

WINTER 2026

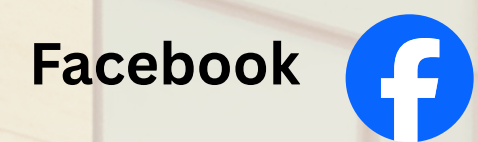
IN TOUCH

SCSHA
A



2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Convention Recap [6](#), Spring Workshop [13](#),
Meet the Board [3](#)



PRESIDENT:

Rebekah Wada, PhD, CCC-SLP

PRESIDENT ELECT

Christina Pelatti, Ph.D.,
CCC-SLP

PRESIDENT ELECT-ELECT

Carrie J. Hinnant, M.A., CCC-
SLP, BCBA, LBA, CAS

PAST PRESIDENT

Jessica Berry, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

**VP OF CLINICAL &
PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS**

Shaverra Jones, ClinScD,
CCC-SLP

VP OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Kelly Caldwell, MA, MS,
CCC-SLP

VP OF FINANCE & LEADERSHIP

Julia Costello, M.S., CCC-SLP

VP OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Angela N. McLeod, Ph. D.,
CCC-SLP

**VP OF MEMBERSHIP &
OUTREACH**

Ashley Scott, M.A., CCC-SLP

**VP OF ACCESSIBILITY,
INCLUSIVITY, AND
OPPORTUNITY**

Candace S. Fladger, M.Ed,
MCD, CCC-SLP

President's Message Rebekah Wada, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Dear SCSHA members,

Thank you to everyone who braved the cold, icy weather and attended the 2026 SCSHA Convention.

We had over 250 attendees come together to learn, network, and celebrate the achievements of our members. Thank you to everyone who contributed your time, expertise, and enthusiasm to ensuring a successful convention!

I am very excited about the upcoming plans for SCSHA in the next year. While there are many exciting events planned, I want to highlight two major upcoming events. First, through ASHA grant support, SCSHA is sponsoring students to participate during the South Carolina HBCU Day at the State House and gain hands-on advocacy experience. Second, the upcoming Spring Workshop will provide an opportunity to learn about billing, reimbursement, and practice management. And, as always, SCSHA will continue to advocate for the profession on key issues.

I encourage you to stay involved by attending events, participating in a committee, sharing ideas, and supporting our events. Your continued commitment strengthens our community and ensures that we remain responsive, innovative, and impactful.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Sincerely,
Rebekah Wada, Ph.D., CCC-SLP





MEET THE 2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD



PRESIDENT

Rebekah Wada, PhD, CCC-SLP

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- In my free time, I like to play video games and read.
 - I hate the taste of cucumbers.
 - My first job was teaching swim lessons.



PRESIDENT ELECT

Christina Pelatti, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

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- I'm SCSHA's President Elect. I have participated on the convention committee for the past 3 years, and I'm excited to start planning Convention 2027!
 - I'm an associate professor and Division Director of Speech-Language Pathology MUSC.
 - We moved to Charleston in July 2022 from Baltimore, Maryland where I was on faculty at Towson University.
 - I am originally from Indiana and went to school in Ohio!
 - My husband and I have three children (ages 12, 11, and 8), a naughty Golden Mountain Doodle puppy, and a feisty cat! Our family loves all things sports and games!
 - I love to read, cook, bake, and play games. I just recently jumped on the Mahjong wagon!





BEHIND THE BOARD

Who we are



PRESIDENT ELECT - ELECT

Carrie J. Hinnant, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCBA, LBA, CAS

- I used to sing opera in Italy.
- I'm an equestrian and love riding horses with my family.
- I can tie a knot in a cherry stem with my tongue.
- I have held a penguin.



PAST PRESIDENT

Jessica Berry, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

- I play acoustic guitar
- I love sunglasses and Albanese gummy worms.
- I have Christian music on iTunes



VP OF CLINICAL & PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS

Shaverra Jones, ClinScD, CCC-SLP

- As Vice President of Clinical and Professional Affairs, I am passionate about supporting clinicians and advancing best practices in our field. My professional interests include speech sound disorders and staying engaged with emerging research and innovative approaches that will shape the future of speech-language pathology.
- Key Initiatives related to SCSHA, I am committed to strengthening clinical resources, promoting professional growth opportunities, and supporting initiatives that empower both seasoned and emerging SLPs across South Carolina.
- Outside of my professional life, I enjoy all things related to the Gamecocks and spending quality time with my family and friends.
- Fun Fact: I have an identical twin sister and started learning to play the piano last summer!



