

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Lorena Gonzalez, Chair
AB 815 (Luz Rivas, et al.) – As Introduced February 16, 2021

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 7 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill allows a local educational agency (LEA) to offer a school nurse credentialing program to school nurse candidates. Specifically, it authorizes the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to approve a program offered by an LEA for one year of coursework beyond the baccalaureate degree to fulfill requirements for becoming a school nurse. The bill requires CTC to apply the standards for approval to a program offered by a postsecondary educational institution to a program offered by an LEA.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Minor one-time and ongoing special fund costs to CTC to evaluate and decide whether to approve nurse credentialing programs offered by an LEA. CTC indicates that each program review process requires 0.1 staff and about \$15,000. CTC expects between one and five LEAs to offer a program in the nearer term.
- 2) One-time Proposition 98 GF cost pressures to an LEA opting to offer the program of about \$40,000 for personnel to develop and submit a new nursing program to the CTC and to pay CTC fees.
- 3) Potential, ongoing Proposition 98 GF cost pressures of about \$40,000 annually to an LEA opting to offer a program to a single cohort of 25 students, or about \$1,600 per participant. To the extent a program charges a school nurse candidate for the program, costs would be lower. Statewide costs would depend on the number of LEAs opting to offer a program.

LEA cost estimates are based on estimates provided by Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). LAUSD intends to apply for approval to offer a school nurse program, should this bill become law.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Background.** Currently, to become a school nurse in California, a candidate must have (a) a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited institution; (b) a valid California license as a registered nurse; and (c) one year of coursework beyond the baccalaureate degree in a school nursing credential program approved by CTC.

Currently, four postsecondary educational institutions offer school nursing credential programs in California: California State University (CSU) at Fresno, CSU at Sacramento,

CSU at Fullerton and one private program offered at Azusa Pacific University located northeast of Los Angeles. The cost for these credential programs range from about \$4,400 to \$19,600.

- 2) **Support and Opposition.** This bill is sponsored by LAUSD. LAUSD indicates California is facing a school nurse shortage, and that allowing LEAs to offer their own credentialing programs would provide additional options and opportunities to become a school nurse. Since 1983, LAUSD has offered CTC-approved teacher credentialing programs. LAUSD views its credentialing programs as a teacher recruitment and retention effort and does not charge teachers candidates for these programs.

This bill is opposed by the California School Nurses Organization (CSNO) and the CSU Office of the Chancellor. The CSNO indicates it would be less costly and more effective to collaborate with and scale up existing programs and notes existing postsecondary programs are not oversubscribed and offer online courses and in-person placements. The CSU Office of the Chancellor raises similar concerns.

- 3) **Prior Legislation.** AB 2175 (Gibson), of the 2019-20 Legislative Session, was substantially similar to this bill. The bill died in the Assembly Education Committee without being heard by the committee.

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