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Superintendents' and principals' opinions about the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program

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**SUPERINTENDENTS' AND PRINCIPALS' OPINIONS ABOUT
THE FUNCTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE
NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM**

BY

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251

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem	2
Justification of Problem	2
Scope and Limitation	3
Definition of Terms	3
Preview of Methodology	3
Sequence of Presentation	4
II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY	5
Statement of Hypothesis	11
III. METHODOLOGY	12
Selection and Description of Sample	12
Procurement of Data	12
Tools Used to Collect Data	12
IV. FINDINGS	15
Presentation and Discussion of Data	15
The Open Ended Questions	15
The Check List Questions	19
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	26
Findings	26
Conclusions	28
Recommendations	29

TABLE OF CONTENTS - Continued

	Page
BIBLIOGRAPHY	30
APPENDIX	34

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Opinions of Seven Superintendents About the Ideal Functions of the Nurse in the School Health Program	15
2	Opinions of Seven Principals About the Ideal Functions of the Nurse in the School Health Program	16
3	Opinions of Seven Superintendents About the Qualifications of the Nurse in the School Health Program	17
4	Opinions of Seven Principals About the Qualifications of the Nurse in the School Health Program	18
5	Responses of Seven Superintendents and Principals About the Qualifications of the Nurse in the School Health Program	19
6	Responses of Seven Superintendents and Principals About the Service Functions of the Nurse in the School Health Program	20
7	Responses of Seven Superintendents and Principals About the Education Functions of the Nurse in the School Health Program	21
8	Responses of Seven Superintendents and Principals About the Guidance Functions of the Nurse in the School Health Program	22
9	Responses of Seven Superintendents and Principals About the Administrative Functions of the Nurse in the School Health Program	23
10	Responses of Seven Superintendents and Principals About the Miscellaneous Functions of the Nurse in the School Health Program	24

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School nursing is an area of practice that encompasses aspects of both nursing and education. The nurse who serves in the school functions within the educational framework. Her primary role is the promotion and maintenance of the health of students and school personnel.

The American Nurses' Association has prepared a statement of functions and qualifications for the nurse in the school health program.¹ The recommended functions are that the nurse participate in faculty meetings; in formulating policies, standards, and objectives of the school health program, communicable disease control, and immunization planning; in the health appraisals of students; in health counseling of parents, students, and educators; in encouraging the correction of remedial defects; in assisting with and identifying the handicapped child; in preventing and controlling disease; in rendering first aid; in providing for emergency care of accidents and illnesses; in promoting an environment that is conducive to good health; in acting as a resource person for teachers in planning health instruction and as a liaison person between the community and the school.

¹American Nurses' Association, Functions and Qualifications for School Nurses, School Nurses Branch, Public Health Nurses Section (New York: 1960), pp. 3-8.

The recommended qualifications are that the nurse be a licensed graduate of an accredited school of nursing and possess a baccalaureate degree. She should have knowledge and understanding of the total school program, specific school nursing responsibilities, factors influencing the learning process, public health, health education, and public relations.

Administrators, because they are not aware of the nurse's functions and qualifications, may sometimes expect the nurse to carry out functions for which she is not prepared, or limit her activities so she cannot function at her greatest capacity. Other factors that may affect the functions of the nurse in the school health program are school policy, her own preparation and experience, the number of students in the school, the health needs of students in the school, other school health personnel, and the availability of community services.

Statement of Problem

What opinions do school superintendents and school principals have about the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program?

Justification of Problem

The writer's experience as a nurse in a school health program in two different school systems indicated that different functions and qualifications were expected of the nurse by the superintendents and by the principals. Because school superintendents and school principals are responsible for the administration of the school health program and for employing the nurse to work in the school health program, it was decided

to ask them their opinions. The writer thought that a clearer understanding by superintendents and principals of the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program might assist the nurse to function more effectively as a member of the school health team.

