

Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

Board Members

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 Amanda Bonner, BC-HIS, Hearing Aid Specialist
 Ruth Rowan, Citizen Member

Pamela Coughlin, Executive Director

July 31, 2026

Public Comment Summary

Title:

Proposed Rules for West Virginia Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.

Date: July 31, 2026

The call for Public Comments ran from June 26, 2026 to July 29, 2026.

Mission Statement: The mission of the West Virginia Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology is to protect consumers by ensuring that all licensed practitioners meet or exceed educational standards and adhere to the of Code of Ethics as presented in the WV or Code.

Summary of Amendments to Legislative Rule §29-2

The State Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology voted on July 18, 2026 to remove audiology assistants from their regulations after determining that none of the states they contacted currently license or register them.

Comment 1:

On July 24, 2026 American Speech-Hearing Association opposes the removal of §29-2-7 and §29-2-8 due to neighboring states—including Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Maryland—maintain regulatory pathways for audiology assistants.

Response 1:

On July 31, 2026, the Board reviewed the submitted comment and decided to take no action.

The Board noted that since 2018, there has only been one registered Audiology Assistant, and that individual retired in 2024. Additionally, while the comment stated that Ohio regulates pathways for Audiology Assistants, this is incorrect; Ohio does not regulate Audiology assistants.

99 Edmiston Way, Box 11 – Suite 214, Buckhannon, WV 26201

Email: wvbeslpa@wv.gov

Web Site: www.wvspeechandaudiology.com

Phone: 304-473-4289

Fax: 304-473-4291

In-state toll free number: 877-462-5460

~Pamela Coughlin– Executive Director~

Comment 2:

On July 25, 2026, the President of West Virginia Speech-Hearing Association, Tori Gilbert questioned how the decision was made to eliminate Audiology assistants.

Response 2:

On July 27, 2026, the Board reviewed your comment and noted that we did not survey universities, though we did receive a public comment from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

The decision to eliminate Audiology assistants was made at the Board meeting on July 18, 2026, due to a lack of demand in West Virginia. For context, the Board only had one Audiology assistant registered between 2018 and 2024.

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~Pamela Coughlin– Executive Director~



ASHA

American
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

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JUL 23 2026
BY: _____

July 24, 2026

Ms. Pamela Coughlin
Executive Director
West Virginia Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
99 Edmiston Way
Ste 214
Box 11
Buckhannon, WV 26201

RE: Audiology Assistant Regulations

Dear Director Coughlin:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), we submit the following comments regarding the proposed changes to the audiology assistant regulations under §29-2.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 247,000 members, certificate holders, and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists (SLPs); speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students. Over 1,100 ASHA members reside in West Virginia.¹

ASHA opposes the proposed removal of §29-2-7 and §29-2-8 governing audiology assistants. We are concerned that the rationale provided for eliminating these provisions is not supported by available evidence. Contrary to the Notice of Public Comment, neighboring states—including Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Maryland—maintain regulatory pathways for audiology assistants. These states recognize the value of appropriately trained assistants working under the supervision of licensed audiologists to improve service efficiency while maintaining patient safety.

Audiology assistants enable licensed audiologists to delegate appropriate technical and support tasks, increasing access to care and allowing audiologists to focus on more complex clinical services. Eliminating these provisions would remove a workforce option that imposes minimal regulatory burden while reducing flexibility to address future service delivery needs. According to projections from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for audiologists in West Virginia is expected to grow by 11.1% between 2022 and 2032.² Maintaining a regulatory pathway for audiology assistants can help address workforce shortages, expand access to services, and better meet the needs of West Virginians with communication and hearing disorders.

ASHA respectfully recommends that the Board retain §29-2-7 and §29-2-8. If revisions to these provisions are warranted, we welcome the opportunity to provide feedback informed by input from the West Virginia Speech-Language-Hearing Association (WVSHA) and practicing audiologists in the state. Revising the regulations, rather than eliminating them entirely, would preserve an important workforce resource while allowing the Board to address any identified concerns.

