

# MSLHA Newsletter

For all Maine speech, language, and hearing professionals



## February 2022

Our online newsletter continues! Please let us know your thoughts and ideas about what to include in future publications by going to <https://mslha.memberclicks.net/> under "Contact Us" on the navigation menu.

## Salutations From Sue

In April 2022 I move from the honored position of President to Past President for one year. I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to have worked with such a dedicated EC and to have served the members of MSLHA. I have many great memories of attending MSLHA conferences as a UM student and then as an "official" SLP. I loved coming to conferences, catching up with friends, making new friends and learning something new to help me better serve my students. In all those years, I never considered becoming a member of the EC until one day, while attending a MSLHA conference, I was asked by a member to consider joining. Who, me? What do I know about being on this council? I accepted the invitation despite my apprehension and have never regretted it for a minute. Have you ever thought about joining the EC? Consider this your personal invitation. Ask, an EC member about joining at our upcoming fall conference. Like me, I'm sure you won't regret it.

Best,  
Sue Shain, MSLHA President



## Further Clarification About Continuing Education Rules in Maine

The Executive Council (EC) has gotten several inquiries lately about 2021 continuing education requirements for SLP/A licensure. All speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and hearing aid dealers and fitters in Maine are required by the Maine Board of Speech, Audiology, and Hearing (BSAH) to obtain 10 hours of continuing education activities yearly. This requirement includes at least 6 “live” hours (in person or by distance learning with immediate interaction with the speaker) and no more than 4 “non-live” hours.

As reported in the October 2021 MSLHA newsletter, the Executive Order signed by Governor Mills, which waived CEU requirements for all Maine professions for 2020, was suspended in June 2021. The EC reached out to the Maine Board of Speech, Audiology, and Hearing to find out whether the “live” portion of the CEU requirement could be changed to “non-live” status or waived for 2021 due to ongoing Covid-19 concerns about live gatherings. The Board replied that the requirement for 10 hours stood as required and also stated that there was no plan to alter the “live” requirement. Therefore, the CEU requirement still stands for license renewal by February 28, 2022.

One question the EC has received more than once was why the MSLHA EC didn’t change the CEU requirement for 2021. To clarify, the State of Maine Board of Speech, Audiology, and Hearing (BSAH) sets and regulates licensure and continuing education requirements. The MSLHA EC advocates for members but does not set licensure regulations. The Rules of BSAH may be found at the following web address:

<https://www.maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing/sites/maine.gov.pfr/professionallicensing/files/inlinen-files/December%2024-2011.pdf>

The BSAH Rules consist of 12 Chapters that define SLP/A/HA licensure and practice as well as continuing education. The specific part of the Rules that covers continuing education requirements may be found in Chapter 8, Sections 3, 5, and 6.

To help members and non-members identify ways to meet licensure requirements, the EC has posted links to several “live” CEU activities on the MSLHA FB page since August 2021. In 2022, MSLHA will be holding their annual convention which will provide an excellent opportunity to get “live” CEU hours for this year.



## Clinical Conversations Certificate

MSLHA recently hosted two online Clinical Conversations with excellent guest speakers. Dr. Kenneth Tom from California shared his expertise on voice treatment with yoga techniques and myofascial release in December 2020. Dr. Phyllis Palmer from the University of New Mexico discussed swallowing disorders in February 2021. These MSLHA professional development opportunities gave attendees the opportunity to discuss specific cases with the experts.

If you attended and would like documentation for your portfolio, contact Margie Childs for a certificate ( [mchilds@rsu18.org](mailto:mchilds@rsu18.org) ).

Margie Childs, MSLHA Secretary



## 293 Certification: Do I Need It?

Over the years, MSLHA has received questions about the 293 certification for SLPs in Maine schools. For those who are unaware, the 293 certification is issued by Maine's Department of Education (DOE) and was designed to meet the standard for "qualified provider" in federal regulations under the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA). For a period of time, SLPs in Maine, even if they were licensed, were required to also hold this certification.

In 2011, MSLHA's executive council successfully helped lobby the Maine State Legislature to discontinue the practice of requiring dual certification and licensing of SLPs who work in schools. As a result, if you hold a license as an SLP in Maine, you do not need the 293 certification to work as a school-based therapist. To be clear, if you do not have a state license, you are required to hold this

certification in order to work as a "speech and language clinician" in schools. Here is the official information to share with your administrators in case they ask you for it.

### **LD 129 from the 125th Maine Legislature**

Public Law 2011, Chapter 49 (LD 129), "An Act to Eliminate Dual Certification Requirements for Speech-Language Pathologists" now allows professionals who are licensed by the State of Maine to be employed in Maine schools without needing to hold the Department of Education educational specialist certificate (293).

