



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

School Health Personnel Profession Entry Report

Section 7.32 of Session Law 2023-134

Date Due: January 15, 2024
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2023-2024

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I. Policy, Practices Standards, and Curriculum Overview

For purposes of this report, the term “school health personnel” refers to school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses, and school social workers. Each of these professions are specialized to practice and be employed in all NC public school units. The requirements vary and can be compared in the following table.

	Education/Training Required/Minimum Time to Meet Requirements	Practicum/ Internship	Licensure/ Certification	Link to Professional Standards
School Counseling	<p>Master’s Degree in School Counseling from CACREP accredited program</p> <p>Praxis Exam for School Counseling</p> <p>Minimum time to complete is 6 years</p>	<p>Practicum (semester)</p> <p>Internship (1 year)</p>	DPI Professional Educators License	EVAL 026: Evaluation Standards and Criteria: School Counseling
School Nursing	<p>Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN)</p> <p>NCLEX Nursing Licensure Exam</p> <p>Minimum time to complete an ADN is 2 years.</p>	N/A	RN licensure by NC Board of Nursing upon hire.	NC Nurse Practice Act School Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, 4th Edition
School Psychology	<p>Completion of an approved program in school psychology at the advanced/specialist level (master’s + 30) and a passing score on School Psychology Praxis exam</p> <p>Minimum time to complete is 7 years</p>	<p>Practicum (1-2 years)</p> <p>Internship (1 year)</p>	DPI Professional Educators License	EVAL-025: Evaluation Standards and Criteria: School Psychologists (eboardsolutions.com)
School Social Work	<p>Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in social work</p> <p>School social work specialty program at approved NC Educator Preparation Program</p> <p>Minimum time to complete is 4 years</p>	Internship (1 year)	DPI Professional Educators License	Eval Professional -027 North Carolina School Social Work Standards

There is an undeniably important connection between students' mental and physical health and their ability to learn. Schools' ability to meet the needs of their students is dependent on the strength of their school health personnel: school social worker, nurse, counselor, and psychologist. However, in NC, funding for these positions is insufficient, so the recommended student-staff ratios are not being met. Current ratios are shown below, along with the national recommended ratios.

	Current Ratio	Recommended	% Progress
School Counselors	1:361	1:250	 69%
School Nurses	1:809**	1 per school	 68%
School Social Workers	1:1,033	1:250	 24%
School Psychologists	1:1,979	1:500	 25%

**Note there were 128 school nurse positions vacant for longer than 6 months during the 22-23 school year, which greatly impacts the FTE and adjusts the ratio to 1:875.

II. Methods For Gathering Comprehensive Scope Of Problem

There are additional barriers to these personnel entering the profession. They also vastly vary by profession. NCDPI requested feedback on barriers and recommendations for school health personnel entering or employed in the profession. Respondents range from NC educator preparation faculty to supervisors and directors over these personnel, to these personnel themselves, and related stakeholders. The state-level consultants for all of these professionals also provided insights related to barriers and recommendations. Feedback is summarized in the next section.

III. Barriers and Recommendations to Entering the Profession

School Counseling

According to [N.C. G.S. 115 C. Duties of a School Counselor, part of the NC School Safety Act of 2013](#): a) School counselors shall implement a comprehensive developmental counseling program in their schools. Counselors shall spend at least eighty percent of their work time providing direct services to students. In the area of practice, concerns arise for school counselors performing inappropriate non-counseling duties. **Performing such duties as 504 coordination and teacher classroom coverage interferes with their ability to provide direct service delivery of a comprehensive school counseling program to students.** In addition, alignment of state and district role expectations of school counselors would eliminate inappropriate use of time for school counselors in non-counseling-related duties.

Actions already taken to reduce/eliminate barriers for school counselors:

- The State Board of Education approved the adoption of the ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors, December 2023. The new standards will be named the North Carolina Student Success Standards and will ensure the development of comprehensive school counseling programs statewide that are data-driven. The shift to the new standards will take place in the 2024-2025 school year.

Recommendations to reduce/eliminate barriers for school counselors:

- **Reduce the school counselor-to-pupil ratio to the recommended ratio of 1:250**
- **Removal of non-counseling duties such as 504 coordination and daily classroom coverage in master schedule rotation for elementary school counselors**

School Nursing

The National Association of School Nurses recommends that students have access to a registered professional nurse all day, every day. Appropriate staffing levels should be determined by assessing student acuity and school community indicators. The survey data feedback recommends the state salary band for school nurses to be more comparable with nurses in other professional settings and differentiated from the classroom teacher pay scale. In addition, it is recommended that the school nurses shift from classified employees to certified employees. School nurses receive decreased pay when they transition from outside professional settings into school settings until they receive their National School Nurse Certification.

For school nurses to practice effectively, one school nurse should be assigned to each school. Standards of practice are written within the framework of the nursing process and are consistent with the North Carolina Board Of Nursing requirements and regulations for practice. School nurse job descriptions should include minimum standards of practice, school nurse competencies, and a quantifiable way of demonstrating that the school nurse possesses the knowledge, skills, abilities, critical thinking, and judgment to function autonomously. **The school community is best served by a qualified professional school nurse who is working to the full extent of their allowed scope of practice.**

The complexity of issues that school nurses encounter in the school setting require advanced skills and competencies, including the ability to practice independently and navigate between education and health systems. Preceptorships and mentorships with an experienced school nurse or school nurse educator involved with school health programs would help with retention.

Actions already taken to reduce/eliminate barriers for school nurses:

- Temporary grant funding was offered during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years to supplement school nurse salaries and increase the number of population-based school nurses and school nurse extenders.

Recommendations to reduce/eliminate barriers for school nurses are:

- **Increase salary for school nurses to be comparable to nurses in other settings on a certified pay scale versus a classified pay scale**
- **Increase funding for more school nurse positions in public school units.**
- **Reduce the school nurse-to-pupil ratio to the recommended ratio to at a minimum one school nurse per school.**

School Psychology

School psychologists are experts in learning, behavior, mental health, and educational systems. School psychologists are trained to support students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional success through a comprehensive range of services, including:

- Implementation of academic and behavioral interventions
- Provision of mental health supports
- Evaluation, assessment, and data analysis
- Consultation with teachers and families
- Culturally responsive services
- Crisis prevention and response

North Carolina is one of many states that are experiencing shortages of school psychologists, which means that we compete for school psychologists with other states. The average school psychologist's salary in NC is lower than the average in neighboring

states, hindering our success in attracting professionals from other states that train more school psychologists and have more favorable ratios.

School psychologist-to-student ratios across North Carolina are significantly higher than recommended, and decreasing these ratios to begin to approach the national recommended standard would allow better delivery of the full range of services from school psychologists. High caseloads for school psychologists make the delivery of comprehensive school psychological services difficult. **As a result, a disproportionate amount of time is spent engaged in psychoeducational evaluations supporting exceptional children's needs.**

According to FY 2023 data, there were 792 school psychologists employed in 766 FTEs across the 115 traditional PSUs. To achieve the recommended ratio of school psychologists to students, North Carolina would need 2715 FTEs serving the 1,357,681 students (2022 ADM), representing an increase of 350%.

Approximately one-quarter of NC's traditional PSUs do not have a school psychologist on staff. These PSUs are almost exclusively located in rural counties, especially in northeastern NC, which compounds existing inequities in access to mental health services and educational opportunities. Of the 26 PSUs without a school psychologist on staff, 19 have been without a school psychologist for at least 3 years.

Minimum graduate training for school psychology is at the advanced or specialist level, which requires two years of full-time coursework followed by one year of full-time internship in a school setting. Training of school psychologists requires more time and coursework than in other School Health Support fields. Additionally, the graduate programs in North Carolina are delivered in a traditional full-time, in-person format that is often prohibitive for individuals who currently work in schools and may wish to consider school psychology as a career. Only a few school psychology graduate programs nationally offer distance learning formats that are accessible to NC's working professionals and can lead to licensure in NC Public Schools.

North Carolina's graduate training programs are highly regarded and have all received program approval from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP); however, NC does not have enough educational preparation programs to meet the needs of the state in training and staffing school psychologists at recommended ratios. Five universities (all within the UNC System) offer graduate training in school psychology. These programs have cohorts that typically consist of 6–10 students, leading to a total of 25-30 new school psychology graduates per year, which is not nearly enough to meet the growing need for school psychologists in our state.

Actions already taken to reduce/eliminate barriers for school psychologists:

- Creation of DPI School Psychology Consultant position to focus on addressing issues around recruitment and retention of school psychologists in NC; consultant began in July 2023.
- Across-the-board increase of \$3500/year to school psychologist salary schedule in 2021
- Limited 2-year grant funding (PRC 204) began in 2022 to help fund individual PSUs' recruitment and retention efforts through signing bonuses, mentor stipends, and professional membership and development fees (funding cycle ends in 2024).

