



UFT nuzledar

Speech Improvement

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



Dear Anne,

As the holidays approach, I hope this newsletter finds you well. Each month, we work to address your issues. We strive to address problems as soon as they are brought to our attention. Our goal is to prevent them from becoming systemic issues. We work to empower and educate you with our newsletters, monthly meetings, tenure meetings, survival classes and hotline.

Katherine Lewis, Brenda Caquias, Lisa Arian and Caroline Murphy, our newest representative, respond as quickly as possible to your calls and emails.

Remember: We answer phone calls more quickly than emails so call us first at 212-598-7774 from 4 to 6 p.m.

If email is more convenient, please — send your emails from your personal email address. (It will take more time for us to answer emails, however.) We want to ensure that the information you share with us is private and that your DOE employer does not have access to it. For similar reasons, and to respect my work responsibilities as an in-service DOE speech provider, use only my UFT email address when communicating with me, mbornemann@uft.org.

We continue to consult with the DOE on issues related to Medicaid, SESIS, materials, space, supplies, paperwork and compliance. These meetings are in addition to our monthly consultations with Suzanne Sanchez, senior director of therapy services, and Helen Kaufman, assistant superintendent of District 75.

The issues you bring to our attention are discussed at these meetings and information gathered is shared with you in our newsletters and monthly meetings.

Many of our monthly meetings are videotaped so you can view them after the date if you cannot attend them at central UFT. It is important that you keep abreast of all issues that may be related to your employment. It is also vital that you speak up for yourself and your students. Your union is only as good and strong as the members in it. We can advocate for your needs but it is you who must contact us at the hotline for the tools and strategies to get you what you deserve. If you have no one making announcements at your meetings and want to volunteer and support your chapter, email me.

If I do not see you at one of our meetings, I hope to meet you at a local speech meeting in the future. Have a wonderful break and a relaxing holiday. See you in the New Year.

Sincerely,

Mindy Karten Bornemann
Speech Chapter Leader

SLP activities and requirements for all chapter members

As a reminder to the chapter, everyone is expected to keep accurate and timely attendance in SESIS. The days of paper attendance are over. It is imperative that you make every effort to keep up with SESIS. We know this is challenging so to accomplish this, we've made sure you have designated time in your schedule for your SESIS work.

Your duty-free lunch should not be used for SESIS and your preparation time is time to prepare for your work. You should be excused from staff development on Mondays and parent engagement activities on Tuesdays in an elementary school to allow time for SESIS if it is not already in your schedule. In middle and high schools, you must get a minimum of 155 minutes for SESIS. As a result of some changes in encounter attendance procedures, made as part of our

Medicaid agreement with the city, SESIS should be more efficient than before.

Our negotiated per session time, discussed at length in the recently issued Guide to SLP Activities and Requirements, should also help you to complete your attendance.

Be aware: DOE compliance personnel, including supervisors, are carefully watching encounter attendance. Some members who have not kept up with their attendance and recordkeeping have been spoken to. Reach out to us if you need help or support but do not ignore the warnings. Schools are tracking students who are receiving services and this is done through SESIS also.

According to the Standard Operating Procedure Manual , you should be invited to all annual reviews and three-year evaluations in a timely fashion, i.e. 15 days prior to the meeting. Reach out to your school administration and speech supervisor if this is not happening. If IEPs meetings are exclusively held during the parent engagement time, please contact us. According to the SOPM, unless you are a mandated participant ("speech only" student) you may report to the meeting, sign the attendance sheet, share information with the team and leave. If you cannot attend the meeting, then submit a progress report with your recommendations to the team. Let us know if this is a problem at your school.

Medicaid differential payments

We are making excellent progress in addressing outstanding differential issues. Several thousand members have benefitted from our UFT Medicaid agreement with the city and only a few are still awaiting payment. There are also a few members who did not receive the differential one month after entering all three requirements into NYCAPS who are awaiting back pay. For more information on this, refer to [February 2017 chapter newsletter](#).

