

SEALS Meeting July 15, 2010

State Education Advocacy Leader News

I have the honor of serving as the State Education Advocacy Leader (SEAL) for Virginia. This is a joint ASHA-SHAV position that provides me with the opportunity to participate in ASHA meetings (face-to-face and via distance education) regarding issues associated with public school speech-language pathology services. At the ASHA Schools Conference, the SEALS meeting included updates on various topics and round table discussions. Here are the highlights from that meeting.

ASHA has published a new document on the Roles and Responsibilities of School SLPs. It is designed both for school SLPs and their administrators (<http://www.asha.org/docs/html/PS2010-00318.html>).

ASHA staff reviewed the current status of reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (the Elementary and Secondary Education Act - ESEA) and of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ESEA is authorized before IDEA and is currently stalled due to other issues in Congress. Watch the **ASHA Leader** for updates and opportunities to provide input to your Representative or Senator. Neil Snyder, ASHA's lobbyist, predicts a reduction in IDEA funding after 2010-11 when the ARRA (stimulus) funds (\$12.5 billion) are gone.

The Common Core State Standards were published in early June, a collaborative effort of the Obama administration, the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (the state superintendents' organization). Although Gov. McDonnell has indicated that Virginia will not adopt these standards, it is informative to see the national expectations. Take a look at the English Language Arts standards regarding speaking, listening and vocabulary skills at www.corestandards.org.

We had the opportunity to hear about the Nevada Coalition to Address Personnel Shortages that was created to address the shortages of counselors, nurses, OTs, PTs, school psychologists, SLPs, and special education teachers. The professional organizations representing these professions have come together to develop recruitment and retention activities and have gained the support of the Nevada Department of Education. A small ASHA grant to the Nevada Speech-Language-Hearing Association provided stimulus funds. I especially appreciated the comment made by Nancy Kuhles, the Nevada SEAL who co-chairs the Coalition "we try our best to solve problems and not to admire them."

At the conclusion of the meeting we had a round table discussion about "Telepractice." ASHA is promoting state licensure boards to develop more flexibility in licensing persons who provide telepractice. CMS (Medicare and Medicaid) approves telemedicine. Each state Medicaid office may have different standards. We heard from a school district in Oklahoma that is trying this out this year by using ARRA money to buy equipment. They will be hiring a telepractice assistant to manage the equipment and behavior to the remote middle and high schools in the district. ASHA is eager to hear about schools' experience with telepractice.

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