The findings should help define areas in which superintendents and principals are not clear about the functions and qualifications and thus help nurses interpret them to administrators. The findings should help administrators select better prepared nurses to work in the school health program and then make it possible administratively for them to use their knowledge effectively.

Scope and Limitation

Seven superintendents and seven principals of eight Regional High Schools in southeastern Massachusetts were the participants in this study. The findings are applicable only to the superintendents and principals in the Regional High Schools in this one district and no further generalization can justifiably be made.

Definition of Terms

School Nurse is a registered nurse, with or without academic preparation, employed by a Board of Education to work in a school health program.

Preview of Methodology

An interview schedule was developed employing open end questions and a check list of probing questions. Each participant was interviewed by the investigator and the answers were recorded verbatim. The average

length of each interview was twenty-five minutes. The data were tabulated, analyzed, and conclusions made.

Sequence of Presentation

Chapter II includes a review of the literature, the basis of the hypothesis and a statement of the hypothesis.

Chapter III presents the description and selection of the sample and the methodology used to procure the data.

Chapter IV includes the presentation of the data with an analysis and discussion.

Chapter V contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The literature did not reveal much information concerning the opinions of administrators about the nurse in the school health program, but there were many references about the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program as viewed by nurses and by educators.

Klein¹ in 1957 analyzed critically the functions and professional preparation of the school nurses in the New Jersey public schools. She sent a questionnaire with one hundred and fifty-two items to six hundred and thirty-nine school nurses. She summarized that the nursing profession was uncertain about the functional role of the school nurse; that the technical competency obtained through a diploma program did not prepare the nurse for school nursing; that the responsibility of the school nurse should be defined by school administrators by taking into consideration her professional preparation and experience with systematic procedures to guide the nurse.

In 1957 Poe² did a study to identify the functions of a nurse as indicated by the nurses working in a school health program. This study was

¹Ruth A. Klein, "The Functions of the Public School Nurse and Professional Preparation for School Nursing," Journal of School Health, 27:175 (September, 1957), pp. 270-75.

²Nancy Poe, "Functions of a School Nurse," (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Boston University, 1957).

done at the elementary and secondary school levels using full time public health nurses and nurses employed by Boards of Education and other organizations in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. A questionnaire was sent to one thousand, two hundred and eighty-seven public school nurses, fifty per cent employed by the Boards of Education and fifty per cent serving the school but employed by other organizations. Only six hundred and ten returns were usable.

Poe observed that there was a consistency in a large number of activities of a nurse in the school health program, but a failure on the part of the nurse to see the total school health problems. For example there was a high percentage of nurses that performed the visual acuity test but a low percentage of nurses that rated this activity as important. The second problem area was the need for overall school health planning by the nurse such as evaluation of the school health program, participation in the in-service education program, and preparation of the school health budget. It was noted that nurses felt the need for more educational experience and skills.

Poe concluded that nurses in a school health program performed a wide variety of activities; that there was a need for nurses to function more often in the overall planning of programs; that broader educational background and experience are needed to prepare the school nurse.

McManus,³ in 1960, sent a questionnaire to seventy-one elementary

³Louise McManus, "A Study of Opinions of Seventy-one Classroom Teachers and Twelve Public Health Nurses About the Activities a Nurse Should Perform in a School Health Program," (unpublished Master's thesis, Boston University, 1960).

class room teachers and twelve public health staff nurses in a health department of a suburban community in southeastern New England. She found that there were several significant differences such as: fifty-two teachers thought nurses should perform the hearing test but none of the nurses thought this; sixty teachers and three nurses thought that the nurse should perform the vision testing; fifty-two of the teachers and two of the nurses thought that the nurse should perform the retest of the hearing failures; forty-nine teachers and two nurses thought the nurse should exclude the children with signs of illness; thirty-four teachers and one nurse felt the nurse should do the height and weight measurements; and forty-eight teachers and four nurses thought the nurse should address any health notices. McManus concluded there was a need to determine the advisability of employing non-professional personnel to perform certain activities in the school health program.