Thank you for considering ASHA's comments regarding the audiology assistant regulations. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact:

Eileen Crowe
Director, State Education Affairs
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
ecrowe@asha.org.

Submitted on behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2026). *West Virginia* [Quick Facts].
<https://www.asha.org/siteassets/advocacy/state-flyers/west-virginia-state-flyer.pdf>

² Ibid

BESLPA, WV <wvbeslpa@wv.gov>**Re: Assistant Regulations**

1 message

BESLPA, WV <wvbeslpa@wv.gov>

Fri, Jul 31, 2026 at 8:32 AM

To: Eileen Crowe <ECrowe@asha.org>

Good morning,

On July 31, 2026, the Board reviewed the submitted comment and decided to take no action.

The Board noted that since 2018, there has only been one registered Audiology Assistant, and that individual retired in 2024. Additionally, while the comment stated that Ohio regulates pathways for Audiology Assistants, this is incorrect; Ohio does not regulate Audiology assistants.

Thank you for reaching out to the Board.

Thank you and have a great day!!

Pamela Coughlin, Executive Director

WV Board of Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology

99 Edmiston Way - Box 11, Suite 214

Buckhannon, WV 26201

304-473-4289

On Thu, Jul 23, 2026 at 5:27 PM Eileen Crowe <ECrowe@asha.org> wrote:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these regulations.

Eileen K. Crowe

Director, State Education Affairs

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

2200 Research Blvd. #220

Rockville, MD 20850-3289

ecrowe@asha.org

Direct Line: 301-296-5667

National Office: 301-296-5700

<http://www.asha.org>

**ASHA**American
Speech-Language-Hearing
AssociationEmpowering audiologists, speech-language pathologists,
and speech, language, and hearing scientists.<http://www.asha.org>

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BESLPA, WV <wvbeslpa@wv.gov>

Re: §29-2-7, 29-2-8 Questions

1 message

BESLPA, WV <wvbeslpa@wv.gov>

Mon, Jul 27, 2026 at 8:16 AM

To: Tori Gilbert <Tori@chatterandchalk.com>

Good morning Tori,

Thank you for reaching out to the Board.

Please see the responses below regarding your questions about the recent discussions on Audiology Assistants:

1. What were the discussions leading up to the changes? Were surveys or questionnaires conducted with audiologists and/or Universities?

During the Board meeting on July 18, 2026, there was a discussion regarding Audiology Assistants. It was noted that many states do not utilize Audiology Assistants, but instead employ technicians.

2. Do WV universities no longer see the need or interest?

No, there is no degree program for Audiology Assistants.

3. Did ASHA contact the Licensing Board?

Yes, we received public comment from ASHA requesting that we keep Audiology Assistants.

4. Do the AuD licensure board members think this is the best decision/what are their thoughts?

The Board had only one Audiology Assistant registered from 2018 to 2024, indicating a lack of demand. Consequently, the Board felt that moving toward Audiology technicians would be the best approach.

I will review the public comments we received with the Board and submit them to the WV Secretary of State.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Thank you and have a great day!!

Pamela Coughlin, Executive Director

WV Board of Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology

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Buckhannon, WV 26201

304-473-4289

On Sat, Jul 25, 2026 at 1:45 PM Tori Gilbert <Tori@chatterandchalk.com> wrote:

Good afternoon,

I am reaching out to ask a few questions related to the recent recommended changes to §29-2-7, 29-2-8, acting as the president of WVSHA. The WVSHA Board asked me to send some follow up questions related to this decision. The questions are below:

1. What were the discussions leading up to the changes? Were surveys or questionnaires conducted with audiologists and/or Universities?
2. Do WV universities no longer see the need or interest?
3. Did ASHA contact the Licensing Board? We ask this question because ASHA has reached out to us and we want to be sure we are communicating with you all.
4. Do the AuD licensure board members think this is the best decision/what are their thoughts?

Thank you for your time in answering these questions and collaborating with WVSHA.

Best,
Tori Gilbert