

## TEMPLATE LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR

### Role of School Nurses in Improving Health and Learning Outcomes

Note: Most local newspapers only allow “letters to the editor” to contain 200-250 words. The **sample letter** below is an **example** of what you could include in a letter. Please be advised the letter below has about 400 words. Include the sentences which make the points that are most relevant to address in your community. You should always include a brief personal story (and local data if possible) to make the letter more compelling. Finally, it is important to double-check the newspaper’s guidelines before submitting your letter.

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*Dear Editor:*

On May 9, 2018 we recognize our school nurses by celebrating National School Nurse Day as a way to foster a better understanding of the role of school nurses in the educational setting. The theme this year is, *School Nurses: Advocates for 21st Century Student Health*.

Parents should be able to send their children to school with the peace of mind that they will remain healthy, safe, and ready to learn. Given that today’s children face more chronic health illnesses (e.g. asthma, diabetes, food allergies, mental health, etc.) than ever before, I take my role as a licensed, professional school nurse very seriously. I am grateful for the teachers, administrators, and professional support staff with whom I work each day – which helps to create a healthy learning environment for every child in our school (*name school*). My knowledge, assessment skills, and judgment help ensure I can provide quality health care to children.

As a school nurse at (*use specific title and school*), I take on a variety of roles every day. For many children, I am the only health professional they may have access to, except in emergencies. This becomes even more important as the prevalence of chronic social, emotional, and other health problems keep increasing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), asthma is the leading chronic illness among children and adolescents in the United States. On average, in a classroom of 30 children, about 3 are likely to have asthma. Further, childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years. Today, approximately one in every 400 children and adolescents has type 1 or type 2 diabetes. According to a study released in 2013 by the CDC, food allergies among children increased approximately 50 percent between 1997 and 2011. The CDC reports that food allergies are a growing food safety and public health concern that affect as estimated 4-6 percent of children in the United States. (*Insert local data if available.*) I help develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Healthcare Plans for these students.

It seems like common sense that healthier students are better learners. But evidence-based research in fields ranging from neuroscience and child development to epidemiology and public health support this argument. Our elected officials must invest in programs and services that seek to improve the health and well-being outcomes of all children.

As our local stakeholders (*list names of superintendent, school board, city council, etc.*) make funding decisions for next year, I hope their budget reflects the right priorities – ensuring our children have a successful, productive, and healthy future.

Sincerely,