In 1960, Tighe⁴ interviewed ten public school teachers from two public schools in southern Rhode Island to determine their opinions about the usefulness of the school nurse's activities. The teachers were randomly selected from the primary, elementary, and secondary levels of the schools.

The findings showed that teachers felt the nurse-teacher conferences concerning the child's health were very useful; that the home visiting and subsequent follow up by the nurse was important in understanding the problems of the school child; that the amount of time spent by the nurse

⁴Elizabeth Tighe, "A Survey to Determine Teacher's Opinions About the Usefulness of the School Nurses' Activities," (unpublished Master's thesis, Boston University, 1960).

in the school was adequate; and that the school nurse needed more preparation than the hospital nurse in psychology, sociology, and community resources.

Tighe concluded that the nurses in this community, doing school nursing, had been able to interpret their role to teachers; that the teachers recognized the nurse as a liaison person between the school, community, and home; that the teachers accepted the nurse as a member of the staff; and that the preparation of school nurses must include broader education in family and community relationships.

Neth,⁵ in 1961, interviewed thirty principals and thirty school nurses in one county in California. She found that only school principals focused on the service category. Both nurses and principals agreed on the education category, and principals felt that the administrative category was a primary responsibility of the nurse, while none of the nurses thought this. It was concluded that principals and school nurses differed in their concept of the role of the school nurse. This study also implied that since administrators have authority and responsibility for the health program, the school nurse must have difficult situations in which to function.

In 1961, Stobo⁶ did a study to provide information concerning the knowledge and skills needed by nurses in carrying out their responsibilities

⁵Myrtle Alice Neth, "A Study to Compare Concepts of the Role of the School Nurse," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of California, 1961).

⁶Elizabeth Stobo, "Findings of a Study Designed to Assist in the Development of Guidelines for the Preparation of Nurses for School Health Work," National League for Nursing (New York: 1961).

in the school health program and to utilize the findings in determining what would constitute necessary educational preparation for the nurse to fulfill her role. She sent questionnaires to the faculty members of ninety-seven colleges throughout the nation. Eighty-seven of these colleges had programs that were accredited by the National League for Nursing and ten were state colleges that had special programs for school nurses.

Stobo found that there was a fairly general agreement among the participants that the opportunity to obtain beginning health knowledges belonged in the baccalaureate program; that the sources suggested to provide learning experiences represented the broad areas of the biological sciences, social sciences, public health, and nursing; that students should have an opportunity to apply their knowledge of health in various clinical settings where they can care for children, as well as opportunities to apply such knowledge while babysitting, teaching parents' classes, counseling about growth and development, and participating in immunization programs. It was suggested that instructors look for evidence of student's ability to plan an environment conducive to growth and development, to record deviations from normal growth and development, to record significant data on normal growth and development, to note possible causative factors of deviations, to select and utilize health information for individual children, to make both immediate and long range plans for patients, to make appropriate referrals to other agencies, to utilize knowledge of safety and accident prevention in caring for patients, and to use authoritative literature for recommending first aid procedures in the schools.

The findings of the study indicated that much of what the nurse in the school health program needs to know can be gained through a baccalaureate

program, but that some work beyond this first degree is necessary in order to give the nurse an orientation to the school system. School boards employing nurses will have to be encouraged to seek those nurses who have completed their baccalaureate degree as the base upon which to establish additional requirements.

Following up this study, Florentine⁷ suggested guidelines for appraising the preparation of school nurses. The guidelines covered five major areas and include:

1. The nurse in the school health program applies concepts of human growth and development, and behavior in the milieu of the school health program.
2. The nurse in the school health program recognizes and deals with developmental and health needs of students especially in relation to those areas of prevention, detection, and treatment which necessarily influence educational programming.
3. The nurse in a school health program uses existing community resources for children and youth and spearheads the development of additional services when indicated by the needs of the school health program.
4. The nurse in the school health program comprehends the nature of the educational setting in which the school nurse works.
5. The nurse in the school health program selects and uses processes appropriate to the roles assumed by the school nurse.

