COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Qualified School Nurse

Every school-aged child deserves a school nurse who is highly qualified and holds a degree from an accredited college or university and is licensed as a registered nurse through the Colorado Division of Regulatory Agencies (DORA). These requirements constitute minimal preparation needed to practice at the entry level of school nursing according to the American Nurses Association and the National Association of School Nurses.

School nursing requires advanced skills that include the ability to practice independently, supervise others, and delegate care in a community, rather than a hospital or clinic setting. These advanced skills are needed to address the complex health needs of students within the school community setting. These skills are attained through a baccalaureate degree in nursing.

School nurses must hold a Colorado Department of Education license as a special services provider with a school nurse endorsement. The requirement is a) a baccalaureate degree in nursing and a current DORA license as an RN; or b) baccalaureate degree in a related field, a current DORA license as an RN with three years school nursing experience, and national school nurse certification.

> **2260.5-R-2.00 General Licensing Regulations**. The Colorado Department of Education has the sole authority to issue educator licenses and authorizations. Pursuant to 22-63-201 and 22-32-126, C.R.S., a Colorado license or authorization is <u>required</u> for employment as a teacher, special services provider, or principal in a Colorado School District or school.

E.C.E.A. rules also require that all related services personnel including school nurses must hold a CDE Special Services license.

> **1 CCR 304-8 3.04 (1)(b) Related services personnel**. All related services personnel providing service to children with disabilities shall hold Colorado special services licenses or certificates with appropriate endorsements.

The new Educator Effectiveness for Specialized Services Professionals require under Standard III, Element A that the School Nurse maintains a Special Service Provider license for School Nursing from the Colorado Department of Education to be Partially Proficient.

Registered nurses that do not meet the qualifications for a CDE special services license are able to apply for a temporary endorsement through their school district if they are currently enrolled in a BSN program. District hiring personnel would provide the pertinent information for this temporary process. This type of license is renewed yearly and gives the nurse 3 years to complete the program as long as they are progressing toward their BSN degree. There are many RN to BSN programs available in the state including online programs that can be easily accessed to fulfill this requirement.

It is also important to bring to your attention that in August 2004, a bill was passed in the Colorado legislature that limits the use of the title ”Nurse” to RNs and LPNs. Any person who violates the provisions of this section commits a class 3 misdemeanor and shall be punished as provided in section 18-1-106 C.R.S. Unlicensed individuals working as health office assistants or health techs in schools may not call themselves the school “nurse” or indicate in any way to staff, students, or families that they are the “nurse”.