



Montana Association of School Nurses: The purpose of the Montana Association of School Nurses (MASN), an affiliate of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) is to maintain, promote, and advance quality school health services and health education throughout the state of Montana. The vision of NASN is that every student is healthy, safe, and ready to learn.



The Montana Nurses’ Association: The Montana Nurses Association (MNA), an affiliate of the American Nurses Association (ANA), is the recognized leader and advocate for the professional nurse in Montana and promotes professional nursing practice, standards and education; represents professional nurses; and provides nursing leadership in promoting high quality health care.

A parent in Billings School District 2 reached out to our professional nurse associations for comments about a recent “safety levy” and address some district wide safety needs cited from a recent fact sheet that was produced following a third-party [safety audit](#) conducted November 2023.

MASN and MNA are collaboratively addressing a couple of specific bullet points below for community members to consider.

- ✓ “We have a nurse to student ratio of 1 nurse for every 950 students, however, the recommendation is 1 registered nurse for every school, every day, all day.”
([yes_factsheet.pdf \(safeschoolsbillings.org\)NASN.org](#))

Safety is one of the most important aspects of the profession of nursing, no matter the nurse’s role. Children deserve to learn and thrive in a safe environment, moreover, teachers and all education staff deserve to teach and function in a safe environment. Safety measures will not only protect your schools but will bring students, parents, education staff, and communities together to improve public education.

Having safer schools leads to safer communities allowing students to develop lifelong skills, improve communities' quality of life, and wraps resources and services around families. Often a school nurse is the first connection to healthcare for many students and their families. The National Association of School Nurses identifies schools as primary locations to address student health issues, since a school nurse is the health care provider that many students see on the most regular basis. MASN and MNA understand one of the purposes from the levies would provide more funding to hire more nurses, up to three for this specific district. Currently, Billings School District has a student to nurse ratio over recommended best practices. Hiring more school nurses is a crucial step toward addressing safety, moreover, MASN and MNA continue to advocate statewide for a school nurse in every school.

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) formerly advocated for a ratio of 1 nurse per 750 students, deeming it sufficient for adequate care. However, recognizing the evolving needs and complexities of modern education and health concerns, NASN has recently revised their recommendation to emphasize the necessity of having a nurse present at every school. Regrettably, this district and many others across the state, fall short of meeting even the previous guidelines, let alone the heightened standard. This discrepancy not only jeopardizes the well-being of our students but also underscores the urgency for immediate action to prioritize their health and safety.

- ✓ “Nearly all elementary schools lack life-saving Automated Electronic Defibrillators (AED) devices for cardiac emergencies.” ([yes_factsheet.pdf \(safeschoolsbillings.org\)](https://www.safeschoolsbillings.org/yes_factsheet.pdf))

Investing in life-saving Automated Electronic Defibrillators (AED) devices for cardiac emergencies is self-explanatory and should be located at all schools no matter the grade level.

Other suggestions for improvement from this 2023 Billings safety audit that will help with mental health and safety include the audit's comments on school resource officers and addressing the high mental health counseling staff to student ratios.

Passing these levies will help correct these deficits and improve health outcomes.

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