The School health services and staff as described in the Evaluative Criteria⁸ for the accrediting of secondary schools spells out the functions

⁷Helen Goodale Florentine, The Preparation and the Role of Nurses in School Health Programs, Guidelines for the Use of Administrators, Educators, and Students (New York: National League for Nursing, 1962).

⁸Evaluative Criteria (Washington: National Study of Secondary School Evaluation, 1960).

and qualifications desired of the school nurse by educators. These criteria are closely allied with the functions and qualifications as defined by the American Nurses Association.

The literature indicated that there was a marked similarity in the functions and qualifications of the school nurse as seen by both professions.

Statement of Hypothesis

Superintendents and principals of Regional High Schools do not agree with one another, or with standards set by the American Nurses Association about the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Selection and Description of Sample

Seven school superintendents and seven school principals of eight Regional High Schools in southeastern Massachusetts were the participants in this study. Five of the superintendents were responsible for the elementary schools in the town in which the Regional High School was located, and two were only responsible for the Regional High School.

All the Regional High Schools had recently been accredited by the New England Association of Secondary Schools, or were in the process of being accredited. As a result it was thought that the section on school health services and staff in the secondary school evaluative criteria would have been recently reviewed by the superintendents and principals.

Each regional school district was composed of rural towns and some small industrial towns. Six of the high schools employed a full time nurse and two employed a part time nurse. Each nurse was employed by the Board of Education and was directly responsible to the superintendent of schools, but worked closely with the principal in their schools.

Procurement of Data

The respondents were contacted by telephone for an appointment for the interview. The following procedure was adhered to in each telephone contact:

1. The writer introduced herself as a Master's student at Boston University doing a study.
2. The purpose of the study was discussed.
3. The respondents were assured that their replies would remain confidential.
4. The respondents were assured that they would in no way be identified in the final report.
5. The respondents were informed that the interview would take approximately twenty-five minutes.

All of the respondents agreed to participate in the study and made an appointment for an interview. The writer interviewed each of them in their offices during the school day. Each interview lasted approximately twenty-five minutes. The fourteen respondents showed interest in the study and the writer felt they expressed their opinions freely. At the close of the interviews the respondents asked many questions about what the investigator thought were the functions of the nurse in the school health program.

Tool Used To Collect Data

An interview schedule was developed for use in the collection of the data.¹ An interview was selected because it was thought it would give greater flexibility for eliciting information since the interviewer could clarify any misunderstandings about the questions asked. It was also thought that it would free the respondents from the time consuming task of writing answers to questions and assist in maintaining his interest in the study. The functions and qualifications stated as desirable by the

¹See Appendix A

American Nurses Association,² the Administrator's Guide for the School Health Program,³ and the writer's own experience were used as resources in developing the interview schedule.

The interview schedule contained two open ended questions about the functions and qualifications of the school nurse. These were followed by closed end check list questions to gain opinions on specific points. The questions about the functions of the nurse in the school health program were divided into categories, similar to those used by Neth,⁴ relating to service, education, counseling and guidance, administration, and miscellaneous. The functions included in each category, except for miscellaneous, were stated as desirable functions by the American Nurses Association. Those under the miscellaneous category were considered non-nursing duties. The questions about the qualifications of the school nurse requested specific areas of professional and educational preparation.

The interview schedule was tried out with two superintendents and two principals of southeastern Massachusetts high schools. As a result one question was eliminated.

²American Nurses' Association, Functions and Qualifications for School Nurses (New York: School Nurses Branch, Public Health Nurses Section, 1960).

³Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Administrator's Guide for the School Health Program, The Department of Education, The Department of Mental Health, The Department of Public Health, June, 1957, pp. 32-33.

⁴Neth, loc. cit.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

The findings are presented under two headings: the data obtained from the open ended questions; and the data obtained from the check list questions.

