

Tennessee Association of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists
TAASLP Semi-annual Newsletter
Fall-Winter 2016 Edition

InTouch with TAASLP

FALL 2016

SLPs & CFs
School-Based Opportunities!



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InTouch with Legislation

The report is in: The Professional Privilege Tax does not tax fairly.

On August 30, 2016, the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR) presented a report entitled “The Professional Privilege Tax in Tennessee: Taxing Professionals Fairly”. This report is the response to Public Chapter 1024, Acts of 2016, in which the Commission was asked to investigate the history and intent of the professional privilege tax (PPT) in this state, other states’ laws imposing a PPT, and options for eliminating or phasing out the PPT in Tennessee. Members of TAASLP are familiar with the \$400 annual PPT paid in addition to the licensure fees required to practice in the state of Tennessee. This tax was established in 1992 in order to raise revenue following the 1990-1991 recession as an alternative to increasing sales tax or imposing an income tax. It is a standard \$400 annual tax regardless of the income of the individual professional paying the tax, which varies from less than \$29,110 to over \$200,000 per year. Additionally, the tax applies to 22 professions which include physicians, dentists, audiologists, and speech-language pathologists but does not include colleagues in similar fields such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, or nurse practitioners, even though they earn a higher average salary than those working in communication sciences.

The report was comprehensive and revealed that there are only 5 other states with a PPT. In 2 of these states, the amount of the tax varies by profession while for 2 other states, the tax is a standard \$25-50 annual fee. Additionally, for 2 of these states, the PPT applies only to attorneys. **None of the other 5 states with a professional privilege tax apply this tax to audiologists or speech-language pathologists.** The state of Texas had a similar \$200 professional privilege tax for licensed professionals which was completely eliminated in 2015.

While the evidence shows that the PPT does not tax professionals equitably in Tennessee, the report does not make a recommendation to the legislature ... it is up to us to initiate a change! TAASLP is endorsing a call to action urging all membership to contact your legislators to tell them how the PPT affects *you*. The most effective way to influence a legislative representative is to meet with them in person! A copy of the TACIR report is available on the TAASLP website with resources that can help prepare you to contact your representative by email, phone, or in-person meeting. It is up to us to act now to create a movement to eliminate the professional privilege tax for audiologists and speech-language pathologists in Tennessee!

By: Alison Kempf, AuD
Vice President of Legislative Affairs

A Call to Action: School SLP's Needed

In the SLP/Audiologist world, School SLPs are the majority. Why, then, are we not stepping up to make our voices heard within our state organization? We have the capability to bring our issues to the forefront, yet we (for the most part) prefer to remain in the background. We are in the trenches; we know what issues need to be addressed. These issues cannot be resolved unless we get involved.

We need to have some say in getting quality speakers for the convention in which School SLPs are interested. We're the ones in the schools; we're the ones who know what's really going on in our setting. We're the ones who know what the trends are, what areas we want/need to improve, and where we're headed. When it comes to the schools, *we* are the experts; *we* are the reality.

Why, after 10 years of living in the state did I finally get involved? My main reason for joining TAASLP is to get more School SLPs involved...and to help university professors & clinical supervisors understand exactly what we do; not what they *think* we do.

We have a few issues that need to be addressed. Who better to address them with lawmakers than School SLPs? Since Tennessee has no caseload cap, we have some SLPs in the state with over 100 students on their caseload. Are they able to provide quality services to those students? ASHA can only do so much; recommendations can be made, but, ultimately, it's each state's decision to cap or not to cap. Some states recognize the Certificate of Clinical Competence as being equal to National Board Certification for Teachers. With this comes benefits that their teacher counterparts enjoy.

Does your school system obtain substitutes when you have to be absent? Do you think this violates our code of ethics?

What about Tenn Care? Are you required to have your Professional License so that you can bill Tenn Care? Do you think there should be a provision in the law for School SLPs to be able to bill Tenn Care without holding a license?



A brief look at the TAASLP directory indicated that we only have approximately 60 SLPs/SLPAs employed by school systems who are members of TAASLP. 60. I was shocked when I realized that was it. We owe it to our profession and to future Tennessee School SLPs to change this.

We have no one to blame but ourselves for allowing the out of date practices to continue. The leadership in TAASLP is interested in what we have to say.

They are interested in building up the organization, but they need our help.

Now is the time to change things in Tennessee! Separately, we are but one voice; together we can change things. What can TAASLP do for you? Don't just join us; **get involved**. We CAN make a difference.

Written By: Mary Cooper
Schools Committee Member

InTouch with the President



Happy Fall! First and foremost, thank YOU, our TAASLP members, for making our organization a success. This year has been a whirlwind of activity and it is because of your time, dedication, knowledge and effort that we've made significant progress.

Over the Spring, the Tennessee Department of Education Office of Special Populations began reviewing current disability standards and eliciting input on revisions. Several members voiced concern over the amendments and together we responded. The TAASLP Executive Council and Schools Committee formed a specialized task force to address the proposed revisions and ensure our members' concerns were heard by the state. Please give a special thank you to our Task Force members Paulette Gentry, Mary Cooper, Kathie Self, Kandy Sue Savage, Sherri Fults and Andrea Moore. They spent countless hours reviewing, discussing and responding to each proposed revision.

Our Executive Council and Schools Committee remained active throughout the year, most recently addressing the Tennessee State Board of Education Special Programs and Services proposed amendments. Again, our team came together to review the proposed changes and submit feedback to the State.

