

Licensure Considerations for Health Care Professionals

The purpose of this document is to assist schools and districts with determining which licenses a health care professional must possess when providing health care services in a school environment. For the purposes of this document, a “health care professional” includes those individuals serving in fields licensed by state professional licensing boards, as well as those fields licensed by the Ohio Department of Education with a pupil services license.

NEED FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN SCHOOLS

School-based health initiatives help to ensure students are in school, healthy and ready to learn through a school or district’s partnerships with health care providers and other community organizations. In alignment with *Each Child, Our Future*, Ohio is helping to support schools and districts begin new, or augment existing, school-based physical and mental health partnerships to meet the needs of the whole child while supporting licensure decisions that ensure the safety of our students. For additional information on “The Benefit of Partnership in School-Based Physical and Mental Health Care,” please click [here](#).

LICENSURE PURPOSE

Licensing serves two important purposes within the education system. First, licensure ensures that individuals who work within our schools and interact with children receive an adequate criminal records check and are enrolled in the state’s Rapback monitoring system. Rapback provides continuous updates regarding criminal arrests or convictions of licensed individuals to the employing schools or districts. The safety and security of Ohio’s children is our top priority. Second, teachers and other staff within Ohio’s schools are the most important school-based factor affecting student success. Licensure plays an important role in ensuring that our children are interacting with high-quality professionals who have been specifically educated for their roles within the education system to support students’ success.

LICENSURE REQUIREMENT FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AS SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

When establishing position descriptions, schools and districts should determine which licenses are required for any potential candidate based on the duties of the position. If a position aligns directly with a license issued by the Ohio Department of Education (Department), any individual in that position must hold the requisite license issued by the Department. Inversely, if a position does not align with any license issued by the Department, an individual in that position need not hold a license from the Department to be employed by a school or district or to be paid by the school or district treasurer. The Department acknowledges that it can be difficult to determine whether a position description aligns directly with a license and that, at times, only a portion of the duties assigned will overlap. In these more complicated circumstances, schools and districts are encouraged to seek guidance from the Office of Educator Licensure as well as work with their legal counsel to determine what the licensure requirements are for a given position.

Health Care Professional Licenses Issued by the Ohio Department of Education: The Ohio Department of Education issues pupil services licenses for a variety of health care professions.

Pupil Services Licenses: If the position description the school or district has outlined aligns with any of the eight pupil services areas listed below, the individual must hold the respective Department license **and** a professional state license from the respective Ohio licensure board (e.g., Board of Nursing, Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology) to work in schools.

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School Nurse
School Audiologist
School Social Worker
School Speech-Language Pathologist

Occupational Therapist
Physical Therapist
Occupational Therapy Assistant
Physical Therapy Assistant

The Department also issues pupil services licenses for school counselors and school psychologists, who need only hold Department license to work in schools. Please visit the Ohio Department of Education Pupil Services Licenses [webpage](#) for further information on completing an approved professional pupil services licensure program.

Temporary Pupil Services Licenses: In addition to the professional pupil services license, the Department offers the temporary pupil services license, which allows certain professional license holders to work in schools while completing the requirements necessary for a professional pupil services license. Please visit the Ohio Department of Education Pupil Services Licenses [webpage](#) for further information on temporary pupil services licenses.

Substitute Pupil Services Licenses: The substitute pupil services license allows certain professional license holders to work in schools in a substitute capacity. The only prerequisite to apply for the substitute pupil services license is to hold the appropriate professional license, except that the substitute school nurse which also requires a bachelor's degree in nursing. There is no limitation on the number of days an individual can work in a district under this license. Please visit the Ohio Department of Education Pupil Services Licenses [webpage](#) for further information on substitute pupil services licenses.

Professional Board License for Other Health Care Professionals: When the Department does not offer a license that directly aligns to the position description the school or district has outlined, the health care professional must still hold any necessary professional state license for the position (e.g., a Doctor of Medicine license or Physician's Assistant license from the State Medical Board of Ohio; a Certified Nurse Practitioner license from the Ohio Board of Nursing; a Professional Counselor license from the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board; a Chemical Dependency Counselor license from the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board). It is important to note that if these professionals do not hold a Department license, they will **not** be enrolled in the Rapback system as only Department-licensed professionals are enrolled in Rapback.

If a school or district chooses to directly employ a health care professional who holds professional state licensure, but whose position description does not directly align to a Department license, Ohio Revised Code [3319.39 Criminal Records Check](#) requires schools and districts to complete a criminal records check, consisting of an FBI and BCI criminal background check, with respect to the hiring of employees. Schools and districts should also ensure the applicable professional state license is valid and in good standing.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS FOR SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

Schools and districts can partner with health care providers to provide services to their students in several ways. The most common ways are contracting with health care organizations or directly employing health care professionals. It is important to remember that should a school or district wish to ensure these health care professionals are enrolled in Rapback, they need to require the professional obtain licensure with the Department (e.g., temporary pupil services licenses, substitute pupil services licenses, substitute teaching licenses or educational aide permits).

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For health care professionals working in schools as part of a school-based health care partnership, Ohio Revised Code [3319.392 Criminal records check of private contract employee](#) requires schools and districts to verify that all professionals complete a criminal records check every five years to ensure that the individuals subject to a criminal records check have not been convicted of any offenses in division (B)(1) of Ohio Revised Code 3319.39. Schools and districts are strongly encouraged to review this statutory requirement to ensure compliance that protects the safety of all students who may interact with contracted employees. The school or district should also ensure any professional state license held by the professional is valid and in good standing.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

To better assist districts and schools in providing school-based physical and mental health services to meet the needs of the whole child, the Ohio Department of Education will be considering other long-term opportunities to increase accessibility of quality health care. In doing so, the Department is dedicated to ensuring all students are served in a safe and secure environment by high-quality professionals. If you have ideas or would consider being involved in working to expand the pool of health care professionals in our schools, please contact WholeChild@education.ohio.gov.

Questions may be directed to:

Office of Educator Licensure
Educator.Licensure@education.ohio.gov

Office of Integrated Student Supports
WholeChild@education.ohio.gov