



Memo

TO: State Consultants for Special Education and Related Service Providers and Directors of Special Education

FROM: Noma Anderson, President, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

DATE: November 12, 2007

RE: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification Programs

As you may be aware, a number of states and local school districts provide teachers who have master teacher certification from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) with a salary supplement or bonus. Since NBPTS does not have certification in audiology or speech-language pathology, ASHA believes that states and local districts should accept ASHA's Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) in audiology or speech-language pathology as a basis for providing salary supplements to these professionals, as occurs in eight states and numerous local school districts around the country.

In 2001, ASHA met with NBPTS representatives to discuss recognition of ASHA's certificate. At this meeting, the NBPTS representatives made clear that they have no intentions of establishing a specific credential for audiologists or speech-language pathologists. Instead, NBPTS maintains that audiologists and speech-language pathologists may qualify as master teachers under their Exceptional Needs Specialist program. As of 2007, NBPTS still does not have a credential specifically for audiologists or speech-language pathologists.

As a follow-up to the meeting, NBPTS provided documentation, which indicates that the Exceptional Needs category is appropriate only "if their [school personnel who provide supportive services to classroom teachers] practice as teachers fit the description of some of the existing standards." One of these standards requires mastery of subject matter—such as mathematics and science, social studies and the arts, and health/physical education/leisure—that typically is not part of the audiologist's or speech-language pathologist's responsibilities.

NBPTS further qualified eligibility by indicating that applicants should have "the ability to address the breadth of the field," including analyzing classroom interaction. At the meeting the NBPTS President, Betty Castor, also indicated that their certification programs are designed for teachers providing instruction. Similarly, the NBPTS web site notes "NBPTS concentrates education reform in the classroom."

While a few audiologists and speech-language pathologists who teach in classrooms of children with language--learning disabilities or hearing loss may be eligible for the NBPTS Exceptional Needs Specialist program, this program and its criteria are best suited for special education teachers.

In recognition that salary supplement legislation related to NBPTS certification is only one way of increasing salaries of school audiologists and speech-language pathologists, ASHA continues to support member efforts to negotiate with unions, school boards, and school administrators to convince them to include the ASHA CCC as a bargaining factor for higher salaries.

I hope the above information is helpful as you continue to pursue this issue at the state and local levels.