



POSITION STATEMENT - STATE SCHOOL NURSE CONSULTANT ROLE

The purpose of this document is to inform state nursing, health, and education agency leaders of the crucial nature of state level leadership in the specialty of school nursing.

POSITION

The National Association of State School Nurse Consultants (NASSNC) recognizes the significant leadership, consultation, and guidance for school nurses that state school nurse consultants (SSNC) provide. NASSNC endorses the establishment of such positions in every state. The SSNC is a specialist in school nursing practice who works with local educational agencies (LEAs) which may include private, parochial, and/or charter schools. An LEA is a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2017). SSNCs work with schools and school nurses to promote quality school nursing services and school health programs that address the broad health needs of all students and the school community. Minimum educational preparation should be a registered nurse (RN) who is master's prepared. Candidates for the position should also have management, leadership, administrative experience, training, and skills. SSNCs need nursing experience in the school setting, ideally to include administration experience in an educational system. SSNC positions should be affirmed by state law or state policy, with adequate support staff, and full funding. SSNCs should be administratively housed in state departments of education and/or health to work collaboratively in achieving mutual goals.

RATIONALE

The SSNC develops new or analyzes existing continuous systems of accountability for improving student health and educational outcomes in partnership with school nurses and others. School nursing services are a critical component of the support required for the health and safety of students and staff while on and off school campuses. The SSNC links school nurses to the larger nursing infrastructure and expertise

to proactively address local challenges, prevent disruptions, and improve systems. This includes developing support for school nurses who train ancillary school health staff to guide their safe practice and professional development. Schools need qualified personnel at all levels to meet student health and safety needs.

The SSNC leads school nurse workforce development activities to orient registered nurses to the specialty of school nursing and to support ongoing professional development. School nurses come to their positions with varied backgrounds and professional work experience obtained in a variety of healthcare settings. School nurses are the healthcare professionals/clinicians qualified to work in an educational setting often with limited clinical supervision or with administrative supervision from a person who has a background in educational administration or personnel management. School nursing is best described using the five principles outlined in the Framework for 21st Century School Nursing Practice (National Association of School Nurses [NASN], 2016; American Nurses Association [ANA] & NASN, 2017). These principles are quality improvement, care coordination, public or community health, leadership, and standards of practice. Pursuant to state law, ancillary staff (licensed practical or vocational nurses or unlicensed individuals) may be used in some settings to meet the growing student health needs and to support the school nurse. The SSNC interprets the state's nurse practice acts to support the school nurse's role in assessing (nursing judgment), planning, training, supervising, and evaluating assistive personnel (National Council of State Boards of Nursing [NBCSN], 2016) and resulting student health outcomes.

The SSNC is responsible for promoting statewide quality standards for school health policies, nursing scope of practice, clinical procedures, documentation, and standards development as well as coordination and systems accountability. SSNCs work in collaboration with their respective state board of nursing, provide guidance in program development and planning, establish a continuum of workforce development, and serve as a liaison and resource expert in school nursing practice and school health program(s).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE SCHOOL NURSE CONSULTANT INCLUDE:

- Serving as liaison and resource expert in school nursing and school health program areas for local, regional, state, and national school health care providers, and policy setting groups.
- Data collection and analysis (e.g. health outcomes, social determinants of health, customer satisfaction, effectiveness of services).
- Promoting the Framework for 21st Century School Nursing Practice (NASN, 2016; ANA & NASN, 2017).
- Providing consultation and technical assistance to local school districts, parents, and community members.
- Coordinating school health program activities with public health, social services, environmental, and educational agencies as well as other public and private entities.
- Monitoring, interpreting, synthesizing, and disseminating relevant information associated with changes in health and medical care, school nursing practice, legislation, and legal issues that impact schools.

- Facilitating the development of policies, standards, and/or guidelines. Interpreting, updating, and disseminating policies, standards, guidelines and/or procedures to enhance coordinated school health programs.
- Fostering and promoting staff development for school nurses. This may include planning and providing orientation, coordinating, and/or providing educational offerings and networking with universities and other providers of continuing education to meet identified needs.
- Promoting quality assurance in school health services by initiating and coordinating a quality assurance program that includes needs assessment, data collection and analysis, and evidence-based practice research.
- Participating in state level public interagency/private partnerships with statewide stakeholders to foster a coordinated school health program, representing school nurses in multi-disciplinary collaborations.
- Initiating, participating in, and utilizing research studies related to a coordinated school health program focused on the health needs of children and youth, school nursing practice, and related issues; and
- Serving as legislative liaison regarding school health issues with the state department of health, state department of education and/or the state legislative body.

SUMMARY

SSNCs provide nursing leadership to ensure effective school nurse services within their state. SSNCs develop and promote quality standards for school health services programs that reflect current school nursing practice. Their leadership fosters a better understanding among educators, parents, and the general public regarding the relationship between health status and a student’s capacity to learn. For assistance in developing a state school nurse consultant position description, a sample job description, talking points or to discuss organizational models, please contact NASSNC or one of its members.

CONTACT INFORMATION

National Association of State School Nurse Consultants: <http://www.schoolnurseconsultants.org/>

RESOURCES

National Association of State School Nurse Consultants Bylaws (2020).

Trefry, S. (2019). Health and Academic Equity in Schools: Is Nursing Far Enough Up Stream, *NASN School Nurse*. November 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1942602X19885956>

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (1995, Walker, H. as cited by U.S. Department of Education, Jan. 18, 2017). <https://sites.ed.gov/osers/2017/01/a-continuum-of-support-for-all/>

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model (Association of School Curriculum Directors [ASCD]), 2014). <http://www.ascd.org/programs/learning-and-health/wsc-model.aspx>

REFERENCES

- American Nurses Association and National Association of School Nurses. (2017). *School nursing: Scope and standards of practice* (3rd ed.). ANA & NASN.
- National Association of School Nurses. (2016). Framework for 21st century school nursing practice. *NASN School Nurse*, 31(1), 45-53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1942602X15618644>
- National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2016). National guidelines for nursing delegation. *Journal of Nursing Regulation*, 7(1), 5-14. https://www.ncsbn.org/NCSBN_Delegation_Guidelines.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education. (2017). Individuals with disabilities education act. Sec. 303.23 local educational agency. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/c/a/303.23>

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