

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 1618

SPONSOR: Senator Klein

SUBJECT: School Health Services

DATE: March 22, 2001

REVISED: 04/05/01

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Munroe	Wilson	HC	Favorable
2.			ED	
3.			AHS	
4.			AP	
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

The bill creates a program to make available matching funds for school nurse services to local communities that have the involvement of public-private partnerships in the funding or delivery of school nurse services. The Secretary of Health and the Commissioner of Education or their designees must form a committee to determine the eligibility of sites for matching funds. Criteria for eligibility include: evidence of a comprehensive in-service staff development plan; evidence of a working relationship between the county health department and the school district; a high incidence of medically underserved children, children with chronic health conditions or children with high-risk behavior problems; a commitment of funds or resources from community entities; and a plan for billing Medicaid under a certified match program.

The bill establishes the intent of the Legislative to make sufficient funds available to provide a nurse in every school in the state under this act. Funding sources cited include those for comprehensive school health services, full service schools, Medicaid match programs and tobacco-settlement revenue.

This bill creates section 381.0058, Florida Statutes, and undesignated section of law.

II. Present Situation:

School Health Services

Section 381.0056, F.S., is entitled the ~~A~~School Health Services Act, @also known as the basic school health services program. This section authorizes the Department of Health (DOH), in cooperation with the Department of Education (DOE), to administer the school health services program, consisting of mandated services and the biennial development of a local school health

services plan, based on plan elements specified in statute. As used in s. 381.0056(3)(b), F.S., an “entity” or “health care entity” is defined to mean any of the following organizations participating in a public-private partnership with a county health department, school district, or school in the delivery of school health services: a local governmental unit, hospital, health maintenance organization, health insurer, community health center, migrant health center, federally qualified health center, non-profit organization, private industry, business, or philanthropic foundation.

Section 381.0057, F.S., relates to funding for school health services, commonly referred to as the comprehensive school health services program. Comprehensive school health services projects are co-designed by county health departments and local school districts, with public input. The projects have three goals: promote student health; decrease student involvement in drug/alcohol abuse, suicide/homicide, and other forms of risk-taking behaviors; and reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy.

Section 402.3026, F.S., provides additional statutory guidance for full-service schools, under which county health department staff provides their services on school campuses as an extension of the educational environment. DOE and DOH are to jointly establish full-service schools to serve students from schools that have a student population that has a high risk of needing medical and social services, based on the results of demographic evaluations. Services may include nutritional services, medical services, aid to dependent children, parenting skills, counseling for abused children, education for the students' parents or guardians, and counseling for children at high risk for delinquent behavior and their parents. Full-service schools must integrate the services that are critical to the continuity-of-care process and provide services to these high-risk students through facilities established within the grounds of the school.

Availability of Nurses

Florida has a total of nearly 3,000 schools and 2.3 million students, and has 797 nurses providing services in the schools. Nearly one third of the school health nurses are provided through private-public partnerships, mostly in Palm Beach County and other large counties with access to taxing district funds, large hospitals or industries. If these nurses were distributed evenly throughout the state, less than one in four school health rooms would be staffed with a nurse.

The nurse-to-student ratio is a common standard that is used in assessing school health services. The National Association of School Nurses recommends a staffing ratio of one Registered Nurse (RN) for every 750 students. In 1987, the Florida Department of Education recommended a quality standard for Florida of no less than one RN for every 1,500 generic students. The ratio in the basic school health services program is 1:6,059 students, while the ratio in the comprehensive school health services projects is 1:1,586 students. Florida's nurse-to-student ratio varies greatly according to region and program. Only 7 counties/school districts achieve the recommended 1:1,500 ratio for basic school health services, while 34 counties/districts have a ratio exceeding 1:3,000.

The minimum entry standard for school health nurses hired by the Department of Health is a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from an accredited school of nursing. Only in cases of acute shortage can nurses with associate degrees or hospital diplomas plus extensive experience be

hired. School health nurses are hired by several entities and there is no universal adherence to uniform standards for training, hiring, placement, and supervision of nurses.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill creates s. 381.0058, F.S., to provide circumstances under which matching funds for school nurse services will be made available to local communities that have the involvement of public-private partnerships in the funding or delivery of school nurse services. The Secretary of Health and the Commissioner of Education or their designees must publicize the availability of matching funds and form a committee to determine the eligibility of sites for matching funds. Communities seeking matching funds must submit a proposal that contains certain specified information. County health departments or local school districts receiving matching funds may not supplant more than 50 percent of current local contributions. Criteria for eligibility include: evidence of a comprehensive in-service staff development plan; evidence of a working relationship between the county health department and the school district; a high incidence of medically underserved children, children with chronic health conditions or children with high-risk behavior problems; a commitment of funds or resources from community entities; and a plan for billing Medicaid under a certified match program.

The bill establishes the intent of the Legislative to use tobacco-settlement revenue to pay for health and human services for children and to make sufficient funds available to provide a nurse in every school in the state under this act. Funding sources cited include those for comprehensive school health services, full service schools, Medicaid match programs and tobacco-settlement revenue.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2001.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on municipalities and the counties under the requirements of Art. VII, s. 18 of the Florida Constitution.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on public records or open meetings issues under the requirements of Art. I, s. 24(a) and (b) of the Florida Constitution.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on the trust fund restrictions under the requirements of Art. III, s. 19(f) of the Florida Constitution.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Health and the Department of Education will incur costs to implement the requirements of the bill to administer the matching funds for public and private entities; to enhance the availability of school nurse services; and to form a committee to determine the eligibility of sites to receive matching funds.

The Department of Health estimates are based on the legislative goal of “one nurse per school,” and will be phased in over a five-year period. The Department of Health will employ 435 school nurses at \$39,519 and expenses costing \$17,738,103 for fiscal year 2002-2003 and 446 school nurses at \$40,705 for fiscal year 2003-2004. The Department of Health will provide support for the implementation of the expanded school health program.

The services to develop, manage, and evaluate the disbursement of matching funds will be contracted for an estimated \$120,000 for fiscal year 2002-2003 and \$110,000 for fiscal year 2003-2004. The bill does not provide an appropriation to fund the award of matching funds to local communities.

The Department of Health projects local matching funds of \$3,223,268 for fiscal year 2002-2003 and \$4,510,611 for fiscal year 2003-2004, which will offset a portion of the cost of the program.

The Department of Health estimates the total cost to the state, after deducting local match, will be \$15,613,585 for fiscal year 2002-2003 and \$19,612,881 for fiscal year 2003-2004.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.