

HB 1624 - DIGEST

Finds that due to the growing complexity of student health needs, the delegation of nursing tasks to unlicensed and untrained school personnel compromises the health and safety of students, creates the potential for errors with life-threatening consequences, and exposes school districts to legal liability.

Acknowledges that the department of health, in its 2001 sunrise review of school health aides, recommended the state regulation of registered school health aides according to established nursing practice standards and the state's uniform professional accountability processes.

Declares that the training of registered school health aides is in the interest of public health and safety.

Declares an intent to undertake a more comprehensive examination of overall student health care needs in the school setting to determine how school nursing services can be best integrated into existing efforts to raising student academic achievement.

Creates the joint legislative task force on student health.

Provides that the task force, in consultation with the department of health and the office of the superintendent of public instruction, shall investigate the need for additional school nursing services by gathering data about current school nurse-to-student ratios, and assessing the demand for school nursing services by acuity levels and the necessary skills to meet those demands. The task force also shall recommend to the legislature best practices in school nursing services, including a dedicated, sustainable funding model that would best meet the current and future needs of Washington's schools and contribute to greater academic success of all students.

Requires the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2005.

Encourages school building administrators and school district boards of directors to provide ample opportunities for all school employees to receive training in emergency first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and to periodically attend refresher courses in these vital areas of preparedness necessary to provide assistance to students and other employees in emergency situations.

Appropriates the sum of forty-five thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006, from the general fund to the office of the superintendent of public instruction for the purpose of funding a position to pursue grants and obtain funds for the school nurse account.