



**Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)**  
516 West Loockerman St., Dover, DE 19904  
302-739-4553 (voice) 302-739-6126 (fax) <http://www.gacec.delaware.gov>

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 16, 2017

**TO:** The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

**FROM:** Dafne A. Carnright, Chairperson  
GACEC

**RE:** **House Bill No. 50 (School Nurse Funding)**

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed **House Bill No. 50** which will ensure that every public school in the State has a school nurse. The bill provides a mechanism to allow a district or a charter school that currently does not have a school nurse to receive state funds and permits district to levy a tax under § 1902(b), Title 14, known as a "match tax", to assist those districts that hire a school nurse as a result of this legislation to pay for the local share of that school nurse. Council **endorses** this bill.

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.

The implication of the synopsis to House Bill No. 50 is that some public schools lack a nurse despite the statutory requirement. Problems associated with the lack of school nurse in each facility are outlined in a February 2, 2017 News Journal article entitled, "A nurse in every Delaware school".

The availability of school nurses has several salutary effects. First, it promotes the 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 responses in the event of a student injury or emergency (e.g. seizure). However, Council suggests the sponsors of this legislation consider an amendment. §1310(b) only applies the requirement of a nurse in each facility to school districts, not to charter schools. Therefore, it is somewhat irregular for House Bill No. 50 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 endorsement and suggestion. Please feel free to contact me or Wendy Strauss at the GACEC office should you have any questions.