

WHAT DOES NSHSLA DO???????

NHSHLA ADVOCACY TIMELINE

2003- July - NHSHLA meets with the Department of Education (DOE).

- Initial purpose was to open discussion regarding qualifications for speech and language service providers in the schools.
- NHSHLA opened discussions relative to who we are, our mission statement and offered to work with the DOE relative to quality of speech and language services in the schools.
- Meetings with the DOE were ongoing and a Speech Language Specialist (SLS) Committee was formed. The purpose of this committee was to review the rules for the re-authorization of the SLS rules. (All DOE rules are periodically subject to this).
- NHSLHA, the Special Ed Directors Association, The School Administrators Association, Speech Language Specialists, Representatives of the UNH Communication Disorders Faculty and the Licensure Board were invited to be on this committee as well. The task was to review the criteria for eligibility for certification as an SLS as well as the competencies that would be required to meet these criteria. Additionally, they were to review current rules and make recommendations for possible changes in the future to the Professional Standards Board.

2004-2006 ---Meetings relative to these rules continued

- They were presented to the PSB with changes and recommendations for some increases in the rigor of the coursework and some other items.
- The PSB rejected these suggestions in the spring of 2006 and sent them back to the committee.

2005-2006---LEGISLATION

- 2005-Numerous meetings and consults with lobbyist, NHSLHA board and licensure Board to plan proposed legislative efforts.
- **January of 2006** HB 1539 was proposed and sponsored by former representative Deb Naro. This bill addressed concerns about alternative routes to DOE certification and qualified providers and asked that the term “critical shortage” be defined and criteria be determined for its usage.
- This Bill was *opposed* by the Special Ed Administrators Association, The School Administrators Association and the DOE.

- Numerous parents, other professionals, University personnel, licensing board members NSHSLA members and some members of the public testified on behalf of the bill. Some written comments were received as well. (To these individuals, thank you.)
- At the end of the legislative session, after hearings in both the house and senate, HB 1539 was merged into a study committee for the fall of 2006.
- Board and University faculty members testified quite adeptly with data to back up their statements to the study committee quite frequently over the period of a month in the fall.
- The results of the study committee were generally in our favor. The committee felt that the area of speech and language in the schools is indeed quite specialized.
- They also felt that there should be very careful consideration before the alternative route is utilized.

Concurrent with this study committee the same individuals and ASHA went before the NH State Board of Education and Commissioner Tracy on October 18, 2007.

At that time concerns were voiced about the use of, qualifications, supervision and criteria for hiring of Alternative 4 candidates within the field of speech and language.

2007----January

- Meeting held at the DOE with DOE staff, NSHSLA board members UNH Faculty member and a member of the Commissioner's staff. At that time some **PROPOSALS** were put forth.
- ALT4 candidates will now have a bachelor's degree in communication disorders to apply for the ALT 4 in speech and language.
- The candidate for ALT4 must matriculate into a Masters Degree program in Communication Disorders/Speech Pathology. No more would there be the language that states a Masters degree in special education or its equivalent.
- A PROPOSAL was made that the DOE look for some grant money to hire SLP's to provide the appropriate supervision to the Master's level Alt4 candidate during the 3 years they are working and taking courses.

AGAIN, THE ABOVE ARE ONLY PROPOSALS AND NO AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED ON ANY OF THESE.

In **February of 2006** Senator Maggie Hassan sponsored **SB 252** on behalf of NHSLHA to **reinstate** language into our licensure law that would allow for CERTIFICATION of SLPA's.

- This bill did pass but unfortunately with an amendment that exempts speech assistants in the schools from being certified.
- This bill was also opposed by the Special Ed Administrators Association and the School Administrators Association.
- At this time the Licensing Board needs to write the rules relative to this law.
- Any questions pertaining to this Law and to CERTIFICATION for SLPA's please address to the Board of Speech Language Pathology at the Office of Allied Health Professionals.

As always the New Hampshire Speech Language Hearing Association Website is www.nhslha.org