

By: Deuell

S.B. No. 311

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the regulation of academic language teachers and therapists; imposing penalties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The heading to Subtitle G, Title 3, Occupations Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBTITLE G. PROFESSIONS RELATED TO HEARING, LANGUAGE, AND SPEECH

SECTION 2. Subtitle G, Title 3, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Chapter 403 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 403. ACADEMIC LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND THERAPISTS

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 403.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Academic language" means the treatment of dyslexia or related disorders.

(2) "Department" means the Department of State Health Services.

(3) "License holder" means a person who holds a license issued under this chapter.

Sec. 403.002. ADMINISTRATION BY DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES. The department shall administer this chapter.

[Sections 403.003-403.050 reserved for expansion]

SUBCHAPTER B. POWERS AND DUTIES

Sec. 403.051. ADVISORY COMMITTEE. The department may appoint an advisory committee to advise the department in

1 administering this chapter.

2 Sec. 403.052. RULES. The department shall adopt rules
3 necessary to administer and enforce this chapter, including rules
4 that establish standards of ethical practice.

5 Sec. 403.053. RULES RESTRICTING ADVERTISING OR COMPETITIVE
6 BIDDING. (a) The department may not adopt rules restricting
7 advertising or competitive bidding by a license holder except to
8 prohibit false, misleading, or deceptive practices.

9 (b) In the department's rules to prohibit false,
10 misleading, or deceptive practices, the department may not include
11 a rule that:

12 (1) restricts the use of any medium for advertising;

13 (2) restricts the use of a license holder's personal
14 appearance or voice in an advertisement;

15 (3) relates to the size or duration of an
16 advertisement by the license holder; or

17 (4) restricts the license holder's advertisement under
18 a trade name.

19 [Sections 403.054-403.100 reserved for expansion]

20 SUBCHAPTER C. LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

21 Sec. 403.101. LICENSE REQUIRED; EXCEPTION. (a) A person
22 may not practice academic language teaching or therapy or represent
23 that the person is an academic language teacher or therapist in this
24 state unless the person holds a license under this chapter.

25 (b) This section does not apply to a person under the
26 supervision of a license holder.

27 Sec. 403.102. ISSUANCE OF LICENSE. The department shall

1 issue an academic language teaching or therapy license to an
2 applicant who meets the requirements of this chapter.

3 Sec. 403.103. LICENSE APPLICATION. (a) A license applicant
4 must apply to the department on a form and in the manner the
5 department prescribes.

6 (b) The application must be accompanied by a nonrefundable
7 application fee.

8 Sec. 403.104. ELIGIBILITY FOR ACADEMIC LANGUAGE TEACHER
9 LICENSE. (a) To be eligible for an academic language teacher
10 license, an applicant must have:

11 (1) successfully completed at least 45 hours in
12 courses related to academic language, including training in
13 multisensory structured language training; and

14 (2) completed at least 90 hours of practice of
15 supervised clinical experience related to academic language,
16 including at least five conferences with clients observed by the
17 supervisor.

18 (b) Clinical experience required under Subsection (a)(2)
19 must be obtained under:

20 (1) the supervision of a license holder; and

21 (2) guidelines approved by the department.

22 Sec. 403.105. ELIGIBILITY FOR ACADEMIC LANGUAGE THERAPIST
23 LICENSE. (a) To be eligible for an academic language therapist
24 license, an applicant must have:

25 (1) successfully completed at least 200 hours in
26 courses related to academic language, including training in
27 multisensory structured language training; and

1 (2) completed at least 700 hours of practice of
2 supervised clinical experience related to academic language,
3 including at least 10 conferences with clients observed by the
4 supervisor.

5 (b) Clinical experience required under Subsection (a)(2)
6 must be obtained under:

7 (1) the supervision of a person holding an academic
8 language therapy license; and

9 (2) guidelines approved by the department.

10 Sec. 403.106. EXAMINATION; RULES. (a) To obtain a license,
11 an applicant must:

12 (1) pass an examination approved by the department;
13 and

14 (2) pay fees in a manner prescribed by the department.

15 (b) The department shall:

16 (1) administer an examination at least twice each
17 year;

18 (2) determine standards for acceptable performance on
19 the examination; and

20 (3) maintain a record of all examination scores for at
21 least two years after the date of examination.

22 (c) The department by rule may:

23 (1) establish procedures for the administration of the
24 examination; and

25 (2) require a written or oral examination, or both.

