



# The Relentless School Nurse



The Relentless School Nurse  
- Be Relentless in Your Practice, Whatever it is. -

**The School Nurse is the Chief Wellness Officer  
Robin Cogan MEd RN NCSN FNASN FAAN**

# **PLANNER, PRESENTER, AUTHOR DISCLOSURES**

- **I, ROBIN COGAN, DISCLOSE THE ABSENCE OF PERSONAL FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMERCIAL INTERESTS RELEVANT TO THIS EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS**

- **Explore what it means to be the Chief Wellness Officer in your schools.**
- **Reflect on advocacy as a primary function of leadership according to NASN's School Nursing Practice Framework™.**
- **Review the steps to creating clear messaging, whether at the school, district or state level.**

## **Learning Outcomes**



**Overheard in a High School Nurse's Office**

**by Lynne Signore BSN, RN, NCSN**



---

**NURSE**



---

**SCHOOL  
NURSE**

# Two Things Can Both Be True at the Same Time

- a) True
- b) Also true
- c) Two things can be true at the same time
- d) All of the above



WWW.ANDERSTOONS.COM

It's fine. I'm fine.



**Everything is fine.**

**The intricate dance of school nursing, where passion intertwines with exhaustion, and fulfillment coexists with frustration.**

# Things That Can Both Be True:

The Relentless School Nurse: 'I Love my Job, But This Year Has Broken Me'



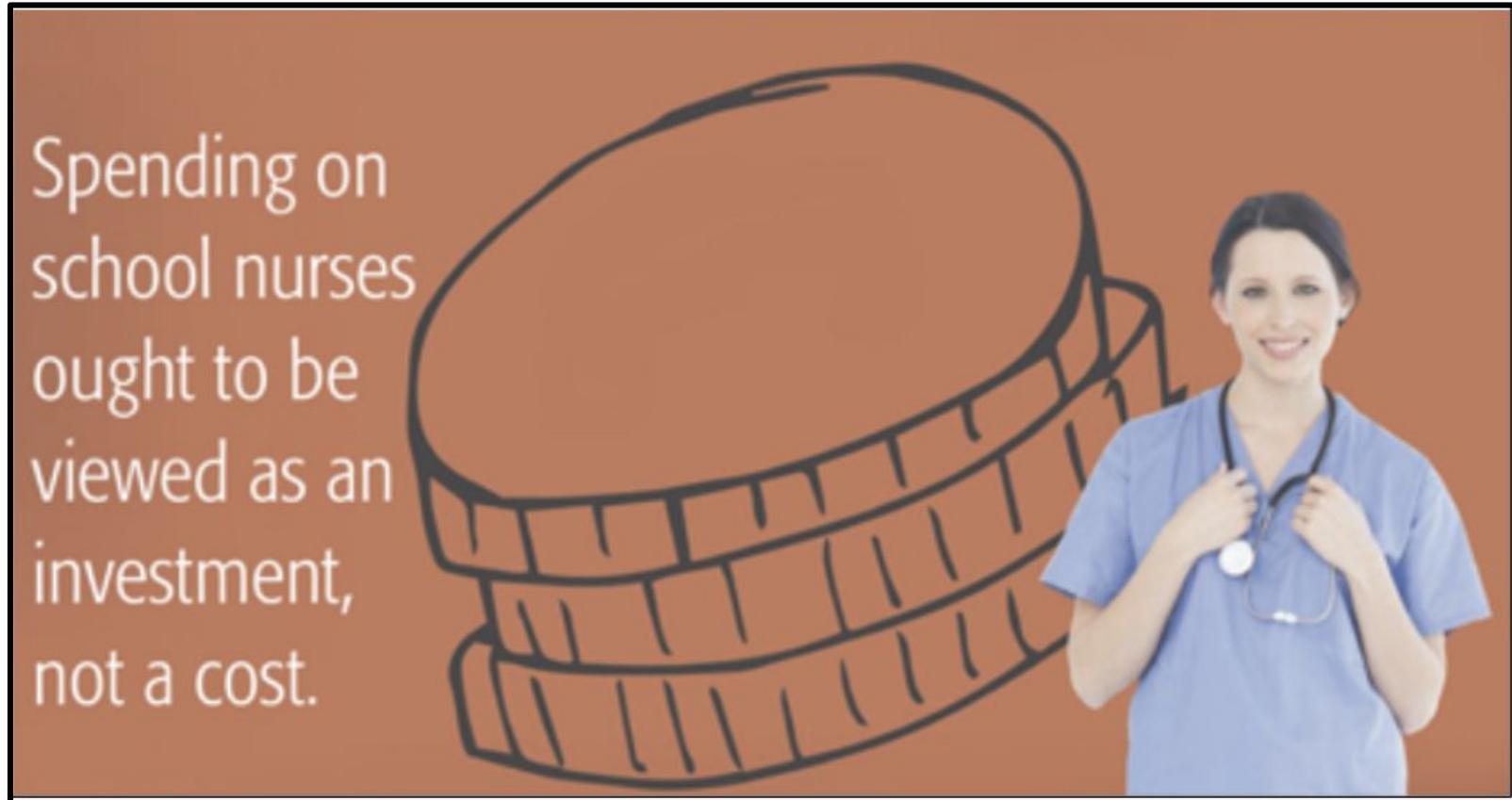
**You love school nursing and you are exhausted and feel frustrated by the untenable workload.**

## Things That Can Both Be True:

**You are open to new ideas and you are tired of school staff who believe they can do your job better than you.**



**Things That Can Both Be True: You love school nursing and you are tired of having limited opportunities for growth and professional advancement.**



**Things That Can Both Be True: You can be there for the students and you are setting boundaries at school.**

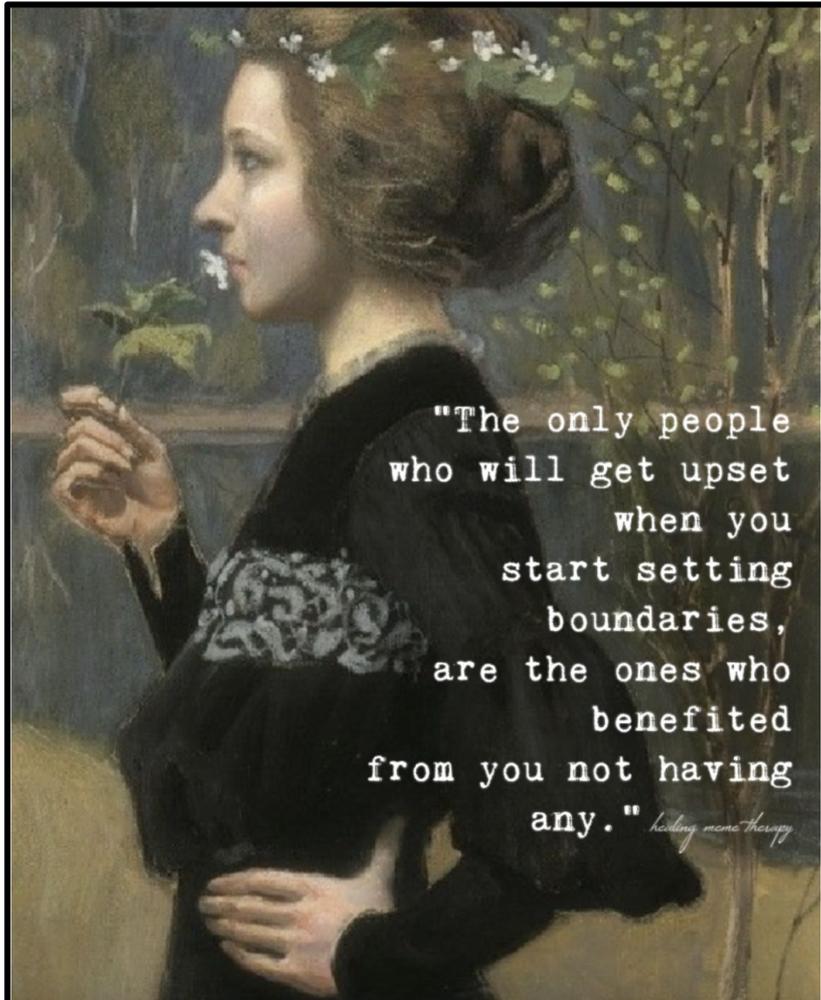
## **Boundaries First Aid**



What is **BOUNDARY**

Be aware  
Of what is  
Unacceptable and  
Normalize saying no.  
Do what is best for you  
And know that it's not your  
Responsibility to sacrifice  
Yourself for others.

@artofpoets



"The only people  
who will get upset  
when you  
start setting  
boundaries,  
are the ones who  
benefited  
from you not having  
any." *healing meme therapy*

Illustration from [Healing Meme Therapy](#)

say it with me:::

---

i don't have to  
explain  
why i need a break.  
not even to myself.  
i do not have to earn  
rest.

