

INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2021-109

REQUESTING THAT THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION CONDUCT AN INTERIM STUDY REGARDING THE FACTORS, COSTS, AND OUTCOMES RELATED TO THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, speech-language pathologists, as defined by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, are professionals who hold the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology, which requires a master's, doctoral, or other recognized postbaccalaureate degree; and

WHEREAS, speech-language pathologists must complete a period of supervised postgraduate professional work experience and pass a rigorous national examination as described in the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association certification standards, demonstrate continued professional development as mandated for the maintenance of the Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology, and hold other required credentials, such as state licensures, teaching certifications, and specialty certifications; and

WHEREAS, the scope of practice in speech-language pathology covers several diverse domains, including without limitation issues related to:

- (1) Speech intelligibility;
- (2) Stuttering;
- (3) Voice and resonance; and
- (4) Receptive and expressive language, which includes:
 - (A) Literacy and written language;
 - (B) Hearing screening and auditory skills development;
 - (C) Swallowing;
 - (D) Cognitive aspects of communication;
 - (E) Social communication; and
 - (F) Alternative communication modalities; and

1 WHEREAS, services for these domains using service delivery models
2 include collaboration, counseling, prevention and wellness, screening,
3 assessment, treatment, technology, population, and systems; and
4

5 WHEREAS, as of October 2021, there are fifty (50) speech-language
6 pathologists in Arkansas who are certified as both speech-language
7 pathologists and are teachers working in public schools; and
8

9 WHEREAS, Medicaid funds generated by speech-language pathologists could
10 be utilized to fund budgets to reimburse speech-language pathologists for
11 gaining the speech-language pathologist licensure that is required to bill
12 Medicaid or to recognize the contribution of speech-language pathologists to
13 public schools by funding a stipend commensurate with stipends received by
14 public school teachers who have received National Board Certifications and
15 certified speech-language pathologists who meet certain teaching-related
16 criteria, as described in Arkansas Code § 6-17-413,
17

18 NOW THEREFORE,

19 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION OF THE NINETY-THIRD
20 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
21

22 THAT the Senate Committee on Education study factors related to the
23 recruitment and retention of speech-language pathologists in public schools,
24 the positive role of highly qualified speech-language pathologists in public
25 schools related to student development and school safety, the costs
26 associated with attaining national certifications by speech-language
27 pathologists, and the effect Medicaid funding billed by licensed speech-
28 language pathologists both within public schools and those provided by
29 contracted third-party vendors has on the budgets of public school districts
30 in Arkansas.
31

32
33 Respectfully submitted,
34
35
36

1 Senator Joyce Elliott

2 District 31

3 Prepared by: TNL/TNL

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36