

DEVELOPING SCHOOL NURSING IN THE WALLINGFORD-SWARTHMORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains findings and recommendations aimed at informing the support and professional development of school nurses and the role they play in addressing student health needs at the district- and school-level. PolicyLab, a research center at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, partnered with leaders from the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District to design and implement a review of school nursing programming within their own district and benchmark metrics of interest with surrounding districts in the 2024-2025 academic year.

While data demonstrated strengths of the nursing program, the primary purpose of this brief is to highlight areas for growth and offer recommendations to support the school district in strengthening their school nursing system.

MAIN FINDINGS



FINDING 1:

The current staffing model does not meet the district’s nursing needs, thus limiting the support available to students.



SUGGESTED SOLUTION:

Expand the capacity of the school nursing team to meet the needs of students, staff and nurses.



FINDING 2:

School nurses experience a lack of connection and visibility within the school climate, making it difficult to capitalize on their expertise.



SUGGESTED SOLUTION:

Prioritize the integration and visibility of school nurses in the broader school culture to create mutual understanding among staff.



FINDING 3:

The documentation and electronic health record system poses several challenges to nursing staff, and does not provide enough actionable evidence related to student health and nursing activities to administrators.



SUGGESTED SOLUTION:

Streamline documentation and reporting systems to optimize the time of nurses and administrative staff.



FINDING 4:

The supervisory and evaluation structures are not tailored to the unique roles and responsibilities of school nurses.



SUGGESTED SOLUTION:

Develop a model of supervision and support that better aligns with nursing work and expertise.