progress to Families: What Families Actually Need

What NOT to Send

- Pages of raw data without interpretation
- Jargon-heavy clinical terminology (dysarthria, phoneme awareness) without plain-language explanation
- Progress reports that read exactly the same quarter after quarter
- A simple 'progressing as expected' with no detail
- Reports that only describe deficits — never strengths

What Families NEED

- A brief narrative: 'Here is what we are working on and why it matters for school'
- A clear data summary: 'She is now accurate 70% of the time, up from 40% in September'
- A real-world example: 'This week she used her new strategy during morning meeting'
- Next steps: 'Our focus this quarter shifts to carryover in the classroom'
- An invitation: 'Here is one thing you can try at home'
- Honesty when progress is slow — and a plan for what comes next

You Need Real Breaks — This Is Not Optional

The ASHA Schools Survey consistently shows that workload, not work hours, is the greatest threat to SLP retention in schools.

- ASHA's Workload Analysis approach: Direct service is only one part of your job
- Non-direct time includes: IEP writing, progress reporting, consultation, evaluation, family meetings, and professional learning
- NJ law does not specify SLP break requirements — but your contract and district policy do: know them
- A 40-minute lunch worked through every day is a 200-minute debt each week — unsustainable and unfair
- Build in documentation time: 5-10 minutes between sessions is a professional practice standard, not a luxury
- Advocate for your schedule through your supervisor — bring data: total caseload, IEP meeting time, eval time
- Burnout costs students: an exhausted SLP cannot deliver the quality of service your students deserve

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Case Management & Student Advocacy

Being the Expert Voice in the Room Without Losing the Team

The SLP as Case Manager & Advocate

- In most NJ districts, the SLP is the case manager of the Speech IEP for students whose primary classification is a communication disorder ESLS vs ESERS
- Case manager responsibilities: coordinating evaluations, scheduling meetings, writing IEPs, tracking timelines, notifying parents
- NJAC 6A:14 timelines are strict: you are accountable even when the team is slow
- Advocacy means: naming what the student needs clearly
- Bring data to every team meeting — not just your own, but the classroom teacher's too
- Listen to families as experts on their child — they often know what works before you do
- Document advocacy: when recommending a service, document: if team disagrees, note that too
- The age/grade, caseload, and program population can vary extremely from SLP to SLP
- You will likely have membership in multiple teams I&RS, Crisis/Safety teams MTSS

Navigating the IEP Table: Collaboration vs. Capitulation

When to Stand Firm

- When the data clearly supports a service the team is reluctant to fund
- When a family is being dismissed or not heard
- When a student's communication need is being minimized as 'just an articulation issue'
- When proposed services are below what is required for FAPE
- When you are being pressured to change a recommendation without clinical justification

When to Flex

- When the team has new information that genuinely changes the picture
- When a student has made progress that warrants a service adjustment
- When the family's priorities shift the goal hierarchy
- When consultation or push-in could serve the student as well as pull-out
- When a peer support or co-teaching model provides equivalent benefit in a less restrictive setting

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Scheduling Models

Push-In, Pull-Out, and Everything In Between

Service Delivery Options: Matched to Student Need, Not Habit

Pull-Out (Individual or Small Group)

Best when: Student needs intensive, distraction-free practice.

Considerations: Time away from instruction adds up; justify with data.

LRE caution: Should not be the default — must be documented as necessary.

When to fade: As skills generalize, transition to less restrictive delivery.

3:1 Model and Transition

Push-In Integrated Therapy

Best when: Goals are directly linked to classroom participation, language, literacy.

Advantages: Immediate generalization; teacher co-learns strategies.

Requirements: Pre-planning with teacher; defined SLP role in the room.

NJ expectation: Services in natural environment should be considered first per NJAC 6A:14.

Consultation Indirect Service

Best when: Skills are emerging; team can carry strategies.

SLP role: Coaches teachers and families; monitors progress indirectly.

Documentation: Must be reflected in the IEP as a service type.

Powerful use: Maintenance phase, transition planning, or tiered support (MTSS).

Making Scheduling Decisions That Reflect LRE

Ridgewood Public Schools significantly outperforms state LRE benchmarks — a result of intentional scheduling decisions by our SLPs and teams.

- LRE is not just about placement — it applies to how and where services are delivered
- Ask first: Can this goal be addressed in the classroom? In a small group? Before defaulting to individual pull-out?
- The IEP must document WHY a more restrictive service delivery model is necessary for that student
- Push-in requires intentional collaboration — a co-planned session is not the same as following a student around
- Mixed models are often the answer: individual pull-out for new skill acquisition, push-in for generalization
- Talk to your principal early in the year — a shared master schedule conversation prevents conflicts
- ASHA resources on service delivery in schools: asha.org/slp/schools

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Identifying the Right Support

Consulting Strategically & Building Capacity in Others

The Most Powerful Question You Can Ask at an IEP Meeting

The goal is not to do less — it is to ensure the right people are doing the right things for each student.

