



# **Recommended School Health Services Staff Roles**

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**Texas School Health Advisory  
Committee**

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## Introduction

In 2005, the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislature adopted [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 1001.0711](#), which established the Texas School Health Advisory Committee (TSHAC). The purpose of the TSHAC is to provide a leadership role for the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in the support for and delivery of coordinated school health programs and school health services. The Legislature then expanded the TSHAC's responsibilities to assess the effectiveness and develop recommendations for coordinated health programs provided by schools based on the findings of the analysis of the results of the required physical fitness assessment (see [Texas Education Code \(TEC\), Section 38.104](#)). [25 Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\), Rule 37.350](#), lists the roles and responsibilities of the TSHAC.

The TSHAC first developed the *Recommended School Health Services Staff Roles* document in 2011 to outline the recommended roles and responsibilities based on state laws, professional licensing, and best practices. In 2023, the TSHAC established the School Health Staff Roles subcommittee to update the recommendations with administrative support provided by DSHS staff. The *Recommended School Health Services Staff Roles* document is a resource for school districts. The listed staff roles are recommendations based on best practices. The roles are not required and do not have to meet the responsibilities listed under each role.

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## Background

School health has grown from a simple system of visiting nurses to a complex network of multifaceted school health programs and full-service school-based health centers.

School nurses have provided different services to local school children supporting the complex physical and mental health issues that are being addressed in the school setting. They play a vital role in providing information about flu and other infectious diseases and reporting outbreaks to DSHS.

With more children entering school with complex medical issues, schools are challenged to match the available resources and the needs of the students in the growth of school health services. The [TEC, Section 38.012](#), outlines requirements that school boards follow to implement or expand school health services. Although there are different models implemented throughout the state, the following staff roles and guidelines will help in developing a local model that is reflective of state laws, professional licensing, and best practices in school health service delivery.

## Medical Advisor/Director

A Medical Advisor/Director is a [Texas Medical Board](#) licensed physician who provides contracted or consultative services to the school district. These services can be provided through the Health Services Coordinator/Director and/or administrative personnel in matters that impact the areas of the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control's (CDC) [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model](#).

Suggested responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Participate in the establishment of school health program goals and priorities;
- Serve as a member of the district's school health advisory committee, exposure control committee, and other health and safety related committees;
- Serve as a subject matter expert to school district administration on policies and administrative regulations related to student and employee health, including but not limited to, managing serious physical and mental health problems, communicable disease control, health screenings, environmental hazards, first aid, automated external defibrillator (AED) protocols, unassigned medication policies, accident prevention, and emergency protocols/care;
- Advocate for the school health program and promote discussion and collaboration with community agencies and organizations, such as professional health associations, local health departments, and consumer groups;
- Serve as a consultant to coordinate health services with other district departments, such as special education, athletics, physical education, nutrition services, and health education;
- Participate in professional growth planning for school nurses and other school personnel, as needed;
- Promote communication between the school district and primary care physicians, medical specialists, and health care facilities regarding treatment plans for students;
- Upon request, provide review for outside proposals for health-related activities within the district, such as education research and service activities; and
- Develop, review, revise, and oversee implementation of standing orders required for AEDs, epinephrine auto-injectors, medications for respiratory

distress, opioid antagonist medications, and other health service needs related to district policies and administrative regulations.

## School Health Services Coordinator/Director

A School Health Services Coordinator/Director is a licensed health care professional (Registered Nurse (RN) or Advanced Practice RN) at the district level. They are responsible for managing and coordinating all school health service policies, administrative regulations, activities, and resources, including program administration, implementation, and evaluation. The health care professional should have experience in school health, community health, pediatric/adolescent health care, and/or nursing administration.

Suggested responsibilities include:

- Coordinate implementation of state mandates related to school health services, including but not limited to, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)/AED, screenings, immunizations, Type 2 Diabetes Screening (if applicable) and other state laws, rules, and regulations;
- Identify, analyze, and apply current nursing and medical research findings to plan and provide health care delivery for all students;
- Determine the goals and priorities of the health services program, in conjunction with nursing and other staff, within the goals and strategic plan established by the district;
- Establish the organization of, and determine the priority for, allocation of resources to achieve the school health services program goals;
- Develop programs and recommend policies and administrative regulations related to health and safety;
- Provide expert advice to district administration and other departments regarding policies, administrative regulations, nursing, and health care standards on matters impacting students, staff and the community;
- Collaborate with district level administrators to integrate and implement health policies and practices with the priorities of the district;
- Coordinate departmental and district staff development, orientation, training, and certification as related to the health needs of students;
- Communicate with parents and the community in areas concerning student health and safety, acting as the district liaison to parents on health matters;
- Serve as a member of the local school health advisory council and other district committees related to health and safety issues of students and staff, such as crisis intervention planning teams, staff wellness programs, and exposure control committees;

- Prepare and monitor department budgets to include projected needs and secure funding for special projects to accomplish the goals of the health services program in a cost-effective manner;
- Assist with hiring appropriate district and campus-level staff through establishing criteria for education and experience, as well as departmental and campus staffing needs;
- Network with internal and external stakeholders, and represent the district in discussion and collaborative programs related to student and staff health issues;
- Conduct performance appraisals of school health staff, especially clinical performance;
- Assess, improve, and evaluate school health priorities and practices for the district; and
- Serve as the district's media spokesperson on health-related issues.