SLP license renewal

The DOE reported that it has a process in place for identifying when an SLP speech teacher renews a professional license. SLP speech teachers who renewed their licenses between December 2016 and December 2017 should shortly receive reimbursement for the \$229 license renewal in their paychecks. The DOE will automatically reimburse members four times a year. Service providers are reimbursed based on the effective date of their renewal which has been sent to our chapter. All providers who weren't in the first round but have identified effective dates going back to November 2016 were included.

Other items under discussion

We continue to work with the DOE to provide training on session notes, CPT codes and referrals. The DOE wants to discuss the time for parent engagement and our chapter wants to discuss SESIS time. The DOE also wants to explore the possibility of non-SLP speech teachers working "under the direction" of a SLP speech teacher. We will keep you posted on these current issues.

Chromebooks for new speech providers

The DOE has been distributing Chromebooks to new speech teachers and speech teachers who did not receive Chromebooks in prior years. Chromebooks are meant to assist these staff members with their work, which includes entering encounter attendance data in SESIS. You should receive an email from MedicaidOps@schools.nyc.gov with information regarding the date and time of Chromebook delivery. Make sure that you are at the designated school on the day delivery is scheduled.

IEP-mandated services: protections in the Medicaid agreement

The union successfully fought for language in the Medicaid agreement that protects you from anyone pulling you away from your assignment to perform other duties.

The agreement states, “The DOE may not assign any speech teacher to duties that would prevent him or her from providing IEP-mandated services such as coverages, scoring exams or proctoring, except in extraordinary circumstances.” Please contact our chapter if you are given an assignment that prevents you from serving your students. Remind your administrator of our agreement, document the issue and then notify your speech supervisor and the chapter’s speech hotline as soon as possible.

Space and supply survey results

The UFT sent you a space and supply survey as part of the Medicaid agreement with the DOE. The union negotiated you a survey because we wanted to make sure that your professional voice is heard on issues related to your working conditions. If you have little or no space, your space is inappropriate or you lack the appropriate materials or tests, you cannot effectively serve your students.

More than 850 members completed the survey. We will be presenting information to the DOE and asking for a plan to address the issues raised.

In addition, if you serve students in a school in an unhealthy or unsafe environment, please call the UFT borough office and ask for help from our health and safety representatives. Do not wait for the results of the survey to get assistance.

Highlights of consultation with Suzanne Sanchez

We discussed the following issues with Suzanne Sanchez, senior director of therapy services:

- **Teachers Choice funds for DOE employed pre-school speech teachers** We are happy to report the DOE will provide comparable funds to pre-school speech teachers. Teachers in this group will be reimbursed for materials up to \$250. Thank you for bringing this to our attention and helping to rectify this inequity.
- We reviewed pre and post observations for all members. We asked the DOE to review these procedures with all speech supervisors.
- Supplies and materials for new speech teachers were also discussed. The DOE is working on speech materials. Our chapter encourages you to ask for basic school supplies from your school, which is the school's responsibility to provide.
- The DOE sent chapter members a letter for parents about mandated speech services. Speech providers did not have to send it unless they had not yet sent a similar letter to students' parents.
- Shortage area and procedure issues from last year were discussed. Funding issues were also addressed. Let us know if you have not been paid in a timely manner. Do not wait for your money until the year's end. You may also file a grievance on shortage area nonpayment in any UFT borough office. We also discussed procedures for high school speech teachers and some of the problems with payment during the new semester.
- We discuss push-in services in high school (mandated and caseload issues) with the DOE on an ongoing basis. We will bring to Ms. Sanchez any school where location and group size decisions are not determined as part of an IEP team meeting. This includes "forced push-in services" or mandates that were changed without a team meeting and your input.
- Sign in and out policy reminders: SESIS is the only official attendance record! You should never manually sign in or out students. Let your speech supervisor know if it is an issue. Contact us if it does not get resolved.