Recommendations to reduce/eliminate barriers for school psychologists are:

- **Increase salary scale to be more competitive with surrounding states**
- **Provide additional resources to rural PSUs that do not have a school psychologist on staff to help support recruitment and retention efforts**
- **Continue PRC 204 grant funding for PSUs' recruitment and retention efforts; make funds recurring**
- **Increase the capacity of North Carolina's graduate training programs to be able to train more school psychologists**
- **Creation of additional school psychology graduate programs that offer an option for a hybrid training format to be more accessible to current school staff**
- **Continue with NC Forgivable Education Loans for Service (FELS) program to keep school psychology program graduates in NC**

School Social Work

School Social Workers are trained mental health professionals who can assist with mental health concerns, behavioral concerns, positive behavioral support, academic, and classroom support, consultation with teachers, parents, and administrators as well as provide individual and group counseling/therapy. School social workers are instrumental in furthering the mission of the schools, which is to provide a setting for teaching, learning, and the attainment of competence and confidence. They are hired by school districts to enhance the district's ability to meet its academic mission, especially where home, school, and community collaboration is the key to achieving student success.

The lack of master's pay in comparison to other school health personnel impacts the retention of school social workers. There is no legislation or state board policy that requires a school social worker to have a master's degree. For this reason, they are not

paid for any advanced degrees. This is problematic because a growing number of districts are requiring a school social worker to have a master's degree to handle the intensive mental health needs of the school community. **Unlike teachers, who don't get paid for advanced degrees either, school social workers are locally required to have a master's and are not getting compensated for it.**

The practice of school social workers is primarily related to addressing attendance and not the full scope of their work. While the issue of chronic absenteeism is soaring currently, there are many other aspects of the role that work together to best serve school communities. Lack of well-defined role clarification prevents them from delivering needed services to students. Not having enough of all the school health personnel contributes to the blurred lines in roles and responsibilities. In the area of standards, school social workers are not adequately evaluated on their full-service delivery due to their evaluations aligning more with the work of classroom teachers.

Actions already taken to reduce/eliminate barriers for school social workers:

- NC DPI created and approved a new job description for School-Based Mental Health Clinicians, which allows for school social workers who serve as clinicians to be paid for their clinical licenses and work.
- Collaborative efforts between NCDPI and school social work educator preparation programs are ongoing to ensure there is a healthy pipeline of candidates should the compensation be corrected. There is currently no shortage of school social work candidates.

Recommendations to reduce/eliminate barriers for school social workers are:

- **Compensation for advanced degrees and restoration of master's pay for school social workers with class "M" NCDPI licensure.**
- **Increase state funding to employ at least one school social worker per school.**

IV. Conclusion

School health personnel carry a vital role in providing comprehensive services to meet the physical and mental health needs of children to produce optimal academic performance outcomes. To ensure successful service delivery, there are recommendations that would leverage the sustainability of school health personnel in North Carolina schools. First, reducing student ratios to the recommended ratios of each profession would aid in the manageability of student caseloads and effectively meet professional standards. Secondly, employing at least one school social worker, school psychologist, and school nurse would strengthen on-site student support services teams. Thirdly, funding for increased and competitive salaries would increase retention and recruitment rates for these positions. Lastly, clear job descriptions would protect school health personnel from engaging in inappropriate job duties.

