B. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Developing a School Health Services Assessment Tool and Related Resources

Without exceeding this one (1) page, briefly describe your project and partnership.

The equation is simple: healthy child = healthy learner = academic achievement. It is clear that poor child health negatively impacts school learning and academic achievement. Children who experience poor health have significantly poorer adult outcomes, such as lower education attainment, adverse health conditions, and lower social status. How we support our children now will affect the future health of the state’s economy, communities, and population. Improving school health services is an important population health issue essential to improving our children’s health.

In addition to concerns about the health of our children, Wisconsin’s public health infrastructure and school health-related services rank poorly on national measures of quality. Results of this partnership’s HWPP-funded Determining the Status of School Health Services (Development Grant) determined that schools are facing “significant increases in the severity and complexity of student health issues, without a corresponding increase in nursing services”.

Compounding these issues, school nurses in Wisconsin lack a quality assessment tool to critically look at the quality of care provided to our children and youth in the school setting. Nation-wide, community health and school nursing are the rare specialties within nursing that have few quality indicators documented in the literature.

Our children need quality school health services; there are significant gaps in quality indicators of school health services. **Thus, this project will increase the competency and capacity of local school health services systems by drafting, piloting, finalizing, implementing and evaluating a school health services quality assessment tool which will be complemented by resources, templates and educational materials to address priorities identified through the assessment results.**

The quality assessment tool and corresponding resources will be based on current Wisconsin statutes, the priorities identified in the previous project, and best practices within the fields of population health and school nursing. The project will also collect the data from the individual school assessments anonymously to provide Wisconsin as a whole with key school health services quality data. A review of literature and other resources will assist in the identification of potentially similar quality assessment tools to adapt for Wisconsin, as well as the development of resources, tools and educational materials. Finally, evaluation will occur at multiple levels: the usefulness and applicability of the quality assessment tool (e.g., is it easy to understand, does it measure items that are important for school health, etc.); the usefulness and applicability of the resources (e.g., are they accessible, do they adequately address the topic/focus, etc.); and the overall impact of the quality assessment tool and the resources (i.e., the changes that occur as a result of their use). All project efforts build toward this final evaluation – did the quality assessment tools and corresponding resources make a difference in the quality of school health services.

The project partners have a strong history of successful collaboration. In addition to completing the previous grant, numerous partners spent the subsequent 2 years assuring the passage of legislation and changes in state statute that reflect the results of the previous project. The partners are eager to re-engage with the broader Advisory Committee, develop the proposed School Nurse Expert Panel, and continue with their focus on school health through this project. Partnership monitoring and improvement will be integrated into the partner processes. The project partners include: Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA); Wisconsin Association of School Nurses (WASN); Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB); Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA); Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI); Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH); and Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW).