

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Education Committee

BILL: SB 370

INTRODUCER: Senator Peaden

SUBJECT: Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

DATE: February 5, 2006

REVISED: 02/07/06

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Munroe</u>	<u>Wilson</u>	<u>HE</u>	Favorable
2.	<u>Harkey</u>	<u>Matthews</u>	<u>ED</u>	Fav/1 amendment
3.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
4.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
5.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
6.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Please see last section for Summary of Amendments

- Technical amendments were recommended
- Amendments were recommended
- Significant amendments were recommended

I. Summary:

This bill revises the requirements for the Department of Health (DOH) to issue a provisional license in the fields of speech-language pathology and audiology. The bill specifies course objectives that should be included in the educational curriculum that applicants must complete.

Beginning in 2008, an applicant for licensure as an audiologist must have earned a doctoral degree in audiology.

The bill expands the list of accrediting agencies under whose standards a program may be approved, to allow for a potential name change of a current accrediting body and to permit a program to meet U.S. Department of Education standards.

The Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (board) is authorized to waive specific licensure requirements for certain international medical graduates for both speech-language pathologists and audiologists if the board is satisfied that the applicant meets the equivalent education and practicum requirements and passes the examination in speech-language pathology or audiology.

The bill requires applicants for certification as an audiology assistant to earn a high school diploma instead of completing at least 24 semester hours of coursework, as is currently required.

An audiologist or speech-language pathologist who employs a speech-language assistant or audiology assistant must provide the assistant with a plan approved by the board for on-the-job training and must maintain responsibility for all services performed by the assistant.

This bill amends sections 468.1155, 468.1165, 468.1185, and 468.1215, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists

Speech-language pathologists assess, diagnose and treat disorders of speech, language, communication, fluency and related disorders. They are also trained to help prevent such disorders. According to the U.S. Department of Labor,

Most speech-language pathologists provide direct clinical services to individuals with communication or swallowing disorders. In medical facilities, they may perform their job in conjunction with physicians, social workers, psychologists, and other therapists. Speech-language pathologists in schools collaborate with teachers, special educators, interpreters, other school personnel, and parents to develop and implement individual or group programs, provide counseling, and support classroom activities. Some speech-language pathologists conduct research on how people communicate. Others design and develop equipment or techniques for diagnosing and treating speech problems.¹

The U.S. Department of Labor describes the nature of an audiologist's work as follows:

Audiologists work with people who have hearing, balance, and related ear problems. They examine individuals of all ages and identify those with the symptoms of hearing loss and other auditory, balance, and related sensory and neural problems. They then assess the nature and extent of the problems and help the individuals manage them. Using audiometers, computers, and other testing devices, they measure the loudness at which a person begins to hear sounds, the ability to distinguish between sounds, and the impact of hearing loss on an individual's daily life. In addition, audiologists use computer equipment to evaluate and diagnose balance disorders. Audiologists interpret these results and may coordinate them with medical, educational, and psychological information to make a diagnosis and determine a course of treatment.²

Teacher Certification in the Area of Speech-Language Impaired

Rule 6A-4.0176, F.A.C., establishes specialized requirements that a teacher must meet in order to be certified in the area of speech-language impaired for grades K-12. In addition to meeting the general and professional preparation requirements in Rule 6A-4.006, F.A.C., a teacher must meet one of the following requirements:

¹ U.S. Department of Labor. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. 2006-2007 edition. Readable at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos099.htm#nature>

² U.S. Department of Labor. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. 2006-2007 edition. Readable at <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos085.htm#nature>

- Have a master's or higher degree with a major in speech-language pathology;
- Have a valid license in speech-language pathology issued by the Department of Health;
- Have a certificate of clinical competence issued by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association; or
- Have a master's or higher degree with a minimum of 60 hours of college credit in speech-language pathology and 300 hours of supervised clinical practice.

Rule 6A-4.01761, F.A.C., permits certification for a period of three years for teachers in school districts that receive a sparsity supplement if the teacher has a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology of speech-language impaired.

