



School Nurses: Leadership

- ▶ **Audience:** School Nurses
- ▶ **Type:** Self-Paced with Rolling Enrollment
- ▶ **Enrollment:** September 1, 2022-April 14, 2023
- ▶ **Duration:** September 1, 2022 - May 19, 2023

Description: This course is designed for all certified school nurses working full time in West Virginia's schools. School nursing is a unique practice that requires a BSN prepared nurse to have the knowledge and skills to work efficiently and independently to keep students healthy, safe, and ready to learn. Every school nurse is a health care leader within his/ her school(s) and his/ her district. This course, School Nurses Leadership, discusses six (6) essential areas of expertise that go into creating school nurse leaders. Those areas are Leadership, Standards of School Nursing Practice, Standards of Professional Performance, Communication, Legal and Ethical Issues, and Advocacy. The content of each of these sessions is designed to help school nurses better understand how each area impacts their practice of school nursing. Knowledge and experience in each area is an essential part of being a highly qualified school nurse leader, whether in one school, several schools, or over an entire district.

Course Goals:

- ▶ Develop an understanding of the role of the school nurse leader.
- ▶ Recognize the characteristics of a true nurse leader and how these characteristics can be developed and enhanced.
- ▶ Cultivate and/ or improve those essential leadership characteristics.
- ▶ Review the Scope and Standards of School Nursing and be able to relate them to their practice.
- ▶ Understand the utilization of the nursing process and the Scope and Standards of School Nursing in the school nurses' decision-making process.
- ▶ Relate to the practice competencies attached to the Standards of Practice.
- ▶ Review the Standards of Professional Performance for School Nurses and the relationship between these standards and developing leadership skills in the practice of school nursing.
- ▶ Develop personal and positional power, to be utilized as leaders in their profession.
- ▶ Understand the relationship between professional performance evaluations and the professional school nurse standards.
- ▶ Understand and appropriately use the informal communication networks in your school.
- ▶ Seek a balance between technological communication options and the need for human touch, caring, and one-on-one, face-to-face interactions.
- ▶ Learn the essential aspects of delegation of tasks to LPN's and unlicensed assistive personnel including the rationale and the thought processes that go into making delegation decisions.
- ▶ Become familiar with state and federal code that affects school nursing practice in West Virginia.
- ▶ Become familiar with and better understand the 2015 revised Code of Ethics for Nurses and how it relates to the practice of school nursing.
- ▶ Understand the differences between legal issues and ethical issues in school nursing.
- ▶ Have a working definition of advocacy.
- ▶ Understand the essential and integral role that advocacy plays in the practice of school nursing.



- ▶ *Develop skills for advocating for the role of the school nurse in keeping students healthy and safe and able to learn.*

Session Overviews

▶ **Session One - Leadership in School Nursing**

School nurses are leaders in their daily work, even though they may not always realize or understand the complexities, powers, and responsibilities of their role. School nurses, through their unique job duties, are leaders within their own buildings.

In West Virginia Schools, the supervision of school nurses often falls to a non-medical person such as the superintendent or other administrative personnel. Thus, school nurses are required to be leaders in making the right decisions that will impact students and staff in all medical issues arising in their school organization. Leadership skills can be developed, not just inherited, which is what this class will attempt to do, reducing the frustration and giving school nurses a feeling of security.

▶ **Session Two - Standards of School Nursing Practice-Tools for Leadership Development**

Leaders are not born but must be developed over time. While inborn personality characteristics may aid the development of a leader, the specific qualities must be learned and practiced over time. Some school nurses embrace the leadership role while others may take longer to recognize the leadership potential within them.

The role of the school nurse involves multiple tasks including problem-solving, decision-making, advocacy, teaching, and counseling. Assessment and critical thinking are essential skills that are learned over time and improve with practice. Most nurses have already honed these skills to some extent through their nursing education and clinical experience. Many of the decisions are made through the nursing process, which is an effective decision-making model. School nursing is a specialized practice within professional nursing and the standards of school nursing practice require a thorough understanding of the nursing process and the ability to adapt the nursing process to the practice of school nursing and the decision-making that is an integral part of the school nursing profession.

▶ **Session Three - Standards of Professional Performance for School Nurses-Tools for Advanced Leadership Development**

It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) that every child has access all day, every day to a full time registered professional school nurse (hereinafter referred to as school nurse). The school nurse serves in a pivotal role that bridges health care and education. Grounded by standards of practice, services provided by the school nurse include leadership, community/ public health, care coordination, and quality improvement (NASN, 2016a).

No matter what position a school nurse has in his or her school district, she/ he is, by virtue of her/ his role, a leader, planning health care services and developing health care policies and programs. The Standards of Professional Performance for School Nurses are areas of expected performance for the professional school nurse. They include ethics, education, evidence-based practice and research, quality of practice, communication, leadership, collaboration, professional practice evaluation, resource utilization, environmental health, and program management. These standards and the competencies that accompany them are those actions to which school nurses are held accountable. A school nurse leader has a thorough understanding and practices each of these in his/ her daily job performance.



► **Session Four - Communication Skills and Delegation**

Developing expertise in all aspects of communication is critical to managerial success. Above and beyond the envisioning of capabilities, a leader must be a “social architect” who understands the organization and shapes the way it works. This is accomplished by developing communication skills: organization, interpersonal, and group communication. These are perhaps the most critical leadership skills.

The school nurse is responsible for developing a cohesive team in each school to meet that particular school’s medical needs. To do this, the school nurse must articulate issues and concerns so other school personnel will not become confused about priorities. The ability to communicate effectively often determines the success.

Nowhere is skilled communication more necessary than when making decisions around the delegation of health care procedures to different levels of employees. The American Nurses Association (ANA) defines nursing delegation as the assignment of the performance of a nursing activity to a non-nurse. Accountability remains with the registered nurse; state laws and regulations and school regulations must be followed; and standards of school nursing practice must be upheld (ANA & NASN, 2017).

► **Session Five: Legal and Ethical Issues and Challenges**

Laws and policies, created by state and federal legislative branches, are enacted by the executive branches. Both health care and education are governed on federal, state, and local levels by laws and regulations.

While nursing is governed by these laws and policies, much of the morality that is intrinsic in the profession transcends these legal mandates. In addition to determining if actions are legal, nurses must be well versed in the ethics that are integrated within their profession. Just as important as upholding the law, nursing leaders understand that they must uphold their standards and adhere to an established code of ethics for nurses in all aspects of their practice.

► **Session Six: Advocacy**

Advocacy is defined as the act of supporting a cause or a position (Merriam). According to the NASN presentation, *Advocacy, Telling Your Story, It’s What Advocacy is All About* (Largent, March 2015), “Advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make decisions.” (Largent, Slide 2). As school nurses, we advocate for our students, our families, and our communities as an ongoing part of our jobs. School nurses throughout the nation, individually and collectively, work to bring about change for the school nursing profession and to safeguard the health of children and the public (Kosiorowski, 2014, p. 25). Florence Nightingale advocated for her patients and brought about cleaner and more sanitary conditions in war time hospitals. Lillian Wald, through Lina Rogers, advocated for follow up care for excluded children and was able to identify problems and manage the spread of communicable diseases, establishing the first school nursing services. Today’s school nurses have a duty to advocate for the day to day needs of their students and families but must also advocate for the value of and need for school nurses (Resha and Lambert, NASN School Nurse, January 2014, p. 7).

Course Grades

All grades in the course gradebook must be a checkmark for successful course completion. A checkmark indicates that all work has been completed and the work meets the expectations for that assignment. Quiz scores must meet the minimum expectations as stated in the course.

