

Non-binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)

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Senate Bill 89 (2019)

- SB 89 is the school safety omnibus bill through which the recommendations of the Governor's School Safety Task Force were enacted.
- The Task Force recommendations were organized and proposed by two work groups:
 - Physical Infrastructure
 - Student Wellbeing

State Board of Education Requirement

- “The State Board of Education shall develop non-binding recommendations for the ratio of pupils to specialized instructional support personnel in this State for kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive.” (SB 89, Section 7)

SBE Recommended Ratios must:

- Prescribe a suggested ratio of pupils in grades K-12 per each type of SISP;
- Be based on evidence-based national standards; and
- Take into account the unique needs of certain pupils, including English learners.

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel

- NRS 388.890: “Specialized instructional support personnel’ includes persons employed by each school to provide necessary services such as assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational services, therapeutic services and related services, as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1401(26), to pupils.”

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel Include:

- (1) A school counselor;
- (2) A school psychologist;
- (3) A school social worker;
- (4) A school nurse;
- (5) A speech-language pathologist;
- (6) A school library media specialist; and
- (7) Any other qualified professional.

Evidence-Based National Standards

- Most national associations for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) publish recommended ratios
- However, there is no one federal entity that collects data on existing or formally adopted ratios
- Most ratios are per pupil, while others are per school building or per capita of the general population
- There is no formal definition of “other qualified professional” (federal or state)

School Counselors

- The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends a student-to-school-counselor ratio of 250:1
- The most recent (May 2019) national average ratio as calculated by ASCA is 1:455.
- The ratio for Nevada in 2017 was 1:478.

School Psychologists

- The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) recommended ratio for school psychologists is 1:500–700
- “Implementation of the NASP model creates the capacity to make the best, most cost-effective use of school psychologists’ skills and expertise, which are an existing but sometimes underutilized resource in schools”

School Social Workers

- The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) recommends a maximum ratio of one Master of Social Work (MSW) level school social worker to 250 general education students or one school social worker per building serving 250 students or fewer

School Nurses

- The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) recommends the following ratios:
 - 1:750 students in the healthy student population
 - 1:225 for student populations requiring daily professional nursing services
 - 1:125 for student populations with complex healthcare needs

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)

- The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) reports that in 2018 the national average was 52.8 ASHA-certified SLPs per 100,000 residents
- Arkansas had the highest ratio, at 84.1 SLPs per 100,000 residents
- Nevada had the lowest ratio, at 26.7 SLPs per 100,000 residents

School Library Media Specialists

- The National Education Association (NEA) reports a continuous decline in staffing levels of librarians/media specialists due to increases in student populations and reductions in funding
 - Nationally, only 66.4% of library/media centers have at least one full-time state-certified librarian
 - The current estimate of the national average is 1 librarian per 2.28 schools

Other Qualified Professionals

- In Nevada, this may include the following Special Licenses/Endorsements:
 - American Sign Language
 - Audiological Services
 - English Language Acquisition and Development
 - Music Therapy
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Physical Therapy
- There are no national recommendations regarding per pupil ratios for these professionals.

Non-Binding Recommendations

- The following ratios are proposed as non-binding recommendations for each category of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel:
 - for School Counselors, one per 250 pupils
 - for School Psychologists, one per 500-700 pupils
 - for School Social Workers, one per 250 pupils
 - for School Nurses, one per 750 pupils
 - for School Library Media Specialists, one per school

Questions?

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References

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- **School Social Work Association of America** (2013). [School Social Workers Helping Students Succeed: Recommended School Social Worker to Student Ratios.](#)
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- **American Speech-Language-Hearing Association** (2019). [Supply and Demand Resource List for Speech-Language Pathologists.](#)
- **National Education Association** (2016). [Library/Media Centers in U.S. Public Schools: Growth, Staffing, and Resources.](#)