Licensure as a Speech Language Pathologist or Audiologist

Part I, ch. 468, F.S., governs the licensure of speech-language pathologists and audiologists by the board in DOH. The law provides requirements for provisional licensure and licensure for persons to practice speech-language pathology and audiology in Florida, including education, professional employment experience, practicum, and examination. A provisional license is required for each applicant who cannot document nine months of supervised professional employment experience and a passing score on the national examination. The department must issue a provisional license to practice speech-language pathology to an applicant who has received a master's degree or is currently enrolled in a doctoral degree program with a major emphasis in speech-language pathology at an institution of higher learning that is, or at the time the applicant was enrolled and graduated was, accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or from an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Similarly, an applicant seeking a provisional license in audiology must have received a master's degree or be currently enrolled in a doctoral degree program with a major emphasis in audiology at an institution of higher learning that is, or at the time the applicant was enrolled and graduated was, accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by CHEA or from an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Persons seeking provisional licensure and licensure in speech-language pathology or audiology must obtain 60 semester hours of specified coursework and 300 supervised clinical clock hours. The board must certify for licensure any applicant who has satisfied the education and supervised clinical clock hour requirements for provisional licensure, completed the nine months of supervised professional experience, and passed the required licensure examination pertinent to the license being sought. In addition, the board must certify as qualified for licensure by endorsement any applicant who holds a valid license or certificate in another state or territory of the United States if the criteria for issuance of the license were substantially equivalent to or more stringent than those in Florida at the time the license was issued or to any applicant who has received the certificate of clinical competence of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association. The law provides certification requirements for speech-language pathology assistants and audiology assistants.

The American Speech-Language Hearing Association provides academic accreditation for speech-language pathology and audiology university programs through the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA). The Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognizes CAA. The CAA has received continuous recognition as an accrediting agency from the United States

Department of Education since 1967. In 1997, the American Board of Audiology was founded to provide voluntary board certification for audiologists. A relatively new accrediting body, the Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education, was founded in 2002.

Frequent changes in the academic and clinical requirements for accreditation have led to the need for revisions of the speech-language pathology and audiology practice act. The audiology profession will transition to a doctoral degree entry, with expanded educational requirements by January 1, 2007. The CAA will no longer accredit any audiology programs at the master's degree level after December 31, 2006. Speech-language pathology will remain at the master's degree entry-level for clinical practice, also with expanded knowledge and skills and competency-based assessment.

Three universities in Florida—the University of Florida, University of South Florida, and Nova Southeastern University—offer the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) degree.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 468.1155, F.S., to require a provisional license for all applicants for a license in speech-language pathology who cannot document a minimum of nine months of supervised professional employment experience. A provisional license is required for applicants for a license in audiology who cannot document a minimum of 11 months of supervised clinical experience.

Requirements for a Provisional License in Speech-Language Pathology

The current requirement for a provisional license in speech-language pathology—that an applicant must have a master's degree or be enrolled in an accredited doctoral program—is changed to require the applicant to have received a master's degree or have completed the academic requirement of a doctoral degree program. Under the provisions of the bill, such a program must be:

- Accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA);
- At an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada;
- Accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE); or
- Accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by a successor to CHEA.

Applicants from programs outside of the United States or Canada must document equivalency of the program to the standards of CHEA, a successor to CHEA, or the USDOE.

Applicants for a provisional license in speech-language pathology must have completed the program requirements by academic coursework, practicum experience, or laboratory or research activity, as verified by the program. The program requirements must include knowledge of basic human communication and swallowing processes, disorders and differences in those processes, and principles of prevention, assessment and intervention for people who have such disorders. The knowledge specified in the bill is comparable to the academic requirements for the

certificate of clinical competence in speech-language pathology issued by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association. The bill repeals the current academic and clinical requirements for the provisional license in speech-language pathology that include 60 semester hours of coursework and 300 supervised clinical clock hours.

The board may waive the requirements for education, practicum, and professional employment experience for an applicant who received a professional education in another country if the board is satisfied that the applicant meets the equivalent education and practicum requirements, passes the examination in speech-language pathology, and meets other requirements established by rule of the board.

Requirements for a Provisional License in Audiology

The requirements for a provisional license in audiology are revised, effective January 1, 2008. Under the new requirements, an applicant must:

- Have earned a doctoral degree in audiology, but not have passed the license examination required for a license in audiology, or
- Have completed the academic requirement of a doctoral degree program with a major emphasis in audiology.

