

1 INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2021-109

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

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

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

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

- 24 (1) Speech intelligibility;
- 25 (2) Stuttering;
- 26 (3) Voice and resonance; and
- 27 (4) Receptive and expressive language, which includes:
- 28 (A) Literacy and written language;
- 29 (B) Hearing screening and auditory skills development;
- 30 (C) Swallowing;
- 31 (D) Cognitive aspects of communication;
- 32 (E) Social communication; and
- 33 (F) Alternative communication modalities; and
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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
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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
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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,
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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:
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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.
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33 Respectfully submitted,
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1 Senator Joyce Elliott

2 District 31

3 Prepared by: TNL/TNL

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