



VCSEA Testimony to Senate Government Operations Committee concerning the proposed transfer of the educational speech language pathologist license from AOE to OPR under S.217

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VCSEA does not support the removal of the educational Speech Language Pathology endorsement from the Agency of Education for the following reasons:

- SLPs serve as educators in the schools and removing them from an educational endorsement is not appropriate. The role of the SLP is central to the educational pursuits of language acquisition, communication and literacy. Language acquisition is key to academic skill development and access to the curriculum. SLP services are often at the heart of the educational program for students who struggle with language and literacy.
- Educational endorsement of SLPs in a manner similar to their teacher colleagues is central to supporting a consistent educational culture, climate and experience. The performance skills and knowledge identified in the current Educational Speech Language Endorsement within the AOE (5440-84) are vital to the role of the SLP in schools. Included are case management, assessment, collaborative work with teachers and designing and implementing educational plans “including directly teaching, or supervising the teaching of the communication skills essential to literacy development.” The skill set needed within a school setting is different from practice within a clinical setting. If endorsement of educational SLPs is removed from the Vermont Agency of Education how would the knowledge and skills identified in the endorsement be assured in all schools across Vermont?
- VCSEA is concerned that SLPs lacking the educational endorsement will not be able to provide case management services and thereby lead to a more clinical orientation to speech language pathology services in the schools. Under Vermont Special Education Regulation Rules (2360.2.12 (b)(1)(iii) speech language pathology services “...may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction; or related services, if required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education.” Both educator and related services provider roles are important to SLP practice in schools.

It is critical that the General Assembly consider all implications, beyond the convenience, of moving to a single licensing function to OPR, away from the current AOE educator endorsement process. Additionally, will the transfer of other educational endorsements to OPR such as school nurses, school psychologists raise some similar issues?