

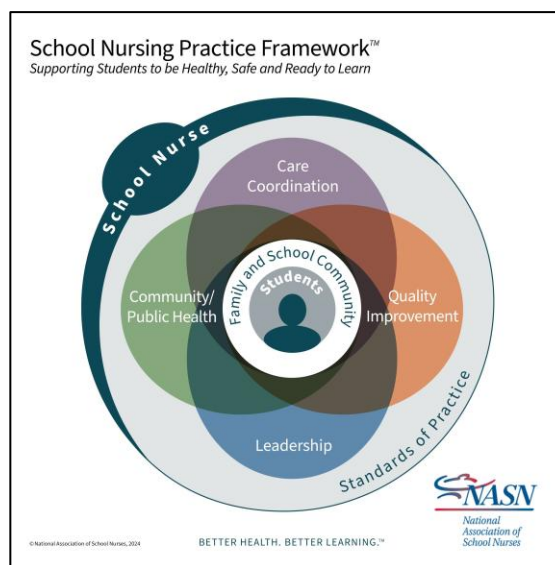
Executive Summary

Oregon's annual data collection continues to demonstrate a critical shortage of school RN services for students in Oregon. Nursing services remain a critical component in a student's health, safety, and well-being in a school building. School Registered Nurses (RN)¹ are vital for the health of the whole school community and contribute to reduced absenteeism and improved graduation rates.² Importantly, lack of school nursing services not only impacts a student's ability to access their education, but it also increases the risk of serious injury or death. Oregon continues to fall short of its own school nursing requirements by a wide margin. **On average there is only one school RN for every 2,361 students in Oregon.** This is over three times higher than Oregon's recommended ratio of one school RN per 750 students ([ORS 336.201](#)).

"Our school nurse is often unavailable to help students having medical issues, [...]. Students with chronic illnesses often miss a lot of school and they get penalized for that even if communication with them, doctors, parents, and the school has been had." – Anonymous Oregon student

School RN services promote equitable access to education, particularly for students with disabilities and those affected by current and historical disparities. School RNs provide direct nursing services to students, coordinate care, train school staff, and respond to emergencies. They also serve as a vital liaison among students, families, schools, and community healthcare systems to support student safety, wellness, and academic success. The School Nursing Practice Framework posits five intersecting principles of work that make up a school nurse's role.³

- **Care Coordination:** Includes direct care, connection to resources, plans of care, and staff training.
- **Community/Public Health:** Includes culturally sensitive care, health



¹ Under ORS 336.201, registered nurses and certified school nurses are responsible for coordinating student nursing services. This report refers to both groups collectively as "school RNs."

² Gratz, T., Goldhaber, D., Willgerodt, M., & Brown, N. (2023). The Frontline Health Care Workers in Schools: Health Equity, the Distribution of School Nurses, and Student Access. *The Journal of school nursing: the official publication of the National Association of School Nurses*, 39(5), 357–367.

³ 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*, 39(3), 140-147. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1942602X241241092>

screenings, health promotion, disease prevention, health literacy, and community partnerships.

- **Leadership:** Includes policy advocacy, health service direction, and implementing school emergency or disaster plans.
- **Quality Improvement:** Includes data collection, monitoring student/academic outcomes, and evaluations.
- **Scope and Standards:** Includes ensuring school nursing services are provided safely and legally, using evidence-based practice aligned with applicable laws including those regulating nursing practice, public health, and education settings

Together, these domains illustrate the depth and complexity of school nursing practice, and affirm that school nurses are not optional, but are required and essential to creating equitable learning environments where every student can thrive.

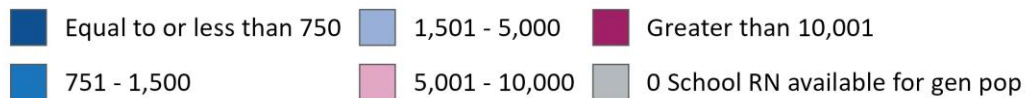
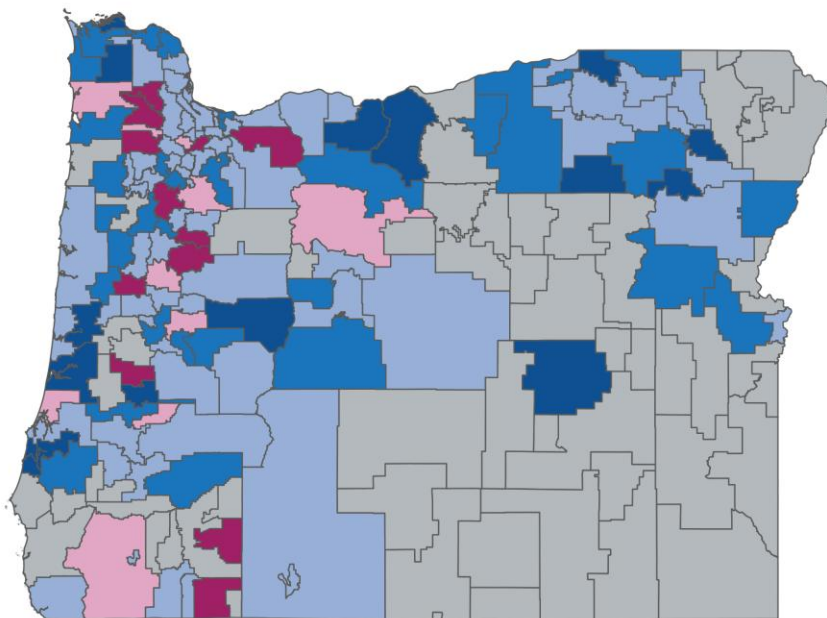
“[An important part of my school nursing role this year included] developing protocols for several district needs, such as opioid overdose/naloxone administration; TBI/head injury protocols and team development; and supporting individual families and facilitating advocacy for their students.” - Oregon school nurse

Oregon schools face a critical shortage of school RNs. **To meet the recommended ratio of one school RN for every 750 students, school districts need to add a total 463 school RN FTE.** Addressing this challenge requires policymakers and education leaders to prioritize recruitment and retention of qualified school RNs, invest in professional development and infrastructure, and establish sustainable funding for school health services. Strengthening the school nursing workforce will improve student health, reduce absenteeism, and promote equitable academic success statewide.

- **Oregon’s school RN ratio is one nurse for every 2,361 students**
- **15 of 196 school districts (8%) meet the recommended ratio of 1 nurse to every 750 students**
- **28,731 (5%) of Oregon’s students were identified as medically complex, medically fragile, or nursing dependent**
- **47 (24%) of school districts, about 1-in-4, did not report any school RN FTE.**
- **100 (53%) of school districts reported staffing one or more full-time school RNs.**

Student-to-Nurse Ratio in Oregon School Districts

Number of general education students per one Full-time School RN in 2025-26



Note. ORS336.201 (Nursing Services Provided by District) recommends the presence of a school RN in schools at a ratio of at least 1 RN to every 750 students.