Yasmine Cheyenne



Reframe

# **SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVE**

**SETTING BOUNDARIES**

**ADVOCATING FOR PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT**

**SEEK RECOGNITION**

**SUPPORT OUR OWN WELL-BEING TOO**

**Daily Schedule Health Office Schedule for the School Nurse**

**Open 8:25–9:30** Sick Call Any student you suspect is ill or has a complaint of illness

(fever, headache, stomach ache).

**Closed 9:30–11:00** The office may be closed for state and board-mandated health assessments and screenings, **however, do send emergencies.**

**Open 11:00-1:00** Lunchtime injuries and medications.

**Closed 1:00-1:45** Nurse's Lunch.

**Open 2:00-3:00**

---

Medications: Children who receive medication know when to come. Children who receive medication as needed will request to see the nurse. Teachers must allow them to come.

---

Exceptions to Sick Call: Emergencies, expression of any bodily fluids, newly discovered fungus, personal problems, and toothaches.

---

Remember: Do not send any child home, and do not call parents to report illness. The only people who can send a child home are the Principal and the Nurse.

I apologize in advance for any interruptions in your class routine. I don't always know when the school physicians are coming. I will try my best to keep interruptions to a minimum.

---

Thank you all for your continued support! It is greatly appreciated!

# Public Perceptions of School Nurses

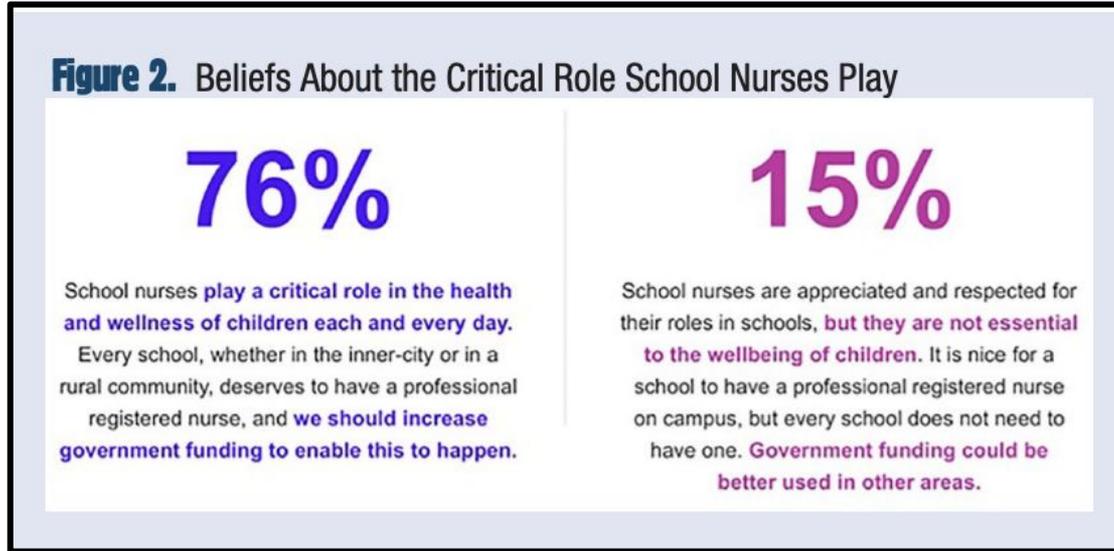
Advocacy/Systems-level Leadership

## Public Perceptions of School Nurses

**Results From a Recent Public Opinion Poll**

**National Association of School Nurses**

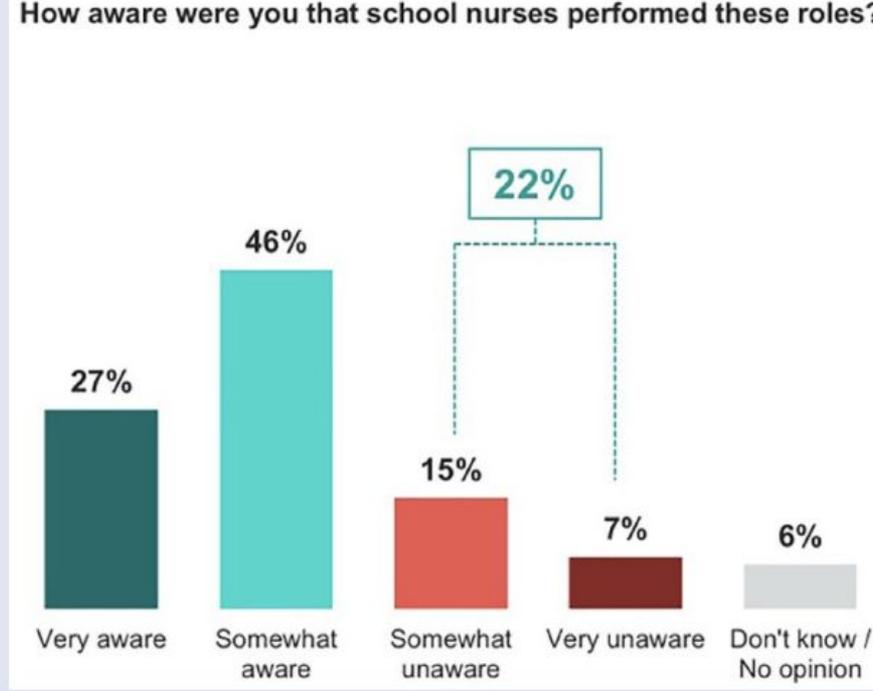