Under the provisions of the bill, such a program must be:

- Accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by CHEA;
- At an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada;
- Accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE); or
- Accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by a successor to CHEA.

Applicants from programs located outside the United States or Canada must document equivalency of the program to the standards of CHEA, a successor to CHEA, or the USDOE.

The bill repeals the current academic and clinical requirements for the provisional license in audiology. In lieu of those requirements, an applicant for a provisional license in audiology must have completed the academic and clinical requirements of a program that assures that the student obtained:

- Knowledge of foundation areas of basic body systems and processes relating to hearing and balance;
- Skills for the diagnosis, management, and treatment of auditory and vestibular or balance conditions and diseases;
- The ability to effectively communicate with patients and other health care professionals;
- Knowledge of professional ethical systems as they relate to the practice of audiology; and
- Clinical experiences that encompass the entire scope of practice and focus on the most current evidence-based practice.

The board may waive the requirements for education, practicum, and professional employment experience for an applicant for a provisional license in audiology who received a professional education in another country if the board is satisfied that the applicant meets the equivalent education and practicum requirements and passes the examination in audiology.

An applicant for a provisional license in audiology who has earned a master's degree with a major emphasis in audiology that was conferred before January 1, 2008, may obtain provisional licensure in audiology, however, the authorization for the issuance of a provisional license to graduates of a master's degree program in audiology will expire on January 1, 2013. For such a provisional license, the applicant must have graduated from an institution of higher learning that was, or at the time the applicant was enrolled and graduated was:

- Accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA);
- At an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada;
- Accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDOE); or
- Accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by a successor to CHEA.

Applicants from programs located outside the United States or Canada must document equivalency of the program to the standards of CHEA, a successor to CHEA, or the USDOE.

The board may waive the requirements for education, practicum, and professional employment experience for an applicant who received a professional education in another country if the board is satisfied that the applicant meets the equivalent education and practicum requirements and passes the examination in audiology.

Requirements for Professional Employment Experience

The bill amends s. 468.1165, F.S., to require speech-language pathology and audiology licensure applicants to demonstrate, prior to licensure, a minimum period of full-time or equivalent part-time professional employment experience, pertinent to the license being sought. An applicant for the speech-language pathologist license must demonstrate a minimum of nine months of full-time professional employment, or the equivalent in part-time professional employment. An applicant for the audiology license must demonstrate 11 months of full-time professional employment, or the equivalent in part-time professional employment.

Requirements for Licensure as a Speech-Language Pathologist or Audiologist

The bill amends s. 468.1185, F.S., to eliminate requirements for speech-language pathology or audiology licensure applicants to satisfy supervised clinical clock hour requirements. The bill specifies that an applicant for an audiologist license who has obtained a doctoral degree in audiology has satisfied the education, supervised clinical requirements, and professional experience requirements for licensure. A speech-language pathologist or audiologist who applies for licensure by endorsement must be certified by the board as qualified for a license by endorsement if he or she holds a valid certificate of clinical competence from the American

Speech-Language and Hearing Association or board certification in audiology from the American Board of Audiology.

Requirements for Certification of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants and Audiology Assistants

The bill amends s. 468.1215, F.S., relating to certification requirements for speech-language pathology assistants and audiology assistants. The bill eliminates the current coursework requirements for audiology assistant licensure applicants; instead, an applicant must have earned a high school diploma. An audiologist or speech-language pathologist who employs a speech-language assistant or audiology assistant must provide the assistant with a plan approved by the board for on-the-job training and must maintain responsibility for all services performed by the assistant. References in the section to supervised clock hours are deleted and replaced with supervised clinical experience to conform to changes in the provisional licensure requirements for audiologists.

Effective Date

The bill will take effect July 1, 2006.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Individuals seeking licensure as audiologists will have to meet higher educational requirements, beginning in 2008.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Health may incur costs relating to rulemaking under the bill. Such costs are expected to be minimal.

The effect of the increased licensure standards on school district personnel is unclear. According to the DOE, the supply of speech-language pathologists and audiologists for K-12 schools could potentially be affected by the changes proposed in this bill.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

On page 6, line 21, the word “has” should be deleted as it is duplicative.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s introducer or the Florida Senate.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

Barcode 635306 by Education:

This technical amendment deletes a word that is repeated unnecessarily.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
