



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 20, 2015

TO: The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

FROM: Robert D. Overmiller, Chairperson
GACEC

RE: House Bill No. 12 (School Nurse Funding)

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed House Bill No. 12 which authorizes public schools to apply for supplemental State funds subject to annual appropriations to fund school nurses. The bill also authorizes a district which receives the supplemental State funds to increase its local tax to pay for the local share of employment costs without referendum. See line 11 and Title 14 Del.C. §1902(b). The GACEC **endorses** House Bill No. 12.

As background, Title 14 Del.C. §1310 currently authorizes school nurse funding for districts based on one nurse per 40 state units of pupils. Districts are also required to have "at least 1 school nurse per facility". If the "1-40" funding formula is insufficient to provide for one nurse per facility, the districts are directed to use either Division III equalization funds (§1707), academic excellence funds (§1716), or discretionary local operating expense funds to make up the shortfall. Council understands however, that some public schools lack a nurse despite the statutory requirement.

The availability of school nurses has several salutary effects. First, it promotes inclusion of students with disabilities who may require some nursing services to be successful in integrated settings. Second, it facilitates screening of students for health problems. Third, it facilitates quick response in the event of a student injury or emergency (e.g. seizure). However, the sponsors may wish to consider an amendment. The attached §1310(b) only applies the requirement of a nurse in each facility to school districts, not charter schools. Therefore, it is somewhat irregular for House Bill No. 12 to refer to the requirement that only applies to districts and then authorize supplemental funding for both districts and charter schools. It would be preferable to require both district and charter schools to have a school nurse in each facility.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our observations and recommendations. Please feel free to contact me or Wendy Strauss should you have any questions.

Attachment