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VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND
VERMONT AGENCY OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

I. PURPOSE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describes the collaborative relationship between the Vermont Agency of Education (the Agency) and the Department of Health (the Department) in supporting the school nurse workforce. This partnership allows the Department to assist school nurses in identifying and mitigating health-related barriers to learning, and supports student attendance every day, all day.

School health services are a vital component of the multi-tiered system of supports needed to create and sustain learning environments that are equitable, culturally responsive and aligned to the needs of our students. Well trained, supervised and supported school nurses are vital to optimize health and academic outcomes for children and the school community. School nurses must be prepared to address the needs of today's students and to plan for and respond to trending issues.

II. TERMS AND AGREEMENTS

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) seeks to link, and to optimize the efforts of the Agency and the Department in supporting school health services. With this shared goal in mind, the Department and the Agency agree to the following:

The Agency will continue, through the State Board of Education and the Standards Board for Professional Educators (as their respective authorities are defined in law), to promulgate administrative regulations in areas which include, but are not limited to, education quality standards, school nurse licensing, and school health services. The Agency shall have continuing responsibility for the administration of school nurse licensing requirements.

The Department will continue, through the School Nurse Advisory Committee (the Committee) of the Maternal and Child Health Division to carry out its three responsibilities:

1. Maintenance and revision of the Standards of Practice: School Health Services Manual (the Manual)
2. Maintenance and revision of the New School Nurse Orientation (the Orientation)
3. School nursing workforce development, including promotion of the Essential School Health Services system, as referenced in the Education Quality Standards (2014)

The Committee is made up of five practicing school nurses, one of whom will be the President of the Vermont State School Nurses' Association (VSSNA), and one the Agency's professional appointee. The Department's Maternal and Child Health Division Director and a Public Health Nurse Administrator are ad hoc members. The Committee is chaired by the Department's State School Nurse Consultant.

The Committee will maintain the Manual and the Orientation addressing school health issues, fostering evidence-based practices, using national frameworks, and population-based quality improvement practices, e.g. School Health Index and Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Surveillance (AAP, 2017), in compliance with state and federal laws. School health issues may include but are not limited to mental health, adverse childhood experiences, other social determinants of health, substance use prevention, chronic absenteeism and disaster preparedness. National frameworks, databases, or laws include the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model (ASCD, 2014) and the Framework for 21st Century School Nursing Practice (Maughan, et al., 2016), Healthy People 2030, Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, and Every Student Succeeds Act (2015).

The Committee shall access professional program staff at the Agency and the Department for subject matter expertise and counsel. The Committee will access content experts from community partners including, but not limited to, institutions of higher education, the Vermont State Board of Nursing, the Vermont Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Vermont Academy of Family Physicians, the VSSNA, the Vermont Principals' Association, the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Vermont School Boards Association, various departments in the Agency of Human Services, and the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program. Recommendations for the Manual, the Orientation, or school nurse workforce development are welcomed from community and family stakeholders.

The Committee will provide recommendations on topics including, but not limited to:

1. Education Quality Standards
2. Supervision of school nurses as licensed healthcare clinicians
3. Educational opportunities for both new and current school nurses
4. Support for these highly skilled professionals
5. Information technology
6. Professional Learning Collaboratives for VT school nurses

Responsibility for the ultimate approval of those recommendations shall rest with the Commissioner of the Department of Health and the Secretary of the Agency of Education. Professional staff at the Agency and the Department shall cooperate on the implementation of this MOU and of evidence-based guidance for school health services.

III. INTENTION OF THE PARTIES

This MOU is not intended to replace or supersede any other existing interagency agreements or MOUs between the Agency and the Department. In the event of any actual or perceived inconsistency between this MOU and any other existing interagency agreement or MOU between the Agency and the Department, the earlier interagency agreement or MOU shall control, absent an express written agreement to the contrary.

In the event of any actual or perceived inconsistency between this MOU and State or Federal statutes, or regulations, the State or Federal statutes, or regulations shall supersede this MOU.

Nothing within this MOU shall be construed as requiring either party to provide funding for any purpose which is not otherwise required by law.

IV. CHANGES OR AMENDMENTS TO THIS MOU

Any changes to the Memorandum of Understanding may be made only by the mutual written agreement of the parties.

V. TERMINATION

The parties agree that each has the right to terminate the relationship within 30 days of sending a written notice to the other parties.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be in effect upon signing and will expire four years from the date of signing.

Mark Levine, MD
Commissioner
Vermont Department of Health

Daniel M. French D.Ed.
Secretary
Vermont Agency of Education

Date:

Date: