

North Carolina Professional School Nursing Standards

The North Carolina Professional School Nursing Standards are the basis for preparation, evaluation, and professional development for school nurses. Colleges and universities are encouraged to align with these standards, a new evaluation instrument has been created, and professional development will occur to ensure growth based on these standards. These will describe the skills and knowledge needed for 21st Century intervention and learning.

Vision for School Nursing

The demands of 21st Century education dictate new roles for school nurses who provide a wide variety of services that help students succeed academically, functionally, socially, and emotionally. In collaboration with educators, parents/guardians, and other school professionals, school nurses strive not only to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students, but also to strengthen connections between home and school. Utilizing leadership, advocacy, specialized technical skills and knowledge, data, and collaboration, school nurses promote overall academic and functional success by providing services that enhance student, school, home, and community partnerships and alleviate barriers to learning.

Intended Purpose of the Standards

The North Carolina Professional School Nursing Standards serve as a guide for school nurses as they continuously improve their effectiveness. It is imperative for the school nurse to provide services as part of a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary team whose members have complementary knowledge, skills, and experiences.

The North Carolina Professional School Nursing Standards will:

- guide the development of the skills and knowledge germane to the nursing profession in the twenty-first century;
- provide the focus for schools and districts as they employ, support, monitor, and evaluate their school nurses; and
- assist higher education programs in aligning the content and requirements of nursing education curricula with expectations for practice.

Standard 1: School nurses demonstrate leadership.

School nurses demonstrate leadership by promoting and enhancing the overall academic mission through providing health related services that strengthen student, home, school, and community partnerships to alleviate barriers to learning in the twenty-first century educational environment. School nurses are knowledgeable of relevant laws and policies and improve the profession by demonstrating high ethical standards and following the codes of ethics set out for the profession. School nurses manage school health services and effect change through school, district, and community activities.

Element a. School nurses advocate for safe and effective school nursing services that address student needs and support learning. They participate in the implementation of initiatives designed to improve educational and support services to promote positive student outcomes.

Element b. School nurses demonstrate leadership within the profession and practice setting and collaborate with the student, family, school staff, and community providers.

Element c. School nurses demonstrate leadership by serving as a health expert and managing school health services.

Element d. School nurses practice ethically.

Standard 2: School nurses establish a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for diverse populations.

School nurses promote an environment in which individual differences are valued. They effectively use communication skills that demonstrate sensitivity necessary to work with families, students, and staff from diverse cultures and backgrounds. These cultural and background factors are incorporated into care planned by school nurses. School nurses also collect and use school, local, state, and national data to assist in promoting health and safety in the school environment. School nurses model practice in an environmentally safe and healthy manner that is consistent with the law and accepted standards.

Element a. School nurses align practice with the requirements of the North Carolina Board of Nursing, recognized standards of nursing practice and North Carolina education goals.

Element b. School nurses foster an environment that supports success of all students.

Element c. School nurses communicate effectively in a variety of formats in all areas of nursing practice.

Element d. School nurses use environmentally safe and healthy practices.

Standard 3: School nurses use their knowledge of the nursing process, current nursing standards, and principles of growth and development to facilitate and enhance competent practice in the school setting.

School nurses seek out continuing educational opportunities to expand their knowledge base and to maintain licensure and school nurse certification. School nurses are self-aware of learning needs when providing care and use current research and evidence based practices in the planning and delivery of care. School nurses share experience and expertise with peers and school staff.

Element a. School nurses attain knowledge and competence that reflect current nursing practice.

Element b. School nurses integrate evidence and research findings into nursing practice.

Standard 4: School nurses facilitate student learning by providing individualized care using the nursing process.

School nurses understand the influence of health related factors on student academic performance and achievement. School nurses use the steps of the nursing process in a problem solving manner to plan care that facilitates the ability of the student to be present in school and ready to learn.

Element a. School nurses collect comprehensive data pertinent to the student's health and analyze the data to determine nursing diagnoses.

Element b. Based on the assessment, school nurses identify expected student outcomes and develop a plan with strategies to attain those outcomes.

Element c. School nurses implement the plan of care, coordinate care delivery, and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

Element d. School nurses utilize appropriate resources to plan and provide school health services that are safe, effective, and financially responsible.

Standard 5: School nurses reflect on their practice.

School nurses demonstrate accountability for managing and delivering comprehensive school health services. School nurses analyze formal and informal data to evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery. School nurses adapt their practice based on current and relevant research findings and data to best meet the needs of students, families, schools, and communities. School nurses utilize collaborative relationships with colleagues, families, and communities to reflect upon and improve their practice.

Element a. Quality of practice: School nurses continually strive to improve practice.

Element b. Professional practice evaluation: School nurses engage in self-assessment of practice.