Highlights of consultation with District 75 with Deputy Superintendent Helen Kaufman and UFT District Representative David Doorga

- We asked District 75 to revise the District 75 speech services guide (handbook). There are now three categories of forms in the appendix: required, recommended and resource. Resource and recommended forms are optional for member use. The revised handbook will be reissued with these changes.
 - Mandated modification form: This issue will be brought to the attention of the superintendent because Ms. Kaufman did not address it. We believe the form violates the team decision-making process
 - Speech schedules: Schedules are handed in five times a year and in the event of a change to large caseloads.
 - Pick up and delivery time: Students must receive services for the full duration of the mandate on their IEP. Sessions should not be back to back; sessions must have an interval of time between them.
 - Location of services: The place where services are delivered must be described in the IEP with specificity. Statements such as “any school location,” “in and out of classroom” or other vague description is not permissible. This longstanding issue has not been resolved and the UFT will bring it to the attention of the superintendent.
 - Excessive paperwork in D 75 manual: We do not believe members should be required to rewrite caseloads since they are already input into SESIS with student mandates. This is redundant paperwork and the issue will be brought to the superintendent and the central paperwork committee if not resolved.
 - Clarity of annual performance options: We have asked for the specific procedures for annual performance options. We believe the information we have been provided is contrary to the Teaching for the 21st Century guidelines.
-

New speech supervisor position and “under the direction of”

Shortly before our November labor management meeting, it came to our attention that the DOE had posted a new speech supervisor position called “supervisor of speech improvement UDO/CFY.”

As implied, supervisors who serve in this position will supervise, direct and evaluate the performance of DOE speech teachers with specific responsibilities for providing “under the direction of” (UDO) supervision for speech teachers who do not have a speech-language pathology license and speech teachers who are working towards their clinical fellowship year

The UFT had many questions about the new position. Under our Medicaid agreement, the DOE agreed to negotiate with us regarding a new “level 3” position with UDO and CFY responsibilities. The DOE stated that the creation of the new CSA-represented position will not affect the agreement to discuss the level 3 position with us. Any SLP who has a school administration and supervision credential, in addition to the SLP, can apply for this position.

We have many questions about how this position will be implemented. How will it affect speech teachers who do not possess the SLP? Will members receive a new speech supervisor? Will speech teachers working “under the direction of” one of these new supervisors have additional responsibilities? What time will be allocated for speech teachers to meet with the supervisor of speech improvement UDO? Will SLP speech teachers hired for this position have the right to return to a speech teacher position if the position is eliminated?

We will continue to press the DOE for answers to these and other questions regarding this new supervisory position. Our chapter advises members to review the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association technical paper on “under the direction” for legal and ethical issues so you understand all of the ramifications if you have applied for this supervisory position.

Skype observations and nontraditional observations

Chapter representatives were alerted that some D-75 members were observed through the use of Skype, software that allows video chat, due to a speech supervisor's injury.

Although we sympathize with the supervisor and wish her a quick recovery, the use of Skype or any other video option was not negotiated by the union.

You may think that this type of change may be harmless but changes to the evaluation system must be negotiated by the UFT with the DOE. We are not being petty and here's why:

It is imperative we know if unilateral changes are made to how you are evaluated. We must be sure you are evaluated properly and fairly as described in our agreements with the city.

We don't have the answer to numerous questions raised by a video observation: Who is watching besides the supervisor? Your principal, your superintendent, another colleague or even a parent or an advocate?

Is it confidential? Was it done privately? Is the video being recorded for review at another time or for use in a different forum? Could it be used to determine tenure or an extension of probation?

Since we cannot answer these questions, we cannot permit an observation through Skype or any other audio-visual software.

The good news is that no one received a U rating, but I am concerned that we did not hear from any speech teachers about this radical departure from the UFT's negotiated observation process.

Another D-75 speech supervisor wanted multiple speech supervisors to observe members under the guise of helping with professional development. We also heard that some speech supervisors are observing with the principal or an assistant principal. Fortunately, one of our liaisons alerted us to this change in practice and we got it stopped. Under the guidelines of Teaching for the 21st Century, only one administrator should perform the observation. It is imperative

that you question changes in observations or any other procedures.

We are here to support you and answer your questions. Please: If you have a question about any process, please call the hotline at 212-598-7774.