Official summary of this document:

"This bill requires the State Board of Education to accept a speech-language pathologist licensed by the Board of Speech-language Pathology, Audiology and Hearing Aid Dealing and Fitting as meeting the education and professional requirements to work in schools as a speech and language clinician. It directs the State Board of Education to revise its rules establishing eligibility requirements for speech and language clinicians accordingly."

You can also find the official document that enacted this change here:

<https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0111&item=1&snum=125>

Katie Thibodeau, Membership Committee

## **Getting Recognized: The Fight To Have SLPs Rightfully Designated As a STEM Field By the State of Maine**

The state of Maine currently recognizes certain degrees as supporting specific STEM fields, which translates into real-world benefits. STEM is an abbreviation for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and it is used to highlight the unique contributions people who focus on these areas make to the world. In the state of Maine, if you graduated with a designated STEM degree, you qualify for additional benefits from the Educational Opportunity Tax Credit (EOTC). The EOTC is a tax credit that you can earn if you are a Maine resident and earned an Associate or Bachelor's degree in the state after a certain year (see here for more information:

<https://www.liveandworkinmaine.com/opportunity-maine/>). However, if your degree is considered to support a STEM field, then the tax credit is refundable- meaning after being applied to your tax, you'll get a check in the mail from the state of Maine for the remaining credit. This may seem like a small benefit, but with the growing focus on STEM degrees, further benefits may be given to those who focus on these areas.

The degree that produces speech-language pathologists, Communication Sciences and Disorders (as you already know), is recognized by the University of Maine as a STEM degree. However, the state of Maine does not currently recognize this in a practical way (i.e., tax benefits) despite UMaine's designation. To help notify the state of this, Jeffrey Heckler, Executive Vice President of Student Affairs and Provost, provided a letter from the University specifically stating that our degree IS recognized as a STEM degree. Although this document has been sent to the state, they have yet to honor this distinction.

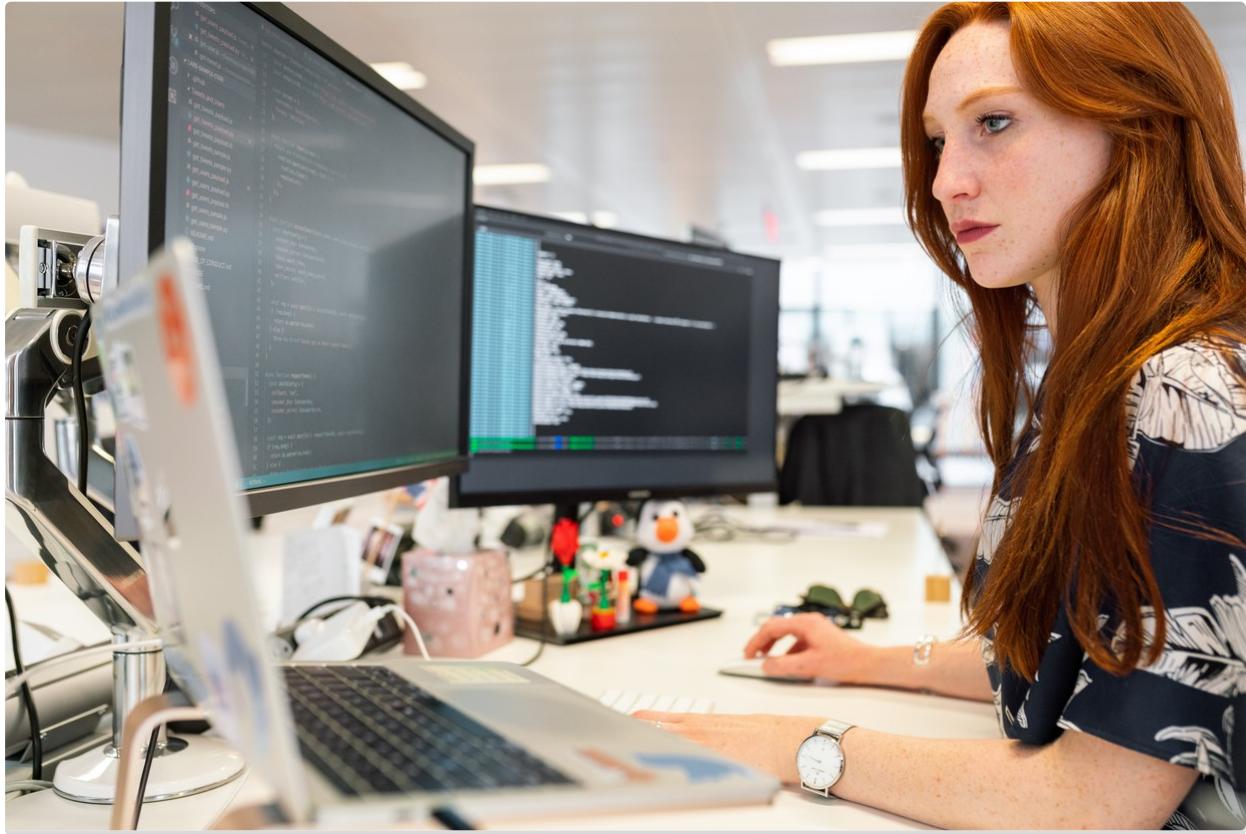
**We think that this is something to continue to fight for- not only to earn benefits from our current tax laws, but for all potential future ones as well.** One way we can do this is to contact our state representatives and senators to have them help us fight this battle. Click on this link to find your state