Appendix

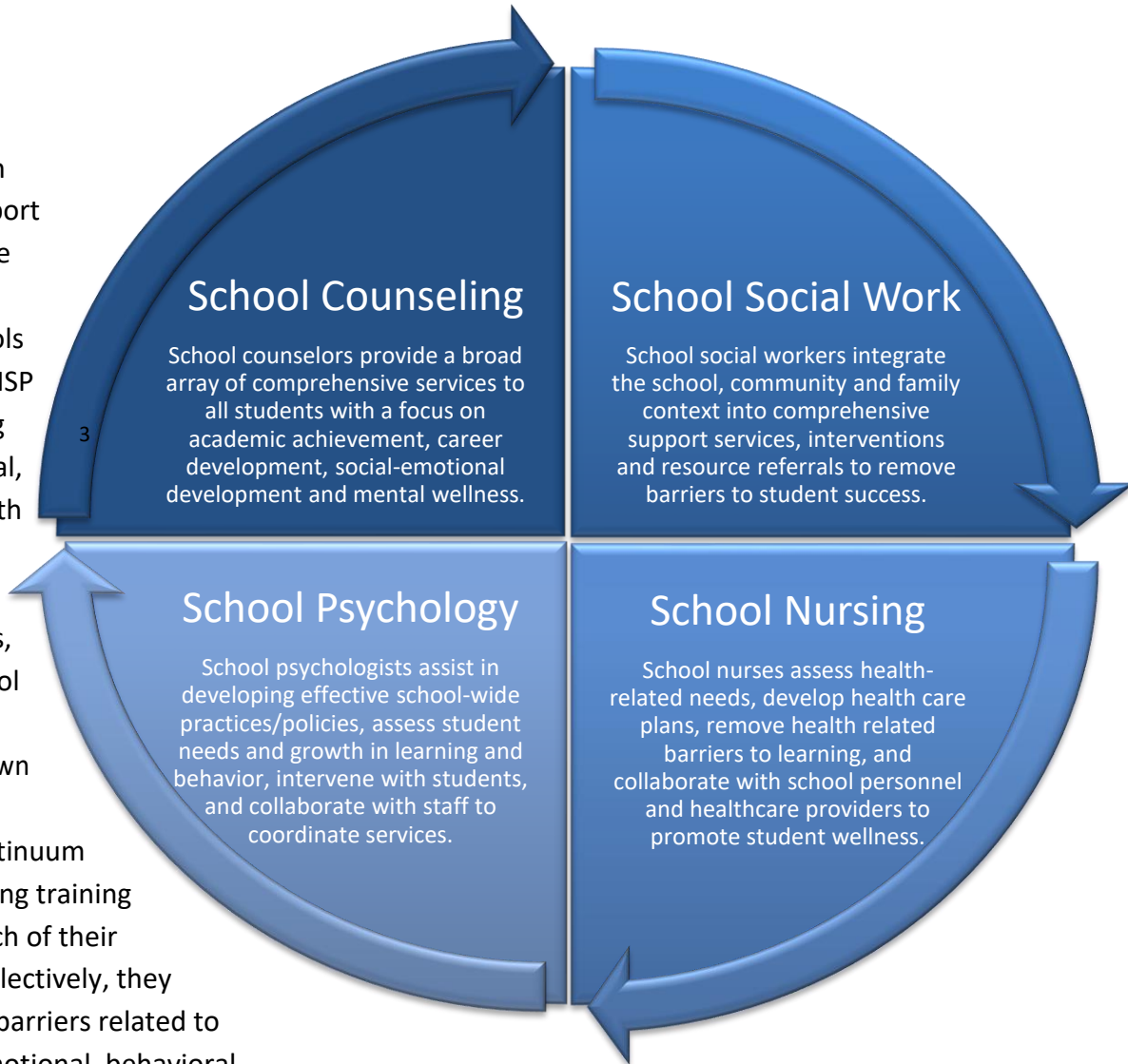


Specialized Instructional Support Personnel in North Carolina

Providing for the Well-Being of the Whole Child

Who are Specialized Instructional Support Personnel?

The licensed Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) included in this document are the support personnel who are available to serve all students within North Carolina public schools who employ them. These SISP are affiliated with providing school-based physical, social, emotional and mental health prevention, intervention, transition and follow-up services - school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists and school nurses. These SISP, also known as student support services, provide a collaborative continuum of services while also bringing training and expertise unique to each of their professional disciplines. Collectively, they enhance skills and address barriers related to academic, career, social-emotional, behavioral, and mental and physical health needs of PK-12 students so that all students can learn, thrive, and grow. Although each provider plays a specialized role to meet the needs of students, some supports may overlap to cultivate the overall well-being of the whole child.



For information on SISP other than those included in this document, please visit their respective web pages on the NCDPI website at www.dpi.nc.gov.

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel in North Carolina

See accompanying implementation and evaluation Administrator Guides for more details on each professional discipline.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Unique Role in School

Support all students to be successful with a focus on academic achievement, career development, social-emotional development and mental wellness. School counselors are uniquely trained to provide a broad array of prevention and early intervention educational, counseling, and support services to all students.

Training

Minimum of a master's degree in school counseling

OR

Master's degree in another area of counseling plus the additional school counselor-specific required courses.

Licensed by the Department of Public Instruction

Academic Support

Provide classroom and group lessons and individual and small group counseling, advising and direct support to remove a variety of barriers to learning to help all students develop skills and behaviors critical to academic and personal success. Collaborate, consult and provide data for teachers, families, and administration to support classroom success.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

Unique Role in School

Provide focused outreach for identified students in areas of social-emotional and mental and physical health needs. School social workers are uniquely trained to integrate the school, community and family context into comprehensive support services, interventions, and resource referrals to remove barriers to student success.

Training

Minimum of a bachelor's degree in social work with the addition of required school social work-specific courses.

Licensed by the Department of Public Instruction

Academic Support

Provide schoolwide, small group and individual support to identified students to reduce barriers to learning using interventions to improve overall student functioning. Collaborate and consult with teachers, families, administration, and community service providers to address barriers to learning.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Unique Role in School

Assist school leaders in selecting/developing school-wide practice/policies to support all students. In-depth training to provide assessment (academic and behavioral) and data analysis at the individual and group level. Evaluation/identification of intensive learning and behavioral needs of students with disabilities.

Training

Minimum of an Advanced degree in school psychology

Licensed by the Department of Public Instruction

Academic Support

Develop/implement student progress monitoring plans and provide data analysis/growth trajectories at both the individual and group level to support the academic growth of students. Provide individualized evaluation services, reporting and interpretation of the instructional implications of evaluation results to parents/school staff.

SCHOOL NURSES

Unique Role in School

Assess health-related needs, provide for health care plans, and collaborate with school personnel and healthcare providers to promote student physical and mental wellness.

Training

Minimum of a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (BSN)

Licensed by the NC Board of Nursing.

Certification by the National Board for Certification of School Nurses

Academic Support

Assess needs, complete, and oversee health care plans, and provide related instruction, support, and oversight to staff, students and families to address student health-related needs that can present barriers to learning and wellness. Assist administration with preventing and responding to communicable disease outbreaks.

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SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Career Support

Provide career awareness, exploration, and preparation opportunities to assist all students through the K-12 career and college planning and readiness process. Utilize classroom lessons, small group counseling, and individual planning to assist students to form postsecondary and career goals, build a plan to meet goals, foster skill-building, assess student abilities and interests, and access post-secondary options.

Social-Emotional, Behavioral & Mental Health Support

Utilize a specialized, broad focus impacting all students schoolwide. Provide classroom lessons and small group and individual counseling and planning to develop student skills and behaviors needed for social-emotional growth, resilience, and wellness. Provide short-term counseling and crisis assessment and intervention. May also refer students to specialized professionals for intensive needs and long-term counseling.

Recommended Provider-to-Student Ratio

1:250
Consider that school counselors work with every student in the school.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

Career Support

Provide schoolwide, small group, individual and family support focused on skill-building to foster resiliency and job preparedness. Provide students and parents with community linkages and resources to support successful school and work transitions.

Social-Emotional, Behavioral & Mental Health Support

Provide specialized small group and individual social-emotional, mental health and behavioral interventions. Conduct risk and threat assessment and provide a continuum of crisis management supports. Maximize school-based and community resources to meet student and family needs. May also refer students to receive further specialized support.

Recommended Provider-to-Student Ratio

1:250
Consider that school social workers work with small groups, individuals and families who have been identified in need of more direct support, and often serve more than one school.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Career Support

Assess student abilities and social skills to assist in career planning and postsecondary services. Provide strategies to support career and college readiness. Work with IEP teams to develop individualized transition plans for students with disabilities.

Social-Emotional, Behavioral & Mental Health Support

Assist in identifying system/school-wide proactive social-emotional/behavioral health practices and systemic response protocols (risk and threat assessment). Assess, identify, and provide targeted behavioral health services to individuals/groups of identified students to develop skills and behaviors critical to academic success. May also refer students to receive further specialized support.

Recommended Provider-to-Individual Ratio

1:500
Consider that school psychologists work with individuals and small groups, conduct extensive assessments and data analysis, and often serve more than one school.

SCHOOL NURSES

Career Support

Promote healthy behaviors that support active post-secondary lifestyles and assist students with personal health care management needed to enable them to pursue post-secondary career and educational options.

Social-Emotional, Behavioral & Mental Health Support

Screen for potential emotional and mental health concerns. Instructs students on positive behaviors and skills that support wellness. Refer students to receive further specialized support.

Recommended Provider-to-Individual Ratio

Minimum 1 nurse per school
Consider that school nurses work with small groups, individuals and families who have been identified in need of more direct support, and support school personnel in health care compliance.

See accompanying implementation and evaluation Administrator Guides for more details on each professional discipline.

SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

A K-12 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION SUPPORT TOOL



School Counseling

As vital members of the education team, school counselors play an essential specialized role in promoting a school culture that helps to achieve the school's mission of successfully educating the whole child to be a lifelong learner and career and college ready. School counselors design, deliver and assess data-driven school counseling programs that are comprehensive in scope, preventive in design and developmental in nature to improve a range of student learning and behavioral outcomes through evidence-based practices. School counselors help all students

- apply academic achievement strategies
- manage emotions and apply interpersonal skills
- strengthen mental wellness and
- explore and plan for postsecondary options such as higher education, military, and work force

School counselors accomplish this through a variety of activities delivered similarly to the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model with core school counseling services for every student, supplemental small group and individual services for some students and limited individual intensive services for select students. Some examples include:

- developmentally appropriate classroom and school-wide guidance curriculum activities focused on emotional intelligence and behaviors all students need for postsecondary readiness and personal success
- career awareness, exploration, and readiness activities
- student academic planning and goal setting
- short-term small group and individual counseling (including crisis intervention) to improve personal skills, address barriers to learning, and support mental wellness
- referrals for long-term support
- collaboration with families, teachers, administrators, other SISPs, and community for student success
- data analysis to identify student needs and plan appropriate counseling services.

[Research studies](#) show positive associations between comprehensive school counseling and improved student outcomes.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

The *North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards*, [Policy EVAL-026](#), support effective best practices in school counseling with the intention of -

- guiding the professional development of school counselors,
- providing focus for schools and districts as they support, monitor, and evaluate school counselors, and
- assisting higher education programs in developing the content and requirements for school counselor education curricula.

North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards are also aligned with research- and evidence-based practices provided in the *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs*.

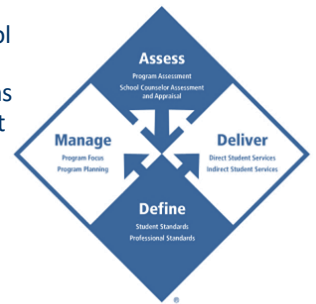
One has to complete an approved school counseling master's degree program in a regionally accredited college or university in order to be a licensed school counselor in North Carolina. Current school counseling graduate master's programs are typically 48 to 60 semester hours. School Counselors are licensed K-12 by the NC Department of Public Instruction. Many are also eligible to apply for licensure with the NC Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors to practice counseling in other settings. Those with a master's degree in another area of counseling must also complete courses required for school counseling specialization to be licensed as a school counselor.

EVALUATION

The evaluation process ([NCEES](#)) for evaluating school counselor implementation of the *North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards* is similar to that of other licensed school personnel. The evaluation rubric is based on the professional school counseling standards and designed to encourage professional growth. For school counselor roles that cannot be observed due to confidentiality, school administrators may consider requesting related artifacts such as process or outcome data or materials used in activities. Tools to assist administrators with school counselor evaluation can be found on [the School Counseling Standards and Evaluation web page](#).

APPROPRIATE ROLES

For school counselors to be successful on their evaluation and to have the most positive impact on student outcomes, it is vital that they spend the majority of their time in appropriate school counselor roles and that they and the school administrators have common expectations for their work. These appropriate school counselor roles are defined in the *North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards* and in NC. G.S. 115C-316.1.



The ASCA National Model diamond is a registered trademark of the American School Counselor Association.

Recommended School Counselor-to-Student Ratio 1:250

NC G.S. 115C-316.1

[NC General Statute 115C-316.1 - Duties of School Counselors](#) - requires traditional public school counselors to deliver comprehensive school counseling programs and spend 80% of their time delivering a variety of direct school counseling services. It further states that school counselor services do not include coordination of standardized testing. This general statute reflects and supports the *North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards* which seek to support student and school success through comprehensive school counseling programs.

You can find the NCDPI School Counseling web pages at nchealthyschools.org

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SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

A K-12 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL NURSING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION SUPPORT TOOL



SCHOOL NURSING

As vital members of the education team, school nurses play an essential role in promoting a culture that supports the school's mission of successfully educating the whole child while removing health related barriers to learning. School nurses play a prominent role in planning and providing health promotion, early intervention, and care coordination services. School nurses deliver comprehensive health services in a systematic, planned approach that includes:

- Promoting healthy school environments
- Providing health education training to students and staff
- Developing and implementing school health policies
- Addressing individual student health needs
- Managing student chronic health conditions

School nurses accomplish this through a variety of activities delivered in a manner that is consistent with the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model in tailoring interventions to the level of student need. Health prevention and promotion strategies are available for all students and faculty, individual health services are provided for some students, and targeted individual intensive nursing services are planned for students with poorly controlled chronic health conditions that could result in increased absenteeism and poor academic outcomes.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

The American Nurses Association (ANA), in collaboration with the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) produced "School Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice," 3rd Edition. These school nursing standards set expectations for nursing care provided to students in schools. Standards represent agreed-upon levels of quality in practice and reflect the values and priorities of the profession. The standards of practice are written within the framework of the nursing process and include data collection (assessment), nursing diagnosis, planning, intervention, and evaluation. They are consistent with the North Carolina Board of Nursing requirements and regulations for practice.

The North Carolina Board of Nursing (NCBON) defines the scope of practice of a registered nurse in North Carolina. The scope of practice should be used as a guide to ensure that the nurse is providing care to students within the margins of the law and rules. [NC Nurse Practice Act](#)

The credentialing standard for school nursing in North Carolina, set by the State Board of Education, is licensure as a registered nurse (RN), and national school nurse certification within three years of date of hire. The National Board for Certification of School Nurses (NBCSN) is the only current credentialing agency. There are a small number of nurses who are historically credentialed through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

EVALUATION

The School Nurse evaluation process (NCEES) is similar to that of other licensed school personnel. The Rubric for Evaluating School Nurses is based on the Framework for 21st Century Learning and the North Carolina Professional School Nursing Standards, as adapted from School Nurse Scope and Standards of Practice. The instrument is designed to promote effective leadership, quality nursing practice, and student learning while leading to improved instructional response for students with health care needs. The school health services program supervisor, lead school nurse or other designee should conduct the portions of the evaluation related to nursing practice. It should be noted that the North Carolina Board of Nursing (See Components of Nursing Practice for The Registered Nurse and Nursing Practice Act in Appendix A.) requires that school nurses be practice evaluated by a licensed registered nurse. Therefore, the principal's designee for this purpose must hold such a credential to serve as an evaluator. Additional information may be found here: [School Nurse Evaluation Process](#).

APPROPRIATE ROLES

For school nurses to be successful and to have the most positive impact on students' outcomes, it is vital that they spend the majority of their time in appropriate school nursing activities that require a nursing license. School administrators and school nurses must have common expectations for their work as described in a current job description.

Recommended School Nurse Staffing: 1 per school

16 NCAC 6D.0402 - [Special Healthcare Services](#) - requires each LEA to make available a registered nurse for assessment, care planning, and ongoing evaluation of students with special health care needs in the school setting.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, ([IDEIA](#)) – mandates children with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education. A free and appropriate public education includes special education and related services. The act recognizes nursing as a related service for students with disabilities.

You can find the NCDHHS School Nursing web pages at [NC School Nursing Support](#).

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SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

A K-12 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION SUPPORT TOOL



School Psychology

School psychology is a specialized area within the field of psychology that includes advanced training in mental health, data analysis and interpretation as related to academic and behavioral functioning at both the group- and individual student level. As vital members of a school's education team, school psychologists apply strategies for positive academic and behavioral outcomes for children within the context of the academic learning environment. School psychologists often assist in developing **system level improvements** intended to reach all students in addition to providing **direct, targeted academic and behavioral health services** to identified students/student groups in need of additional support. School psychologists are trained to deliver services at both the system- and student-level to ensure that all students have access to services, based on need. The proportion of time that school psychologists engage in each area of service is dependent on contextual factors, including the needs of the school, students, families, and community served. Additionally, due to their training in IDEA evaluation and identification, shortages in providers may result in school psychologists having to prioritize certain services types over others to meet federal and state special education requirements. Within a comprehensive model of service delivery, school psychological services include: System level services include:

- Lead teams in designing and implementing school-wide universal screening systems and using data to guide core (academic and behavioral) instruction and to help identify students at-risk
- Lead efforts to implement school-wide progress monitoring practices (routine checks of student proficiency to verify growth)
- Collaborate with family members and other professionals who support students at all levels
- Assist school teams in selecting evidence-based interventions and progress monitoring tools matched to student need (including crisis prevention/response protocols)
- Support regular progress monitoring and data reviews, including reviews of treatment integrity
- Consult with school staff to boost understanding and interpretation of progress data to determine if students are making adequate progress and whether intervention changes are needed

Student level services include:

- Develop/deliver small-group interventions to support students' social skills and behavioral health
- Conduct functional behavioral and academic assessments; develop individual support plans for students
- Lead teams that frequently review/interpret data to determine whether individual students should be referred for an evaluation
- Provide individualized IDEA evaluation services, including reporting and interpreting the instructional implications of evaluation results to parents and school staff
- Provide individualized counseling for students with intensive behavioral health needs

PRACTICE MODEL/PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

Provision of a multi-tiered continuum of prevention and intervention services that are evidence-based, data-driven, and culturally responsive is consistent with the Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services, also known as the NASP Practice Model. It is through this model of practice that the NC Professional School Psychology Standards are derived. The *North Carolina Professional School Psychology Standards, Policy EVAL-025*, serve as a guide for school psychologists as they continually improve their effectiveness. It is imperative for school psychologists to provide services as part of a comprehensive, multidisciplinary team with complementary knowledge, skills, and experiences. The NC School Psychology standards were developed to:

- Guide the development of skills and knowledge inherent to the school psychology profession in the 21st century;
- Provide the focus for schools and districts as they employ, support, monitor, and evaluate their school psychologists; and
- Assist higher education programs in aligning content and requirements of school psychology education curricula with expectations for practice.

One must complete an approved school psychology training program at the advanced level to be a licensed school psychologist in NC. School psychologists are licensed through the NC Department of Public Instruction. Many are also eligible to apply for licensure with the NC Psychology Board to practice psychology in other settings. Those with degrees in another area of psychology must also complete courses required for school psychology specialization to be licensed as a school psychologist.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND GROWTH PLANNING

The evaluation process (NCEES) for evaluating school psychologist implementation of the North Carolina Professional School Psychology Standards is similar to that of other licensed school personnel. The evaluation rubric is based on the professional school psychology standards and designed to encourage professional growth. Tools to assist administrators with school psychologist evaluation can be found on the NCEES Information and Resource page.

**Recommended School
Psychologist-to-Student Ratio
1:500**



You can find the NCDPI School Psychology web pages at:
[https://ncschoolpsychology.med.unc.edu/NC Health Schools/School Psychology](https://ncschoolpsychology.med.unc.edu/NC_Health_Schools/School_Psychology)

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SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

A K-12 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION SUPPORT TOOL



School Social Work

School Social Work is a specialized area of professional practice in the broad field of social work. School social workers are trained in providing comprehensive supports and services to address barriers impacting the social, emotional, academic and physical needs of all students. Research on the effectiveness of school social work services shows increased student outcomes related to academic achievement, physical and psychological safety, improved mental and behavioral health, improved attendance, and social-emotional competencies, and family and community involvement.

School social workers are expected to possess advanced knowledge and technical skills to guide their practices. The proportion of their time that school social workers engage in each practice varies widely depending on contextual factors, including the needs of the community, school, families, and students served. School Social Workers are the link between the home, school, and community in providing direct as well as indirect services to students, families, and school personnel to promote and support students' academic and social success. Services include:

- Direct services
 - Bio-psychosocial assessment
 - Crisis intervention
 - Family counseling/support
 - Home/school/community liaison
 - Individual and small group counseling
 - Mediation
- Indirect services
 - Advocacy
 - Case management
 - Collaboration
 - Consultation
 - Parent education
 - Staff development

PRACTICE MODEL

The Practice Model encourages school social workers to (1) provide evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services; (2) promote a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence; and (3) maximize access to school-based and community-based resources. The proportion of their time that school social workers engage in each practice varies widely depending on contextual factors, including the needs of the community, school, families, and students served.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS

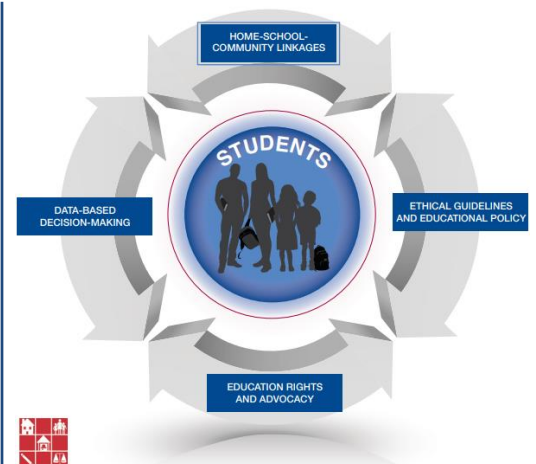
The *North Carolina Professional School Social Work Standards, Policy EVAL-027*, have been developed as a guide for School Social Workers as they continually improve their effectiveness. It is incumbent upon the School Social Worker to provide services as part of a comprehensive multidisciplinary team with complementary knowledge, skills, and experiences. The School Social Worker standards will:

- Guide professional development as School Social Workers move forward in the 21st century so that School Social Workers can attain the skills and knowledge needed;
- Provide the focus for schools and districts as they support, monitor, and evaluate their School Social Workers; and
- Assist higher education programs in the development of content and requirements of School Social Work education curricula.

One has to complete an approved school social work degree program in a regionally accredited college or university in order to be a licensed school social worker in North Carolina. School Social Workers are licensed K-12 by the NC Department of Public Instruction. Many are also eligible to apply for licensure by the North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board to practice social work in other settings. Those with a degree in social work must also complete courses required for school social work specialization to be licensed as a school social worker.

EVALUATION

The intended purpose of the North Carolina School Social Worker Evaluation Process is to assess the school social worker's performance in relation to the North Carolina Professional School Social Work Standards and to design a plan for professional growth. The principal or designee (hereinafter "evaluator") will conduct the evaluation process in which the school social worker actively participates through the use of self-assessment, reflection, presentation of artifacts, and classroom demonstration(s).



Recommended School Social Worker-to-Student Ratio 1:250

You can find the NCDPI School Social Work web pages at nchealthyschools.org

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