

## Licensed Nurses in Every School

Nurses play a critical role in the health of a school community, and the daily needs of students, families and staff are beyond what a non-licensed school health assistant can provide. Research indicates that school nurses reduce absenteeism (Maughan, 2003) and that a higher nurse to student ratio is related to better attendance rates (Pennington & Delaney, 2008). School absences affect student academic performance and contribute to increased school drop-out rates. This, in turn, has economic and social repercussions for individuals, families and the community (Pennington & Delaney, 2008). School nurses are significantly less likely to dismiss a student from school early than non-licensed personnel (Pennington & Delaney, 2008; Wyman, 2005).

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) leadership aims to have a licensed practical nurse (LPN) in every elementary school and a registered nurse (RN) in every middle and high school. With current partners currently in place, the district needs an additional 85 LPNs for elementary schools and 34 RNs for secondary schools.

OCPS also needs two district-level Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNP) to address complex medical issues and problem solving. Nurses at this level will work with the most medically fragile students. The district has six center sites countywide serving elementary students with intense medical needs, four middle school center sites and five high school center sites.

The return to class rate in Winter Park Consortium Schools that have licensed medical professionals in their clinics is 92.6 percent. The OCPS return to class rate in schools with the unlicensed School Health Assistants (SHA) is 76.3 percent.

**Budget:** \$4,559,244 per year

\$28,714 per elementary school

\$57,083 per middle or high school

\$88,866 per ARNP

**Return on Investment:** Less student absenteeism; less time taken by teachers, principals and staff for health issues; and improved wellness that will lead to better academic performance.

**The National Association of School Nurses Guidelines recommends a ratio of one school nurse to every 750 students. The OCPS ratio is one school nurse (RN, ARNP) to 3,836 students.**





## Licensed Nurses in Every School

### Targeted Population

K-12

### Needs Statement

Health care is a key factor in the academic success of students. School budget cuts have left students with a growing range of physical and mental health problems in the care of a non-licensed school health assistant (SHA) at 88 of the county's elementary schools, 25 middle schools and five high schools.

The National Association of School Nurses 2010 guidelines recommend a ratio of school nurses to students of 1:750 for well students; 1:225 in student populations that may require daily professional school nursing services or interventions; and 1:225 in student populations with complex health care needs.

The OCPS school nurse to student ratio is 1:3,836. This ratio only includes advanced nurse practitioners (ARNP) and registered nurses (RN). It does not include licensed practical nurses (LPN) or school health assistants (SHA). SHAs are not licensed medical professionals.

Obesity has more than tripled among adolescents in the past 20 years, and 33 percent of students are obese or overweight, with related mental and physical health issues, including depression and the growing number of Type 2 diabetes cases. In Orange County, 32 percent of 1st, 3rd and 6th graders are considered obese or overweight. Students with chronic health conditions or problems such as attention disorders, Type 1 diabetes, epilepsy or asthma may require help with medication or other assistance from a school nurse.

During the 2010-11 school year, 10 percent of OCPS students were absent for 21 or more days. Chronic health conditions play a role in student absenteeism. More than one-third of the children ages 1 to 11 and roughly 40 percent of adolescents living in Orange County suffer from allergies or asthma. Roughly half of the county's elementary students have missed school due to asthma, while nearly 40 percent of their parents missed work due to their child's asthma. Roughly one-fourth of the adolescents have missed school due to asthma, and nearly 15 percent of their parents missed work because of their adolescent's asthma.

Currently, the total staff for all OCPS clinics is 215. This is more than the total number of OCPS schools due to sites with more than one clinic staff person on the campus. The intensity of medical needs of the students on the campus dictates the number of medical staff required.

### 2012-13 OCPS Clinic Staff:

	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Special Day Schools	Learning Community
ARNP	4	2	2	0	0
RN	11	8	10	5	5
LPN	33	7	7	3	0
SHA	88	25	5	0	0
TOTAL	136	42	24	8	5

## Proposal

Some of the licensed medical professions listed above may be funded wholly or partially by Orlando Health, Winter Park Health Foundation, Rosen, Inc. or the Orange County Health Department.

