

A RESOLUTION

22-579

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

July 10, 2018

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend the District of Columbia Public School Nurse Assignment Act of 1987 to require that any public school currently receiving school nurse services above 20 hours per week continue at that existing level of service, or the level recommended by the Department of Health’s risk-based assessment, whichever is greater, for the 2018-2019 school year.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Public School Nurse Assignment Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2018”.

Sec. 2. (a) In 1987, the Council passed the District of Columbia Public School Nurse Assignment Act of 1987, effective December 10, 1987 (D.C. Law 7-45; D.C. Official Code § 38-621), to require a registered nurse be assigned to each District of Columbia elementary and secondary public school a minimum of 20 hours per week, beginning in 1989.

(b) In 2006, the Council’s Committee on Health requested that the Department of Health and Children’s National, the school nurse program contractor, transition to 40 hours of nurse coverage per week by supplementing registered nurses with licensed practical nurses.

(c) In April 2016, the Deputy Mayor for Education sent a letter to local education agency (“LEA”) leaders announcing the Department of Health’s new model for the school health services program as part of the broader Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (“WSCC”) model developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”). Under the new program, registered nurses would continue to provide clinical care for all children with special health care needs who require daily medications or treatment. Additional health professionals and community navigators would work with families, schools, and students’ primary care providers to make sure students receive well-child exams and the preventive services they need to be healthy. School nurse service levels would be reset for all schools at a minimum of 20 hours each week, with some receiving additional coverage depending on the medical needs of the student population. This new model was to be implemented at the start of school year 2016-2017.

(d) Due to extensive concerns raised by school leaders, parents, and the Council’s Committee on Health and Committee on Education about the proposed changes, and the failure of the Department of Health to properly consult with and inform school communities about the

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change, the Council passed emergency and temporary legislation to stop any reduction in nurse coverage in November 2016 and again in September of 2017.

(e) While permanent legislation to require a full-time nurse in every school was unanimously approved by the Council and signed by the Mayor, it remains subject to appropriations. The Council is poised to pass the more limited language in line with the past emergency and temporary legislation at the July 10, 2018 legislative meeting. However, the previously passed temporary legislation will expire before the permanent will take effect.

(f) Therefore, there exists an immediate need to amend existing law to require that any school currently receiving school nurse services above 20 hours per week continue at that existing level of service, or the level recommended by the Department of Health's new risk-based assessment, whichever is greater, for school year 2018-2019.

Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Public School Nurse Assignment Emergency Amendment Act of 2018 be adopted after a single reading.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.