

Workload/Caseload Position Statement

Purpose

The NJSHA School Affairs Committee originally developed this workload/caseload position statement to promote effective service delivery, interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional sustainability for Speech-Language Specialists (SLSs) in New Jersey schools. This document provides a framework for addressing ongoing concerns related to excessive workloads that impede SLSs' ability to meet mandated requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, reauthorized 2004 and subsequent amendments) and related federal and state regulations.

IDEA requires that:

1. Each student with a disability be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) based on individual need; and
2. Special education and related services are delivered within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and linked to meaningful progress in the general education curriculum.

Ensuring compliance with these mandates requires recognition of both caseload and workload demands placed on SLSs.

Definitions

- **Caseload** refers to the number of students receiving speech-language services.
- **Workload** encompasses all responsibilities required to provide legally compliant, evidence-based, and educationally relevant services. Many workload demands are essential yet often unrecognized or undervalued in staffing and scheduling decisions.

Scope of Speech-Language Specialist Workload

In addition to direct service delivery, SLS responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

Clinical and Educational Responsibilities

- Pre-evaluation consultations and conferences
- Comprehensive evaluations and re-evaluations
- Eligibility determinations and participation on Child Study Teams (CST)
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) development and implementation
- Progress monitoring and data-driven decision-making
- Collaboration with teachers to support curriculum access, language development, literacy, and classroom communication

Documentation and Compliance

- Report writing and interpretation of assessment results
- IEP documentation and progress reporting
- State and federal compliance reporting (e.g., Medicaid/Medicare documentation)
- Maintenance of service logs and required data submissions

Consultation and Collaboration

- Parent communication and family training
- Consultation with general and special education teachers
- Collaboration with related service providers and outside agencies
- Participation in CST, I&RS, MTSS/RTI, and transition planning meetings

Professional Development and Evidence-Based Practice

- Ongoing training in speech-language intervention, literacy development, AAC, autism spectrum disorders, hearing loss, auditory processing disorders, and other complex needs
- Staying current with evidence-based practices, emerging research, and evolving technology
- Training in and management of assistive and instructional technologies, including AAC systems, hearing aids, cochlear implants, and sound-field systems

Increasing Complexity of Student Needs

Public schools are serving an expanding population of students with complex communication needs, including:

- Students with multiple disabilities
- Students with significant medical and developmental histories
- Increased survival rates of medically fragile infants
- Students requiring intensive, individualized intervention

These trends demand greater service intensity, specialized expertise, and time, further increasing workload demands.

Categories for Workload Analysis

I. Student-Centered Services

- Direct therapy and intervention
- Observation and consultation
- Speech-language assessments (in-district and out-of-district)
- Early intervening services and MTSS/RTI support

II. Professional Responsibilities

- Lesson planning and preparation
- Data collection and analysis
- Documentation and compliance reporting
- Collaboration with families, educators, and multidisciplinary teams
- Meeting participation (eligibility, annual reviews, reevaluations, transitions)
- Case management in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.2(c)3
- Research and professional growth
- Material development and adaptation to meet individual student needs

III. Systemic and Organizational Factors

- Administrative duties and contractual obligations
- Committee participation and school-wide responsibilities
- Staffing shortages and recruitment challenges
- Workspace limitations
- Access to technology and resources

Rationale for a Workload-Based Staffing Model

NJSHA strongly supports implementation of a workload analysis approach to determine appropriate staffing levels for SLSs, consistent with ASHA guidance. A workload model ensures:

- Compliance with federal and state mandates
- High-quality, evidence-based service delivery
- Equitable access to services for students
- Improved professional retention and job satisfaction
- Enhanced student outcomes and educational access

Advocacy and Professional Responsibility

SLSs must be knowledgeable advocates for students and for the profession. Understanding regulatory requirements enables practitioners to advocate for sufficient time, staffing, and resources to fulfill their roles effectively. Flexible service delivery models and appropriate group sizes, based on student need, are essential to maximizing engagement and progress.

Conclusion

Viewing the role of the SLS through a workload lens supports effective programming, interdisciplinary collaboration, professional sustainability, and, most importantly, the provision of FAPE for all students. NJSHA remains committed to advocating for policies and practices that ensure students receive the services they need to succeed.

References

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). (2002). *A Workload Analysis Approach for Establishing Speech-Language Caseload Standards in the Schools*. Rockville, MD.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2000). *National Outcomes Measurement System: National Data Report*. Rockville, MD.