

February 10, 2019

Honorable 12th District Legislative Representatives

Keith Goehner, Brad Hawkins, Mike Steele

Dear Legislators,

I am the Lead School Nurse for the Wenatchee School District. Our nurse group consists of seven experienced, and well-educated school nurses. We are responsible for nearly 8,000 students throughout the District. We are charged with complying with State laws, State mandated vision and hearing screenings, monitoring immunization status of our students (and now staff, with the current measles outbreak!), advocating for at-risk students, developing care plans, securing medication orders, training and delegating our licenses to school staff, providing care in health rooms, as well as collaborating with school staff, health providers, and families.

Schools are responsible for the well-being of their students from the time they arrive at school until the time they return home. This includes during after school sports, activities, and field trips. District nurses review student health records - and report to responsible staff - every time students are 'off campus' or participating in school sponsored extracurricular activities. This keeps our students safe, and minimizes risk to staff and school district.

Each of our nurses spends two days per week in each school, for approximately 1,000 students. Recommended ratio for schools is 1 nurse for every 750 healthy students. Our students are not all healthy. We have seen significant increases in students with type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetes, life threatening allergies, asthma, medications at school, and mental health concerns. We currently have 22 insulin-dependent students in the Wenatchee School District. They range from grades kindergarten through 12th grade. In 2008 - just 10 years ago - we had only 12 diabetics in our District! These students need varying degrees of support, which must be

assessed by a school nurse, and negotiated with families and staff. We cannot delegate administration of insulin in the school setting.

The result of the implementation of HB 2242 and E2SSB 6362 will be devastating for our District. The Wenatchee School District will lose \$5.6 million, in levy revenues alone. These dollars have supported many initiatives which help our students. The support from the State in Basic Education monies are woefully inadequate. Our District would only be funded for 1.1 school nurses to cover our 7,700 students! Surely, anyone would understand that this is not even close to appropriate. I question how this formula was developed. It would be impossible to provide any assurance of safety with this level of nursing support.

Please re-visit the issues of the levy swap, or reconsider increasing the State funding allocation to cover basic student needs. The model currently proposed will certainly have a negative impact on our students and our community. Our community recognizes the value of supporting our schools and our students. We have supported levies to provide programs and staff for our children. If our District is forced to make cuts, in response to funding shortfalls, our most vulnerable students will be stripped of programs and staff who can, and do make a difference in their futures.

Finally, please understand that there is research which concludes that school attendance is strongly correlated with school nursing hours. Please consider increasing funding for professional nurses in schools.

Thank you for your time. I appreciate your advocacy for the children in our District. I would be happy to meet with any of you, if your schedule allows.

Sincerely,

Julie Robinson, MN, RN  
School Nurse, Lead  
Wenatchee School District  
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