



fresno county superintendent of schools

Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher, Superintendent

Health Services Overview

The Vision

The COVID-19 Pandemic thrust student health into the forefront. As students returned to school after pandemic school closures, districts braced themselves for students with mental, physical and emotional challenges from sheltering in place and physical/social isolation from peer groups and close family. School districts increased staffing of School Psychologists, mental health counselors, academic counselors, and other support staff to help students adapt to a “new normal” at school. But powerful collaborators remain missing from many Fresno County school districts: Credentialed School Nurses (CSNs) and other health professionals.

The Challenge

Unlike School Psychologists, California Education Code does not mandate districts to have CSNs on campuses. Because of this, districts usually contract with FCSS to provide CSN services, but only for enough time to do just the bare minimum: Special Education assessments, mandated hearing and vision screenings, and mandated staff education. Because of the limited time our contract CSNs spend in districts, they are not able to help their districts with preventative education to staff and students, nor are they able to identify students and support students with chronic health conditions. And since 20% of school-age students have a chronic health condition, it is imperative that schools know how to best serve students with these chronic medical needs.

The Solution

With proper CSN to student ratios and proper other health professionals in each school (LVNs or Trained Healthcare Aides, if needed), the CSNs would be able to offer so much more to support student and staff wellness needs. The goal of CSNs is to keep students healthy and available to learn. CSNs can help students stay healthier and decrease absences caused by health conditions. School districts have a bigger burden to provide staff that can care for students’ mental, emotional and physical health. With the addition of CSNs in proper proportion to student population and additional LVNs/Trained Healthcare Aides in each school, districts can lessen the burden of the expected health issues.