26 Sec. 403.107. EXAMINATION RESULTS. (a) Not later than the
27 30th day after the date a person takes a licensing examination under

1 this chapter, the department shall notify the person of the results
2 of the examination.

3 (b) If the examination is graded or reviewed by a testing
4 service:

5 (1) the department shall notify the person of the
6 results of the examination not later than the 14th day after the
7 date the department receives the results from the testing service;
8 and

9 (2) if notice of the examination results will be
10 delayed for longer than 90 days after the examination date, the
11 department shall notify the person of the reason for the delay
12 before the 90th day.

13 (c) The department may require a testing service to notify a
14 person of the results of the person's examination.

15 (d) If requested in writing by a person who fails a
16 licensing examination administered under this chapter, the
17 department shall furnish the person with an analysis of the
18 person's performance on the examination.

19 Sec. 403.108. REEXAMINATION. (a) A person who fails the
20 examination may take a later examination on payment of a
21 nonrefundable fee for the examination.

22 (b) An applicant who fails two examinations may not be
23 reexamined until the person:

24 (1) submits a new application accompanied by a
25 nonrefundable application fee; and

26 (2) presents evidence acceptable to the department of
27 additional study in the area for which a license is sought.

1 Sec. 403.109. WAIVER OF EXAMINATION REQUIREMENT. The
2 department may waive the examination requirement and issue a
3 license to an applicant who holds an appropriate certificate or
4 other accreditation from a national organization recognized by the
5 department.

6 Sec. 403.110. PROVISIONAL LICENSE. (a) The department may
7 issue a provisional license to an applicant currently licensed in
8 another jurisdiction who seeks a license in this state and who:

9 (1) has been licensed in good standing as an academic
10 language teacher or therapist for at least two years in another
11 jurisdiction, including a foreign country, that has licensing
12 requirements substantially equivalent to the requirements of this
13 chapter;

14 (2) has passed a national or other examination
15 recognized by the department relating to the practice of academic
16 language; and

17 (3) is sponsored by a person licensed by the
18 department under this chapter with whom the provisional license
19 holder will practice during the time the person holds a provisional
20 license.

21 (b) The department may waive the requirement of Subsection
22 (a)(3) for an applicant if the department determines that
23 compliance with that subsection would be a hardship to the
24 applicant.

25 (c) A provisional license is valid until the date the
26 department approves or denies the provisional license holder's
27 application for a license.

1 (d) The department shall issue a license under this chapter
2 to the provisional license holder if:

3 (1) the provisional license holder is eligible to be
4 licensed under Section 403.111 or the provisional license holder
5 passes the part of the examination under Section 403.106 that
6 relates to the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the laws
7 and rules relating to the practice of academic language in this
8 state;

9 (2) the department verifies that the provisional
10 license holder meets the academic and experience requirements for a
11 license under this chapter; and

12 (3) the provisional license holder satisfies any other
13 licensing requirements under this chapter.

14 (e) The department must approve or deny a provisional
15 license holder's application for a license not later than the 180th
16 day after the date the provisional license is issued. The
17 department may extend the 180-day period if the results of an
18 examination have not been received by the department before the end
19 of that period.

20 Sec. 403.111. ENDORSEMENT OF OUT-OF-STATE CREDENTIALS;
21 RECIPROCITY. (a) The department may waive any prerequisite to
22 obtaining a license for an applicant after reviewing the
23 applicant's credentials and determining that the applicant holds a
24 license issued by another jurisdiction that has licensing
25 requirements substantially equivalent to those of this state.

26 (b) The department may waive any prerequisite to obtaining a
27 license for an applicant who holds a license issued by another

1 jurisdiction with which this state has a reciprocity agreement.
2 The department may make an agreement, subject to the approval of the
3 governor, with another state to allow for licensing by reciprocity.

4 Sec. 403.112. TEMPORARY LICENSE; RULES. The department by
5 rule may provide for the issuance of a temporary license.

6 Sec. 403.113. INACTIVE STATUS; RULES. (a) The department
7 by rule may provide for a license holder to be placed on inactive
8 status.

9 (b) Rules adopted under this section must include a time
10 limit for a license holder to remain on inactive status.

11 Sec. 403.114. LICENSE RENEWAL. (a) A person who is
12 otherwise eligible to renew a license may renew an unexpired
13 license by paying the required renewal fee to the department before
14 the expiration date of the license. A person whose license has
15 expired may not engage in activities that require a license until
16 the license has been renewed.

