

Vermont School Nurse Workforce

Assessment Survey 2006

Prepared by:

Office Of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning, and Development
University of Vermont, College of Nursing & Health Sciences
For more details: (802) 656-0023 • e-mail: mary.palumbo@uvm.edu

Why was this survey done?

One factor in assuring that Vermont's children have access to school health services is an ongoing understanding of the state's school nurse workforce. To this end, the Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning and Development conducted the Vermont School Nurse Workforce Assessment Survey in February, 2006. The following report details the results of this survey.

Who was surveyed?

In February, 2006 The Vermont School Nurse Workforce Assessment Survey was sent to each superintendent in Vermont. Surveys were returned by 52 of the 65 superintendents (80% response rate).

WEEKS TO FILL NURSING POSITIONS:

- The LSN position was filled in a range of 3-52 weeks, with 48% of the agencies reporting RN vacancies during the past year.
- ASN was reported to be filled in an average of eight weeks, with six of the supervisories reporting ADN vacancies during the past year.
- The LPN position was reported vacant by two superintendents during the last year.

The need:

Overall, the reported need for Licensed School Nurses (LSN), Associate School Nurses (ASN), Nurse Health Educators, Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), other nursing positions and Health Assistants was reported to be equal to the positions budgeted by 64-80% of respondents. However, 23% (10 superintendents) reported a greater need for Licensed School Nurses (LSN) than was currently budgeted. In addition, 30% of superintendents reported making staffing pattern changes in their nursing workforce in the last year. Nurses with provisional licenses¹ were reported being used by 47% of the superintendents.

Statewide Vacancy Rate (Range) (Positions being recruited for in Spring 2006)

Licensed School Nurse	3% (0-33%)
Associate School Nurse (ASN).	0%
LPN	0%
Health Assistant	0%
Health Aide.	0%
Nurse-Health Educator	0%
Other (Supervisor)	0%



Full-Time Compensation	#	Median Salary Range*	Overall Salary Range
Licensed School Nurse salary	44	\$32,613-\$55,648	\$27,000-\$69,923
. . . hourly	4	\$20.91-\$28.13	\$12.70-\$37.61
Associate School Nurse salary	4	\$30,442-\$37,866	\$25,000-\$47,223
. . . hourly	7	\$21.16-\$24.62	\$12.00-\$40.00
LPN . . . hourly	5	\$14.32-\$15.60	\$12.00-\$20.00
Health Aides . . . hourly	4	\$8.71-\$12.68	\$7.00-\$17.89
Generating EPSDT ² dollars	47	90% report generating EPSDT \$\$	

Salaries for substitute RNs were reported by only one superintendent at a rate of \$20/hour.

**Median salary range was calculated by taking the median of the minimum salary and median of the maximum salary of the salary range reported by the respondents..*

Statewide Turnover Rate (Range) between 9/1/05 and 2/1/06

LSN	4% (0-50%)
ASN	0%
LPN	0%
Health Assistant	0%
Health Aide	0%
Nurse-Health Educator	0%
Other (supervisor)	0%

Department of Education Licensing Office reports³:

- During the '05-'06 school year 37 provisional licenses were issued: 12 for LSN and 25 for ASN.
- During the '04-'05 school year 26 provisional licenses were issued: 13 for LSN, 13 for ASN.

How are Vacant Positions Covered?

- Nursing coordinator fills in
- Substitute nurses if available
- Other nurses in the district provide triage
- Substitutes, usually LPNs
- Districts share nurses
- Covered by contract with local hospital
- Overtime by current employees
- Daily or long term substitute

Conclusions/recommendations about Vermont's School Nurse Workforce

- Vacancy rate and turnover are currently low in Vermont schools

- When LSN positions are vacant, it can take as long as 52 weeks to fill.
- Since 23% of superintendents reported a need greater than the current budgeted positions for LSN – another 10 FTEs might be required to provide adequate school health services.
- The school nurse workforce may still be adjusting to the change in licensing endorsements made by the State Board of Education (approved by legislator, July 2005), as evidenced by the large number of superintendents using nurses with provisional licenses.
- Since previous Office of Nursing Workforce research has indicated that the mean age of school nurses is 52 years, awareness of the unique needs of the older nurses in school settings may be helpful to assure and adequate supply of nurses in the next 5-10 years.

Notes

¹ Provisional License: Required by the Department of Education when an applicant for an educator's license has not yet met all requirements for licensure. These are valid for two years and are non renewable.

² EPSDT means Early & Periodic Screening, Diagnosis & Treatment and is the child health component of Medicaid.

³ Vermont Department of Education Licensing Office, Glenn Bailey, E-mail, May 22, 2006