VP OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Kelly Caldwell, MA, MS, CCC-SLP

- Geek out over policy and analytics, trying to find efficiency in everything.
- Love supporting professionals in advocacy so that they can love their jobs!
- Majored in flute performance in college and loved playing in the UNC Marching Tar Heels
- Was once given a superlative award for "most likely to plan her own funeral" because I'm THAT extra



BEHIND THE BOARD

Who we are



VP OF FINANCE & LEADERSHIP

Julia Costello , M.S., CCC-SLP

- I serve as SCSHA's Vice President of Finance and Leadership, and I am deeply committed to ethical leadership and transparent financial decision-making.
- I focus on ensuring that our financial planning directly supports meaningful advocacy—protecting access to services, promoting fair reimbursement, and uplifting clinicians in high-need settings.
- I am passionate about advancing policies that reflect real-world clinical practice, especially for SLPs, AAC users, and those providing neurodiversity-affirming and feeding-based services.
- Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, practicing yoga and meditation, and being outdoors. I value balance, intentional living, and personal growth.



VP OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Angela N. McLeod, Ph. D., CCC-SLP

- Board member since 2023
- Member of SCSHA for 20 years
- Serves as the Vice President of Higher Education, representing higher-education programs on the Executive Board
- Keeps the Board informed on updates to certification standards and other academic/clinical training requirements



VP OF MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH

Ashley Scott, M.A., CCC-SLP

- I'm excited to serve as VP of Membership & Outreach. I hope to increase membership by spreading the word across the state about how SCSHA serves and supports our SLPs.
- I serve as one of the speech leads for Berkeley County School District.
- I took classical voice and piano lessons for 11 years.
- Being a school-based SLP is truly my jam, especially treating speech sound disorders.
- In my free time, I enjoy shopping, going to the beach, and gardening.



VP OF ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSIVITY, AND OPPORTUNITY

Candace S. Fladger, M.Ed, MCD, CCC-SLP

- I serve as VP of Accessibility, Inclusivity, and Opportunity, representing these values on the Executive Board for a two-year term.
- I help oversee communications and trainings for the board and association members related to accessibility, inclusivity, and equity.

**VP of Membership
and Outreach**

Ashley Scott, M.A., CCC-SLP



CONVENTION RECAP

SCSHA's 2026 Annual Convention theme was Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers, Advocacy in Action.

This year's convention was filled with energy, connection, and plenty of fun. The following photos say it all! More than 250 professionals came together to learn, reconnect, and celebrate our incredible SLP community. From line dancing to honoring standout colleagues at our convention luncheon, the joy in the room was unmistakable.

We were especially grateful for our featured speaker, Megan Israelsen-Augenstein from West Virginia University, who shared powerful insights on using narratives in evaluation and treatment.

We also celebrated the legacy of Sharonda Coleman-Singleton with a joyful line-dancing tribute and by awarding a scholarship in her honor.

Attendees enjoyed a wide range of high-quality sessions and earned valuable CEUs. They also connected with outstanding presenters, sponsors, and vendors who helped make this year's convention a true success.

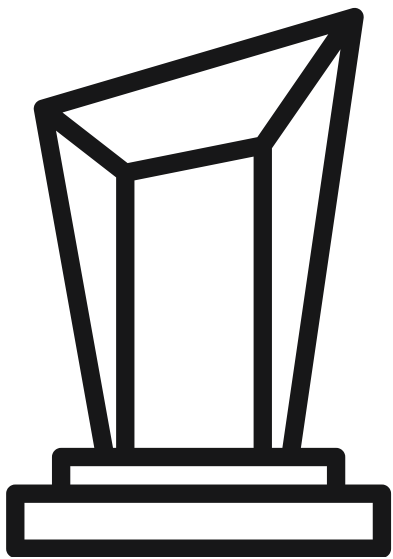


2026 CONVENTION

CONVENTION RECAP

See More Photos on





SCSHA 2026 Recognition Awards



Louis M. DiCarlo Award for Recent Clinical Achievement

Lori-Ann Ferraro Ph.D, CCC-SLP

Dr. Lori-Ann Ferraro is receiving the Louis M. DiCarlo Award for her outstanding contributions to advancing clinical practice. Through her leadership on Project SPARKLE, she secured a \$1.25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to transform interprofessional clinical education, and at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) she played a key role in establishing the SLP graduate clinical education program. As the ASHA STAR for South Carolina, she advocates for professional sustainability at the legislative level, and as founder of Over the Rainbow Speech-Language Pathology and Related Services, she provides family-centered services to rural and underserved communities. Her career exemplifies the innovation, expertise, and service that define this award.