17 (b) A person whose license has been expired for 90 days or
18 less may renew the license by paying to the department a renewal fee
19 that is equal to 1-1/2 times the normally required renewal fee.

20 (c) A person whose license has been expired for more than 90
21 days but less than one year may renew the license by paying to the
22 department a renewal fee that is equal to two times the normally
23 required renewal fee.

24 (d) A person whose license has been expired for one year or
25 more may not renew the license. The person may obtain a new license
26 by complying with the requirements and procedures, including the
27 examination requirements, for obtaining an original license.

1 (e) A person who was licensed in this state, moved to
2 another state, and is currently licensed and has been in practice in
3 the other state for the two years preceding the date of application
4 may obtain a new license without reexamination. The person must pay
5 to the department a fee that is equal to two times the normally
6 required renewal fee for the license.

7 (f) Not later than the 30th day before the date a person's
8 license is scheduled to expire, the department shall send written
9 notice of the impending expiration to the person at the person's
10 last known address according to the records of the department.

11 [Sections 403.115-403.150 reserved for expansion]

12 SUBCHAPTER D. PRACTICE BY LICENSE HOLDER

13 Sec. 403.151. CONTINUING EDUCATION. (a) The department
14 shall recognize, prepare, or administer continuing education
15 programs for its license holders under this chapter. A license
16 holder may not renew the person's license unless the person meets
17 the continuing education requirements.

18 (b) The department shall establish the requirements in a
19 manner that allows a license holder to comply without an extended
20 absence from the license holder's county of residence.

21 (c) The department shall:

22 (1) provide to a license applicant, with the
23 application form on which the person is to apply for a license,
24 information describing the continuing education requirements; and

25 (2) notify each license holder of any change in the
26 continuing education requirements at least one year before the date
27 the change takes effect.

1 [Sections 403.152-403.200 reserved for expansion]

2 SUBCHAPTER E. LICENSE DENIAL AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

3 Sec. 403.201. ADMINISTRATIVE SANCTIONS. (a) The
4 department shall revoke, suspend, or refuse to renew a license or
5 shall reprimand a license holder for a violation of this chapter or
6 a department rule.

7 (b) The department may place on probation a person whose
8 license is suspended. If a license suspension is probated, the
9 department may require the person:

10 (1) to report regularly to the department on matters
11 that are the basis of the probation;

12 (2) to limit practice to the areas prescribed by the
13 department; or

14 (3) to continue or review professional education until
15 the person attains a degree of skill satisfactory to the department
16 in those areas that are the basis of the probation.

17 (c) Any person may commence a proceeding for revocation or
18 suspension of a license by filing written charges with the
19 department under oath.

20 Sec. 403.202. PROHIBITED ACTIONS. A license holder may
21 not:

22 (1) obtain a license by means of fraud,
23 misrepresentation, or concealment of a material fact;

24 (2) sell, barter, or offer to sell or barter a license;
25 or

26 (3) engage in unprofessional conduct that endangers or
27 is likely to endanger the health, welfare, or safety of the public

1 as defined by department rule.

2 Sec. 403.203. MONITORING OF LICENSE HOLDER; RULES. (a) The
3 department by rule shall develop a system for monitoring a license
4 holder's compliance with this chapter.

5 (b) Rules adopted under this section must include
6 procedures to:

7 (1) monitor for compliance a license holder who is
8 ordered by the department to perform certain acts; and

9 (2) identify and monitor license holders who represent
10 a risk to the public.

11 Sec. 403.204. LICENSE DENIAL, REVOCATION, OR SUSPENSION FOR
12 CRIMINAL CONVICTION. (a) The department may deny a license or may
13 suspend or revoke a license if the applicant or license holder has
14 been convicted of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude or a
15 felony. The department may take action authorized by this section
16 when:

17 (1) the time for appeal of the person's conviction has
18 elapsed;

19 (2) the judgment or conviction has been affirmed on
20 appeal; or

21 (3) an order granting probation is made suspending the
22 imposition of the person's sentence, without regard to whether a
23 subsequent order:

24 (A) allows withdrawal of a plea of guilty;

25 (B) sets aside a verdict of guilty; or

26 (C) dismisses an information or indictment.

27 (b) A plea or verdict of guilty or a conviction following a

1 plea of nolo contendere is a conviction for purposes of this
2 section.

