

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 or registered with the Ohio Department of Education.

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 Ohio’s students. For additional information please refer to [Ohio’s School-Based Health Care Support Toolkit](#).

LICENSURE PURPOSE

Both licensing and registration serve two important purposes within the education system. First, these processes ensure that individuals who work within Ohio schools and interact with children receive an adequate criminal record 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 the Department’s top priority. Second, teachers and other staff within Ohio’s schools are the most important school-based factor affecting student success. Licensing and registering pupil services providers ensures that children are interacting with high-quality professionals who have been specifically educated for their roles within the education system to support students’ success.

LICENSURE AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AS SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

When establishing position descriptions, schools and districts should determine if licensure or registration is required for any potential candidate based on the duties of the position. If a position aligns directly with an Ohio Department of Education (Department) license or registration, any individual in that position must hold the requisite Department license or registration. Inversely, if a position does not align with any Department license or registration, an individual in that position need not hold a Department license or registration 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 or registration 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 requirements are for a given position.

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

Pupil Services Licenses: Candidates must complete an approved school license program through an accredited college or university and hold the professional state license from the respective Ohio licensure board (such as Board of Nursing; Speech and Hearing Professionals Board; Counselor, Social Worker and

Marriage and Family Therapist Board; or Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Athletic Trainers Board) to be eligible for a pupil services license in the following areas:

School Nurse	Occupational Therapist
School Audiologist	Physical Therapist
School Social Worker	Occupational Therapy Assistant
School Speech-Language Pathologist	Physical Therapy Assistant

The Department also issues pupil services licenses for **school counselors and school psychologists**, who have completed an approved school licensure program and need only hold the 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: 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.

Pupil Services Registrations: The pupil services registration allows certain professional license holders to work in schools without having to complete an approved school licensure program (required for the Department pupil services license). Candidates for the pupil services registrations must hold the respective professional license and submit FBI and BCI criminal background checks to the Department. Pupil services registrations are available for the following areas:

Registered Nurse (bachelor's degree required)	Occupational Therapist
Audiologist	Physical Therapist
Social Worker	Occupational Therapy Assistant
Speech-Language Pathologist	Physical Therapy Assistant

Please visit the [Ohio Department of Education Pupil Services Licenses webpage](#) for further information on pupil services registrations.

Professional Board License for Other Health Care Professionals: When the Department does not offer a license or registration 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 (such as 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 or registration, they will **not** be enrolled in the Rapback system as only Department-licensed or registered 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 or registration, Ohio law¹ 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. FBI and BCI checks should be completed every five years. Schools and districts should also ensure the applicable professional state license is valid and in good standing and periodically monitor the state license system to verify these individuals have renewed their license as required by law (nurse practitioners, nurses, and social workers must renew their licenses every two years, for example).

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 or registration with the Department (such as temporary pupil services licenses, pupil services registrations, substitute teaching licenses or educational aide permits).

For health care professionals working in schools as part of a school-based health care partnership, Ohio law² 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. Those who have ideas or would consider being involved in working to expand the pool of health care professionals in Ohio schools should 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

¹[ORC 3319.39](#)

²[ORC 3319.392](#)