



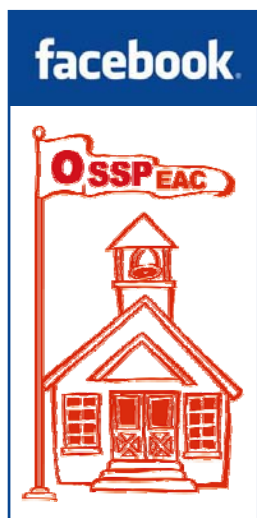
Ohio School Speech Pathology Educational Audiology Coalition

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The Communicator

October, 2011

President's Message

Beautiful, crisp autumn days are upon us, which means the OSSPEAC Conference cannot be far behind! As we gather to *Focus on Communication*, to learn, to refresh our skills, and to network with colleagues, I anticipate a lot of "buzz" regarding some hot topics: the revision of the autism voucher program to include all special education students, school funding, the approach of the NCLB deadline for full compliance, along with what the latest trends in phonology, fluency, language, and autism.

As a Board, we are very interested in hearing your thoughts on these critical issues. I encourage you to stop by the OSSPEAC booth to discuss issues

that you care about, and that you would like OSSPEAC to respond to. Our organization is strengthened by a steady flow of communication among members and officers, and we invite you to join the conversation on our Facebook page, and at the OSSPEAC website, and especially at the conference. Over the lunch hour on Tuesday, you will have a chance to interact with Wayne Secord and state leaders in the profession regarding how we can more effectively lead in our districts and in the profession - don't miss it!

Remember - YOU are OSSPEAC: OSSPEAC is an entirely volunteer, member-supported professional organization. As such, OSSPEAC relies completely on its members for leadership, direction, and action at all levels. If you want to create forward movement in our profession, I urge you to become more involved with OSSPEAC this year. You will become better acquainted with outstanding professionals from across the state, and have the opportunity to influence the direction of our organization and our professions.

See you at the OSSPEAC booth! Or email me via the OSSPEAC website. I look forward to hearing from you!

Terry Farnham
2011-2012 OSSPEAC President



2011 OSSPEAC Fall Conference
"Focus on Communication"

October 23 - 25

Polaris Hilton
Columbus, Ohio



OSSPEAC 2011 Fall Conference: Focus on Communication

October 23-25, 2011

The Fall Conference is fast approaching. It's not too late for you to register. Let's start "Focusing on Communication" as we all dive back into another school year!

Visit www.osspeac.org/conference to access to conference brochure, hotel reservation information, and online registration.

Tailor your conference experience by choosing some new options:

- Volunteer positions are still available! Hoping to obtain complimentary registration? That means you attend the conference at no charge! Email Lisa Smith at Iryckbost@gmail.com for more information. All that is required is a little bit of your time to coordinate volunteers for our registration booth at the conference!
- Session preferences are back! Carefully peruse the conference website and please select the sessions you may be interested in attending on your registration form. We are working hard this year to best utilize our meeting room space.
- There will be two lunch opportunities this year. Review this information in the conference brochure at www.osspeac.org/conference for more details!

Why I'm Going to the Fall Conference

This week I...

- ...wrote 6 I.E.P.s
- ...worked on describing and defining skills with primary language delayed students
- ...helped two middle school students with their narrative skills
- ...utilized the services of a translator to evaluate the autistic child of non-English speaking parents
- ...downloaded, printed and constructed a cool activity from an awesome website
- ...did phonological therapy with a preschooler
- ...evaluated a high schooler with a severe stutter
- ...got several compliments on a piece of jewelry
- ...collaborated with teachers

Today I realized I was more proficient at these activities because of last year's OSSPEAC fall conference. (Yes, got the jewelry at the conference, too!) Wonder what I'll learn this year...

Hope to see you there!

Kate Butler

OSSPEAC Legislative Update - September/October 2011

Kelly O'Reilly, Governmental Policy Group

While the Legislature enjoyed a post-budget summer recess during July and August, cabinet and administrative agencies remain busy attending to their policy agendas. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) recently implemented its long awaited new computer system called MITS. Over time, this system will change the way that all Medicaid providers submit billing and receive reimbursement and may impact the way that school district bill for services under the Medicaid Schools Program (MSP). Stay tuned for more details as they become available.

Looking ahead to this fall, there are two issues on the statewide ballot that may be of interest to OSSPEAC members. Issue 2 is the widely publicized effort to repeal Senate Bill 5, legislation passed earlier this year

which impacts collective bargaining rights of school employees. A "yes" vote on Issue 2 will keep SB 5 in place, while a "no" vote on Issue 2 will repeal SB 5. Another ballot issue of note for OSSPEAC members is Issue 3, which has been called the "Ohio Healthcare Freedom Amendment". If voters approve Issue 3, it would block Ohio implementation of the federal healthcare reform "individual mandate" which would have required individuals to carry healthcare coverage by 2014.

