

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 815 (Luz Rivas, et al.)

As Amended August 26, 2021

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Authorizes the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to approve a clear credential program offered by a local educational agency (LEA) for school nursing; and, requires the CTC to apply the standards for approval of a program of professional preparation offered by a postsecondary educational institution to a program of professional preparation offered by a LEA.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Clarify that one of the minimum requirements for a services credential with a specialization in health for a school nurse is a baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.
- 2) Authorize LEAs that served 40,000 or more students during the 2019-20 fiscal year to apply to the CTC to offer a clear credential program for school nursing.

COMMENTS

The need for nurses and school nurses. By 2030, California is anticipated to have the most severe nursing shortage alongside Florida and Texas. California is also expected to have significant population growth projected at 116% by 2030 (Zhang, 2018). Additional factors exacerbating the shortage include the shifting demographics of an increasing aging population of baby boomers who started reaching the retirement age of 65 years in 2011 and a significant portion of the nursing workforce that is nearing retirement age.

Based on figures provided by the California Department of California (CDE), the 2018-2019 school year reported there were 2,720 nurses employed in California schools and a total of 6,186,278 students in the State. This amounts to 2,274 students for every school nurse. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends one school nurse to 750 students in a healthy population and decreases to a 1:225 school nurse to student ratio when accounting for pupils who require daily professional health services. For a student population as large and diverse as California's, it is essential to staff the appropriate amount of nurses for every school.

The role of school nurses. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, a school nurse provides vital services to pupils that aid in the educational success of students including preventive and screening services, direct care for pupils who sustain injuries and pupils with acute illnesses, and they serve as liaisons between school personnel, family, and health care professionals. For students who have special health needs, such as children with chronic illnesses or disabilities with varying degrees of severity, the school nurse has a unique role in developing a health care plan for management of problems in a school setting.

According to the Author

"COVID-19 highlighted the critical role that nurses play in safeguarding the health of our communities. Unfortunately, a majority of California's schoolchildren must attend a school with no nurse present. In fact, for the 2018-2019 school year, there was only one nurse for every 2,400 students. This school nurse shortage means that non-medical staff, like teachers and

administrators, must be the one who provide critical health services for students, particularly those experiencing chronic health conditions like diabetes and asthma.

Under currently law, candidates must earn a Clear School Nurse Services Credential to serve as a school nurse. However, only four universities in the entire state offer accredited programs that grant this credential. AB 815 increases access to this necessary credentialing program by clarifying in state law that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) can apply to the Commission on Teaching Credentialing to establish in-house Clear School Nurse Services credentialing programs."

Arguments in Support

Los Angeles Unified School District states, "Los Angeles Unified views the provisions in AB 815 is creating an alternative option, but not a replacement, of the existing credentialing programs offered by postsecondary institutions of higher education. We believe there are several benefits to authorizing LEAs to offer their own credentialing programs. School nurse candidates are able to experience on-site learning, receive ongoing mentoring and on-the-job coaching, and be immersed in the school campus life to better understand the health and social and emotional needs of the student population served. Los Angeles Unified has offered distinguished educator preparation programs since 1983 that meet or exceed the quality standards and rigor set forth by the CTC, and is prepared to set the same standards when seeking accreditation to offer a Professional Clear School Nurse Services Credential. By expanding which entities may offer the necessary school nurse credential, AB 815 could have the effect of increasing access to high-quality credentialing programs with the goal of supporting school employers with more qualified candidates that are ready for hire or who still need to complete the credentialing requirements."

Arguments in Opposition

The American Nurses Association California states, "AB 815 will not address the shortage of school nurses until the State of California addresses its state-wide shortage of school nurses, especially in regions where a limited number of school nurses serve large pupil populations, or where school nurse are not at all. It is important to realize that credentialing of school nurses is quite different from teach credentialing. While LAUSD had success with their teacher credentialing program, we are questioning the ability of an LEA to develop and implement a school nurse credentialing program. Any nursing education program requires the expertise and experience of nursing faculty and the approval by the CA Board of Registered Nursing. CA is experiencing an alarming shortage of nursing faculty at its colleges or universities and the future looks even bleaker.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- 1) The bill's authorization for CTC to approve LEA-based school nursing credentialing programs could result in additional one-time costs in the tens of thousands of dollars for each LEA to develop and submit a new nursing program to CTC for approval. Additionally, a participating LEA is likely to incur ongoing costs estimated to be in the tens of thousands of dollars each year to offer the program for free to a single cohort of students. To the extent that a program charges a program candidate fees to participate, these costs could be lower.
- 2) The CTC indicates it would incur additional special fund costs to evaluate school nurse credentialing programs seek815

- 3) ing authorization offered by an LEA. Specifically, each program review process would require 0.1 staff or about \$15,000 and these costs would need to be absorbed by its reserves for the 2021-22 fiscal year since the Budget Act suspends accreditation fees for that year. The CTC also estimates that given the workload necessary for an LEA to create a school nurse credentialing program, there would be between one and five LEAs seeking authorization in the near term.

VOTES:

ASM EDUCATION: 7-0-0

YES: O'Donnell, Kiley, Bennett, Megan Dahle, Lee, McCarty, Quirk-Silva

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 16-0-0

YES: Lorena Gonzalez, Bigelow, Calderon, Carrillo, Chau, Megan Dahle, Davies, Fong, Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Levine, Quirk, Robert Rivas, Akilah Weber, Holden, Luz Rivas

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0-3

YES: Aguiar-Curry, Arambula, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bloom, Boerner Horvath, Bryan, Burke, Calderon, Carrillo, Cervantes, Chau, Chen, Chiu, Choi, Cooley, Cooper, Cunningham, Megan Dahle, Daly, Davies, Flora, Fong, Frazier, Friedman, Gabriel, Gallagher, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gipson, Gray, Grayson, Holden, Irwin, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Kiley, Lackey, Lee, Levine, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, McCarty, Medina, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, Nguyen, O'Donnell, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Santiago, Seyarto, Smith, Stone, Ting, Valladares, Villapudua, Voepel, Waldron, Ward, Akilah Weber, Wicks, Wood, Rendon

ABS, ABST OR NV: Bigelow, Lorena Gonzalez, Mayes

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Atkins, Bates, Becker, Borgeas, Bradford, Caballero, Cortese, Dahle, Dodd, Durazo, Glazer, Gonzalez, Grove, Hertzberg, Hueso, Hurtado, Jones, Kamlager, Laird, Leyva, Limón, McGuire, Melendez, Min, Newman, Nielsen, Ochoa Bogh, Pan, Portantino, Roth, Rubio, Skinner, Umberg, Wieckowski, Wiener, Wilk

ABS, ABST OR NV: Eggman, Stern

UPDATED

VERSION: August 26, 2021

CONSULTANT: Chelsea Kelley / ED. / (916) 319-2087

FN: 0001790