



November 2, 2023

Ana Lia Oliva, President
Oregon Speech-Language-Hearing Association
c/o Meetings, Management and More
P.O. Box 8040
Salem, OR 97303

RE: Teacher Strike

Dear Ana Lia:

As I know you are aware, the Portland Public Schools began striking yesterday. While negotiations between the Portland schools and the union are continuing, we want you to know that we support ASHA members working in Portland during this difficult time. As with other strikes, we anticipate that members will have questions/concerns about their responsibilities.

We know that—as school-based professionals—members are concerned about the welfare of their students as well as their fellow colleagues.

It is the school district's responsibility to notify families about the school closures and any services that will continue. If the strike is prolonged and students miss school, audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) should document their attempts to provide continuity of service. The documentation should include sending homework packets or providing correspondence to parents that pertains to questions about services.

Potential disruptions in clinician–client relationships may occur as the result of a school strike. If a district makes the decision to close schools because of a strike, this temporary lack of services would not be construed as client/student abandonment by the audiologist or speech-language pathologist (SLP). If schools remain open during a strike, the audiologist or SLP should ensure that parents are notified that their children may not receive services as scheduled. (Whether FAPE [free appropriate public education] has been denied as the result of a missed session is to be decided on a case-by-case basis. The school district is responsible for addressing parent concerns.

If there are missed sessions during the strike, parents may ask for those services to be made-up or to receive compensatory services. While the school district is responsible for addressing those concerns, audiologists and SLPs may be asked to provide services for missed sessions.

For further guidance on client abandonment, refer to ASHA's issues in ethics statement on client abandonment in its entirety at www.asha.org/Practice/ethics/Client-Abandonment/.

For your reference, ASHA's website has information on:

- **ASHA Guidance: School Walkouts or Strikes**
www.asha.org/SLP/schools/ASHA-Guidance-on-Walkouts-or-Strikes/

- **Missed Speech-Language Sessions in Schools**
www.asha.org/slp/schools/prof-consult/missed-sessions/
- **Caseload and Workload**
www.asha.org/practice-portal/professional-issues/Caseload-and-Workload/
- **Salaries and Wage Data**
www.asha.org/Research/memberdata/Salary-Data/
- **Advocating for a Salary Supplement**
www.asha.org/Advocacy/state/issues/Advocacy-Resource-Guide-for-the-Salary-Supplement-Initiative/
- **Appropriate School Facilities for Students with Speech-Language-Hearing Disorders**
www.asha.org/policy/TR2002-00236/

Any audiologist or SLP who is concerned or unclear about the legal obligations in their employment contract should consider consulting a labor or employment lawyer. Please send questions, concerns, or comments to Eileen Crowe, ASHA's director of state association relations, at ecrowe@asha.org or states@asha.org.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Augustine, PhD, CCC-SLP
2023 ASHA President