legislators: <https://nrcm.salsalabs.org/mainelegislatorlookup/index.html>. As you know, SLPs are relatively small in number. However, together, we can fight to have our contributions rightfully recognized.

Katie Thibodeau, Membership Committee

Jamy Parkhurst, Communications Committee



## Compensating SLPs in Schools

In the state of Maine, more and more school districts are providing significant compensation for National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT). This includes either large yearly stipends from the state of Maine, an increase in their overall salary, and occasionally both. However, many of these same districts are not providing an equivalent compensation for speech-language pathologists who have their certificate of clinical competence (CCC-SLP) from ASHA. On occasion, a request for similar compensation given the following evidence is even being denied. It is important to note that our education requirements, steps to achieve our CCCs, and the level of maintenance required is equivalent to NBCT (see this link for more information which compares the requirements of a few different specializations and the CCCs: [A Comparison of School Professionals](#)).

MSLHA believes that this is an incredibly important issue for SLPs in our state who currently work in schools. In addition, attracting and retaining speech pathologists in Maine is difficult in the school settings. Often the district contract does not pay as much as other clinical placements. In order to increase the number of ASHA-endorsed SLPs in Maine, we are looking to gather information on contracts that offer stipends or separate pay scales for SLPs that have their CCCs.

**We are currently seeking data to support how public school contracted SLPs are paid to further evaluate this issue. If you are aware of either of these features in your contract, another district's**

contract or even elsewhere than in the state of Maine, please send this information to [megjackins@gmail.com](mailto:megjackins@gmail.com).

Meg Jackins, Legislative Committee



## Let's Read and Network!

The MSLHA sponsored **SLP Book Club** has begun with over ten active participants, and we would LOVE new people to join us. We live everywhere from Presque Isle to Massachusetts. Being a MSLHA member is not a requirement. This is an opportunity to enjoy reading novels (with topics involving communication disorders) and to get to know other SLPs. The group is meeting online every couple months for about 60-90 minutes and is quite casual.

The first book was The Speed of Dark by Elizabeth Moon. Everyone agreed it was an interesting premise and good writing. We will be meeting on Sunday, March 6th @ 6:30 for our next Book Club.



calendars and email Margie Childs ([mchilds@rsu18.org](mailto:mchilds@rsu18.org)) to get more information and a link to the meeting.

Margie Childs, MSLHA Secretary



## Scholarship Winners!

### Mary K Brandt Scholarship

Congratulations to Meaghan Balsdon for being awarded the \$1000 Mary K Bryant Scholarship for 2021! Meaghan is a first year graduate student at the University of Maine who also holds a BA from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Meaghan first knew she wanted to become a speech-language pathologist when she worked as a Kumon instructor as a high school student. In this position, she assisted young children with math and reading, and many of them had speech and

the different aspects of social communication that produce social communication deficits. Although she is still unsure about the setting or population she wants to work with when she graduates, she feels strongly about implementing family-centered approaches as well as promoting pre-literacy and literacy awareness through parent education. She also wants to raise awareness about who speech-language pathologists are and the diversity of our field.

### **Dr. Jon Petit Scholarship**

Congratulations to Jessica Holz for being awarded the \$1000 Jon Petit Scholarship for 2021! Jessica is a second year graduate student at the University of Maine who also earned her undergraduate degree at UMaine. During her time in Orono, she has worked as a student researcher at the Virtual Environmental and Multimodal Interaction (VEMI) Lab. In this position, she has worked as a primary researcher on human-subject studies that included (but not limited to) testing assistive technologies for visually impaired individuals. She has also independently researched the use of virtual environments in pragmatic language interventions and is working with a peer on a project for a speech rate monitoring smart phone app to use in interventions. With this immense experience with these various research projects (including her thesis), Jessica sees the importance of the connection between research and practice. Therefore, she hopes to initially work in an outpatient clinic that specializes in AAC interventions or an acute or rehab facility with patients who may require some form of AAC. She would then like to consider a position as a clinical researcher or pursue a PhD to become a faculty member at a university. As a life-long Mainer, Jessica also hopes to continue to live and work in Maine when she graduates.