3 Sec. 403.205. SCHEDULE OF SANCTIONS; RULES. The department
4 shall use the schedule of sanctions adopted by department rule for
5 any sanction imposed as the result of a hearing conducted by the
6 department.

7 Sec. 403.206. REINSTATEMENT. (a) A person may apply for
8 reinstatement of a revoked license on or after the first
9 anniversary of the date of revocation.

10 (b) The department may:

11 (1) accept or reject the application; and

12 (2) require an examination as a condition for
13 reinstatement of the license.

14 Sec. 403.207. REPRIMAND; CONTINUING EDUCATION. (a) In
15 addition to other disciplinary action authorized by this
16 subchapter, the department may:

17 (1) issue a written reprimand to a license holder who
18 violates this chapter; or

19 (2) require that a license holder who violates this
20 chapter attend continuing education programs.

21 (b) The department may specify the number of hours of
22 continuing education that must be completed by a license holder to
23 fulfill the requirement of Subsection (a)(2).

24 Sec. 403.208. EMERGENCY SUSPENSION. (a) The department or
25 a three-member committee of members designated by the department
26 shall temporarily suspend the license of a license holder if the
27 department or committee determines from the evidence or information

1 presented to it that continued practice by the license holder would
2 constitute a continuing and imminent threat to the public welfare.

3 (b) A license may be suspended under this section without
4 notice or hearing on the complaint if:

5 (1) action is taken to initiate proceedings for a
6 hearing before the State Office of Administrative Hearings
7 simultaneously with the temporary suspension; and

8 (2) a hearing is held as soon as practicable under this
9 chapter and Chapter 2001, Government Code.

10 (c) The State Office of Administrative Hearings shall hold a
11 preliminary hearing not later than the 14th day after the date of
12 the temporary suspension to determine if there is probable cause to
13 believe that a continuing and imminent threat to the public welfare
14 still exists. A final hearing on the matter shall be held not later
15 than the 61st day after the date of the temporary suspension.

16 [Sections 403.209-403.250 reserved for expansion]

17 SUBCHAPTER F. PENALTIES AND OTHER ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

18 Sec. 403.251. DECEPTIVE TRADE PRACTICE. A violation of
19 Section 403.101 is a deceptive trade practice.

20 Sec. 403.252. INJUNCTION. The department may apply to a
21 district court in any county for an injunction or another order to
22 restrain the violation of this chapter by a person other than a
23 license holder under this chapter.

24 Sec. 403.253. CRIMINAL OFFENSE. (a) A person commits an
25 offense if the person violates Section 403.101(a).

26 (b) An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

27 [Sections 403.254-403.300 reserved for expansion]

1 SUBCHAPTER G. ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY

2 Sec. 403.301. IMPOSITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY. The
3 department may impose an administrative penalty on a person
4 licensed under this chapter who violates this chapter or a rule or
5 order adopted under this chapter.

6 Sec. 403.302. AMOUNT OF ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY. (a) The
7 amount of the administrative penalty may not be less than \$50 or
8 more than \$5,000 for each violation. Each day a violation continues
9 or occurs is a separate violation for the purpose of imposing a
10 penalty.

11 (b) The amount shall be based on:

12 (1) the seriousness of the violation, including the
13 nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of the violation;

14 (2) the economic harm caused by the violation;

15 (3) the history of previous violations;

16 (4) the amount necessary to deter a future violation;

17 (5) efforts to correct the violation; and

18 (6) any other matter that justice may require.

19 Sec. 403.303. REPORT AND NOTICE OF VIOLATION AND PENALTY.

20 (a) If the department determines that a violation occurred, the
21 department may issue a report stating:

22 (1) the facts on which the determination is based; and

23 (2) the department's recommendation on the imposition
24 of an administrative penalty, including a recommendation on the
25 amount of the penalty.

26 (b) Within 14 days after the date the report is issued, the
27 department shall give written notice of the report to the person.

1 The notice must:

- 2 (1) include a brief summary of the alleged violation;
3 (2) state the amount of the recommended administrative
4 penalty; and
5 (3) inform the person of the person's right to a
6 hearing on the occurrence of the violation, the amount of the
7 penalty, or both.

8 Sec. 403.304. PENALTY TO BE PAID OR HEARING REQUESTED. (a)
9 Within 10 days after the date the person receives the notice, the
10 person in writing may:

- 11 (1) accept the determination and recommended
12 administrative penalty of the department; or
13 (2) make a request for a hearing on the occurrence of
14 the violation, the amount of the penalty, or both.

