



Oregon Department of Education
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2014 Nursing Services in Oregon Public Schools



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Executive Summary

Students are best able to access their education programs when they are healthy. Some students in Oregon, as well as in the rest of the United States, arrive at school with health conditions that are not optimal and require support for success. Services available in schools help to meet the needs of such students. In 2009, the legislature amended ORS 336.201 to require the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to submit an annual report to the State Board of Education and the interim legislative committees related to education, no later than October 1 of each year, that provides information on:

- The availability of Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Nurses and School Nurses in each school district; and
- The number of medically complex students, medically fragile students and nursing dependent students in each school district.

Oregon law encourages districts to provide the following levels of nursing services:

- One Registered Nurse or School Nurse for every 225 medically complex students.
- One Registered Nurse or School Nurse for every 125 medically fragile student.
- One Registered Nurse, School Nurse, or Licensed Practical Nurse for each nursing-dependent student
- School districts are encouraged to provide one Registered Nurse or School Nurse for every 750 students by 2020.

Table 1 below highlights the total number of enrolled students from reporting school districts, over the past three years, along with the nursing FTE available. School years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 did not have all districts reporting, so the number of students reported does not reflect total student enrollment for those years. The ratio of nurses to students is contained in the final column.

Table 1: Nursing Service Available in Oregon Schools			
School Year	Number of Students Reported in this Collection	Nursing FTE Reported in this Collection (RN's/School Nurses and LPN's)	Ratio of Nurses to Students
2011-2012	428,421	235	1:1823
2012-2013	563,519	252.77	1:2229
2013-2014	567,098	267.59	1:2119

Nursing Services in Oregon Public Schools and Students with Certain Medical Impairments

Background

Many Oregon students arrive at school with existing health conditions that influence their ability to access and benefit from the education provided. In order to best assist these students to complete and excel in their educational efforts, it is vital that health care needs within the school program be addressed. Existing health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and epilepsy, are a “fact of life” for many of the students attending Oregon public schools. Their health needs directly influence how they access their education programs, and so need to be supported by school staff.

The data presented in this report is an effort to accurately reflect the health needs of Oregon students and the overall numbers of students who have health care needs in public schools. It also presents data on the number of school nurses who provide this care.

Nursing Services Provided in Oregon Public Schools

Nursing services in school districts are provided by nurses licensed to practice by the Oregon State Board of Nursing. Under Oregon law, Licensed Practical Nurses must work under the clinical direction of Registered Nurses. According to the Oregon State Board of Nursing, Oregon has 52,341 Registered Nurses and 4,771 Licensed Practical Nurses.¹

As defined by ORS 342.455, a “School Nurse” means a Registered Nurse who is certified by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) as qualified to conduct and coordinate the health service programs of a school. The TSPC issues a certificate to Registered Nurses who meet these additional requirements promulgated by the Commission for School Nurses, though there is no state requirement that school districts employ only TSPC certified School Nurses (ORS 342.495) to provide health services to students.

To be eligible for a School Nurse certification, the individual must hold a current Registered Nurse license issued by the Oregon State Board of Nursing and must successfully complete 30 clock hours, three quarter hours, or two semester hours of specified coursework including:

- School health policies, issues, and funding
- School law and legal responsibilities of School Nurses
- The nursing process in the school setting
- Schools and society; mental health and counseling concepts
- The exceptional child characteristics (disabled, gifted, learning disabled)
- Physical and developmental assessment of the school-age child
- The role and responsibilities of the School Nurse
- Human growth, development, and learning; diversity
- School emergencies.²

¹ <http://www.oregon.gov/OSBN/Pages/index.aspx>; Retrieved 9/30/2013

² OAR 584-021-0130

Oregon law allows school districts to train non-health professionals to meet the needs of medically complex students and students without identified medical needs. The vast majority of this training is provided by licensed nurses; thus one nurse, working for a district, may train and oversee non-licensed school staff in tasks of nursing. Nurses have the authority to perform this training and oversight under Division 47 of the Oregon Nurse Practice Act. The Oregon Department of Education does not collect data on the numbers of unlicensed assistive personnel (teachers, educational assistants, etc.) who provide health services and support to students, under the direction and oversight of a Registered Nurse.

School districts are encouraged to provide the following level of nursing services:

- One Registered Nurse or School Nurse for every 3,500 students by July 1, 2014
- One Registered Nurse or School Nurse for every 2,500 students by July 1, 2016
- One Registered Nurse or School Nurse for every 1,500 students by July 1, 2018
- One Registered Nurse or School Nurse for every 750 students by July 1, 2020

Data Collection 2013-2014

School districts were asked to submit data on nursing services for the 2013-2014 school year by June 30, 2014. ODE staff communicated the data request to all districts in a variety of formats. Additionally, training via video conferencing, was offered to all districts and posted on the ODE website for later access. By September, 2014, with follow up via phone calls by ODE staff, ODE received data from all Oregon school districts (N=197). These efforts to clarify the law with districts have resulted in cleaner data for the 2013-2014 collection. Anecdotally, ODE believes that schools have seen an increase in recent years, in the number of students who arrive at school with insulin-dependent diabetes, severe allergic reactions, and complex food allergies.

Nursing Services Available in Oregon Schools

In the 197 Oregon school districts, there are 267.59 full-time equivalent (FTE) nurses employed who serve students. (See district-by-district data in Appendix A). Table 2 shows the total nursing support in public schools for the 2013-2-14 school year, and is an increase over the support in 2012-2013 (see Table 1.)

Table 2: 2013-2014 Nurses Reported in Oregon Schools - FTE	
Licensed Practical Nurse	34.73
Registered Nurse/School Nurse	232.86
Total Nurse Support in Schools	267.59

Students with Medical Impairments

For purposes of this report, students with medical impairments fall into three categories:

- *Medically complex*
- *Medically fragile*
- *Nursing dependent*

Table 3 highlights the number of students with specific medical impairments over the past three school years. There was a large increase in the number of medically complex students over the past three school years, but this increase may be due to revised data collection strategies.

Table 3: Number of Students with Specific Medical Impairments			
School Year	Number of Medically Complex Students	Number of Medically Fragile Students	Number of Nursing Dependent Students
2011-2012	12,705	3,178	89
2012-2013	16,689	2,467	121
2013-2014	16,490	3,245	148

NOTE: Some of the data for this report is reflected in the Special Education Child Count and the Special Education Child Find data collections including: Intellectual Disability, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Deaf-Blindness, Speech or Language Impairment, Emotional Disturbance, Orthopedic Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Specific Learning Disability, Developmental Delay, and Other Health Impairments. However, IDEA and 504 Health-Eligible students are not the totality of students in Oregon schools who have health impairments that impact their educational access (e.g. children with asthma).

Medically Complex Students

Oregon law defines “medically complex students” as those students who may have an unstable health condition and who may require daily professional nursing services. Students in this category have health conditions which require a licensed nurse to do an assessment, write a health care plan, and teach and oversee tasks of care to non-nurse school staff who are working directly with the student. The nurse has intermittent direct contact with the student, for instance to write a health care plan, address emergent problems, monitor school staff performance of tasks, access new medical orders, and similar tasks.

An example of a student in this category would be one who has medically stable epilepsy. The school nurse will access medical orders, assess the student, write a care plan for the student, and teach non-nurse school staff how to recognize and assist the student during student seizure activity. The nurse will also periodically monitor the student during the school year, and intervene if a change is needed in health services provided by the school.

In 2013-2014, districts reported 16,490 medically complex students. This is a decrease of 199 students as compared to the number reported as medically complex in 2012-2013.

Medically Fragile Students

Medically fragile students are those students “who may have a life-threatening health condition and who may require immediate professional nursing services.” Students in this category have a health condition which requires frequent (often daily) one-on-one intervention by a licensed school nurse. An example of this would be a six-year-old student who is newly diagnosed with diabetes. Nurse intervention is required on a daily basis to check blood status, configure correct insulin doses, and administer insulin. As this student’s medical condition becomes more stable and the student matures, the student’s category may change to one which requires less intense school health services.

In 2013-2014, districts reported 3245 medically fragile students. This is an increase of 778 over the number of medically fragile students reported in 2012-2013. Again, this increase may be due to more accurate data collection strategies, and understanding of how to count students in one or the other of the three categories.


Oregon seems to reflect national statistics in the numbers of diabetic and severely allergic children and young adults. Taken together, these two diagnoses may affect up to 10% of Oregon’s school population. Children and young adults who have these and other serious medical conditions are only able to access their educational program when their chronic condition is in good control during their school attendance (for example, a student who is gasping for breath will probably not be able to read at their best level). Achieving this optimum control during hours of school requires cooperation and communication between school staff, school nurses, parents, students, and the medical community. Nurses who deliver services in the school setting are the ‘boots on the ground’ staff for spearheading these efforts.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that nationally, each year, more than 13,000 young people are diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.³
- Health care providers are finding more and more children with Type 2 diabetes, a disease usually diagnosed in adults aged 40 years or older.⁴
- Diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases in children and adolescents; about 151,000 people below the age of 20 years have diabetes
- Number of children who currently have asthma: 6.8 million
- Percent of children who currently have asthma: 9.3%

Nursing-Dependent Students

“Nursing-dependent students” are those students who may have an unstable or life-threatening health condition and who may require daily, direct, and continuous professional nursing services. Nursing-Dependent students are those who require direct one-on-one services by a licensed nurse so that they are medically safe in the school setting. A student with impaired breathing who has a tracheostomy which requires frequent suction, would be one example of a student in this category. Since professional nursing assessment is required with each instance of suctioning, a licensed nurse must be present with the student during the hours of school.

Table 3 shows that 21 more students were identified as nursing-dependent in 2013-2014 over those reported in 2012-2013.

³ Source: [Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Children: National Health Interview Survey, 2012, table 1](#)  [PDF - 697 KB]

⁴ <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/projects/cda2.htm>

Conclusion

Many Oregon students are arriving at school with existing health conditions that compromise their ability to access and benefit from the education program. Specifically, we have seen increased numbers of students with insulin-dependent diabetes and severe allergies. The data reflected in this 2014 Nursing Services in Oregon Public Schools report is the most comprehensive of the four collection years. As with all such data collections, results depend on response from local district partners. Response for this year comprises 100% of Oregon's school districts, and reflects a growing understanding of the collection parameters by district staff and nurses.

This data collection has occurred over the past four school years, but is still relatively new to school districts. The terms, "medically complex," "medically fragile," and "nursing dependent" are terms not typically used in the school setting, so may cause confusion when determining student status for the collection. During the first year of the collection (2010-2011), difficulty arose with determining which students were encompassed by the terms, and there was also some miscommunication between district data staff and district nurses. ODE increased its efforts to clarify the law and collection definitions, so the data from the last two years appear to be more reliable.

Appendix A

2013-2014

Medically Fragile

Data Collection

District Level

School Districts	Medically Fragile Student Count	Nursing Dependent Student Count	Medically Complex Student Count	Licensed Practical Nurse FTE	Registered Nurse/School Nurse FTE
Adel SD 21	0	0	0	0	0
Adrian SD 61	0	0	0	0	0
Alsea SD 7J	0	0	2	0	10
Amity SD 4J	0	0	0	0	0.04
Annex SD 29	0	0	0	0	0
Arlington SD 3	0	0	0	0	0
Arock SD 81	0	0	0	0	0
Ashland SD 5	1	0	199	0	1.2
Ashwood SD 8	0	0	0	0	0
Astoria SD 1	2	0	28	0	2
Athena-Weston SD 29RJ	0	0	8	0	0.04
Baker SD 5J	0	0	17	0	0.4
Bandon SD 54	1	1	1	1	0
Banks SD 13	0	0	45	0	0
Beaverton SD 48J	96	10	4411	2	6
Bend-LaPine Administrative SD 1	619	24	78	0	13.71
Bethel SD 52	17	1	131	1	2
Blachly SD 90	0	0	0	0	0
Brookings-Harbor SD 17C	5	0	95	0	0
Butte Falls SD 91	0	0	0	0	0
Camas Valley SD 21J	0	0	0	0	0
Canby SD 86	0	1	203	0	1
Cascade SD 5	0	0	39	0	1
Centennial SD 28J	5	0	65	0	3.25
Central Curry SD 1	5	0	0	0	0
Central Linn SD 552	2	0	3	0	0.5
Central Point SD 6	19	1	29	0.05	4
Central SD 13J	8	1	60	1	1
Clatskanie SD 6J	10	2	5	0	0.75
Colton SD 53	0	0	0	0	0
Coos Bay SD 9	21	0	130	0	2.6
Coquille SD 8	3	1	20	1	1
Corbett SD 39	0	0	10	0	0.4
Corvallis SD 509J	6	4	130	0	6
Cove SD 15	1	0	0	0	0

School Districts	Medically Fragile Student Count	Nursing Dependent Student Count	Medically Complex Student Count	Licensed Practical Nurse FTE	Registered Nurse/School Nurse FTE
Creswell SD 40	1	3	3	0.75	1.75
Crook County SD	6	0	41	0	2
Crow-Applegate-Lorane SD 66	0	0	0	0	0
Culver SD 4	1	0	19	0	0
Dallas SD 2	35	0	48	0	1
David Douglas SD 40	26	1	133	1	3.6
Dayton SD 8	14	0	43	0	1
Dayville SD 16J	0	0	0	0	0
Diamond SD 7	0	0	0	0	0
Double O SD 28	0	0	0	0	0
Douglas County SD 4	0	0	0	0	0
Drewsey SD 13	0	0	0	0	0
Dufur SD 29	0	0	26	0	0.18
Eagle Point SD 9	1	0	168	0	2
Echo SD 5	0	0	3	0	0.01
Elgin SD 23	1	0	9	0	1
Elkton SD 34	0	0	0	0	0
Enterprise SD 21	0	0	0	0	0
Estacada SD 108	45	0	100	0	1
Eugene SD 4J	23	4	287	1.5	9.15
Falls City SD 57	0	0	0	0	0
Fern Ridge SD 28J	0	0	0	0	0
Forest Grove SD 15	76	6	807	0	2
Fossil SD 21J	1	0	0	0	0
Frenchglen SD 16	0	0	0	0	0
Gaston SD 511J	0	0	9	0	0.2
Gervais SD 1	0	0	26	0	0.2
Gladstone SD 115	1	1	7	0	1.8
Glendale SD 77	0	0	0	0	0
Glide SD 12	0	0	0	0	0
Grants Pass SD 7	0	0	573	0	1
Greater Albany Public SD 8J	0	1	195	1	1.1
Gresham-Barlow SD 10J	19	3	97	2	5
Harney County SD 3	0	0	0	0	0
Harney County SD 4	0	0	0	0	0
Harney County Union High SD 1J	0	0	0	0	0

School Districts	Medically Fragile Student Count	Nursing Dependent Student Count	Medically Complex Student Count	Licensed Practical Nurse FTE	Registered Nurse/School Nurse FTE
Harper SD 66	0	0	0	0	0
Harrisburg SD 7J	0	0	1	0	0.2
Helix SD 1	0	0	3	0	0.01
Hermiston SD 8	3	1	7	0	2
Hillsboro SD 1J	390	5	751	4.6	0
Hood River County SD	74	0	0	0	1.65
Huntington SD 16J	0	0	0	0	0
Imbler SD 11	0	0	8	0	1
Ione SD R2	0	0	0	0	0
Jefferson County SD 509J	53	0	13	0	1
Jefferson SD 14J	0	0	1	0	0
Jewell SD 8	0	0	4	0	0.06
John Day SD 3	0	0	0	0	0
Jordan Valley SD 3	0	0	0	0	0
Joseph SD 6	0	0	0	0	0
Junction City SD 69	8	0	54	0	1
Klamath County SD	65	0	35	0	2.2
Klamath Falls City Schools	33	0	120	0	1.75
Knappa SD 4	0	0	3	0	0.6
La Grande SD 1	0	0	0	0	1
Lake County SD 7	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Oswego SD 7J	4	3	313	2.2	2.9
Lebanon Community SD 9	94	0	112	0	1.6
Lincoln County SD	100	4	198	0	2
Long Creek SD 17	0	0	0	0	0
Lowell SD 71	0	0	1	0	0
Mapleton SD 32	0	0	0	0	0
Marcola SD 79J	0	0	0	0	0
McKenzie SD 68	0	0	0	0	0
McMinnville SD 40	8	0	243	0	2
Medford SD 549C	18	0	391	0	0
Milton-Freewater Unified SD 7	2	0	25	0	0.11
Molalla River SD 35	2	0	8	0	1
Monroe SD 1J	10	0	0	0	0
Monument SD 8	0	0	0	0	0
Morrow SD 1	3	0	21	0	0.1
Mt Angel SD 91	4	0	1	0	0.5
Myrtle Point SD 41	1	0	8	0	0.4
Neah-Kah-Nie SD 56	0	0	13	0	0.43