Katie Thibodeau, Membership Committee



**Meaghan Balson**



**Jessica Holz**



## **MSLHA Member Highlight**

For the next few editions of our newsletter, we are going to highlight some of our amazing Life Members and other SLPs in Maine. These are our fellow professionals who have contributed a great deal to our profession, and we are excited to share who they are!

Deb Cloran, a speech-language pathologist who currently works in schools in Lincoln, Maine, is our first highlighted SLP. Although born in Bangor, she grew up in East Bridgewater, Massachusetts and received her BS in 1980 from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She then went on and earned her MA from the University of Cincinnati in 2002. Deb is currently finishing up as the Past President for MSLHA's Executive Council as well as retiring in June. After that, she will be ready to embark on her next adventure!

**Why did you decide to become an SLP?**



I knew I always wanted to work in a field that would help someone, and I originally wanted to be a pediatrician. I also have one relative who is intellectually disabled and one who was born with cerebral palsy, so, looking at other career choices, I chose speech language pathology.

### **Where did your career lead you and why?**

When I was a senior in college, I worked as a speech intern for Belchertown State School. This was a facility for adolescents and adults who were intellectually disabled. While there I was able to gain experience working in the field by assisting the Speech Pathologists in implementing programs (sign language carryover) during mealtimes, and activities of daily living. After graduating, a position as an SLP opened and I was able to work as an SLP under the supervision of an SLP with certification (laws were different back then). I worked there until 1990 when the state of Massachusetts began closing institutions under the Consent decree. I then transferred to Monson Developmental Center, which was a facility for those individuals with intellectual disability and severe medical needs. I worked there from 1990-1993 when I resigned because my husband had just graduated from Yale University and became a physician assistant for Penobscot Valley Hospital in Lincoln. Once in Maine, I was approached by the director of special services for the town I lived in stating they needed an SLP for the schools. I was hired on the spot.

### **What is the best thing (for you) about being an SLP?**

I have the freedom to make my schedule in the schools. I also love seeing all the progress the children make over time.

### **What has been the hardest thing (for you) about being an SLP?**

I think the hardest thing about being an SLP is working within the constrictions of Covid. Never have I ever felt so isolated and overwhelmed with the profession.

### **Where has been your favorite place to work and why?**

My favorite place has certainly been working in the schools. I just love seeing kids grow and learn.

### **Tell us about your family.**

Right now my husband and I live in Lincoln, Maine. We have three adult children who graduated from Mattanawcook Academy. My oldest daughter is a graduate of St. Joseph's College, and she is currently the Digital Marketing Manager for VIP auto. She is married and has two German shepherds and two cats. My second oldest child is currently working as a gastroenterologist physician assistant at Maine General. She is married and expecting her first child in June 2022. My son is a mechanical engineer and works for Pratt and Whitney working with jet engines. He is married and a father of twins born last August. As of June 2022, my husband and I will be retired and will be living on a boat for the next 3-5 years.

### **When did you join the MSLHA's Executive Council (EC)?**

I think I joined the EC in 2010. I was appointed to the School Committee and served as co-chair and then chair for a period of four years. I then was elected to the Continuing Education Committee and served until 2019 when I was elected President of MSLHA. I am currently Past President with my term up 3/31/2022.

### **Why did you join the EC?**

I wanted to feel connected to the field as I had no one in my district to bounce ideas off of or to get information from that directly affected my profession.

### **How has MSLHA changed over the years?**

When I joined MSLHA, it was a very robust, dynamic group that was involved in the legislature and making the profession in Maine recognizable. It slowly dwindled to almost being absolved with low

membership and poor morale. MSHLA is slowly rising and making a very concerted effort to work for our profession in Maine once again.

**What would you say to someone about becoming part of the EC?**

Please do what you can to support your professional organization! The EC has been committed to the 700-800 SLPs in the state despite having low numbers for membership. We need to have individuals that will commit to bring our profession to the best it can be for the individuals we serve in the state of Maine.

**Is there anything else you want to add?**

I will miss the camaraderie of being a representative of MSLHA.

Thank you, Deb, for being our first member highlighted. And thank you so much for all you have done as an SLP in Maine and Massachusetts. Have a wonderful time on your amazing next adventure!



## Contact Us

Website: <http://mslha.memberclicks.net>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/maineslha>