# Belief in the Necessity of School Nurses



- **Favorability**: 87% of adults hold a positive view of school nurses.
- **Essential Role**: 80% of adults and 81% of K-12 parents believe having a registered nurse in schools is "absolutely essential" or "very important."
- **Awareness**: 78% of adults are aware of school nurses' responsibilities, with 22% unaware of the full scope.

# Public Awareness of Scope of our Practice

**Figure 1.** Public Awareness of the Activities Conducted by School Nurses  
How aware were you that school nurses performed these roles?





## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **School nurse are seen as essential**
- **Strong support for funding school nurses**
- **This is a nonpartisan issue**
- **Presence of a school nurse impacts parental school choice**

# What the school nurses received for themselves that influences their remaining in practice



- **Recognizing Our Unique Scope of Practice**
- **Embracing Varied Tasks**
- **Being Trusted and Receiving Responses**
- **Finding Meaning in Making a Difference**
- **Seeking Opportunities for Learning and Growth**
- **Emphasizing the Positive Aspects**
- **Care for Our Well-Being too**

**“Envision how things would be if the voice & visibility of the nursing profession were commensurate with the size & importance of the nursing profession.”**

**-Buresh & Gordon *From Silence to Voice***

# SELF-ADVOCACY

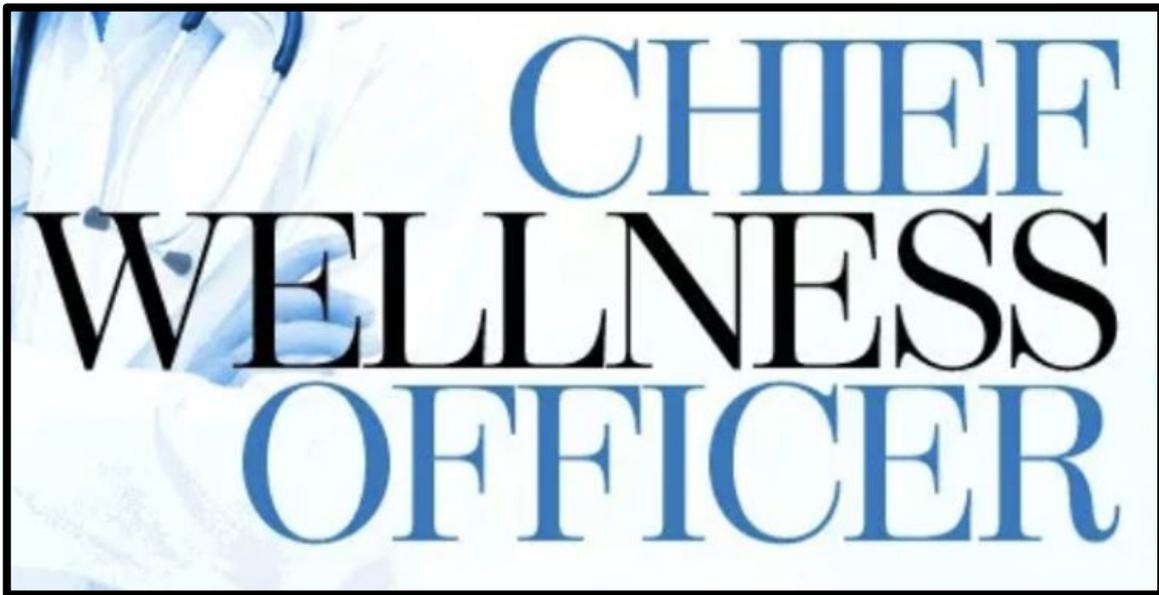
IS THE ABILITY TO ARTICULATE

ONE'S **NEEDS** & **MAKE**  
INFORMED  
DECISIONS

ABOUT THE  **SUPPORT**  
NECESSARY TO MEET  
**THOSE** **NEEDS.**

---

your  
voice — is your —  
power, use it.



