

## Coalition to Address Vermont's Personnel Shortages in Speech-Language Pathology

Convened by the Vermont Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
VTC Langevin House, Randolph, Vermont  
November 1, 2006

### **In attendance:**

Jessie Graham	President, VT Speech-Language-Hearing Assoc.
Kari Fabrizio	State Ed. Advocacy Leader, VT Speech-Language-Hearing Assoc.
Susan Kimmerly	Department of Education Liaison, VT Speech-Language-Hearing Assoc.
Gayle Belin	Legislative Councilor, VT Speech-Language-Hearing Assoc. & UVM Professor
Patricia Prelock	Chair, Dept. of Communication Sciences, University of VT
Alicia Hanrahan	Special Education Consultant, Department of Education
Andrea Wasson	Coordinator, VT Higher Education Collaborative
Joel Cook	Executive Director, VT National Education Assoc.
John Nelson	Executive Director, VT School Boards Assoc.
Holly Preston	Representative, VT Council for Special Education Administrators
Alicia Weiss	Executive Director, VT Coalition for Disability Rights
Terry Keegan	Coordinator, VT Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Liz Jordan-Shook	Program Director, Family, Infant, and Toddler Program

### **Unable to attend:**

Moira Mulligan	Clinical Director, E.M. Luse Center, University of VT
Karin Edwards	Director, Student Support Team, Department of Education
Michael Ferguson	Coordinator of the State Improvement Grant, Department of Education
Marta Cambra	Director of Educator Quality, Department of Education
Nancy Thomas	Past Chair, VT Standards Board of Professional Educators, Dept. of Ed.
Dennis Kane	Director, VT Higher Education Collaborative
Patty Morgan	Coordinator, VT Higher Education Collaborative
Jeff Francis	Executive Director, VT Superintendents Association
Eloise McGarry	Director of Support Services, Rutland City Public Schools
Bob Stevens	Executive Director, VT Principals Association
Mike Mulcahy	Program Director, VT Parent Information Center
Mary Barton	President, Council for Exceptional Children

**Meeting facilitation by:** Judy Warriner Walke

**Notes by:** Kari Fabrizio

### **Desired Outcomes:**

- Agree on common assumptions about the scope of our work (charge of the coalition)
- Define key root causes among the potential factors
- Focus on a few priority strategies
- Identify specific next steps in priority areas
- Build on our work so far and our sense of common purpose as a group

*The group reviewed and refined the list common assumptions that were part of the meeting's preparation packet to formulate:*

**Charge:** The charge of this coalition is to work together to define the possible causes of the shortage of personnel serving children with communication disorders and to identify and prioritize strategies and solutions to address the shortage. *The group discussed that a white paper and action plan will likely need to be developed.*

**Scope:** We will focus specifically on shortages of SLPs serving children and youth ages 0-21.

**Beliefs:** There is a shortage of SLPs working with infants, toddlers, and school-age children in some of the districts/regions in the state. There are a variety of reasons for the shortage of SLPs.

*Participants were asked to re-enter small groups formed in the last meeting to review their categorized list of brainstormed factors thought to be contributing to the SLP shortage. These groups synthesized overlapping factors and identified those that appeared to have the most leverage in effecting change were the coalition to focus its efforts on them.*

**Root Causes:**

- Limited availability, access to (cost/commitment), and capacity of Masters training programs
- High workload (service delivery models, caseload types, job descriptions, efficient use of SLPs)
- Limited compensation packages (budgets, rules/regulations play role)
- Lack of career awareness in high schools/colleges

*Each participant was then asked to prioritize the top 5 strategies/solutions brainstormed in the last meeting by placing dots next to them (1 green dot = 2 points, 4 blue dots = 1 point each). Some chosen strategies that were determined to be similar were collapsed and those points added together.*

**Prioritized Strategies:** (listed in order of priority according to point values)

1. Obtain funding (legislative - State Improvement Grant III) toward hiring additional faculty to train more SLPs and toward Master's students to help pay for their education (21 points)
2. Increase knowledge of SLP role in and training on best practice guidelines for disability areas (autism, language learning disability) and models of service delivery. Increase transdisciplinary training to clarify what others can do (workload issues) (19 points)
3. Improve SLP recruitment and retention strategies/policies: particularly working with districts/union to improve compensation packages (salary, benefits, bonuses, perks) (17 points)
4. Increase distance learning opportunities for SLP coursework – look at models that are working and address ASHA competencies (8 points)

5. Increase publicity to high schools or other college students (counselors & advisors) about field of Speech-Language Pathology (4 points)
6. Consider other levels (SLP-A) of licensure and be clear about scope of practice – technical/clinical skills (2 points)

One person marked the following strategy with an orange dot indicating “Don’t go there”: Consider SLPs as Allied Health personnel vs. Education personnel.