Ballot language and arguments for and against each ballot issue can be found on the Ohio Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/IssueProcBallotBd/BallotBoard.aspx#Issues>. In addition, we can all expect quite a few media ads on each of these issues prior to the November 8, 2011 general election.

Ohio Licensure Board

License renewal fee expected to increase for 2013-2014 biennium

By Dr. Helene Levenfus, Board Chairperson and Gregg B. Thornton, Esq., Executive Director

Before you know it, licensees will be completing their first year of 2011-2012 licensure biennium. As those of you who hold an active license are well aware, the renewal fee for your license to practice speech-language pathology or audiology was \$100.00 for the last renewal period. What you may not be aware of is that after the 2004 practice biennium, the Board reduced the renewal fee from \$150.00 to \$100.00. The Board reduced the renewal fee in order to draw down a surplus that had accumulated through the previous years. Consequently, for the past three renewal cycles (2006, 2008, and 2010), the renewal fee for a speech-language pathologist or audiologist has remained \$100.00. In June 2011, the Board was notified that our surplus was fully utilized. Therefore, we are currently working with the Office of Budget and Management to determine the appropriate license renewal fee necessary to sustain our operations, while at the same time fulfilling our mission. The Board will set renewal fees at the appropriate level to meet known expenditures. Licensure fees are set forth under the Board's administrative rules; therefore, before licensure fees can be changed, the Board must hold a public rules hearing. We also do not anticipate the renewal fee exceeding the 2004 level. We expect to have the license renewal fee finalized at the Board's strategic planning meeting in January 2012, followed by a public rules hearing in March 2012.

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Legislative Update

Bernadette Laughlin

House Bill 136

You may remember that last spring, House Bill 136 was introduced. When it was first introduced, it contained two major proposals. One was the school voucher program and the other was the special education scholarship, or what has been named the Jon Peterson Scholarship. At the time, OSSPEAC lobbied to have provisions of the special education scholarship portion of the bill changed. For example, suggestions our group decided to support were not requiring the school district to be responsible for yearly IEPs (as in the Autism Scholarship) and allowing the school district to retain some funding when the school district initiates the referral, evaluation and identification process.

We anticipated that the bill would be voted on in October 2011. However, the special education scholarship provisions of the bill were put in the budget bill, HB 153. The budget bill was signed into law by Governor Kasich on June 30, 2011. Since the special education scholarship provisions are now law, there was no need to retain them in HB 136. See the article, "Updates for the Ohio Department of Education" in this newsletter for more information on the special education scholarship provisions.

HB 136 creates the Parental Choice and Taxpayer Savings Scholarship (PACT) Program providing students with scholarships to attend nonpublic schools. Basically, the bill would expand Ohio's school voucher program from urban areas to the entire state.

The voucher system bill would replace and expand the state's current voucher system. Currently, only students assigned to schools rated "D" or "F" for two of the last three years can get vouchers. (Cleveland has a separate voucher program.) HB 136 would allow students to get vouchers no matter how their schools performed. HB 136 would allow any student in any district whose family makes less than \$95,000 a year to get a voucher covering the cost of tuition at a private or parochial school.

Ohio School districts and boards of education are lobbying against the bill. What has school districts upset is that, under HB 136 as it currently stands, the state would deduct about \$5,800 from a school district's state aid for each student who receives a voucher. For many districts, the per-student amount deducted would be greater than the total amount they receive per student from the state. (The state doesn't actually allocate the total amount going to each school district entirely on a per-pupil basis, but it is easier here to look at this from a per-student standpoint.)

Referendum for Senate Bill 5

Garnering most of the attention this election season is Issue 2, which is the referendum to repeal collective bargaining legislation (**Senate Bill 5**). A "yes" vote on Issue 2 will keep SB 5 in place, while a "no" vote on Issue 2 will repeal SB 5. Issue 2 was placed on the ballot after the Secretary of State's office received more than a million signatures in support of the referendum.

Other Bills on Our "Radar"

Senate Bill 135 is legislation to recognize September as Craniofacial Acceptance Month. OSSPEAC, through Ohio Speech and Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition (OSHGAC), supports this bill on behalf of children being served by SLPs and Audiologists. Cleft lip and/or palate make up the most common birth defect in the United States. One out of every 700 newborns in the USA is affected by cleft lip and/or palate. The witnesses testifying on behalf of this bill discussed the connection of SLPs in helping these kids and families. One of the witnesses was an SLP and parent of a child with a cleft lip. This bill will create positive awareness of our professions and the important work we do to help children and families.

Senate Bill 123 regards E-licensing. This legislation essentially seeks to expand what information would be included on the searchable licensing verification site (for example it would include information on populations served, services provided, etc.) It would not prohibit a practitioner to only provide services which are listed or to populations they identified. The information would be used to help other professionals and consumers obtain additional information about a practitioner on the state licensing verification site. OSSPEAC, through OSHGAC and our lobbyist, Kelly O'Reilly, is in the process of gathering more information about this bill. Kelly is working closely with Gregg Thornton, the executive director of the Ohio Board of Speech Pathology and Audiology on our behalf.