

December 22, 2008

Rusty Rosenkoetter, Coordinator for Educator Certification  
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
PO Box 480  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Ms. Rosenkoetter:

On behalf of the Missouri Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA), this correspondence is an official request that the State Board of Education and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) consider the qualifications of nationally certified Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) as compared to National Board Certified Teachers. MSHA is seeking a decision that the national SLP standards are, at a minimum, equivalent. It is my understanding that a preliminary side-by-side assessment has been completed by you.

If the Board and DESE approve this request, it would place nationally certified SLPs on an equal standing with nationally board certified teachers and would encourage school districts to consider incentives which could help reduce the critical shortage of school-based SLPs in Missouri. It would also support DESE's goals of:

- Recruiting and retaining qualified educators
- Ensuring students with disabilities receive services specified in Individual Education Plans

MSHA believes that Speech-Language Pathologists facilitate the critical communication skills necessary for Missouri students to access and benefit from the high-quality opportunities for lifelong learning, personal growth, and career success targeted in DESE's mission statement.

The current critical shortage of SLPs in Missouri is affecting school districts ability to provide even minimum communication services to children with disabilities.

Other states have determined that the SLP national certification is at least equivalent to the national teaching standards. If you would like a copy of at least one set of criteria used, please contact me.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact Brenda Martien, MSHA Vice-President for School Services at [bmartien@centurytel.net](mailto:bmartien@centurytel.net).

Sincerely,  
Brenda Martien, Master of Science-CCC/SLP  
Vice-President for School Services

Karen Kerns, Master of Science CCC/SLP  
President