



## Equitable and Sufficient Access to Physical, Social, and Emotional Support Staff

### 2022 Supplemental Operating Budget Decision Package

#### Agency/Program Recommendation Summary

The prototypical school funding model does not provide adequate access to school nursing for students and schools across the state, leaving the health needs of too many students unmet. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests an increase to the staffing ratios for school nurses to align with Washington voters and Initiative 1351 (I-1351) and the recommendations from the legislatively mandated Staffing Enrichment Workgroup report from 2019. The increase in staffing ratios is achieved over a three-year phase-in period beginning with the 2022–23 school year.

#### Package Description

OSPI is requesting an increase to the allocation for school nurses to meet the I-1351 recommended values as follows:

Prototypical School	Elementary (K–6) 400 Student FTE		Middle (7–8) 432 Student FTE		High (9–12) 600 Student FTE	
	Current	I-1351	Current	I-1351	Current	I-1351
Nurses	0.076	0.585	0.060	0.888	0.096	0.824

The estimated cost of this proposal by state fiscal year (FY) is as follows: \$48.2 million in FY 2023; \$112.4 million in FY 2024; and \$179.1 million in FY 2025. In addition, all allocations provided in the prototypical funding model for school nurses, along with those of social and emotional health staff, including social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, family engagement specialists, and staff and student safety personnel, must be spent on employing staff in that broad group to support the health, social, and emotional needs of students.

#### What is the problem, opportunity, or priority you are addressing with the request?

The allocation for school nurses in the prototypical funding model has not been adjusted since the creation of the model in the 2011–12 school year. The current nurse allocation provides a 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) nurse for every 5,263 students in grades K–6, 7,200 students in grades 7–8, and 6,250 students in grades 9–12.

These initial values were based on research and analysis from the mid-1970s. Over the last half century, the needs of public school students have evolved significantly. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for additional nursing staff in Washington schools to monitor the physical, social, and emotional health of students. As a state, we have an opportunity and obligation to ensure adequate resources for school nurse staffing to perform emergent critical services such as health screening and, if necessary, contact tracing.

### **What is your proposed solution?**

OSPI's proposed solution is to increase the allocation for school nurses in the prototypical school funding model to the recommended I-1351 values over a three-school year period in equal increments. In addition, OSPI will be pursuing a change to the prototypical model to require that all funds allocated for staff to meet the physical, social, and/or emotional needs of students be spent on staff to meet those needs.

### **What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?**

We are increasing resources for school districts to employ adequate numbers of school nurses to meet the unique needs of their communities.

### **What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?**

The direction of Washington voters in I-1351, and the recommendations of the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup, is clear: Equitable and sufficient access to school nurses is necessary for our students, and to get there, we must increase the staffing ratios for school nurses in the prototypical school funding model.

Alternatives for funding that were considered included relying on federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding to temporarily fill these critical roles. This option was not chosen because the short-term, one-time nature of ESSER funds does not align with the recommendations of the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup to address the long-term health and social-emotional learning needs of students, which predate the pandemic.

A second alternative would be to rely on other organizational partners, such as educational service districts, to contract with or employ basic education staff through fund sources outside of the prototypical model. This option was not selected as it would neither meet the requirements of I-1351 nor would it be a sustainable, long-term solution.

### **Performance Measures**

#### **Performance outcomes:**

Increasing access to nursing staff and requiring funds allocated for physical, social, and emotional health needs to be spent on those purposes will have a direct impact on student well-being, engagement, and academic performance. By providing these services on a consistent basis, we believe that absenteeism will be reduced, and students will be able to attend school with an elevated sense of purpose and belonging – leading to greater academic achievement.

## Fiscal Details (Funding, FTEs, Revenue, Objects)

<b>Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>
General Fund State - 01	\$0	\$47,935,000	\$111,708,000	\$178,109,000
Opportunities Pathway – 17F	\$0	\$277,000	\$643,000	\$1,021,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$48,212,000</b>	<b>\$112,351,000</b>	<b>\$179,130,000</b>
<b>Biennial Totals</b>	<b>\$48,212,000</b>		<b>\$291,481,000</b>	
<b>Staffing</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>
FTEs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Average Annual</b>	<b>0.0</b>		<b>0.0</b>	
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>
General Fund State - 01	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Biennial Totals</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>	
<b>Object of Expenditure</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>
Obj. N	\$0	\$48,212,000	\$112,351,000	\$179,130,000

### Assumptions and Calculations

#### Expansion or alteration of a current program or service:

This request is not an expansion or alteration of current program offerings. The additional dollars and compliance requirements will simply allow for the employment of more nursing staff.

#### Detailed assumptions and calculations:

The costs related to this request are exclusively related to changes in the prototypical school funding model. The costs are based on the caseload forecast enrollment represented in the 2021–23 biennial budget models, as well as the compensation, inflation, and other assumptions contained within that model.

The nursing allocation per prototypical school by school year is shown below:

- Elementary – per 400 student FTE:
  - Current: 0.076
  - 2022–23 School Year: 0.246
  - 2023–24 School Year: 0.416
  - 2024–25 School Year: 0.585

- Middle – per 432 student FTE:
  - Current: 0.060
  - 2022–23 School Year: 0.336
  - 2023–24 School Year: 0.612
  - 2024–25 School Year: 0.888
- High – per 600 student FTE:
  - Current: 0.096
  - 2022–23 School Year: 0.339
  - 2023–24 School Year: 0.582
  - 2024–25 School Year: 0.824

**Workforce assumptions:**

This proposal does not include any additional staff at OSPI. It will increase the allocation for school nurses by approximately 1,489 additional full-time equivalent staff at school districts across the state.

**How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?**

All students deserve access to quality physical, social, and emotional staff and supports within their school districts. Increasing the prototypical allocation for nurses and requiring these funds to be spent on staff delivering these needed supports will help create equitable access to these supports for students across the state.

**Strategic and Performance Outcomes**

**Strategic framework:**

Meeting the health needs of students ensures they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities the state affords them, aligning with both the goals of a world class education as well as OSPI’s vision that every student be prepared for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

**Other Collateral Connections**

**Intergovernmental:**

None.

**Stakeholder response:**

These recommendations are taken directly from the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup Report of 2019. Representatives of education stakeholders, including both labor organizations and education management groups, were participants in the workgroup which established these recommendations.

**Legal or administrative mandates:**

None.

**Changes from current law:**

Changes will either need to be made in the 2022 Supplemental Budget or to RCW 28A.150.260 to increase the allocation for school nurses at all three prototypical school levels.

**State workforce impacts:**

None.

**State facilities impacts:**

None.

**Puget Sound recovery:**

N/A

**Other Documents**

**Reference documents:**

A copy of the state budget model with which we arrived at the cost estimates can be provided upon request.

**Information technology (IT) addendum:**

**Does this decision package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software (including cloud-based services), contracts, or IT staff?**

- No
- Yes