

## **Recommendations of the Connecticut School Nurse Advisory Council**

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### **Background and Purpose of Report**

Section one of Public Act No. 13-187, *An Act Concerning a School Nurse Advisory Council and An Advisory Council on Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorder Associated with Streptococcal Infections*, effective July 1, 2013 established the School Nurse Advisory Council. The Council makes recommendations to the Commissioners of Public Health and Education and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly on matters related to education and public health including (1) professional development for school nurses; (2) school nurse staffing levels; (3) the delivery of health care services by school nurses in schools and other matters that affect school nurses; (4) protocols for Emergency Medication Administration; and (5) protocols for evaluating certain temporary medical conditions that may be symptomatic of serious illnesses or injuries.

The Council is in its ninth year and meets monthly from September to January and once at legislative session end. Annual reports are submitted to Co-Chairs of Education and Public Health and Commissioners of State Department of Education and Public Health.

Schools in Connecticut are under local control, resulting in school health services, school nurse professional development, staffing levels and health services that vary from district to district. Members of the Council gave careful deliberation to the needs of districts in Connecticut and to state and national regulations, guidelines, and best practices.

#### **Recommendations from 2023 are:**

- American Federation of Teachers, Connecticut, AFL-CIO- support
- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)- no position
- Association of School Nurses of Connecticut (ASNC) -support
- Connecticut Association for Health Care at Home-support

- Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS)- no support
- Connecticut Nurses Association (CNA)- support
- Connecticut Federation of School Administrators -support
- Connecticut Chapter of The American Academy of Pediatrics- support

## Recommendations

- I. Professional Development and Qualifications for School Nurses Professional Development: Professionals in all fields must participate in professional development to remain current. Changes in professional development for other professional staff in school requires district level professional development offerings. There are a variety of ways for districts to offer school nurses professional development such as nurse driven professional development, networking opportunities, online education, and inclusion in interdisciplinary offerings provided by Boards of Education. It is imperative for school nurses to access quality professional development to remain current with evolving health and educational standards. CGS10-212-a *Qualifications for School Nurses*, dated 1982, require school nurses to participate in a minimum of 10 hours of professional development every two years. Proposed recommendation for professional development: **increase continuing education from 10 hours every two years to 15 hours every two years commencing July 1, 2023.**

### Qualifications:

40 years have passed with no revisions to the 1982 regulations for school nurses. It is, and has been, the recommendation of this Council to see the 1982 regulations change.

<https://statepolicies.nasbe.org/health/categories/health-services/school-nurse-qualifications/connecticut>

Recommendations related to CGS 10-212 are: **revise regulations written in 1982 to include entry level requirement for school nurses as a Bachelor of Science in Nursing or a related field. Nurses entering without a Bachelor degree will have 5 years to gain the degree. Nurses currently serving as school nurses will be grandfathered.**

**Recommendations also include creating a Special Services Endorsement for school nurses equal to social workers, speech and language pathologists, psychologists, guidance counselors etc.** School social workers, speech and language pathologists, psychologists, and counselors are licensed by the Department of Public Health as well as certified by the State Department of Education. It is time for school nurses to be afforded the same opportunity for certification by the State Department of Education as their professional colleagues. Collaboration with all stakeholders to develop an appropriate program with a practicum, curriculum, and measurable outcomes is recommended.

Children in Connecticut schools deserve highly qualified school nurses managing their health care needs. Over 50% of school nurses and school nurse supervisors currently have a Bachelor degree; others hold a Master degree or higher.

School nurses support instruction and academic success. Diversity in the student population, more students with complex health care needs, and increasing responsibilities challenge school nurses.

Advanced education for school nurses is a critical contributor toward achievement of the goals of Connecticut schools.

- II. **School Nurse Staffing Recommendations**

TBD for 2024-25 recommendations.

- III. **The Delivery of Health Care Services by School Nurses in Schools and Other Matters that Affect School Nurses**

The number of children getting immunized has gone down and the number of exemptions has gone up. Reduction in herd immunity due to decreasing vaccine rates is a concern. The Council supports maintaining the law related to medical exemptions. The Council does not support moral and philosophical exemptions.

- IV. **Protocols for Emergency Medication Administration**

No recommendations at this time.

**Summary of recommendations:**

**Section I. Professional Development and Requirements for School Nurses**

- a. **Revise regulations written in 1982 CGS 10-212- Bachelor of Science in Nursing or related field**  
Nurses entering without a Bachelor degree will have 5 years to gain the degree.
- b. **Increase continuing education from 10 hours every two years to 15 hours every two years provided by the local Board of Education commencing July 1, 2023.**
- c. **Begin the process for a Special Services Endorsement for School Nurses from SDE with consideration for Health Departments, Agencies, Towns etc. employing school nurses.**

**Section III.**

**Maintain Medical Exemptions for vaccines- no support for moral and philosophical exemptions.**

Recognition is given to members of the Council and those who review this document for their dedication and efforts on behalf of the school health and Connecticut's children.

Submitted to:

Co-chairs of Education Committee  
Co-chairs of Public Health  
Commissioner of Education SDE  
Commissioner of Public Health DPH

Respectfully submitted by,

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*NOTE: Defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), the term 'specialized instructional support personnel' means- "(i) school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists; and "(ii) other qualified professional personnel, such as school nurses, speech language pathologists, and school librarians, involved in providing assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic, and other necessary services (including related services as that term is defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401) as part of a comprehensive program to meet student needs."*