The Board of Education has been busy, and so has our Senate and House of Representatives! In March 2016, the legislature approved a bill that required the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR) to complete a study and make recommendations relative to the Professional Privilege Tax (PPT). A thorough study was completed and presented to the TACIR board in August 2016. Please read the excellent article in this newsletter by our Vice President of Legislation, Alison Kempf, and TAASLP Lobbyist, John Williams. The legislature has the study, and now it is up to the citizens of the state (you!) to influence how they use the study, hopefully to phase out the PPT. Citizens have more power than we realize and we are in the critical time we need to be heard. There is strength in our solidarity and it is time for us to speak with one strong voice. We will be planning our efforts to repeal the PPT at convention on Friday afternoon and we look forward to your input!

It is hard to believe this year is coming to a close. Our busy year culminates with an incredible convention in Murfreesboro on October 20-21, 2016. The educational line-up is impressive and it is not too late to register! Learn more at <http://taaslp.org/TAASLP-Conference.htm>. Please give a big thank you to our VP Convention, Sarah Grantham, and her amazing SLP Co-Chairs Mary Cooper, Ashley Irick, Morgan Greve and wonderful audiology co-chair Laura Gifford.

We are so thankful for our members! Your knowledge, wisdom and insight are what make TAASLP successful. Please share your time with us by joining the Executive Council. Nominations are open on taaslp.org and we hope you'll join us!

It's time for me to pass the torch. I've enjoyed sharing knowledge and laughter with our members across the state and look forward to seeing how, together, we shape our future. I know we are in good hands with our new President, Alyssa Conger, M.S. CCC-SLP. Alyssa brings with her a variety of experience, including working in the schools, in tele-practice and as a medical SLP. She certainly has the experience, and more than that, she has the enthusiasm to lead TAASLP to continue to make a difference in the lives of consumers and professionals.

Sincerely, Jackie Youde, MBA, AuD, CCC-A

InTouch with Convention

The **24th Annual Joint Convention of the Tennessee Association of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists (TAASLP) and the Tennessee Academy of Audiology (TAA)**, is right around the corner – **Thursday, October 20th & Friday, October 21st**. It's not too late to register and join in on the *FUN!* We will be returning to the beautifully equipped Embassy Suites in Murfreesboro, TN, and have an extraordinary lineup of brilliant speakers to share their knowledge with us. During your stay at Convention, delight in two-room suites with complimentary, cooked-to-order breakfast each morning and refreshments (cocktails included) at the Embassy Suites' Evening Reception each night. The Convention meeting facilities are top notch, with state-of-the art audio/visual support, generous Breakout Session seating and a spacious Exhibit Hall. A free shuttle will take you anywhere within a 5-mile radius of the hotel; which conveniently neighbors The Avenue Murfreesboro - a charming collection of restaurants and shops certain to satisfy the need for a little post-convention nourishment and retail therapy.

This year's theme is ***Evolving Practices***, a fitting topic, on-point for so many reasons; for as the fields of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology march into the future, arm-in-arm as allied professions, we must continuously evolve our best practices to become bigger, better, and brighter. Equipping ourselves with the knowledge gained at Convention this year will enable us to become the empowered professionals we need to be, in order to transform the lives of our patients and clients.

Our Featured Sessions are not to be missed. On Thursday (10/20), Adult/Medical SLP Track attendees will enjoy hearing **Michael de Riesthal** discuss two different sessions on the topics of ***Goal Writing in Aphasia*** and ***Returning to Learning after Concussion***. While on Friday (10/21), our Pre-School/School-Age Track attendees will enjoy a workshop presented by **Emily Rubin** discussing ***The SCERTS Model - A Framework for Navigating Evidence-Based Practices for Children with Autism***, and TAA is very proud to be bringing international tinnitus guru **David Baguley**, with **Marc Fagelson**, to discuss ***Tinnitus: From the Basics to Emerging Interventions*** for our Audiology Track attendees.

But wait, there's more! As our Thursday Breakout Sessions conclude, make your way to the Exhibit Hall for our ***Exhibitor's Reception***. Enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres while networking with the best and brightest in our fields. Browse through a selection of unique ***Silent Auction*** items, and place a few winning bids. Bidding wars will certainly commence over a coveted ***ASHA Connect 2017 Registration*** which will be up for grabs. Things will start getting lively with our ***School Spirit*** and ***College Bowl Challenge*** competitions. Be true to your school and donate to the TAASLP Foundation while you're at it! Cheer on the next generation of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists as student teams from across the state battle it out for ultimate academic bragging rights. Thank you, a thousand times thank you, to EBS Healthcare, one of our fantastic Convention partners and return sponsor of the College Bowl! In addition to bragging rights, EBS Healthcare will bestow all members of the winning College Bowl team with reimbursement of their PRAXIS registration fees. S'weet!

So what are you waiting for? Come on down to 'The Boro', Convention is calling!!!

Sarah L. Grantham, Au.D., CCC-A

TAASLP Vice President - Convention

For your convenience, be on the lookout for speaker handouts on the website, <http://taaslp.org/>.

The 24th Annual TAASLP & TAA Convention

The Embassy Suites – Murfreesboro, TN

October 20th & 21st, 2016

Embassy Suites Nashville SE - Murfreesboro

1200 Conference Center Blvd

Murfreesboro, TN

Hotel Room Reservations: (615) 890-4464