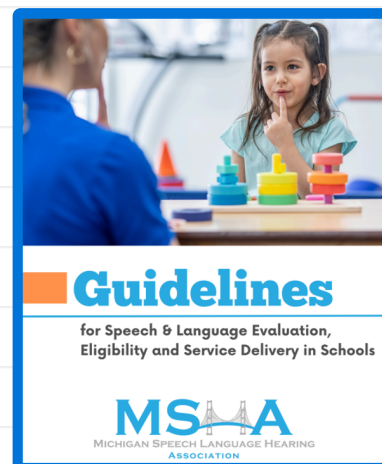




MSHA Guidelines for School SLPs

What Michigan Administrators Need to Know!

The **Michigan Speech Language Hearing Association's** 2025 update to the *Guidelines for Speech & Language Evaluation, Eligibility and Service Delivery in Schools* aims to ensure clarity and consistency in the practice of school speech-language pathology in Michigan. The Guidelines are grounded in the use of evidence-based practice, the application of ASHA's Code of Ethics, and compliance with IDEA and MARSE (Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education). The guidelines are available to any Michigan school SLP; MSHA members will have access to professional learning modules for the guidelines.



1. Use the Guidelines to design or innovate your local written procedures

Access the living MSHA Guidelines with this link: <http://bit.ly/MSHA2025GuidelinesSchools>

- Use the Table of Contents or Bookmarks features to navigate to each section of the guidance
- Find supporting forms to implement the guidance at the end of each section
- Use the MSHA Guidelines to supplement or create your own **local written guidance and procedures** as needed
- School SLPs should always follow their local written procedures within their educational system

2. The Guidelines outline required standards of practice for MI school SLPs

Use of the MSHA Guidelines ensures:

1. compliance with **federal and state regulations** (Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE), and the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)
2. the use of ASHA-endorsed **evidence-based professional practices**, and
3. application of ASHA's **Code of Ethics** for school SLP roles and responsibilities.

3. IDEA & MARSE drive IEP entrance & exit decision-making, not norms

The Guidelines employ a three-questions test derived from IDEA to determine a student's eligibility for an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Affirmative answers to all three questions generally indicate IEP eligibility:

1. **Is there a disability?**
2. **Does the disability limit access to and progress in the general curriculum?**
3. **Does the disability require specially designed instruction (SDI) to access and progress in the general curriculum?**

Exit from IEP eligibility does not, therefore, depend only the presence or absence of a disability. While updated developmental norms for speech & language are included in MSHA's 2025 Guidelines, multiple sources of data documenting disability, impact and need must be used to answer all three questions comprehensively as an IEP team.

- Multidisciplinary teams that use a **Review, Interview, Observe and Test (RIOT)** model for evaluation planning is useful in efficiently answering these questions.
- **IDEA Three-Question Litmus Test Decision-Making Heuristics** are offered for each area of SLI eligibility decision-making in the [Supporting Forms folder](#)

4. Culturally, linguistically & neurodiversity-affirming practice is emphasized

Evaluation and specially-designed instruction (SDI) guidance is grounded in understanding and honoring an individual's **cultural and linguistic backgrounds** and **unique individual differences**. Tools and forms are offered to ensure that assessments are non-discriminatory, conducted in the child's native language(s), and responsive to their lived experiences. Neurodiversity-affirming frameworks are offered to support SDI that honors the unique set of strengths, interests and support needs of individuals.

5. Dynamic assessment & MTSS data are key in initial evaluations

While norm-referenced standardized tests of speech-language specific skills have been a traditional form of a speech-language assessment for school SLPs, the current landscape and

student populations attending schools today require that professionals incorporate **interactive, process-oriented and contextualized approaches** to data collection so that they can validly document an individual's speech, language or academic **learning potential** in addition to their current level of performance.

- While static, norm-referenced standardized assessments provide information about a skill gap when compared with same-age peers, they do not allow SLPs to understand why a gap exists or what supports might decrease the gap.
- Including dynamic assessment or data from robust MTSS cycles as part of an initial special education evaluation allows SLPs to understand what learning supports are needed to decrease a skill gap that may be currently interfering with progress in the general education curriculum.
- Resources for SLP roles in MTSS, visually displaying student data and utilizing dynamic assessment practices are offered in the Guidelines.

6. Attract & retain SLPs with MARSE's 340.1745 workload frame

In contrast to a caseload approach (e.g., counting the number of IEPs an SLP is involved in), MARSE requires that IEP caseloads for SLPs take into account the severity and multiplicity of student disabilities, the extent of services defined collectively in IEPs, and the time required to ensure FAPE in the LRE. This workload requirement:

- ensures that the unique needs of students are met within the number of hours available in a work week
- aligns individual student needs with SLP staffing based on the the intensity and frequency of services needed to accelerate learning and achieve IEP goals
- values the reality that students with different learning needs require different levels of support and time
- ensures that the hours of support required to meet the unique needs of students with IEPs matches the hours available in a given week
- helps to retain school SLPs because their work is better understood and highly valued

SLP shortage? Try these strategies...

- Engage SLPs and administrators in professional learning around how school-based SLP professional practices are different from clinical SLP practice
- Raise awareness of the comprehensive set of SLP Roles and Responsibilities within the ASHA's 4 workload clusters (Direct Services, Indirect Services, Indirect Activities Supporting LRE and Compliance Activities)
- Remove duties and responsibilities that do not require an SLP credential from the workloads of SLPs
- Eliminate over-identification of IEPs for students who don't meet IDEA eligibility by using IDEA's Three-Question Litmus Test
- Promote the classroom as a regular context for intervention for students with IEPs, grouping students to maximize engagement, interaction, learning generalization and exit
- Market your school SLP positions by emphasizing daily rate of pay, overall compensation package and paid time off (like clinical SLP postings do!)

School SLP positions are typically based on the following→

- 185 days of work annually
- Salary + benefits (medical, dental) + life insurance
- Defined contribution pension
- 60 days (12 weeks) of vacation/ non duty time annually

For more information about attracting and retaining SLPs in Michigan schools, please visit <https://optimise.education>.



Visit MSHA's Public Schools Committee webpage for more information!

Professional learning is coming soon! MSHA Members can take advantage of the **Virtual Schools Conference planned for October 30, 2025** to dig into each section of the Guidelines. ASHA CEUs pending. Stay tuned for registration.



Public Schools Committee



WHAT DO WE DO?

We advocate for the professional roles, responsibilities & workloads of school SLPs in Michigan! The work of school SLPs is invaluable to the academic success and social emotional wellness of all students, especially students with IEPs who have communication, speech and language needs.



MSHA

MSHA is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters