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August 27, 2013

TO: Chief School Administrators
               Charter School Lead Person

ROUTE TO: Speech-Language Specialist Contact Persons

FROM: Robert R. Higgins, Ph.D., Director
               Office of Certification and Induction

SUBJECT: New Speech-Language Specialist Regulations

Pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9-13.6, effective July 2, 2013, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has created a new three-tiered Speech-Language Specialist (SLS) certification process, i.e., a SLS Certificate of Eligibility (SLS-CE), a SLS Provisional Certificate, and a SLS Standard Certificate. The NJDOE will no longer be issuing emergency SLS certificates and all existing SLS emergency certificates will expire on July 31, 2013.

Please note that this program is an alternative for Speech-Language Specialist participants who have not yet met academic requirements for issuance of SLS standard certification. However, if a candidate holds a master's degree or higher in speech-language pathology from a regionally accredited college or university AND has passed a State-approved test of comprehensive knowledge in the field of speech language pathology, then he or she **must apply online** at http://www.nj.gov/education/educators/license.

Briefly, participation in the SLS Licensure Program involves the following steps:

- The candidate seeks issuance of a SLS-CE giving him/her the right to seek and accept offers of employment;
- The candidate obtains an offer of employment from a public school or Department-approved private school for students with disabilities;
- The hiring district registers the candidate;
- The candidate is issued a SLS Provisional Certificate; and
- The candidate completes degree and test requirements in a timely manner for issuance of the Standard SLS Certificate.

The following detailed explanation of the SLS Licensure Program is for your reference. The SLS licensure forms cited below are available for download at http://www.nj.gov/education/educators/license/SLS. This is a password protected site **exclusively** for

the use of districts/schools that participate in the SLS Licensure Program. To log in, the username is *SLSforms* and the password is *district123*.

If you should have any questions regarding participation by your school/district in this program, please contact Judith A. Cifone at jac.sls@doe.state.nj.us.

ELIGIBILITY AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR ISSUANCE OF A SLS CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility

The Certificate of Eligibility (CE) authorizes the holder to seek employment in any public school district or Department-approved private school for students with disabilities.

To be eligible for the SLS-CE and subsequent provisional certificate, a candidate must either:

1. Hold a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology/communication disorders from a regionally accredited college or university; and

    i. Be currently matriculated in a master's degree program in speech-language pathology/communication disorders from a regionally accredited college or university; and
    ii. Document completion of a minimum of 18 semester-hour graduate credits in speech language pathology/communication disorders, including a graduate clinical practicum; or

2. Hold a bachelor's degree in a major other than speech-language pathology/communication disorders from a regionally accredited college or university; and

    i. Be currently matriculated in a master's degree program in speech-language pathology/communication disorders from a regionally accredited college or university; and
    ii. Document completion of a minimum of 24 semester-hour graduate credits in speech language pathology/communication disorders, including a graduate clinical practicum.

A certificate of eligibility expires **annually** on July 31 and may be issued to candidates who meet the above mentioned requirements.

Applicant Instructions for Candidates Seeking the SLS-CE

Potential candidates for the SLS-CE must apply with a paper application, which is available at each local county Office of Education. Any SLS candidate who currently holds a SLS emergency certificate should apply for the CE provided he/she meets the above mentioned requirements. In order to ensure continuity of service, the Office of Certification and Induction will expedite all of these applications beginning July 2, 2013. For issuance of the SLS-CE, the fee shall be $190 to include issuance of the provisional certificate at the start of employment and recommendation for standard licensure at the end of the program. For annual renewal of the SLS-CE, the fee shall be $70.00.

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ELIGIBILITY AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR ISSUANCE OF A SLS PROVISIONAL CERTIFCATE

Eligibility

To be eligible for an initial two-year SLS Provisional Certificate, the candidate shall:

1. Possess a SLS-CE; and
2. Obtain an offer of employment in a speech-language specialist position.

To be eligible for a one-time renewal of the SLS Provisional Certificate, a candidate shall:

1. Provide to the County Superintendent at the local County Office of Education an official college transcript from his/her speech language pathology/communication disorders program. The candidate must complete a minimum of 12 semester-hour graduate credits completed each year following the initial issuance of the provisional certificate which demonstrates annual progress toward completion of the master's degree required for the standard certificate; and

2. Provide documentation of employment in a speech-language specialist position in a public school district or Department-approved private school for students with disabilities.

Instructions for Registration of SLS Candidates into the SLS Licensure Program

The lead person/school administrator of the hiring public school or Department-approved private school for students with disabilities must register his/her SLS-CE candidate by submitting a registration application for issuance of the **provisional license** will be accomplished by faxing the "Registration Application" form [See Attached: Form SLS-A1] to 609-984-5876. This fax number has been assigned **exclusively** for the registration of candidates participating in the SLS Licensure Program. The provisional license will be issued by the Office of Certification and Induction upon receipt and processing of the registration.

ELIGIBILITY AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR ISSUANCE OF A SLS STANDARD CERTIFICATE

Eligibility

A standard certificate may be issued to candidates holding the SLS Provisional Certificate who meet the following requirements:

1. Hold a master's degree in speech-language pathology from a regionally accredited college or university; and

2. Pass a State-approved test of comprehensive knowledge in the field of speech-language pathology.

Instructions for SLS Provisional Certificate Candidates for Standard Certification

Upon completion of the SLS Licensure Program (i.e., by completing the licensure requirements listed above while under a SLS Provisional Certificate), the school district must complete a final "District Submission of Application for Speech-Language Specialist (SLS) Standard Certification" form [See Attached: Form: SLS-A2] to ensure that the candidate is promptly issued his or her certificate. **Additionally, the applicant must apply online.** Attached to the aforementioned form, the school/district must attach the following:

1. Official transcripts that indicate completion of the academic requirements for issuance of the SLS Standard Certificate;
2. An original Oath of Allegiance; and
3. A copy of the applicant's SLS Praxis score.

If you have questions about any element of these processes, please contact Judith A. Cifone at jac.sls@doe.state.nj.us.

RRH/JAC/Letter 8-13 SLS.docx
Attachments
c: Members, State Board of Education
Christopher D. Cerf, Commissioner
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Executive County Superintendents
Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
Executive County School Business Administrators
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