*Participants split into work groups according to individual interest in one of the top 4 listed strategies:*

### **Workgroups:**

- 1. Funding for training programs:** Patty Prelock, Alicia Weiss, Liz Jordan-Shook, (Michael Ferguson as of 11/8)
- 2. Workload:** Holly Preston, Jessie Graham, Susan Kimmerly, Terry Keegan (Nancy Thomas as of 11/7, Bob Stevens –as of 11/8, when able)
- 3. Recruitment/Retention:** Joel Cook, Kari Fabrizio, Gayle Belin, Alicia Hanrahan, (John Nelson – when able, Ellie McGarry as of 11/7, Bob Stevens –as of 11/8, when able)
- 4. Distance Learning:** Karin Edwards (as of 11/8)

*Each workgroup identified a short term project, next steps related to the project, and a workgroup point person*

### **Workgroup 1: Funding for training programs:**

**Project: Gather information on need, costs, funding sources, & rationale for training program**

**Next steps:**

1. What information do we need, particularly if taking this to the legislature and writing grants?
  - a. Document real need (aging out factor, increasing need for certain populations - autism)
    - Liz will talk with M. Sullivan, DOE, & ICC to get numbers related to the need for 0-5 providers and categories of disorders typically seen in this population
    - Information will be gathered for the 5-21 year old population from the CSPD - Michael Ferguson
    - Patty will get ASHA info on aging out factors, etc.
2. What is the impact of the shortage?
  - a. Who does it hurt?
  - b. What is the Long Term impact (costs, resources, services needed)?
  - c. What regions are affected (*Additional point raised by participant via sticky note: Why is region affected: is it geographic location or specific S.U.*)
  - d. *Additional point raised by participant via sticky note: What is the number of SLPs per capita and the need for services per capita by region/S.U./district?*

3. What are the real costs?
  - a. Faculty: Patty to get this
  - b. Tuition stipends: Patty to get this
  - c. Space – infrastructure, support: Patty and Michael to get this
4. What are potential funding sources: legislative?
5. Prepare information to train on who SLPs are and what is their unique training (brief but clear)
6. What are the state's legal obligations for provision of SLP services?
  - a. Liz to gather data on 0-3 population for special education direct service and 3-21 related service

**Point person:** Patty Prelock [Patricia.Prelock@uvm.edu](mailto:Patricia.Prelock@uvm.edu)

### **Workgroup 2: Workload**

#### **Project: Gather information on service delivery models**

Identify how individuals with various disorders (e.g. autism spectrum, learning disability, hearing impairment) are being served in FITP, EEE, Elementary, and Secondary environments. Look at:

1. Current service delivery models
2. Evidence/Research based practice
3. Evaluation process
4. Caseload-workload
5. Frequency and intensity of service
6. Efficiency and Effectiveness of service delivery
7. Scope of practice/Job description

**Next steps:** Gather list of questions  
Develop tool to get information from the state

**Point People:** Holly Preston [hpreston@ocsu.org](mailto:hpreston@ocsu.org), Susan Kimmerly [SKimmerly@9East.net](mailto:SKimmerly@9East.net), Jessie Graham [jessieg@madriver.com](mailto:jessieg@madriver.com)

### **Workgroup 3: Recruitment/Retention**

#### **Project: Gather information on current compensation packages, interests of SLPs, and union policy/position**

Identify current compensation packages around the state and desired components for SLPs including (incomplete list):

1. What are the salaries, salary schedules, benefits, perks, bonuses, and retirement/social security options for public school employees versus private practitioners?
2. How are services generally covered with private versus public employees?

3. Are there patterns associated with specific compensation packages and persistent shortage areas around the state?
4. What motivates SLPs to choose to work in schools via public hire or private practice?
5. What motivates SLPs to stay with districts/S.U.s as employees?
6. *Additional point raised by participant via sticky note: What makes UVM grads stay in VT?*

Increase understanding of union contracts around the state as it relates to SLP compensation packages

**Next Steps:** Gather list of questions  
Determine method of obtaining responses

**Point person:** Kari Fabrizio [kari@fabrizio.us](mailto:kari@fabrizio.us)

**Next Steps for Coalition:** *Large group conversation was generated*

1. Kari will share meeting information with coalition members who were unable to attend, get feedback, and invite them to join a workgroup.
2. Individual workgroups will communicate via email and collect data for their area. Kari will look into possible use of forums through VSHA website.
3. Coalition will reconvene in 3 months to discuss workgroup activities, share findings from data collection, re-affirm key areas, and determine whether the coalition is still committed to pursue these.
4. Each workgroup is invited to ask others to join in the effort who may have specific information/expertise, or who care about the particular issue and are willing to contribute.

**Possible dates for next meeting.** Please email Kari preferred date, dates that will not work, as well as preferred time:

Monday 1/29, 12-3 or 1-4

Wednesday 1/31, 12-3 or 1-4

Friday 2/2, 12-3 or 1-4