**CHIEF  
WELLNESS  
OFFICER**



## Step 1: Embrace Your Leadership Identity





**Step 2: Foster Meaningful Relationships**

### Step 3: Showcase Your Expertise

abilities  
knowledge



## Step 4: Take Initiative and Innovate

CREATE  
THE PATH

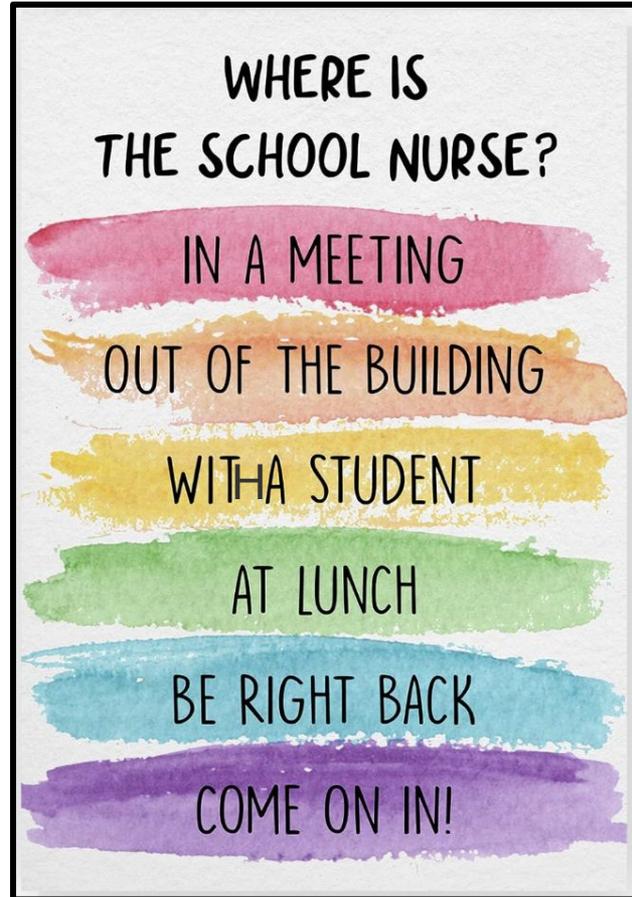
## Step 5: Seek Recognition and Advocacy

**“Courage starts with  
showing up and letting  
ourselves be seen.”**

—BRENÉ BROWN



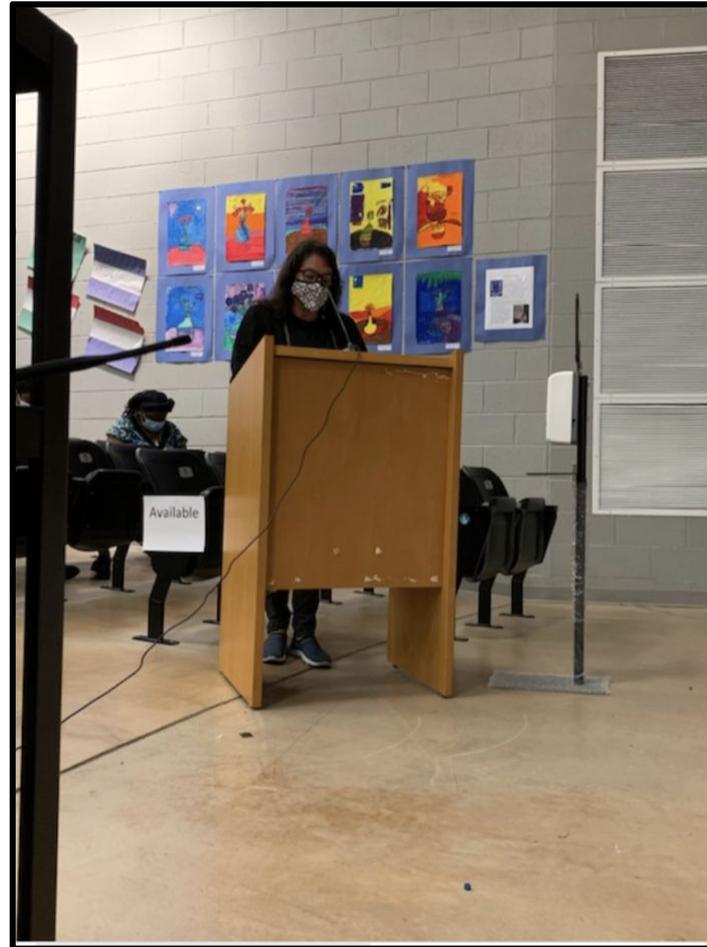
# Be present inside and outside of your school health office