- "Does this student need ME to provide direct service — or do they need the TEAM to have better strategies?"
- Not every student on your caseload needs weekly individual therapy from a licensed SLP
- Some students are best served by a well-coached paraprofessional using your protocols daily
- Some needs are better addressed through teacher language modification, not therapy
- Your consultation can multiply your impact across an entire classroom, not just one student
- Shifting from direct service to consultation requires trust — build it through modeling, not withdrawal
- Document the consultation plan in the IEP: who does what, how often, how you monitor progress

Who Else Can Support This Student? Building Your Team's Capacity

People Who Can Carry SLP Strategies

- Classroom teacher: sentence frames, wait time, vocabulary preview, language scaffolds
- Paraprofessional: trained articulation drills, AAC modeling, structured language routines
- Reading specialist: phonological awareness overlap; co-treat or align goals
- Occupational therapist: sensory-motor needs that affect communication (oral motor, writing)
- Parents/caregivers: home practice with clear, simple protocols from you
- Peers: structured peer interaction programs, communication partners for AAC users

When YOU Should Remain Direct

- New skill acquisition requiring explicit instruction and cueing hierarchy
- Students with complex AAC or augmentative communication needs
- Students with significant pragmatic or social communication disorders
- Students whose progress data shows they stall without direct SLP contact
- When no one else on the team has the capacity to carry the strategy reliably
- When family or team coaching has been tried and not generalized



Sustainability & Professional Wellness

Taking Care of the Person Who Takes Care of Everyone Else

ASHA Workload vs. Caseload: Know the Difference

- Caseload = number of students you serve. Workload = everything you do to serve them.
- Workload includes: direct therapy, IEP writing, evaluations, parent meetings, team collaboration, professional development, data collection, and paperwork
- ASHA recommends a workload analysis — not a head count — to determine what is manageable
- NJ does not set a legal cap on SLP caseloads: your union contract and district policy are your guides
- ASHA's recommended caseload benchmark: 40 students for a balanced workload in a school setting
- If you are consistently over 50, you have a workload problem — not a time management problem
- Bring your workload data to your supervisor: hours spent per week on each activity type is powerful evidence

Advocating for Yourself: So You Can Advocate for Students

Signs You Are Approaching Burnout

- You are writing IEPs on weekends as a regular practice, not an exception
- You feel unable to provide quality services to every student
- You are skipping lunch and prep to see more students
- You dread the caseload list instead of feeling energized by it
- You've stopped attending professional development because there's no time
- Families are sending follow-up emails because they haven't heard from you

What to Do About It

- Request a formal workload analysis meeting with your supervisor
- Bring the ASHA Schools Survey data to the conversation — you are not alone
- Identify which tasks can be delegated or streamlined
- Ask for SLPA support if your district does not already have one
- Connect with NJSHA (NJ Speech-Language-Hearing Association) for advocacy resources
- Remember: your sustainability IS a student service issue

NJ Resource Links: Everything You Need in One Place

CERTIFICATION & LICENSURE

[NJDOE Certification Home](#)

[Apply/Renew: NJEdCert Portal](#)

[Educ. Services Personnel Cert.](#)

[SLP Standard Certificate \(3462S\)](#)

[SLP Certificate of Eligibility](#)

[NJ Consumer Affairs \(NJDOH License\)](#)

[NJSHA: Licensing & Certification](#)

[Praxis SLP \(5331\) — ETS](#)

EVALUATION & PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

[AchieveNJ Educator Evaluation](#)

[Educ. Services Professional Eval.](#)

[NJAC 6A:10 Educator Effectiveness](#)

[NJDOE Certifications & Titles](#)

[NJDOE Certification Contact/FAQ](#)

[ASHA NJ Teacher Requirements](#)

NJDOE Certification Office: rpr@doe.nj.gov

SPECIAL EDUCATION, IEP & BEST PRACTICE

[NJAC 6A:14 Special Education](#)

[NJDOE Special Education Division](#)

[NJDOE Special Ed Directories](#)

[ASHA Schools Resources](#)

[ASHA Workload Analysis Approach](#)

[NJDOE Data & Reports Portal](#)

[NJDOE Parent Rights / Procedural Safeguards](#)

[NJSHA \(NJ Speech-Language-Hearing Assoc.\)](#)

You Are the Bridge.

*Between the clinic and the classroom.
Between compliance and connection.
Between what students can do and
what they deserve to become.*

Questions & Discussion