The Open Ended Questions

The superintendents and principals were first asked what they thought ideally should be the functions of the nurse in the school health program. Table 1 lists the responses of the superintendents.

TABLE 1

OPINIONS OF SEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS ABOUT THE IDEAL FUNCTIONS OF THE NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Function</u>	<u>Frequency*</u>
Administer first aid	7
Do hearing testing	5
Do vision testing	5
Assist the doctor with physical examinations	5
Make home visits	5
Give guidance on health matters	5
Assist with immunization clinics	4
Keep health records	3
Check on absentees	3
Consult with teachers on student health	3
Measure height and weight	2
Teach health	2
Follow up physical defects	2
Supervise the Future Nurses Club	1
Total	52

*The respondents gave more than one opinion.

Fifty-two responses were given by the seven superintendents. The most frequent responses mentioned were administering first aid, doing the vision and hearing testing, assisting with physical examinations, making home visits, and giving guidance regarding student health matters. Supervising the Future Nurses Club was mentioned only once.

Table 2 lists the responses of the principals about the ideal functions of the nurse in the school health program.

TABLE 2
OPINIONS OF SEVEN PRINCIPALS ABOUT THE IDEAL FUNCTIONS
OF THE NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Function</u>	<u>Frequency*</u>
Teach health	6
Assist with immunization clinics	5
Assist the doctor with physical examinations	4
Administer first aid	4
Check absentees	4
Supervise the Future Nurses Club	3
Give guidance regarding health matters	2
Do vision testing	1
Do hearing testing	1
Process insurance claims	1
Participate in curriculum planning	1
Total	32

*The respondents gave more than one opinion.

The most frequent responses mentioned by the principals were teaching health and assisting with immunization clinics. Only one principal mentioned participating in curriculum planning.

There was some difference of opinion among the superintendents and the principals. Six principals mentioned teaching as an ideal function,

but only two superintendents mentioned this; seven superintendents mentioned administering first aid, but only four principals mentioned this activity; five superintendents mentioned assisting with immunization clinics, but only one principal mentioned this; five superintendents mentioned home visiting, but none of the principals mentioned this as a function of the nurse.

In order to determine what superintendents and principals thought the qualifications of the nurse in the school health program should be, they were asked for their opinions. Table 3 lists the responses of the superintendents.

TABLE 3
OPINIONS OF SEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS ABOUT THE QUALIFICATIONS
OF THE NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Frequency*</u>
Registered nurse	7
Public health knowledge and experience	2
Interviewing skills	2
Well adjusted person	2
Pleasing personality	1
Preparation in school health	1
Preparation in elementary education methods	1
Preparation in adolescent psychology	1
Total	17

*The respondents gave more than one opinion.

All respondents mentioned being a registered nurse as a desirable qualification for the nurse in the school health program. Two mentioned having public health knowledge and experience, interviewing skills, and a well adjusted personality as other desirable qualifications.

Table 4 lists the responses of seven principals about the qualifications of the nurse in the school health program.

TABLE 4
OPINIONS OF SEVEN PRINCIPALS ABOUT THE QUALIFICATIONS
OF THE NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Frequency*</u>
Registered nurse	7
Bachelor of science degree	3
Preparation in educational psychology	3
Pleasing personality	2
Well adjusted person	2
Public health knowledge and experience	1
Nursing experience	<u>1</u>
Total	19

*The respondents gave more than one opinion.

All respondents mentioned being a registered nurse as a desirable qualification for the nurse in the school health program. Three principals mentioned having a bachelor of science degree and three mentioned having preparation in educational psychology as other desirable qualifications. One principal mentioned having public health knowledge and experience, and one mentioned nursing experience as desirable.

All superintendents and principals agreed that being a registered nurse was a necessary qualification. In addition three of the principals said the nurse should have a bachelor of science degree and educational psychology, but none of the superintendents mentioned these as desirable. Previously the principals had said that the nurse should teach health; and in the responses to the questions about the qualifications of the nurse they indicated the need for educational preparation to carry on this activity.