Rolland J. Van Hattum Award for Contribution in the Schools

Mary Davis, Ph.D CCC-SLP

Dr. Mary Davis is receiving the Rolland J. Van Hattum Award for her exceptional commitment to delivering high-quality speech-language services within Lexington School District Two. Her thoughtful advocacy, dedication to student access, and support for fellow SLPs through mentoring, developing meaningful resources, and leading with integrity—exemplify the very spirit of this award.



Special Recognition Award

Carson C. Walker Ed.D, CCC-SLP

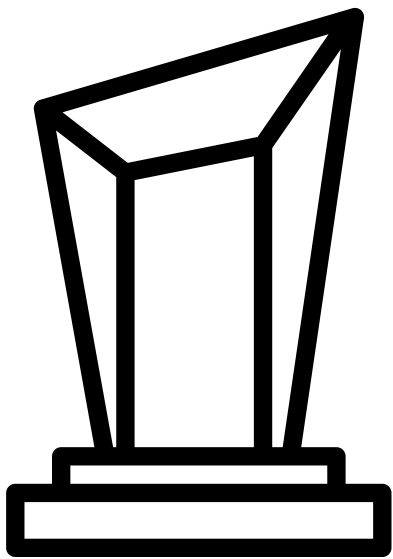
Dr. Carson Walker is receiving the Special Recognition Award for her outstanding contributions to the field through innovation, leadership, and advocacy. With nearly two decades of experience, she has made a meaningful impact across settings, from her work as Lead SLP in Berkeley County School District, where she founded a thriving Unified School program, to her current role as Assistant Professor and Director of Admissions at Oklahoma Baptist University, where she is developing a holistic admissions process to strengthen the future SLP workforce. Her vision, mentorship, and commitment to advancing our profession embody the very essence of this award.



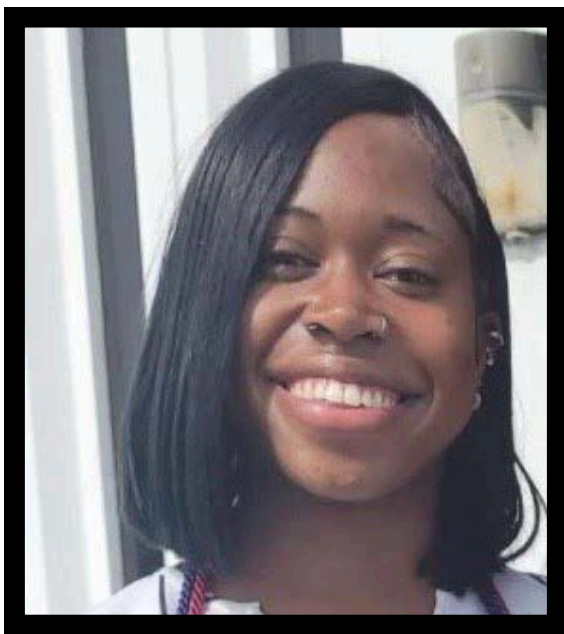
Ambassador Award

Silas Cotterman

Silas Cotterman is the recipient of the 2026 SCSHA Speech Ambassador award. He was chosen for the joy, curiosity, and positivity he brings to every speech therapy session. Silas approaches each challenge as an adventure, turning learning into a playful and inspiring journey. His enthusiasm reminds us that the journey toward better communication is just as meaningful as the milestones themselves.



SCSHA 2026 Recognition Awards



Sharonda Coleman-Singleton Scholarship Azaiyah Phillips

Azaiyah Phillips was selected as the recipient of the Sharonda Coleman-Singleton Memorial Scholarship in recognition of her exceptional dedication, leadership, and service. A standout student-athlete and scholar at South Carolina State University, she successfully balances the demands of her Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology program with her commitments on the Women's Track and Field Team and her leadership role within NSSLHA. Her impact reaches well beyond campus as she mentors younger athletes, supports school clean-up efforts, reads with elementary students through Read Across America, and assists families during the holiday season. Through her discipline, empathy, and commitment to uplifting others, Azaiyah exemplifies the values and spirit embodied by Sharonda Coleman-Singleton.