Nurses play a critical role in the health of a school community, and the daily needs of students, families and staff are beyond what a non-licensed school health assistant (SHA) can provide. According to the National Association of School Nurses, schools benefit from having an on-site nurse in five ways:

**Attendance:** School nurses improve attendance through health promotion, disease prevention and disease management. <sup>1</sup>Students with a full-time nurse have about half the student illness- or injury-related early releases from school compared to schools where no school nurse is present.

**Academics:** Improved attendance means the healthy student is in the classroom ready to learn. School nurses enable better performance, which also contributes to reducing drop-out rates.

**Time:** School nurses save principals almost an hour a day, teachers almost 20 minutes a day and clerical staff more than 45 minutes a day.

**Staff Wellness:** Providing school nurses allows teachers more instructional time, office staff spend less time calling parents and sending students home, and healthy staff means increased attendance and productivity.

**Accountability:** School nurses help schools stay accountable by promoting compliance with federal and state laws that mitigate lawsuits; preparing for emergencies; and addressing student mental health links to academic achievement.

The district's goal is to have a licensed practical nurse (LPN) in every elementary school and a registered nurse (RN) in every middle and high school in Orange County. With the partnerships currently in place, the district needs 85 LPNs for elementary schools and 34 RNs to replace current LPNs and SHAs in middle and high schools to achieve this goal.

Additionally, two Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNP) will work at the district level to address complex medical issues and help with problem solving. Nurses at this level are needed to work with the schools that have the most medically fragile students who need services such as tracheostomy care. The district has six center sites county-wide serving elementary students with intense medical needs, four middle school center sites and five high school center sites.

## Return on Investment

At this time, OCPS partners with agencies for assistance (Winter Park Health Foundation, Orlando Health/Health Central, and Harris Rosen, Inc.). Each agency provides all or partial funding for medical personnel in OCPS school clinics.

<sup>1</sup>School Nurses' New Role in Children's Health, Laura Landro, The Wall Street Journal, September 24, 2012.



**Winter Park Health Foundation:** Aloma, Audubon Park, Cheney, Hungerford, Lake Sybelia, Lakemont, Brookshire, Dommerich elementary schools and Glenridge and Maitland middle schools.

**Orlando Health/Health Central:** Clarcona, Lake Whitney, Maxey, Ocoee, Thornebrooke, Tildenville, West Oaks, Whispering Oaks, Windermere, and Spring Lake elementary schools, Windy Ridge K-8, Teen Xpress Mobile Unit (Evans HS, Jones HS, Memorial MS), and Ocoee High School.

**Harris Rosen, Inc.:** Tangelo Park Elementary School

**Orange County Health Department:** Hiawasee Elementary School, Robinswood Middle School and Evans High School.

**Full Service Schools:** Grand Ave. Primary Learning Center, Orange Center Elementary School, and Colonial High School.

**Citizens Commission for Children:** Tangelo Elementary School, Walker Middle School, Oakridge High School.

The return to class rate in Winter Park Consortium Schools that have licensed medical professionals in their clinics is 92.6 percent. Orange County Public Schools return to class rate with schools with School Health Assistants is 76.3 percent. Students return to class approximately 20 percent more of the time when there is a nurse in the clinic.

## Evaluation Plan

### Formative Evaluation/Progress Monitoring:

Orange County Public Schools Monthly Clinic Services Report  
Orange County Public Schools Documentation of Health Service  
Orange County Public Schools Health Room Log Sheet  
Orange County Public Schools School Health Room Summary Worksheet  
Winter Park Health Foundation SNICRS Data Report

### Summative Evaluation:

Orange County Public School Nurse Observation and Evaluation Form  
Winter Park Health Foundation's Nurse Clinical Competencies

## Sustainability

This is a district-wide initiative supported by the school board and superintendent, and all principals will be asked to support the initiative.

## Key Personnel

### Registered Nurse (RN)

**Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree in Nursing from an accredited college or university and two (2) years of previous nursing experience. Certification or eligible for certification by the Florida State Department of Education. Must have and maintain a valid State of Florida Nursing license.

**Role:** To provide medical care and services to students according to physician prescribed medical care and treatment orders. Responsible for addressing medical emergencies, assessing circumstances, conditions and

resolving such according to established procedures and protocols, and providing intensive medical procedures to students.