The Check List Questions

In order to further clarify what the superintendents and principals thought the educational preparation should be for the nurse in the school health program, they were given a check list. The responses are listed in Table 5.

TABLE 5
RESPONSES OF SEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS ABOUT THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Qualifications</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Principals</u>
Registered nurse	7	7
Experience in nursing	6	5
Public health knowledge and experience.	5	6
Bachelor of science degree	3	4
Master of science degree	0	0

All the superintendents and the principals again agreed that being a registered nurse was a necessary qualification for the nurse in the school health program. The responses of the superintendents were not consistent with previous statements as six mentioned having experience in nursing as desirable, but none mentioned this previously; five mentioned having public health knowledge and experience as desirable, but only two mentioned this previously; three mentioned having a bachelor of science degree as essential, but none mentioned this before.

The responses of the principals were consistent with their previous statements about the need for the nurse to have a bachelor of science degree. However, they were not consistent in their responses about the

need for nursing experience, as five said this was desirable, but only one had mentioned it previously; six said having public health knowledge and experience was desirable, but only one said this earlier.

The thirty-one items included in the check list questions on the functions of the nurse in the school health program were divided into five categories: (1) service, (2) education, (3) administration, (4) guidance and counseling, and (5) miscellaneous or non-nursing. Table 6 lists the responses of the seven superintendents and principals about the functions in the service category.

TABLE 6

RESPONSES OF SEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS ABOUT THE SERVICE FUNCTIONS OF THE NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Function</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Principals</u>
Assist the doctor with physical examinations	7	7
Administer first aid	7	7
Handle emergency illness and accidents	7	7
Plan for communicable disease control	7	7
Assist with immunization clinics	7	7
Do the vision testing	6	7
Do the hearing testing	6	7
Measure height and weight	5	6

The superintendents and principals agreed about the functions of the nurse in the service category. The only area in which there was a slight disagreement was in the screening procedures with the principals tending to assign these functions to the nurse. This was in contrast to previous

answers in which the superintendents tended to assign these functions to the nurse.

Table 7 lists the responses of the seven superintendents and principals about the functions of the nurse in the education category.

TABLE 7
RESPONSES OF SEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS
ABOUT THE EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OF THE
NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Function</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Principals</u>
Assist with in service education . . .	7	7
Plan for teacher conference about student health matters	7	7
Use the health service for informal teaching	7	7
Assist with curriculum planning	6	7
Teach first aid	6	6
Serve as a resource person in the area of health for personnel	6	7
Conduct formal classroom teaching . . .	4	4

The superintendents and principals agreed that the nurse should assist with in-service education, assist with curriculum planning, and teach first aid. Only two superintendents previously mentioned teaching health, but six wanted her to teach first aid, and four mentioned conducting formal classroom teaching as a function of the nurse. The responses of the principals were different than previous responses. Six had previously mentioned teaching health, but only four said the nurse should conduct formal classroom teaching. Further study seems to be indicated in this area to determine what teaching by the nurse means to superintendents and to principals, and what preparation is needed for this teaching.

Table 8 lists the responses of the seven superintendents and principals about the functions of the nurse in the guidance and counseling category.

TABLE 8
RESPONSES OF SEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS
ABOUT THE GUIDANCE FUNCTIONS OF THE
NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Function</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Principals</u>
Consult with parents in the home . . .	7	6
Counsel students with health needs . .	7	7
Assist families to utilize community resources	7	6
Encourage families to seek treatment of remedial defects	7	7
Counsel students with handicaps	7	7
Counsel students interested in the health professions	6	7

Superintendents and principals agreed essentially with one another in the guidance and counseling category. Both said the nurse should consult with parents in the home, assist families to utilize community resources, and encourage families to seek treatment of remedial defects, but only five superintendents and no principals mentioned home visiting as a function. The responses of the superintendents and the principals were in contrast to previous statements. Six superintendents and seven principals mentioned that the nurse should counsel students interested in the health professions. Earlier only one superintendent and three principals had mentioned that the nurse should supervise the Future Nurses Club.

