



To: Senate Education Committee
Date: April 29, 2015
RE: Support for SB 287

The Oregon Education Association supports Senate Bill 287 as an important step toward addressing the chronic shortage of speech language pathologists in our schools, while maintaining rigorous licensing and professional standards.

SB 287 will streamline the licensing of Oregon speech language pathologists (SLPs) who work either in the school or clinical setting. It does this by moving the responsibility for licensure to the Board of Examiners for Speech Language Pathology and Audiology (BSPA), while allowing those that are currently licensed by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) to continue to renew their licenses under TSPC while also maintaining their current scope of practice.

Currently school districts in Oregon can hire SLPs that are licensed by TSPC or the BSPA. Approximately 194 TSPC licensed SLPs are not currently certified by BSPA. Some may qualify for certification from BSPA but have not pursued it.

BSPA-certified and prepared SLPs have school-based contextual training as well as comparable professional practice standards, rules and processes. In addition, all current TSPC SLP pre-service candidates are being prepared in an ASHA (American Speech-Language Hearing Association) program.

SLPs that are currently licensed by TSPC only will still be able to continue in their practice and employment without additional licensure requirements or fees. SB 287 addresses this concern by moving all newly licensed SLPs through BSPA; locating and supporting those current TSPC licensed SLPs who qualify for board certification to obtain it if they wish; and allowing TSPC-licensed SLPs to continue to renew with TSPC and perform their duties accordingly.

SB 287 will protect the current scope of work for TSPC licensed SLPs. TSPC licensed SLPs are covered to teach up to eight different course assignments). That would not be the case for SLPs certified by BSPA. Because SLPs are a chronic shortage area, removing the district's ability to retain and continue with their current people and programs would be devastating.

The Oregon Education Association urges your full support of SB 287.

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