

To: Government Operations Committee
From: Cynthia Leonard, CCC-SLP
Essex High School
Regarding: bill S. 217

I have just become aware that the Vermont legislature will be receiving testimony regarding the licensure of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs), through the proposed bill S. 217. I am unable to attend the session but hope that this letter will serve as a written testimony.

I currently work as a certified SLP at Essex High School. I have worked there for 16 years. In this setting, I perform a wide variety of functions as an SLP that are significantly different from SLPs who are contracted to work in the schools, and from those who work in other settings. The most significant of these functions, is the coordination of language and communication support to students through classroom/staff collaboration. This team effort toward student success is best achieved when there is mutual respect, and a shared approach to adopting new techniques and requirements. When common core and curriculum needs are being addressed, an SLP with a similar background and orientation to educators, who follows similar expectations, and requirements in the classroom, has greater influence upon decisions. If I am no longer to be included as an "educator", I believe, that there may be a hierarchical shift that leads to less influence, and potentially less monetary compensation.

Additionally, the continuing education that is emphasized to maintain certification within the AOE is highly beneficial to my growth as a speech and language specialist and to the students I serve. These workshops, courses and trainings allow for highly qualified individuals to work with students. I am currently able to include In-service training (within reason) received with my co-workers as credit toward maintaining my certification, this is advantageous to me, and less costly.

Lastly, I am concerned that the shift to the OPR will require a greater, and unnecessary, expense for the individual SLP working in the schools, if it is deemed a requirement, for a school-based SLP to obtain two licenses to work in the state of Vermont. I am asking that I not become "fined" for choosing to work in the public school system.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cynthia Leonard, CCC-SLP