15 (b) If the person accepts the determination and recommended
16 penalty of the department, the department by order shall approve
17 the determination and impose the recommended penalty.

18 Sec. 403.305. HEARING. (a) If the person requests a
19 hearing or fails to respond in a timely manner to the notice, the
20 department shall set a hearing and give written notice of the
21 hearing to the person.

22 (b) An administrative law judge of the State Office of
23 Administrative Hearings shall hold the hearing.

24 (c) The administrative law judge shall make findings of fact
25 and conclusions of law and promptly issue to the department a
26 proposal for a decision about the occurrence of the violation and
27 the amount of a proposed administrative penalty.

1 Sec. 403.306. DECISION BY DEPARTMENT. (a) Based on the
2 findings of fact, conclusions of law, and proposal for decision,
3 the department by order may determine that:

4 (1) a violation occurred and impose an administrative
5 penalty; or

6 (2) a violation did not occur.

7 (b) The notice of the department's order given to the person
8 must include a statement of the right of the person to judicial
9 review of the order.

10 Sec. 403.307. OPTIONS FOLLOWING DECISION: PAY OR APPEAL.

11 (a) Within 30 days after the date the department's order becomes
12 final, the person shall:

13 (1) pay the administrative penalty; or

14 (2) file a petition for judicial review contesting the
15 occurrence of the violation, the amount of the penalty, or both.

16 (b) Within the 30-day period prescribed by Subsection (a), a
17 person who files a petition for judicial review may:

18 (1) stay enforcement of the penalty by:

19 (A) paying the penalty to the court for placement
20 in an escrow account; or

21 (B) giving the court a supersedeas bond approved
22 by the court that:

23 (i) is for the amount of the penalty; and

24 (ii) is effective until all judicial review
25 of the department's order is final; or

26 (2) request the court to stay enforcement of the
27 penalty by:

1 (A) filing with the court a sworn affidavit
2 stating that the person is financially unable to pay the penalty and
3 is financially unable to give the supersedeas bond; and

4 (B) giving a copy of the affidavit to the
5 department by certified mail.

6 (c) If the department receives a copy of an affidavit under
7 Subsection (b)(2), the department may file with the court, within
8 five days after the date the copy is received, a contest to the
9 affidavit.

10 (d) The court shall hold a hearing on the facts alleged in
11 the affidavit as soon as practicable and shall stay the enforcement
12 of the penalty on finding that the alleged facts are true. The
13 person who files an affidavit has the burden of proving that the
14 person is financially unable to pay the penalty and to give a
15 supersedeas bond.

16 Sec. 403.308. COLLECTION OF PENALTY. (a) If the person
17 does not pay the administrative penalty and the enforcement of the
18 penalty is not stayed, the penalty may be collected.

19 (b) The attorney general may sue to collect the penalty.

20 Sec. 403.309. DETERMINATION BY COURT. (a) If the court
21 sustains the determination that a violation occurred, the court may
22 uphold or reduce the amount of the administrative penalty and order
23 the person to pay the full or reduced amount of the penalty.

24 (b) If the court does not sustain the finding that a
25 violation occurred, the court shall order that a penalty is not
26 owed.

27 Sec. 403.310. REMITTANCE OF PENALTY AND INTEREST. (a) If

1 the person paid the administrative penalty and if the amount of the
2 penalty is reduced or the penalty is not upheld by the court, the
3 court shall order, when the court's judgment becomes final, that
4 the appropriate amount plus accrued interest be remitted to the
5 person.

6 (b) The interest accrues at the rate charged on loans to
7 depository institutions by the New York Federal Reserve Bank.

8 (c) The interest shall be paid for the period beginning on
9 the date the penalty is paid and ending on the date the penalty is
10 remitted.

11 (d) If the person gave a supersedeas bond and the penalty is
12 not upheld by the court, the court shall order, when the court's
13 judgment becomes final, the release of the bond.

14 (e) If the person gave a supersedeas bond and the amount of
15 the penalty is reduced, the court shall order the release of the
16 bond after the person pays the reduced amount.

17 SECTION 3. (a) Except as required by Subsection (b), this
18 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

19 (b) Section 403.101 and Subchapters E, F, and G, Chapter
20 403, Occupations Code, as added by this Act, take effect February 1,
21 2006.