Speech Implementer Model - Requirements for Implementation

The following are requirements for the use of the Speech Implementer Model as one of the allowable service delivery options for speech/language services in a Missouri public agency. Monitoring standards for this model are found in the *Special Education Program Review Standards and Indicators Manual.* Compliance with these standards will be monitored during the special education cyclical monitoring.

Prior to requesting approval for the use of the Speech Implementer Model during any given school year, the public agency must advertise, recruit and attempt to hire or contract with a certificated speech-language pathologist (SLP) and/or a licensed speech-language pathology assistant (SLP-A) to fill the position. This recruitment must be conducted **annually,** and documentation of the extended SLP/SLP-A recruiting efforts must be maintained on file in the public agency and submitted along with the speech implementer application to the Office of Special Education at DESE. The public agency must also consider the utilization of telepractice to provide speech and language services prior to requesting approval for the use of the Speech Implementer Model. The public agency will need to collect and use the appropriate information to make an informed decision regarding the use of telepractice to provide speech and language services.

The Speech Implementer Model requires a supervising SLP. This individual must hold a valid license from the Missouri Board of Healing Arts as a speech-language pathologist practicing for at least a year. The supervising SLP is ethically responsible for practices and activities provided under this model and must be prepared to attest to the appropriateness of each student's individual therapy program. The public agency remains legally responsible for compliance with state and federal regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA.)

The individual hired as the implementer must have:
- Bachelor's Degree in Communication Disorders and a current Missouri teaching certificate, or
- Bachelor's Degree in Elementary or Secondary Education and a current Missouri teaching certificate or Temporary Authorization Certificate (TAC)

No exceptions to these requirements will be granted.

Written request to use the model is made to the Compliance Section in the Office of Special Education. The request must be made using the Speech Implementer Model Approval Application found on the DESE Special Education Compliance web site under the topic *Speech Implementer*. The application must be signed by the public agency's superintendent. This application contains the names and social security numbers of the supervising SLP and the speech implementer. Permission to use the model is granted by DESE based on the qualifications of the individuals designated to serve as the

supervising SLP and the speech implementer; and on the public agency's assurance of its inability to hire a qualified SLP or SLP-A as demonstrated by the documentation submitted with the application. Additionally, the public agency must provide assurance that it has collected the appropriate information to consider the use of telepractice to provide speech and language services.

Sometimes personnel changes during the year are unavoidable. Because approval to use the speech implementer model is based on individuals' qualifications, a new application to use the model must be submitted and approved prior to implementation when it is necessary to replace an approved supervising SLP or approved speech implementer.

Requirements specific to the supervising speech-language pathologist (SLP):

1. **A Speech Implementer Model District Plan must developed and submitted to DESE.** It will need to outline specific activities that both parties perform, the training and supervision for the speech implementer, how program effectiveness will be monitored, and any adjustments of the SLP's job responsibilities due to using the Speech Implementer Model. In addition to the requirements specified on the Speech Implementer Model District Plan and in the *Standards and Indicators Manual,* there may be additional activities that the SLP determines critical to the implementation of the program in the public agency. Those activities should be included in district plan. It is important that the description include the procedures the public agency has chosen to use to document the interaction between the SLP and the students seen by the implementer as well as the specific activities assigned to the implementer by the SLP. The implementer can only perform those activities for which he/she has been trained and receives appropriate supervision from the SLP.

2. **Program supervision and training** of the Speech Implementer in all assigned activities and periodic direct therapy sessions with the students served by the implementer.

3. **Evaluation activities** are the responsibility of the supervising SLP. Other qualified public agency diagnosticians may conduct assessments needed to determine eligibility for an IEP. An SLP is a required member of the eligibility determination team when speech and/or language disabilities are considered the primary disability category. The implementer may, at the discretion of the supervising SLP, be trained to administer certain screening instruments. However, the SLP must administer any procedure involving judgment decisions based upon student response.

4. **IEP development** is the responsibility of the SLP and includes writing, developing, and modifying the IEPs of all supervised students. The SLP is a

required participant for all IEP meetings when speech and/or language services are considered.

5. **Direct supervison by the SLP** with each student on the implementer's caseload is required. The SLP is required to provide direct supervision (real-time observing/viewing of Speech Implementer and student) for initial student contact and provide continuing supervision of a minimum of one hour per week or one out of every three sessions thereafter. This interaction between the SLP and the SI's caseload must be documented in the Speech Implementer Model District Plan.

6. **Periodic direct therapy by the SLP** with each student on the implementer's caseload is required. The SLP is required to conduct periodic direct therapy sessions with the children assigned to the implementer. Through these periodic direct therapy sessions, the SLP will monitor progress, assess current needs, and evaluate the effectiveness of the program. This interaction between the SLP and the students must be documented in the Speech Implementer Model District Plan.

If the supervising SLP is employed by the public agency to provide direct services to a specific caseload of students, that caseload must be reduced to allow for the additional assessment, IEP responsibilities, and training/supervision for the implementer. If the supervising SLP is serving the public agency in some capacity other than as an SLP (e.g., administrator, process coordinator, teacher), those duties must be adjusted to allow for the additional responsibilities associated with the Speech Implementer Model. Finally, if the supervising SLP works for the public agency through a private contract, that individual's other responsibilities must be considered when determining the number of students she/he will be available to supervise. For example, a pathologist employed in public agency A and serving a full caseload in that public agency would not be available to public agency B to serve as the supervising SLP. With a full caseload in public agency A, the SLP would not have sufficient time to perform the duties required with this model during the regular school day.

Each situation will be evaluated individually; however, approval will be withdrawn in any case where it is determined that the supervising SLP cannot adequately carry out the duties as outlined in this document and Section 400 of the *Standards and Indicators Manual* or if the district has not shown a good faith effort to locate, recruit and hire a SLP, a SLP-A or implement telepractice.