#### Lead Learning Community Registered Nurse (RN)

**Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree in Nursing from an accredited college or university and two (2) years of previous nursing experience. Certification or eligible for certification by the Florida State Department of Education. Must have and maintain a valid State of Florida Nursing license. Worked one year as a School Based Health Care Provider.

**Role:** Provide supervision and support to school based health clinic staff. Train and education school based personnel in the best most current medical practices. Participate in and support Florida State mandated health screenings. Assist school based staff in the collection and correlation of clinic based services data.

#### Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP)

**Qualifications:** must be a registered nurse and have graduated from a Master's of Science in Nursing program or received a post-master's certification. Hold a current valid BLS certification.

**Role:** Current ARNPs in OCPS are found by outside sources. They act in supervisory roles to support health clinic staff while providing medical care to students and the community. The ARNP may interview clients, obtain and record health histories, perform physical and development assessments, order appropriate diagnostic tests, diagnose health problems, manage the health care of those clients for which he/she has been educated, provide health teaching and counseling, initiate referrals, and maintain health records. (Description taken from the Florida Department of Health; <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa/nursing/protocolsample.htm>)

#### Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

**Qualifications:** Certification as a Licensed Practical Nurse from an accredited school is required. A minimum of two (2) years of nursing experience preferred. Must hold and maintain a valid Florida state license as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). CPR/AED and First Aid certification is required.

**Role:** Employees in this classification are responsible for addressing medical emergencies, assessing circumstances and conditions, and resolving according to established procedures and protocols.

#### School Health Assistant (SHA)

**Qualifications:** High school diploma or GED is required. CPR/AED and First AID certification is required.

**Role:** The position is to perform school-based health related duties associated with daily operations of the health room/clinic. Employees in this classification function at an entry level capacity and perform basic first aid duties associated with treating sick or injured students.



<b>Budget</b>	<p><b>Personnel &amp; Fringe Benefits:</b></p> <p>Average OCPS Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Cost: Salary - \$18,853; w/Benefits - \$28,714.</p> <p>Average OCPS Registered Nurse (RN) Cost: Salary: \$43,272; w/Benefits - \$57,083.</p> <p>Average Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) Cost: Salary - \$73,549; w/Benefits - \$88,866.</p> <p><b>Elementary Schools:</b></p> <p>Currently 40 Elementary Schools meet the proposal's criteria of having an LPN or higher in the clinic.</p> <p>85 more LPN positions need to be purchased to meet the proposal's goal.</p> <p><b>Total Cost for Additional LPNs for Elementary Schools:</b>  <math>(85)(\\$28,714) = \\$2,440,690</math></p> <p><b>Secondary Schools:</b></p> <p>Currently 19 Middle and High Schools meet the proposal's criteria of having an RN or higher in the clinic.</p> <p>34 more RN positions need to be purchased to replace current LPN and SHA to meet the proposal's goals for secondary schools.</p> <p><b>Total Cost for Additional RN to replace SHA's and LPN's at Middle &amp; High:</b>  <math>(34)(\\$57,083.00) = \\$1,940,822</math></p> <p><b>District:</b></p> <p>Currently OCPS does not directly employ or pay for ARNPs.</p> <p>2 ARNP positions need to be purchased to meet the proposal's goals.</p> <p><b>Total Cost for Additional ARNPs:</b> <math>(2)(\\$88,866) = \\$177,732</math></p> <p><b>Total Personnel &amp; Fringe Benefits:</b> \$4,559,244</p>
<b>OCPS Strategic Objective(s)</b>	<p><b>Intense Focus on Student Achievement</b></p> <p>OCPS clinic staff improve students' participation and performance in rigorous curricula at all levels by increasing time on task, reducing absenteeism, and returning students to class by increasing the return to class from the clinic statistics.</p> <p><b>Safe Learning and Working Environment</b></p> <p>Clinic staff serves as school based health resources to assist OCPS schools meet all Orange County Health Department and other local agencies compliance standards.</p> <p><b>Sustained Community Engagement</b></p> <p>Community partnerships are fostered, registered, and maintained to provide the highest levels of nursing/health support in OCPS schools.</p>
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