## School Nurse (RN)

[19 TAC, Rule 153.1022](#) defines a school nurse as:

*“An educator employed to provide full-time nursing and health care services and who meets the requirements to practice as a registered nurse (RN) pursuant to the Nursing Practice Act and the rules and regulations relating to professional nurse education, licensure, and practice and has been issued a license to practice professional nursing in Texas.”*

A School Nurse is a [Texas Board of Nursing](#) licensed RN who works at the campus level providing nursing and health services that meet the needs of the students and staff on a school campus(es). They also supervise and train other staff to provide health services. The School Nurse is responsible for implementing the district school health services program in a way that is best suited to the population of the campus(es). According to the [National Association of School Nurses](#), the School Nurse protects and promotes student health, facilitates optimal development, and advances academic success. School nurses, grounded in ethical and evidence-based practice, are the leaders who bridge health care and education, provide care coordination, advocate for quality student-centered care, and collaborate to design systems that allow individuals and communities to develop their full potential.

Suggested responsibilities include:

- Collaborate closely with the campus principal, school counselor, teachers, parents, food service staff, and other staff to provide leadership and ensure a healthy school environment;
- Assist in meeting the health needs of the general school population and those students identified with specific health conditions;
- Provide direct care utilizing professional assessment skills, the nursing process, individualized health care plans, and established school health policies, procedures, and protocols;
- Initiate and maintain accurate student health records, immunization records, medication administration records, individual student treatment plans, and individualized health care plan utilizing confidential methods;
- Establish effective procedures for carrying out mandatory screening programs and submitting required reports;

- Communicate with parents regarding individual students needs and serve as a liaison between school personnel, the family, health care professionals, and the community, to ensure appropriate referral and follow up for student health needs;
- Contribute to campus communications to parents and the local community regarding health issues;
- Attend Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings of students with identified health needs, and develop the Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP);
- Develop and implement IHPs and evaluate outcomes of skilled and direct nursing care and procedures for medically fragile students, thus integrating the medically fragile student safely into the school environment;
- Collaborate with district personnel, including school psychologist/special education diagnostician, to implement health-related Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and services;
- Educate faculty and staff as needed on health-related topics;
- Develop and recommend campus policies and procedures to promote the health and wellness of students and staff;
- Provide consultation to campus administration in crisis/emergency situations;
- Participate in staff development as outlined in the [Texas Nurse Practice Act](#) to maintain professional nursing skills and knowledge. These skills and knowledge include, but are not limited to, basic life support for health care providers (CPR/AED), certification in mandated screenings, and continuing education as required by the Texas Board of Nursing; and
- Supervise, train, and evaluate Licensed Vocational Nurses, Unlicensed Diabetes Care Assistants, other Unlicensed Assistive Personnel, or other school health personnel as designated by the campus principal. (See [Board of Nursing's \(BON\) Algorithms for determining the School RN's role in delegating tasks to unlicensed persons \(UP\) and supervising tasks delegated or assigned by others](#))

For more information on the scope and practice of an RN, visit the [Texas Board of Nursing website](#).

## Vocational Nurse

A Vocational Nurse is a Texas Board of Nursing licensed nurse who provides direct services to meet the needs of students and staff on a school campus(es). The school vocational nurse is responsible for implementing the district health program under the direct clinical supervision of the School Health Coordinator (RN or higher-level practitioner) or RN. Clinical supervision by an RN, medical doctor, advanced practice RN, physician assistant, dentist, or podiatrist is required by the Nurse Practice Act.

Suggested responsibilities include:

- Maintain current certifications in CPR, use of the AED, and state mandated screenings;
- Collaborate with the campus principal, school counselor, teachers, parents, nutrition services, and other staff under the direction of the supervising RN regarding the health needs of the general population and those students with identified health conditions;
- Provide direct care utilizing school health procedures and protocols and IHPs established by the RN supervisor and/or Medical Advisor/Director;
- Maintain accurate and confidential student health records, including immunization records, medication administration records, and individual student treatment records;
- Contribute to and implement the IHPs as established by the RN;
- Carry out mandatory screenings, collect data, and submit required reports as directed;
- Communicate with parents regarding individual students as directed by the RN;
- Attend ARD meetings (if RN unable) of students with identified health needs and collaborate with appropriate campus staff and RN regarding implementation of health-related IEP items;
- Educate staff as needed on health-related topics as directed by the RN;
- Communicate regularly with the School Health Coordinator/Director or School Nurse regarding communicable diseases, specific student health needs/concerns, campus and department issues, health and safety hazards, and all non-routine matters; and
- When directed by the RN, provide guidance to unlicensed assistive personnel on health-related tasks.

## Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP)

An Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (typically referred to as a Health Aide, Clinic Aide, Instructional Aide, or Special Education Aide) is a school staff member who carries out limited health-related tasks. This person may have previous experience in health care, be certified by the state as a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) or Certified Medical Assistant (CMA), have received formal first aid training, or may have gone through a campus/district training related to school health services. See [22 TAC, Rule 224.4\(4\)](#) for the definition of an unlicensed person. In schools without designated school health staff, the UAP often fill this role.

Suggested responsibilities include:

- Provide basic first aid and care for minor injuries, illnesses, and chronic health conditions according to district policy and regulations/protocols established by the School Nurse or Medical Advisor/Director;
- Administer students' medications under the assignment of the School Administrator or delegation of the School Nurse, following district policies and procedures;
- Take vital signs (temperature, pulse, respiration rate, and blood pressure) and accurately document, if trained;
- Communicate findings and student complaints to supervising school health staff for direction;
- Contact parents of students who need to be picked up from school according to established school health services protocols or as directed by the School Nurse;
- Contact Emergency Management Services according to established school health services protocols or as directed by the School Nurse;
- Maintain confidential health records (sorting, filing, reviewing for completeness);
- Assist with screening programs;
- Send out routine notices to parents;
- Maintain an efficient and safe school clinic including infection control procedures, under the direction of the School Nurse;
- Communicate regularly with the School Health Services Coordinator/Director or School Nurse regarding communicable diseases, specific student health needs/concerns, campus and department issues, health and safety hazards, and all non-routine matters;

- Order and maintain health office supplies; and
- Serve as an Unlicensed Diabetes Care Assistant after receiving appropriate training. (See [Guidelines for Training School Employees who are not Licensed Healthcare Professionals](#))

Visit the [Texas Board of Nursing website](#) for the algorithms for determining the School RN's role in delegating tasks to unlicensed persons and supervising tasks delegated or assigned by others.

## Other/Emergency Medical Technicians

The TSHAC acknowledges the growing use of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to support the health of students and staff in the school setting. EMTs do not replace the medical skills and knowledge of RNs. Listed below are important considerations school districts must review when employing EMTs.

- EMTs are considered UAP when practicing in a school setting because they are only authorized to practice under a Texas licensed physician.
- The BON considers the EMT or paramedic role within the school setting to be equivalent with the UAP for the purposes of RN delegation.
- While EMTs and paramedics have additional training and licensure/certification, the scope of practice of the EMT or paramedic is limited to the role of the UAP.

Please review the contents under the Unlicensed Assistive Personnel heading above, for a list of the responsibilities of UAPs.

There may be instances in which a physician or other provider directly delegates to the EMT or paramedic. [22 TAC, Rule 224.10](#) addresses this situation and states the responsibilities of the RN.

## Resources

### [TEC, Section 38.012](#)

This statute requires school board of trustees to hold a public hearing at which the board discloses all information on proposed school health care services.

### [Texas Medical Board](#)

The Texas Medical Board is the state body responsible for regulating the practice of medicine and ensuring quality health care for the citizens of Texas through licensure, discipline, and education.

### [Texas Board of Nursing](#)

The Texas Board of Nursing is the state body responsible for regulating the practice of nursing and approving nursing education programs.

### [Texas Board of Nursing, RN Scope of Practice](#)

This BON webpage defines the legal scope of practice for professional RNs, including the education requirements, BON position statements, and frequently asked questions.

### [Texas Board of Nursing, Delegation Resource Packet](#)

This BON webpage contains resources on [22 TAC, Chapter 224](#), which governs RN delegation to unlicensed personnel in acute care environments or for clients with acute conditions, Conflict Resolution Model, and other links for registered nurses.

### [DSHS, School Health Program](#)

The DSHS School Health Program uses the CDC Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model to provide school health leadership, support, and guidance to Texas school districts such as the Texas Guide to School Health Services.

### [National Association of School Nurses](#)

The National Association of School Nurses is a nonprofit nursing organization representing school nurses to optimize student health and learning by advancing the practice of school nursing.

### [Texas School Nurse Organization](#)

The Texas School Nurse Organization is an affiliate organization of the National Association of School Nurses that promotes, protects, and enhances professional Texas school nurse practice.

**19 TAC, Rule 153.1022**

This rule defines the educational and professional requirements to be classified as a school nurse in Texas.