

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5737

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As of February 23, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to school nurses.

**Brief Description:** Modifying school nurse provisions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Deccio, Winsley, Franklin, Thibaudeau, Oke, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/26/01.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Staff:** Rhoda Donkin (786-7198)

**Background:** Children go to school managing virtually any health condition found among people anywhere. Federal and state law requires that all students with debilitating health conditions must be given special services from schools to assure their access to a "free appropriate public education."

For several years there has been concern that schools lack sufficient nursing staff to safely meet the needs of children in schools. In most school districts, nurses are shared between schools, and in some parts of the state, the ratio of nurses to pupils is as high as one nurse to 2,500 students. In view of the legal requirements on schools to accommodate students with chronic and disabling conditions, the concern over insufficient nursing care remains widespread.

**Summary of Bill:** Beginning with the 2000-2001 school year, each school district must maintain a ratio of no fewer than one school nurse for every 1500 full time equivalent students. In the 2002-2003 school year, the ratio adjusts to one school nurse for every 750 full-time equivalent students.

The State Board of Education must adopt rules providing for the initial and continuing certification of certified school nurses.

By December 31, 2003 the Superintendent of Public Instruction submits a report to the Legislature on the implementation of this act. The report includes recommendations about whether funding for school nurses should be an ongoing responsibility of the state and part of basic education.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 12, 2001.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

