

Meeting the Specialised Health Needs of Students Enrolled in Queensland State Schools - a pilot project

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“Over the past decade, there has been an increasing number of students requiring health care procedures at school while controversy continues over how to best meet their health needs” (Heller et.al., 2000:173)

Setting the scene

- **Numbers of students requiring health procedures in Queensland State Schools has increased from 40 to 585 in the past 14 years**
- **Increases have been attributed to**
 - **Advances in medical technology**
 - **Changes in educational philosophies**

The most common health procedures encountered in schools are:

- **Gastrostomy tube feeding**
- **Nasogastric tube feeding**
- **Catheterisation**
- **Oral suction**
- **Colostomy/Ileostomy Care**
- **Tracheostomy Care**
- **Continuous administration of oxygen**

- **Some health needs may not be routine but may need emergency management during school hours.**
- **These emergencies may occur for students with:**
 - **Diabetes**
 - **Epilepsy**
 - **Asthma**
 - **Anaphylaxis**

The current picture

- **Registered Nurses are employed by Education Queensland support students in some:**
 - **Special Schools**
 - **Special Education Units**
 - **Special Education Classes**
- **Not all State Schools have access to Registered Nurses**

- **These schools access a wide range of support personnel including:**
 - **Blue Care Nurses**
 - **Medical Staff**
 - **Specialist Teaching Staff**
 - **Community Health Nurses**
 - **Hospital Specialist Staff**
 - **Parents**

- ***The Scope of Nursing Practice Decision Making Framework (Queensland Nursing Council, October 1998)***
- ***Interim Position Statement on the Delivery of Specific Health Procedures in Schools (Education Queensland, June 2002)***

Bridging the gap

- **A need for all State Schools to have access to an Education Queensland Nursing Service was identified**
- **The project *Provision of Outreach Nursing Services - meeting the specialised health needs of students within an Inclusive Framework* was developed**

Project plan

- **Purpose**
 - **To pilot a model for the provision of nursing services in a range of inclusive school settings.**
- **Scope**
 - **Four districts were chosen to participate in in the pilot using:**
 - **Student numbers**
 - **Geographical location**
 - **Location of nurses**
 - **Location of students**

- **Objectives**
 - **A skilled workforce**
 - **Appropriate use of professional expertise**

- **Data Collection**
 - **Two phase process**

Data Analysis - Phase 1

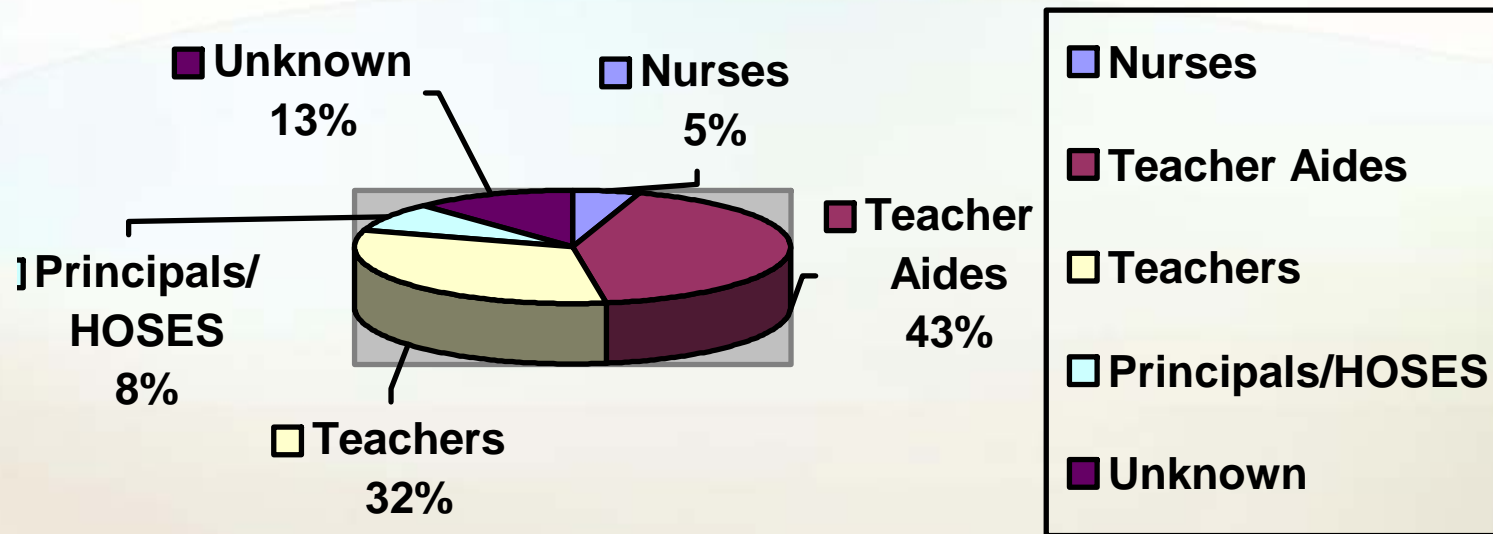
- **Schools with nurses**
 - **Schools staff performed procedures**
 - **Nurses provided training, ongoing supervision and support to staff performing procedures**
 - **Nursing services varied across individual schools**
 - **Students access to learning was “seldom” or “never” affected by issues relating to management of their health procedure**

Data Analysis – Phase 1

- **Schools without nurses**
 - **School staff performed procedures**
 - **A variety of agencies were accessed for training for health procedure**
 - **Not all agencies provided ongoing supervision and support after training**
 - **Students access to learning was sometimes affected by issues relating to management of their health procedure**

Data Analysis - Phase 2

Phase 2 Data Collection – % of questionnaires returned by discipline group



Impact on Students

- **82% of school staff in outreach schools and 100% of school staff in schools with nurses reported that students participation in learning was enhanced**
- **Outreach schools continued to report higher numbers of students missing class or learning compared with schools with nurses**

Impact on School Staff

- **88% of school staff in outreach schools reported that access to training for health procedures had improved**
- **Access to training for health procedures remained the same for staff in schools with nurses**
- **97% of staff in outreach schools and 82% of staff in schools with nurses reported feeling competent at performing health procedures after training**

Impact on School Staff

- **100% of school staff in both outreach schools and schools with nurses felt that ongoing supervision and support from the nurses was valuable or extremely valuable**
- **>85% of school staff in both outreach schools and schools without nurses agreed that a nurses involvement in development of health plans for students was extremely valuable**

Impact on Districts

- **District offices reported improvements in:**
 - **Access to training for school staff for health procedures**
 - **Support for students with health procedures**
 - **The capacity for school staff to manage the needs of students with health procedures**
 - **Access to learning across a range of educational settings for students with health procedures**

Summary

- **Students access to and participation in learning is enhanced**
- **Confidence and competence of school staff performing health procedures is improved**
- **Access to training has improved**
- **Differences in nursing services provided to schools was identified**

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- **Schools and Health - are we working well together?**

References

- **Education Queensland. 2002. *Interim Position Statement for the Delivery of Specific Health Procedures in Schools*. Brisbane.**
- **Heller, K., Fredrick, L., Best, S., Dykes, M. and Cohen, E. 2000. Specialised health care procedures in the schools: training and service delivery. *Exceptional Children*, 66 (2): 173-186.**
- **Queensland Nursing Council. 1998. *Scope of Nursing Practice Decision Making Framework*. Retrieved 1st March 2005. Brisbane. Available online: <http://education.qld.gov.au/students/disabilities/adjustment/pdfs/disable-report.pdf>**