Table 9 lists the responses of the seven superintendents and principals about the functions of the nurse in the administrative category.

TABLE 9
RESPONSES OF SEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS
ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE
NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Function</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
	<u>Superintendent</u>	<u>Principals</u>
Function as a member of the faculty	7	5
Participate in the formation of policies, standards, and objectives of the health program .	7	7
Act as a liaison person with the community	7	7
Work with advisory groups	7	7
Evaluate the health program	7	7
Maintain student health records	5	7

Table 9 indicated some interesting findings. Although the principals wanted the nurse to assist with in-service education, assist with curriculum planning, teach health, and participate in the formation of policies of the health program, they did not agree that the nurse should be a member of the faculty.

Seven principals and five superintendents thought the nurse should maintain student health records. Previously only three superintendents and one principal had mentioned this.

Table 10 lists the responses of the seven superintendents and

principals about the functions of the nurse in the miscellaneous or non-nursing category.

TABLE 10
RESPONSES OF SEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS
ABOUT THE MISCELLANEOUS FUNCTIONS OF THE
NURSE IN THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

<u>Function</u>	<u>Responses</u>	
	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Principals</u>
Carry on extra-curricular responsibility such as		
Future Nurses Club	6	7
Check on absentees	2	3
Transport ill students	0	2
Manage the school insurance program	0	3

Six superintendents thought that supervision of the Future Nurses Club was a function of the nurse, but earlier none of them had mentioned this activity. Even though extra-curricular activity, such as the supervision of the Future Nurses Club, is considered a faculty responsibility, seven principals said the nurse should supervise the Future Nurses Club, but only five saw the nurse as a member of the faculty. Principals mentioned more non-nursing duties of the nurse than did the superintendents.

The findings of this study indicated that superintendents and principals tended to agree with one another about the functions of the nurse in the school health program as established by the American

Nurses Association. They did not agree with one another about the qualifications of the nurse in the school health program as established by the American Nurses Association.

The hypothesis of this study was that superintendents and principals did not agree with one another or with standards set by the American Nurses Association about the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program. The findings of this study indicate that the hypothesis was confirmed in relation to the qualifications, but was not confirmed in relation to the functions of the nurse in the school health program.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Seven superintendents and seven principals in eight Regional High Schools in southeastern Massachusetts were the respondents in this study. An interview schedule was developed to collect the data. The interview schedule consisted of two open ended questions about the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program and thirty-six check list questions on specific functions and qualifications. Each respondent was personally interviewed in his office by the investigator.

The purpose of the study was to determine the opinions of superintendents and principals about the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program. A review of the literature showed that among nurses, nursing educators, and teachers there was a marked similarity about what they thought should be the functions and qualifications of the nurse. There was little evidence found in the literature about the opinions of superintendents and principals about the functions and qualifications of the nurse.

Findings

The findings were: superintendents and principals thought the nurse in the school health program should be a registered nurse, but

more principals than superintendents thought the nurse should have a bachelor of science degree and educational preparation in psychology. More principals than superintendents thought the nurse should have public health knowledge and experience.

Superintendents and principals agreed about the functions of the nurse in the service category with a slight tendency for the principals to assign more screening procedures to the nurse than did the superintendents.

Superintendents and principals agreed the nurse should assist with in-service education, assist with curriculum planning and teach first aid, but more principals than superintendents thought the nurse should teach health and should be educationally prepared to perform these functions.

Superintendents and principals agreed with one another in the guidance and counseling category. Although both thought the nurse should consult with parents in the home, no principals and only five superintendents thought she should make home visits.

Although principals wanted the nurse to carry on faculty responsibilities such as participating in the formation of policies of the health program, assisting with curriculum planning, teaching health, and assisting with in-service education, they did not think she should be a member of the faculty. Principals thought the nurse should carry on more non-nursing duties than did the superintendents.

Conclusions

Superintendents and principals did not agree with one another about the qualifications of the nurse in the school health program as established by the American Nurses Association.

Superintendents and principals tended to agree with one another about the functions of the nurse in the school health program as established by the American Nurses Association.

The superintendents and principals both thought the nurse should teach but they were not clear about what she should teach, or the educational preparation necessary for her to do the teaching.

Both superintendents and principals thought the nurse should perform various functions, but did not state what educational preparation she needed to perform these functions.

Recommendations

A similar study be done in another community where nurses are employed by the Board of Education, and the findings be compared with those of this study.

A similar study be done in a community where school nursing is part of a generalized public health nursing service and the findings be compared with those of this study.

A similar study be done to get the opinions of school principals and nurses in the same school system about the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program.

That further study be done about ways in which the nursing profession can interpret the qualifications of the nurse in the school health program as established by the American Nurses Association more clearly to superintendents and principals of high schools.

That further study be done to define what the term "teaching health" means to superintendents, principals, and school nurses.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

As part of the requirement for a Master of Science degree at Boston University, I am doing a survey to determine what opinions Superintendents and Principals have as to the functions and qualifications of the nurse in the school health program. I am interested only in your opinions so there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Your answers will be confidential and you will not be identified in any way in the final report.

1. What do you think ideally should be the functions of the nurse in the school health program?

2. What do you think should be the qualifications of the nurse in the school health program?

3. Do you think a school nurse should----?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. be a registered nurse	_____	_____	_____
b. have a Baccalaureate degree	_____	_____	_____
c. have a Masters degree	_____	_____	_____
d. have public health training	_____	_____	_____
e. have had experience before coming to the school system How Much? _____	_____	_____	_____

-2-

4. Now let's look at some of the functions of the nurse in the school health program in which there seems to be a variety of opinion.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
1. do screening procedures			
a. assist M.D. with exams	_____	_____	_____
b. do the vision testing	_____	_____	_____
c. do the hearing testing	_____	_____	_____
d. do the height and weight measurement	_____	_____	_____
2. administer first aid	_____	_____	_____
3. handle emergency illness and accidents	_____	_____	_____
4. plan for communicable disease control, exclusion, and readmission of students	_____	_____	_____
5. assist in planning for immunization clinics	_____	_____	_____
<u>Education</u>			
1. conduct formal classes (i.e. home nursing)	_____	_____	_____
2. assist in curriculum planning for health instruction	_____	_____	_____
3. teach first aid	_____	_____	_____
4. serve as resource person in area of health for personnel	_____	_____	_____
5. assist with in-service education	_____	_____	_____
6. plan for teacher conference on student health matters	_____	_____	_____
7. use the health service for informal health teaching	_____	_____	_____
<u>Counseling and Guidance</u>			
1. consult with parents in their homes regarding health of students	_____	_____	_____

-3-

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
2. counsel students with health needs	_____	_____	_____
3. assist family to utilize community resources	_____	_____	_____
4. encourage families to seek treatment of remedial defects	_____	_____	_____
5. counsel students with handicaps	_____	_____	_____
6. counsel students interested in the health professions	_____	_____	_____

Administrative

1. function as a member of the faculty with its responsibilities and privileges	_____	_____	_____
2. participate in the formation of policies, standards, and objectives of the health program	_____	_____	_____
3. maintain health records of students	_____	_____	_____
4. act as liaison person between school and the community	_____	_____	_____
5. work with advisory groups as representative of school health program	_____	_____	_____
6. evaluate the health program periodically	_____	_____	_____

Miscellaneous

1. routinely transport students who are ill	_____	_____	_____
2. routinely check on absentees	_____	_____	_____
3. manage the school insurance program	_____	_____	_____
4. carry on extra-curricular responsibilities (F.N.C.)	_____	_____	_____

Remarks

1. What is your student population? _____

-4-

2. How many nurses do you employ? _____ Full time _____
Part time _____
3. What is the level of their preparation? _____
4. How many years have they been employed by you? _____