



# School Nursing and Health Program

## School Health Services Office

### Overview

The [School Nursing and Health](#) program, provided through the [School Health Services \(SHS\) Office](#), supports Colorado districts, BOCES, schools, and school community members in developing and sustaining practices that support the whole child and establishes a culture of health and wellness for all students, families, and staff. This office provides school health-related guidance, technical assistance and professional development related to chronic disease prevention and management, and school health infrastructure. Team members serve as subject matter experts and administer school health-related grants and programs.

### Student Health and School Nursing Services

School nurses support student success by leading efforts that protect the health and safety of school community members and addressing health-related barriers that can interfere with a student's ability to learn. It's been estimated that more than 40% of school-aged children and adolescents have at least one chronic health condition and children with unmet health needs may have difficulty engaging in the educational process. Schools must be prepared to respond to the health-related needs of students, including those with complex health conditions and life-threatening emergencies. ([CDC Managing Health Conditions in School](#))

School nurses are essential members of the school's interdisciplinary team and are uniquely qualified to address health issues that impede academic progress. They facilitate access to the educational environment and reduce chronic absenteeism by supporting the identification of students with disabilities, facilitating access to treatments and services, and ensuring safe environments through infectious disease control efforts and safety monitoring.

### School Nurse Workloads

According to the [National Association of School Nurses](#) professional school nurses can improve students' health, safety, and educational achievement. The [American Academy of Pediatrics 2016 \(reaffirmed July 2023\) policy statement](#) recommends a full-time nurse in every school. School nurse workloads should be evaluated on at least an annual basis to meet the health and safety needs of school communities. Staffing considerations should include safety, medical complexity, social, and health needs of students and the school's access to emergency care.

### Laws, Rules, Regulations

Federal and state legislation impacting School Health Services are summarized in [Essential School Health Services \(PDF\)](#).