**Share your expertise with the school community**



# Speak at Board of Education (BOE) meetings



# Become ACTIVE in local, state, and national school nursing organizations

## School Nursing Practice Framework™

Supporting Students to be Healthy, Safe and Ready to Learn



### Care Coordination

- Provide direct care for emergent, episodic, and chronic mental and physical health needs.
- Connect student and family to available resources.
- Collaborate with families, school community, mental health team (including school counselors, social workers, and psychologists), and medical home.
- Develop and implement plans of care.
- Foster developmentally appropriate independence and self-advocacy.
- Provide evidence-based health counseling.
- Facilitate continuity of care with family during transitions.

### Leadership

- Direct health services in school, district, or state.
- Interpret school health information and educate students, families, school staff, and policymakers.
- Advocate for district or state policies, procedures, programs, and services that promote health, reduce risk, improve equitable access, and support culturally appropriate care.
- Engage in and influence decision-making within education and health systems.
- Participate in development and coordinate implementation of school emergency or disaster plans.
- Champion health and academic equity.
- Share expertise through mentorship/preceptorship.
- Practice and model self-care.

### Quality Improvement

- Participate in data collection for local, state, and national standardized data sets and initiatives.
- Transform practice and make decisions using data, technology, and standardized documentation.
- Use data to identify individual and population level student needs, monitor student health and academic outcomes, and communicate outcomes.
- Engage in ongoing evaluation, performance appraisal, goal setting, and learning to professionalize practice.
- Identify questions in practice that may be resolved through research and evidence-based practice processes.

### Community/Public Health

- Provide culturally sensitive, inclusive, holistic care.
- Conduct health screenings, surveillance, outreach, and immunization compliance activities.
- Collaborate with community partners to develop and implement plans that address the needs of school communities and diverse student populations.
- Teach health promotion, health literacy, and disease prevention.
- Provide health expertise in key roles in school, work, and community committees/councils/coalitions.
- Assess school and community for social and environmental determinants of health.

### Standards of Practice

- Ensure practice consistent with the scope and standards of school nursing practice, health and education laws (consider the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Nurse Practice Act, state laws regarding school nursing practice and delegation), federal/state/local policies and regulations, and NASN position statements and code of ethics.

- Employ clinical judgment and critical thinking outlined in nursing process and prioritization.
- Integrate evidence and best/promising practices (consider multi-tiered systems of support, clinical practice guidelines).
- Safeguard privacy of students and data (consider Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

## 5. Embed yourself in the school community



# I'm a School Nurse on Vimeo

# We Are Chief Wellness Officers





[www.relentlesschoolnurse.com](http://www.relentlesschoolnurse.com)

[@RobinCogan](https://www.instagram.com/RobinCogan)

# REFERENCES

Dickson E, Cogan R, Gonzalez-Guarda RM. Role of School Nurses in the Health and Education of Children. *JAMA Health Forum*. 2025;6(1):e250116. doi:10.1001/jamahealthforum.2025.0116

Mæland, L., Oftedal, B.F. & Kristoffersen, M. What school nurses receive for themselves that influences their remaining in practice: A qualitative study. *BMC Nurs* 22, 77 (2023).  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-023-01229-5>

National Association of School Nurses. (2024). A contemporary *Framework* update for today's school nursing landscape: Introducing the *School Nursing Practice Framework™*. *NASN School Nurse*, 0(0). doi:10.1177/1942602X241241092

National Association of School Nurses. (2024). *2024 public perceptions of school nurses: Results from a recent public opinion poll*. National Association of School Nurses.  
<https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NASN/87718cd9-e2cf-4a22-9ee1-71db1ce1fdc2/UploadedImages/2024-25/2024-public-perceptions-of-school-nurses-results-from-a-recent-public-opinion-poll.pdf>