



## **Issue Brief** – Funding of School Nurse Positions

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### **Background**

Boards of education are charged with governing school systems so that all students receive the best educational opportunities to graduate prepared to enter a postsecondary institution or the workforce. Board members, administrators, teachers, and staff members do their utmost to ensure students are provided with adequate resources and opportunities. School nurses play an integral part in educating students by promoting, improving, and maintaining quality comprehensive student health services.

School nurses can significantly improve students' health, safety, and abilities to learn since they are often the only healthcare provider that a student sees on a regular basis. The current nurse pupil ratio is one nurse for every 3,000 students, and a lower nurse-pupil ratio of one nurse for every 700 students will help meet the health needs of students throughout Tennessee. For example, during the 2017-18 school year, one county documented 52,434 visits of which 44,949 the student returned to class. This data shows the importance of school nurses.

Inadequate staffing, however, can lead to adverse consequences such as inconsistent care of students and increased nurse turnover which results in additional costs to school districts. Studies have shown that school nurses can help prevent excessive medical costs and improve parent and teacher productivity. Lowering the nurse-pupil ratio will provide students with the support they need and directly impact student achievement throughout the state and reinforce the strides that have been made over the last several years.

### **TSBA Position - SUPPORT**

TSBA urges the General Assembly to lower the Basic Education Program (BEP) nurse-pupil ratio to one nurse for every 700 students to help meet the needs of students across Tennessee.