A growing body of research emphasizes the effect of good health on academic potential and the positive link between school nurse availability and student attendance and academic performance. Texas must take the step to validate the important role school nurses play in securing the future health of children, families and communities. School nurses improve school environment, help bridge social determinant gaps, connect children with health care resources, improve attendance, and manage chronic health conditions. The reference content below is organized by published resource and centers around four main topics:

1. Absenteeism
2. Chronic Health Condition Management
3. Impacting Social Determinants of Health
4. Improved Culture, Climate and Safety

**Literature Review in Support of School Nurse Services**


- School nurses coordinate care to effect positive health outcomes


- The American Academy of Pediatrics highlights the important role school nurses play across a child’s continuum of care and recommends that every school should have at least one nurse
- Federal laws that specify disability and educational access rights of children has resulted in more children requiring and receiving nursing care and health related services in schools.
- Nursing delegation does not negate the need for full time school nurses in every school, every day


- The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model recognizes the connection between health and education and calls for students to be healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged.
- “There needs to be greater alignment between education and health to improve each child’s cognitive, physical, social and emotional development.” (Pg. 6).
School nurses save principals nearly one hour per day, clerical staff 46 minutes, and teachers were able to devote more time on instruction. Schools in the study had a $1.84 return on investment for every dollar invested in health services.

Almost 40% of students in 10th grade who miss 10 or more days of school will dropout.

School nurse care coordination skills are effective in improving readiness to learn, classroom participation, and academic performance.

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

School nurses are leaders in student chronic disease management.

Children with chronic conditions are at risk for low student engagement, more exposure to bullying, disruptive behaviors, poor grades, and below-average performance on standardized achievement tests.

Each year 6.5% of students experience a chronic illness to the point that it affects school performance.

School nurses decrease chronic absenteeism by assisting families to access health care; by providing disease related education to parents, students and staff; and by coordinating care between school and medical homes.

- As life expectancy for students with chronic conditions increases, the healthcare and educational service needs of students also increases.


- Missing 3 or more school days per month can set a student back up to 2 years of learning. Missing 2 days of school per month can lead to academic trouble
- Less absenteeism found in schools with full-time school nurse employment
- There are fewer student absences and fewer student check-outs for medical reasons when a full-time school nurse is available at school.
- School nurses bridge the divide between societal issues such as poverty and lack of accessible health care. Education is free but healthcare is not.
- Skilled school nurse can be a life-saver for students and staff. School nurses have the medical training to deal with the physical and mental illnesses of students as the entire school population.


- “Children with chronic illness are absent from schools for an average of 16 days a year compared to a 3-day average for healthy children. “
- Reduced hospital stays and greater use of outpatient medical care place children with chronic illness directly into the school environment. This places growing burden on school districts and families. School nurses can ease that burden.


- School nurses mitigate long-term impacts of chronic health conditions on children by coordinating the interests of families, education, health care, public health, insurance and community agencies


- “Up to 20% of children in the United States have a chronic or disabling condition, and because of ongoing improvements in health care, these children are living longer.


- The Whole School, Whole Community Whole Child model highlights the critical connection between health and academic achievement; addresses health related learning barriers; and, recognizes the positive impact school nurses make on attendance, academic performance, and safe school environments
- 25% of children and adolescents are estimated to suffer from chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, food allergies, epilepsy and obesity [Journal of School Health November 2015]
- School nurses can have influence on student absenteeism by targeting students with history of high rates for absenteeism
• Health related problems greatly limit student’s motivation and ability to learn
• Research shows negative association between being overweight or obese and school attendance and decreased test scores
• There is an association between asthma and academic achievement: Students with asthma have been shown to have lower cognitive performance and increased school absenteeism rates
• Vision problems are associated with decreased standardized measures of literacy, standardized reading test scores, basic skills test scores, reading ability and spelling


• School nurse care coordination skills are effective in improving attendance, readiness to learn, classroom participation, and academic performance
• Provide direct care to students
• Provide screenings and referral for health conditions thereby decreasing negative effects of health problems on education, and by early identification of students with underlying medical problems
• Promote healthy school environments and provide for physical and emotional safety of the school environment
• Provide health assessments for complaints, administer medication and care for students with special needs
• Provide system management for emergencies and urgent situations
• Is an extension of community health services ensuring continuity, compliance and professional supervision of care within the school setting yielding improved health and academic outcomes
• Allow teachers and staff to focus on their jobs.


• 6.8% of children 3-17 have ADHD
• 8.3% of children under the age of 18 are diagnosed with asthma (a leading cause of school absenteeism)
• Tooth decay among children in five times more prevalent than asthma and 20% of all children have at least one untreated decayed tooth
• 6% of children have suffered from effects of food allergies in past 12 months
• 8% of children 3-17 have a learning disability
• 13-20% of children experience a mental disorder in any given year and 75% of those children do not get the help they need
• 25% of school-aged children have some form of vision impairment (low income and minority youth are at greater risk of under diagnosis and under treatment of vision problems and unmet need of vision care services).
• 31.8% of children are overweight or obese (21% are obese)
• 30% teen American girls will get pregnant at least once before age 20
• 21% of children live in food-insecure households at some point during the school year.


• Research shows that schools with high nurse to student ratios:
  o Have better attendance rates
  o Have more school nurse involvement with health-related issues (diabetes, asthma, unintended pregnancies, etc.)
• Send home fewer students during the school day (increase student learning time) with 57% fewer students leave school early after school nurse contact compared to those who leave with school nurse contact.
• Have more involvement with high-absence students.
  • Studies show school nurses are involved with 75% of high absence students as compared to their involvement with 66% of low absence students. In addition, school nurses are involved at increased rates with student with previously identified health problems.


• 7% of children with chronic disease experience multiple chronic illnesses


• School nurses save dollars for educational, healthcare and family systems.
• Save schools money by improving attendance.
• Every dollar spent on nursing services saves $2.20 in medical cost and lost productivity for teachers and parents.


• School nurse mitigates the effects of chronic conditions in children


• Identify health condition requiring Section 504 accommodations