Jennifer Mungo Student of the Year Azaria Loyd

Azaria Loyd is receiving the Jennifer Mungo Student of the Year Award for her exceptional leadership, service, and academic excellence. Recognized by faculty at Columbia College for her professionalism and dedication, she has been an invaluable volunteer at Koala Camp, supporting toddlers with disabilities and their families through early ASL instruction. Her commitment extends into research and student leadership, where she contributes meaningfully to an undergraduate research project and serves as Treasurer of the NSSLHA chapter. Azaria truly embodies the spirit of this award through her scholarship, leadership, and service.



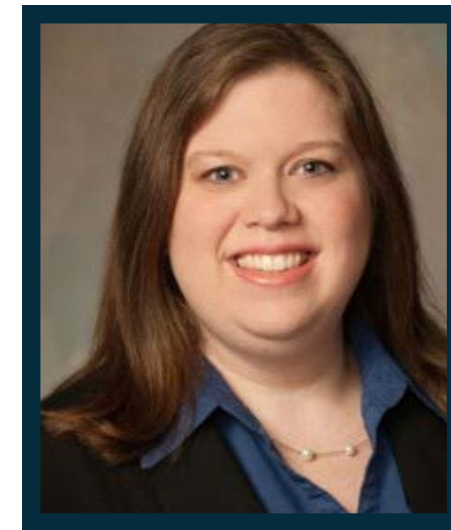
The SCSHA Foundation Scholarship Cara Vandergriff, Ph.D. Student

Cara is a PhD candidate in Communication Sciences and Disorders in the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina. Her doctoral research work is affiliated with the Aging Gracefully Lab and focuses on aging, reading, and cognitive-linguistic accessibility. She has presented on intergenerational book clubs and text accessibility and is working toward developing learning models of adult reading to enhance evidence-based interventions for the minor neurocognitive disorder (MiND) population. She is also a co-author on work characterizing social engagement during group exercise programs for residents in long-term care.

Cara currently serves as President of the COMD doctoral student association and also serves as a liaison between faculty and doctoral students. Acknowledging her work related to inclusion among under-represented communities and literacy-promoting initiatives, she was nominated for a campus Social Justice Award.



SCSHA Advocacy Update: February 2026



VP of Governmental Affairs
Kelly Caldwell, MA, MS, CCC-SLP

4 Goals



1. Enact the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact in SC



2. Share communication public health data reports and advocacy blueprints



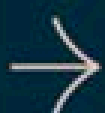
3. Modernize the Practice Act for SLP and Audiology

4. Engage stakeholders on health equity and access to care

- Submitted comments on H3021 small business regulatory freedom act
- Participated in advocacy with the Senate Education committee on H3974 private providers (in schools) bill
- Preparing public comments on Federal student loan access and professional degree designation to the US Dept of Ed
- Working with SCAA and LLR on language to update the practice act



4 Goals



1. Enact the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact in SC



2. Share communication public health data reports and advocacy blueprints



3. Modernize the Practice Act for SLP and Audiology

4. Engage stakeholders on health equity and access to care

- School SLP committee working on some specific professional development courses for May 2026 (target: National SLP month!)
- **SCSHA is participating in HBCU Student Advocacy day on February 17, 2026**
- Healthcare and economics committee is working on supporting the SCSHA spring workshop on reimbursement; date TBD- we will host (virtual) ASHA speakers and a panel presentation on payer policies this year





SCSHA Advocacy Update: February 2026

Bill Tracking

H3974 Private providers in schools (S429)

H3974 Skill-based hiring act

H3021 Small business regulatory freedom act (S254)

S377 Telemedicine and Telehealth

H3093 Assault and Battery on healthcare workers

H3480 Healthcare workplace security act

H3243 Lactation services under state health plan

S42 Insurance coverage for lactation services

H3089 Medical billing

H4562 Prior auth reform

H3210 Non-teaching duties of public school educators

H3342 Hearing aids

H3413 Student loan interest duration

H3927 Ending illegal DEI

H4468 Local advisory councils for educating students with disabilities

Medicare and Telehealth:
Extended through December 31,
2027

SC Medicaid: telehealth on CPT
92507 still good through
December 31, 2026; Babynet
does not allow telehealth without
special approval

BCBS of SC: Telehealth ends in
March 2026 (please help update
us if you hear differently, as
monitoring commercial payers is
a volunteer effort.

We are reviewing bills for the bill tracker in 2026 - ongoing



Member opportunities

SCSHA

Sign up to join a
SCSHA Committee

- Legislative affairs
- School SLPs
- Healthcare policy and economics
- AAC
- Membership

ASHA

- Scope of practice task force
- Fill out the ASHA Volunteer form (March deadline each year)
- Take Action!

Advocacy
Blog Tour!

