

**Mississippi Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
2026 Mississippi Legislative Session Final Legislative Report**

**Bills That Passed**

**Education Pay, School Counselor Standards, and School Attendance Reform**

**Bill Number:** SB 2103

**Author:** Sen. Angela Burks Hill

**Final Status:** Approved by Governor on April 8, 2026.

SB 2103 enacted major education workforce reforms, including increases to the minimum teacher salary scale, revisions to professional school counselor requirements, assistant teacher pay provisions, school attendance law changes, and related education funding updates. The final bill provides annual salary supplements for licensed special education teachers, licensed occupational therapists, and certified school psychologists. Speech-language pathologists were not specifically named in the final supplement language, which remains a significant concern for school-based SLP compensation parity. This should be a major MSHA advocacy priority for the 2027 session.

**Bills That Failed**

**Teacher Pay and Special Education Supplement Proposal**

**Bill Number:** HB 1126

**Author:** Rep. Rob Roberson

**Final Status:** Died in Senate Committee on March 3, 2026.

HB 1126 would have increased the teacher salary scale and provided additional compensation for licensed special education teachers, occupational therapists, and licensed school psychologists. The bill also included language recognizing speech-language pathologists and educational audiologists in certain university-based IDEA Part B and Part C programs. Although HB 1126 failed, many of its teacher pay concepts later moved through SB 2103. The final enacted version still did not explicitly include school-based SLPs in the salary supplement language.

**Education Funding and Lead Instructor Language**

**Bill Number:** SB 2291

**Author:** Sen. Dennis DeBar

**Final Status:** Died in Senate Committee on February 3, 2026.

SB 2291 would have updated education funding language and revised certain multipliers for gifted education and career and technical education. The bill included language stating that speech-language pathologists and educational audiologists may serve as lead instructors when communication is a primary concern on a child's IFSP or IEP. This language was important because it recognized the instructional role and training of SLPs and educational audiologists in early childhood and special education settings. The bill did not advance.

### **Literacy in Grades 4 Through 8**

**Bill Number:** SB 2487

**Author:** Sen. Dennis DeBar

**Final Status:** Died in Committee on March 3, 2026.

SB 2487 would have created intervention and implementation strategies to support literacy proficiency among students in grades 4 through 8. The bill included dyslexia-related language recognizing that dyslexia evaluations may be conducted by professional psychologists, psychometrists, or speech-language pathologists. The proposal also addressed literacy screeners, individual reading plans, intervention services, and school district responsibilities. This bill was relevant to MSHA because of the role of SLPs in literacy, language development, dyslexia evaluation, and reading intervention support.

### **Augmentative and Alternative Communication Device Coverage for Children**

**Bill Number:** SB 2569

**Author:** Sen. Bradford Blackmon

**Final Status:** Died in Committee on February 3, 2026.

SB 2569 would have required Medicaid and private insurance coverage for augmentative and alternative communication devices for children with nonspeaking or limited verbal communication, regardless of complex medical diagnosis. This bill was directly relevant to speech-language pathology because AAC devices are essential tools for children with communication needs. The proposal would have improved access for families who face cost and coverage barriers. The bill did not advance.

### **State Health Insurance Plan and Hearing Aid Coverage Language**

**Bill Number:** HB 1665

**Author:** Rep. Hank Zuber III

**Final Status:** Died on Calendar on March 26, 2026.

HB 1665 primarily addressed the Pharmacy Benefit Prompt Pay Act and the State Health Insurance Plan. The bill included language related to hearing aids, including references to hearing aids for individuals over age 21 within the state health insurance framework. Although not a clean child hearing aid mandate, the bill was relevant to audiology and hearing access policy. The bill passed the House but ultimately died on the calendar.

### **Educational Freedom Program Act**

**Bill Number:** HB 2

**Author:** Speaker Jason White and Rep. Rob Roberson

**Final Status:** Died in Committee on March 3, 2026.

HB 2 proposed broad education choice and flexibility reforms. The bill included provisions affecting special education, scholarship programs, and related service providers, including references to licensed speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and certified academic language therapists. Because the bill could have affected how students access services outside traditional public school settings, it was relevant to MSHA's education and service-access advocacy. The bill did not become law.

## **Dyslexia and Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship Funding**

**Bill Number:** HB 1704

**Author:** Rep. Rob Roberson

**Final Status:** Failed to pass.

HB 1704 would have required annual Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship and Mississippi Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship amounts to equal the amount awarded under the Educational Scholarship Account program. The bill directly addressed the Mississippi Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship and the funding available to eligible students with speech-language impairments. This proposal would have affected access to nonpublic special purpose school services for children receiving speech-language therapy scholarships. The bill did not become law.

## **Special Purpose Schools and Military Family Eligibility**

**Bill Number:** HB 1709

**Author:** Rep. Rob Roberson

**Final Status:** Failed to pass.

HB 1709 would have revised eligibility provisions for the Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship and Mississippi Speech-Language Therapy Scholarship, including eligibility for children of active-duty military personnel assigned to Mississippi. The bill would have allowed certain students to access scholarship programs without the same prior-year Mississippi school attendance requirement. It was relevant to MSHA because it addressed access to speech-language therapy scholarship services for children with speech-language impairments. The bill did not become law.

## **Session Summary**

The 2026 Mississippi Legislative Session produced one major enacted bill of interest to MSHA, SB 2103, but the final language did not specifically include speech-language pathologists in the salary supplement provisions. Several failed bills addressed issues highly relevant to MSHA, including SLP and educational audiologist recognition in special education settings, literacy and dyslexia evaluation, AAC device coverage, hearing aid access, and speech-language therapy scholarship funding. The biggest unresolved issue is compensation parity for school-based SLPs, especially given that occupational therapists and school psychologists were specifically named in SB 2103. For 2027, MSHA may wish to prioritize explicit salary supplement language for school-based SLPs, AAC device coverage, child hearing aid coverage, dyslexia and literacy recognition, telepractice access, and preservation of professional licensure standards.