School Districts	Medically Fragile Student Count	Nursing Dependent Student Count	Medically Complex Student Count	Licensed Practical Nurse FTE	Registered Nurse/School Nurse FTE
Nestucca Valley SD 101J	0	0	10	0	0
Newberg SD 29J	22	0	85	0	1
North Bend SD 13	23	1	436	1	3
North Clackamas SD 12	45	0	766	2	3
North Lake SD 14	0	0	0	0	0
North Marion SD 15	27	0	62	0	1
North Powder SD 8J	0	0	0	0	0
North Santiam SD 29J	1	0	54	0	1.2
North Wasco County SD 21	6	0	25	0	1.2
Nyssa SD 26	0	0	0	0	0
Oakland SD 1	0	0	0	0	0
Oakridge SD 76	3	0	0	0	0
Ontario SD 8C	10	1	52	1	1
Oregon City SD 62	41	1	430	0	2.6
Oregon Department of Education	28	32	4	2	1
Oregon Trail SD 46	106	0	0	0	0.5
Parkrose SD 3	8	1	76	0	1
Pendleton SD 16	4	0	34	0	0.22
Perrydale SD 21	2	0	14	0	1
Philomath SD 17J	33	0	0	0	0
Phoenix-Talent SD 4	2	0	12	0	0.8
Pilot Rock SD 2	0	0	1	0	1
Pine Eagle SD 61	1	0	0	0	1
Pinehurst SD 94	0	0	0	0	0
Pleasant Hill SD 1	0	0	0	0.25	0.03
Plush SD 18	0	0	0	0	0
Port Orford-Langlois SD 2CJ	0	0	0	0	0
Portland SD 1J	85	9	557	5	33.1
Powers SD 31	0	0	0	0	0
Prairie City SD 4	0	0	0	0	0
Prospect SD 59	0	0	0	0	0
Rainier SD 13	0	0	104	0	0.5
Redmond SD 2J	73	1	237	0.88	6.94
Reedsport SD 105	2	1	2	0	1
Reynolds SD 7	5	7	72	2	11.49
Rogue River SD 35	0	0	3	0	0
Salem-Keizer SD 24J	47	1	462	0	11.5
Santiam Canyon SD 129J	1	1	0	0	1
Scappoose SD 1J	9	0	75	0	1
Seaside SD 10	29	1	0	0	1

School Districts	Medically Fragile Student Count	Nursing Dependent Student Count	Medically Complex Student Count	Licensed Practical Nurse FTE	Registered Nurse/School Nurse FTE
Sheridan SD 48J	0	0	18	0	0.4
Sherman County SD	0	0	0	0	0
Sherwood SD 88J	117	2	422	0	2
Silver Falls SD 4J	17	0	20	0	0
Sisters SD 6	6	0	244	0	2
Siuslaw SD 97J	0	0	0	0	0
South Harney SD 33	0	0	0	0	0
South Lane SD 45J3	0	0	253	0	2
South Umpqua SD 19	0	0	0	0	0
South Wasco County SD 1	0	0	0	0	0
Springfield SD 19	10	0	148	0	2.5
St Helens SD 502	8	1	41	0	1.47
St Paul SD 45	3	0	0	0	0.1
Stanfield SD 61	1	0	1	0	0
Sutherlin SD 130	0	0	0	0	0
Sweet Home SD 55	4	1	20	0	2
Three Rivers/Josephine County SD	2	0	1	0	0.2
Tigard-Tualatin SD 23J	408	4	817	0	8
Tillamook SD 9	1	0	23	0	2
Troy SD 54	0	0	0	0	0
Ukiah SD 80R	0	0	0	0	0
Umatilla SD 6R	2	0	10	0	0.02
Union SD 5	2	0	4	0	0
Vale SD 84	0	1	0	0	1
Vernonia SD 47J	0	0	4	0	0.2
Wallowa SD 12	0	0	0	0	0
Warrenton-Hammond SD 30	0	0	0	0	0
West Linn-Wilsonville SD 3J	37	0	254	0	3
Willamina SD 30J	0	0	0	0	0
Winston-Dillard SD 116	0	1	0	0	0
Woodburn SD 103	68	0	0	0	2
Yamhill Carlton SD 1	3	3	0	1.5	1.5
Yoncalla SD 32	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	3,245	148	16,490	34.73	232.86