Don't forget to submit your SCSHA
convention report on continuing
education activities by February 9.



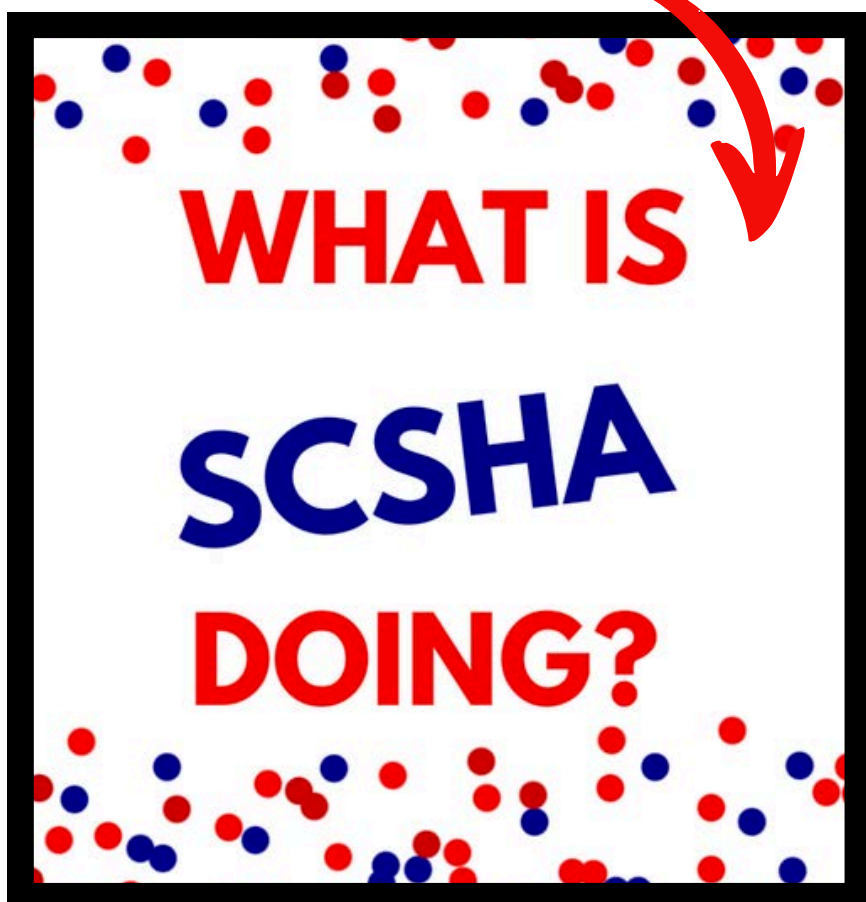


HAVE YOU CHECKED THE ADVOCACY BLOG LATELY?

Please stay up-to-date with SCSHA by logging into your member account on [SCSHA.co](https://www.scscha.co). We are working on updating the advocacy resources webpage this year as well, so if you have any ideas on what can be shared with members, please let us know!

UPCOMING EVENTS

VIRTUAL LINK



FRI
MARCH 6 **Lunch-and-Learn**
about Advocacy at
Noon

TUE
MAY 19 **Town Hall**
7pm

REGISTRATION INFORMATION TO BE
EMAILED TO ALL MEMBERS
2 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

WE'RE STARTING TO GEAR UP
FOR OUR 2027 CONVENTION,
AND WE'D LOVE YOUR HELP!



President Elect
Christina Pelatti, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

The Convention Planning Committee is looking for enthusiastic members to join the team and help create an event that reflects our members' community. One of our broad goals for the upcoming convention is to create an experience that is innovative, welcoming, and engaging—one that highlights fresh ideas while making every attendee feel included and supported. Your voice and perspective can help make that happen.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

- **Help design** sessions and events members care about
- **Contribute ideas** that make the convention innovative and welcoming
- **Build connections** with colleagues across the organization
- **Gain leadership** and planning **experience**
- **Make a real impact** on the success of our convention and our SCSHA community

WHAT'S THE COMMITMENT?

- **Monthly virtual meetings (August--January)**, with some tasks in between, depending on the committee
- **Opportunities** to help with programming, speakers, logistics, or communications based on your interests

NO EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED!

If you're interested, please add your name to the link [here](#).

*Please note: by adding your name, you are not committing to a committee.

Questions? Email Christina Pelatti at
christina_yeager03@yahoo.com.

GET INVOLVED

March

**NEW MEMBER
VIRTUAL
MEET & GREET**

MARCH 18TH, 2026 7PM

LINK TO JOIN!

