

Deaf Child Bills of Rights

BY: LAURA GRESHAM

The Louisiana Legislature recently passed revisions to the Deaf Child Bill of Rights. Now entitled Act 250, this law went into effect August 1, 2015. Major revisions to the law include listing Deaf-Blind individuals along with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, clarifying IDEA protections for those students and mandating that the deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing students have a communication plan included in their Individual Educational Program (IEP) or Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP).



The Deaf Education Alliance (DEA), an organization composed of parents, community members, educators, related service providers and other professionals, was instrumental in getting this bill passed and is working closely with the Louisiana Department of Education as the key stakeholders to implement the revisions in the bill. The original Deaf Child Bill of Rights was established in 1992. The DEA found that the original law lacked strong enough language to mandate rights and equal access for our deaf children. Immediate issues of concern to guide public schools in implementing the law are: revising the Handbook for Personnel who Work with Students who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing, and the dissemination and implementation of a comprehensive communication plan to be used by all public schools. A standardized communication plan will help IEP teams to address the varied communication needs of their deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind students and be accountable to the law.

The Deaf Education Alliance will hold a summit at the Clarion Conference Center in Gonzales, LA on September 25 & 26th continuing their goal of bringing deaf education to the forefront of education improvement in Louisiana. For more information visit www.ileead.org.

LBESPA Discontinues Annual Workshop BY: JOLIE JONES

LBESPA recently voted to discontinue offering its annual continuing education workshop. The board originally began offering its continuing education workshop in 1995 to ensure licensees would be able to find high quality continuing education opportunities at an economical rate. LBESPA has taken great pride in offering presentations from some of the wonderful talent found in our great state, as well as having well known speakers from across the country. LBESPA has provided this valuable continuing education event for the past 19 years. Only a small percentage of licensees have taken advantage of this event and because there are reasonably priced continuing education opportunities now available, the board has decided to discontinue its workshop. The Board also discontinued its Media Library effective December 30, 2014.

The board does place tremendous value on face to face seminars and encourages you to attend local state offerings such as LSHA, SPALS and LAA annual conventions. Other great continuing education opportunities can be found through ASHA, AAA, Audiology Online, speechpathology.com, and Passy-Muir to name a few.

As a reminder, activities that are sponsored by ASHA, LSHA, SPALS, AAA, schools, universities, hospitals, or state agencies are considered acceptable offerings and do not require pre-approval. If you are interested in attending an activity that does not fall under one of these sponsors, you may be required to submit a request for pre-approval to the board office.

