California Federation of Teachers
AFT, AFL-CIO
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Healthy Kids, Healthy Minds

Health and Library Services in Schools Improve Student Academic Performance, Enable Students to Thrive

Schools must offer the comprehensive services that our children need to succeed academically and thrive physically and emotionally. Yet California's schools lack the personnel and programs needed to ensure the most supportive environment for student success.

Educators, parents, and community organizations are launching a legislative campaign and grassroots organizing effort for *Healthy Kids, Healthy Minds.*

We are asking our state elected officials to pass Assembly Bill 1955 (Pan), which would provide nurses, mental health professionals, and extended school library hours in schools with the greatest need.

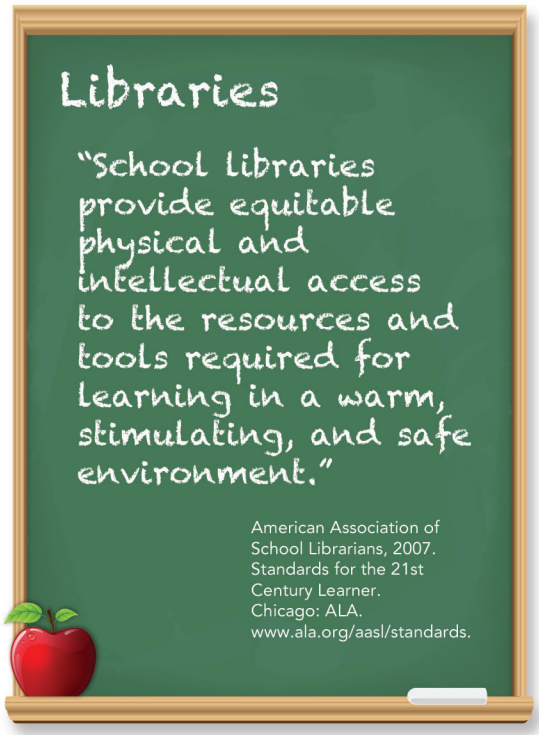
We are organizing in our communities for school-based health services and expanded school library hours so that our children are healthy, safe, and able to achieve their goals.

Research shows a direct link between school-based health and library services and student success.

School-based health services lead to academic improvements, better attendance, reduced suspension and expulsion rates, and lower dropout rates.[1]

Poor educational outcomes for disadvantaged students are often health-related. For instance, adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, violence, or neglect and physical health conditions like asthma and dental cavities impact school readiness, classroom behavior, and absentee rates, highlighting the critical role for school-based health services in addressing inequities in educational outcomes among California students.[2]

School library programs and the presence of school librarians can make significant differences in student success, literacy, information technology skills and overall academic achievement.[3] Thirty-seven percent of all US households do not have access to high-speed broadband connectivity at home.[4] Strong school libraries bridge this gap, equipping students with 21st century information technology skills. Research also shows that when children have access to libraries with plenty of books and adequate staffing, they read more and do better on reading tests.[5]



Reclaiming the Promise
Uniting for Public Schools

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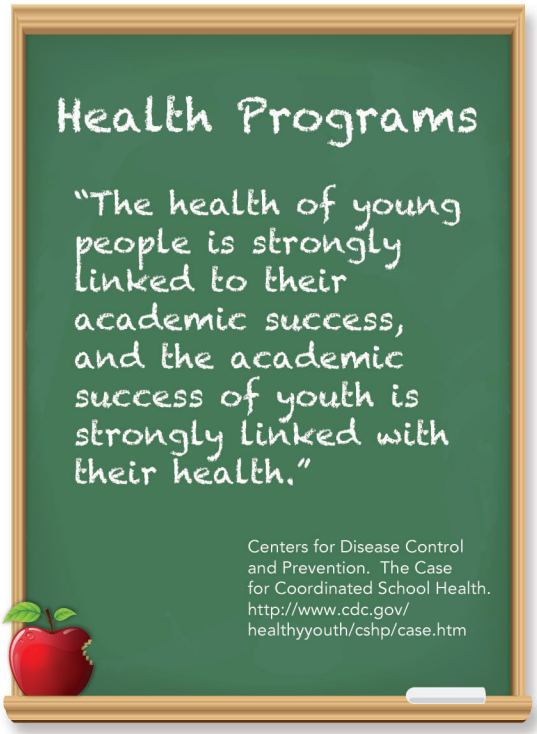

California lags far behind other states and well below recommended ratios for these critical services in schools.

Only 2% of California's schools have a school-based health center,[6] and the ratio of students to school nurses in California is 2,815 to 1.[7] The National Association of School Nurses recommends that school districts provide one nurse for every 750 well students and one nurse for every 225 in the student populations that may require daily professional school nursing services.[8] Fifty-seven percent of California school districts report not having any full-time school nurse.[9] Our state ranks 45th in the ratio of students to school nurses nationally.[10]

Similarly, the ratio of students to school psychologists in California is 1,469 to 1.[11] The National Association of School Psychologists' Practice Model recommends a ratio of one school psychologist to every 500–700 students.[12]

The ratio of students to school social workers in California is 14,772 to 1.[13] The School Social Work Association of America recommends a general ratio of 250 students to one social worker, depending on the characteristics and needs of the student population (students with intensive needs would require a lower ratio).[14]

California schools' student-to-librarian ratio is more than nine times the rest of the US, which had a national average of 872 students per librarian.[15]

According to a recent article in the Los Angeles Times, about half of the 600 elementary and middle school libraries in the Los Angeles Unified School District are without librarians or aides, denying tens of thousands of California students regular access to school libraries.[16] California ranks 51st nationally, including the District of Columbia, in the number of students per librarian – the absolute worst ratio.[17]

California's Students Deserve Better.

For years, California has balanced the state budget on the backs of our most vulnerable populations, including our students and schools. Proposition 30 – passed by voters in 2012 – provided a much-needed influx of funds to stop the cuts to education but we still have a long way to go. Despite being the ninth largest economy in the world,[18] California consistently ranks in the bottom quartile nationally in terms of per-pupil spending.[19]

Assembly Bill 1955 helps to reverse this trend, providing California's students with the fair start they need to succeed. We need to reclaim the promise of California's schools. Please join parents, community leaders, students, and educators in winning this important fight for Healthy Kids, Healthy Minds.

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Stats at a glance

California's Students Deserve Better

	National Standards	California
School Nurses	750 well students: 1 225 students with health needs: 1[8] *National Association of School Nurses*	2,815 students : 1[7]
School Psychologists	500-700 students: 1[12] *National Association of School Psychologists Practice Model*	1,469 students : 1[11]
School Social Workers	250 students : 1[14] (students with intensive needs would require a lower ratio) *National School Social Work Practice Model*	14,772 students : 1[13]
School Librarians	872 students : 1[15] *California Budget Project*	8,310 students : 1[15]

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