



# **New Jersey Department of Education**

**Division of Educational Services**

**Office of Student Support Services**

**State School Nurse Consultant**

July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023

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# Table of Contents

Background .....	2
Roles and Responsibilities.....	2
Key Terms and Acronyms.....	3
Summary of Services.....	3
Resource Development.....	3
Stakeholder Support .....	4
Inquiries .....	4
Meetings and Presentations .....	5
NDOE Broadcast Memos.....	5
Interagency Collaboration .....	6
Recommendations .....	7

## Background

P.L. 2020, Chapter 85, was enacted on September 14, 2020. This legislation supplemented chapter 4 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes, establishing the position of State School Nurse Consultant in the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). The focus of the State School Nurse Consultant is to facilitate best practices in school nursing by advancing comprehensive school health services and acting as a liaison in matters related to comprehensive school health services that addresses the health and wellness of all students while supporting school nursing practice. This includes program improvement, monitoring, synthesizing, and disseminating relevant information associated with changes in health and medical care, school nursing practice, legislation, and legal issues that impact schools.

The State School Nurse Consultant is directly supervised by the Director of the Office of Student Support Services. Pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the State School Nurse Consultant shall report annually to the Governor, and to the Legislature. This report shall include a summary of the activities during the year, and any specific recommendations deemed appropriate and necessary concerning school nursing and comprehensive school health service programs. This report is intended to meet that requirement.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of the state school nurse consultant are set forth in legislation and statute. They include the following:

- 1) Serve as a liaison and resource expert in school nursing and comprehensive school health services for county, state, and national school health organizations, and policy setting groups.
- 2) Provide consultation and technical assistance to support school districts in facilitating parent and community engagement.
- 3) Coordinate school health program activities with public health, social services, environmental, and educational agencies, and other public and private entities.
- 4) Monitor, interpret, synthesize, and disseminate relevant information associated with changes in health and medical care, school nursing practice, legislation, and legal issues that impact schools.
- 5) Facilitate the development of policies, standards, and guidelines to enhance comprehensive school health services.
- 6) Foster and promote professional development for school nurses, which may include planning, coordinating, or providing educational guidance, and networking with universities and other providers of continuing education to meet identified needs.
- 7) Promote quality assurance of comprehensive school health services by advocating for evidence-based school nursing practice and participating in the National Association of School Nurses data collection initiatives.
- 8) Participate in state-level public interagency partnerships and private partnerships with statewide stakeholders to foster comprehensive school health services, representing school nurses in multi-disciplinary collaborations.

- 9) Initiate, participate in, and utilize research studies related to comprehensive school health services, the health needs of children and youth, school nursing practice, and related issues.
- 10) Serve as a liaison regarding school health issues with the Department of Health and the Legislature.

## Key Terms and Acronyms

LEAHP (Leadership Exchange for Adolescent Health Promotion) – The Leadership Exchange for Adolescent Health Promotion is a collaborative of multi-sector, state-level leadership teams with the goal to develop state-specific action plans in support of policy assessment, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to address adolescent health in three priority areas: sexual health education, sexual health services, and safe and supportive environments emphasizing school and family relationships that can reduce the risk for sexually transmitted infections (STI's) and unintended pregnancy.

Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) - The program educates young people between the ages of 10 and 19 on abstinence and contraceptive methods to prevent teen pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections. (STIs). The primary goal of PREP is teen empowerment which encompasses training adolescents to reduce their risk of unplanned pregnancy and prevent Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other STI's.

## Summary of Services

This position was filled effective December 5, 2022. This report reflects the work and services provided from December to June 30, 2023.

Services performed reflect the roles and responsibilities for the position and are categorized as: Resource Development, Stakeholder Support, and Interagency Collaboration. Services and projects are not mutually exclusive but are identified in a single category.

## Resource Development

Resource development includes the facilitation and development of policies, standards, and guidelines to enhance comprehensive school health services. It also includes the monitoring, interpretation, synthesis, and dissemination of relevant information associated with changes in school nursing practice. While serving as a liaison and resource expert in school nursing and comprehensive school nursing services the following work was performed:

- The Development of the updated Model Policy and Guidance for Districts on the Prevention and Treatment of Sports Related Head Injuries and Concussions.
- The Development of the updated Sports-Related Concussion and Head Injury Fact Sheet and Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement Form.
- The Summary of Selected School Health Mandates was updated and posted on the NJDOE website.
- Links and resources posted on the School Health Services website were updated to include the most current and relevant information and resources. Updates related to Paul's Law and seizure

training were posted. Attention was brought to other supports and resources such as LGBTQ resources provided by the Division of Children and Families (DCF), and Immunization Guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). Inactive links, and outdated information were removed. As updates are made to the School Health Services page the information is becoming more relevant and useful to stakeholders.

## Stakeholder Support

The State School Nurse Consultant serves as a liaison regarding school health issues with the Department of Health and the Department of Education. This includes serving as a resource and support that grows professional knowledge and provides guidance. During this period, the State School Nurse Consultant attended professional workshops, presented at conferences or meetings, and responded to inquiries including questions related to best practice and strategies to support best practices in providing student health services. Stakeholder support took place through the dissemination of updates and relevant information such as NJDOE’s Broadcast Memos, responses to email inquiries and presentations associated with changes in school nursing practice, legislation, and related legal issues that impact local educational agencies.

### Inquiries

While the response to inquiries to the [healthyschools@doe.nj.gov](mailto:healthyschools@doe.nj.gov) email represents a small percentage of total work time, the importance of the responses cannot be underestimated. These responses provide timely support to stakeholders including school nurses, administrators, parents, other health professionals, and community members regarding student health services and related nursing practice questions.

There were 96 inquiries from Dec. 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023



Most inquiries originated via email. Phone inquiries were forwarded from other offices within the NJDOE.

While most inquiries were generated by school nurses, the chart below demonstrates that other stakeholders, including parents, and administrators, also rely on and utilize this resource.



### Meetings and Presentations

- The New Jersey State School Nurse Association (NJSSNA) is a key stakeholder in addressing questions or concerns related to school health services. Regular meetings and communications were established to help address school nurse practice concerns. Meetings took place in January and May and will continue quarterly and as needed moving forward. The NJSSNA is a key collaborator in sharing information related to school nurse practice questions.
- The implementation of Paul’s Law brought about questions and concerns related to the frequency of the required seizure training for school staff as well as questions surrounding delegation of medications commonly used to treat seizures. Paul’s Law requires training for all current and new school staff on epilepsy and seizure disorders and the inclusion of epilepsy and seizure disorders in individualized health care plans for students. Clarification regarding the law and previously released guidance was provided via response to email inquiries, updates to the NJDOE school health services website, and several districts and county school nurse associations requested presentations. While not all requests could be honored, two presentations were conducted. In addition, several requests are scheduled for the upcoming year.
- To increase visibility and awareness regarding the position, the State School Nurse Consultant attended the NJSSNA annual conference in March, and the end of year meeting in May honoring retirees.
- Attendance at the National Association of School Nurses meetings and webinars occurred in March, May, and June to support and participate in the NASN data collection initiatives.
- An application has been submitted to become a member of the National Association of State School Nurse Consultants (NASSNC).

### NDOE Broadcast Memos

[Review and Approval of Preparticipation Physical Evaluation Forms](#)

[Translation of Student Immunization Records](#)

[Enrollment in State School HEPA Distribution Program](#)

## Interagency Collaboration

The State School Nurse Consultant serves as a liaison and resource expert in school nursing and comprehensive school health services for county, state, and national school health organizations, and policy setting groups. This requires participation in both public interagency partnerships, and private partnerships with stakeholders to foster comprehensive school health services while representing school nurses in multi-disciplinary collaborations. The State School Nurse Consultant promotes quality assurance of comprehensive school health services by advocating for the use of evidence-based school nursing practices and participating in the National Association of School Nurses data collection initiatives. The following work was accomplished during this reporting period:

- Collaborated with the NJDOH on several projects and initiatives:
  - Provided input and collaborated on the HEPA distribution program – ensuring information was shared with local educational agencies (LEAs) via broadcast memorandums, and individual outreach.
  - Supporting LEAs and families on translating immunization records and other required health information.
  - Served as a grant reviewer for the NJDOH Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP).
  - Served as a grant reviewer for the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child School Health Project.
  - Attended and participated in monthly meetings with the NJ LEAHP team and attended quarterly meetings with the NJ LEAHP to support cross-state collaboration.
- Collaborated with other Divisions and offices across the NJDOE including the Division of Teaching and Learning Services and the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs:
  - Worked with the Division of Teaching and Learning to explore career readiness options leading to a career in nursing.
  - Presented at the New Charter School Training to inform attendees of required school health and nursing services.
  - Supported the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs to understand immunization requirements of migrant and refugee students.
- Supported the NASN data collection initiative which required collaborative work with NASN and
  - Met with NJSSNA to discuss current data points and determined which data points could be identified via the school report card. Also worked to identify key data points for New Jersey.
  - Participation in meetings and webinars regarding the data collection with NASN.
  - Attended the NASN annual meeting and conference in June.
  - Gathered data available via the current reporting system established by the NJDOE.

# Recommendations

1. Develop a standard template for the Nursing services plan and a system for reporting the information. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3 “Nursing services plan” means a plan that describes in detail the nursing services to be provided throughout the school district based on the needs of its students, potential emergency situations, basic nursing services requirements, and the assignment of medical staff to provide the services. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1 Each district board of education shall annually adopt the school district’s nursing services plan at a regular meeting. A review of the nursing services plan in various districts across the state demonstrated significant variation in identifying and addressing the provision of nursing services. To effectively assess and promote quality assurance of comprehensive school health services, a standard assessment tool identifying the health needs of students and nursing services provided should be developed and encouraged by the NJDOE.
2. There is significant work needed to address the school nurse shortage. In January 2023, the Task Force on Public School Staff Shortages in New Jersey reported that school nurse positions have been difficult to fill, however there is no data on the exact number of unfilled certified school nurse positions or what regions are experiencing the greatest need. The staffing report within the Nursing Services Plan, which was collected during the Department’s Quality Single Accountability Continuum process, could provide information related to unfilled positions. Using this data, the Department could target support to regions in the state where there are gaps in the provision of nursing services in schools.
3. It is recommended the updated (2019) Pre-participation Physical Evaluation Form developed jointly by the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Sports Medicine, American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine, and American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine be adopted. A proposal to form a working group to review the form has been submitted. The working group will ensure that the form meets the requirements of *N.J.S.A.18A:40-41.7* along with other statutory requirements describing pre-requisite trainings a physician would need to evaluate if student is approved for participating in organized sports.
4. Review and update the *Training Protocols for the Emergency Administration of Epinephrine* that were written in 2008.
5. Review and update the *Guidelines for the Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Schools* that were written in 2008.