

Developing the 2025–2026 National Workforce Survey: With School Nurses, for School Nurses



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There are NO relevant financial relationships to report for the past 24 months for ALL those with the ability to influence the content of this educational activity.

Background

- School nurses are a critical component of the school health and public health workforce. Through direct care, community partnerships, and advocacy, they help address adverse social drivers of health that influence student well-being, health outcomes, and academic success.
- Understanding the school nurse workforce is foundational for workforce planning, policy development, and resource allocation.
- However, with substantial variation in the workforce across states, regions, and models of practice, it is challenging to accurately characterize the school nurse workforce.
- Leveraging its national reach and leadership in school nursing, the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) led a national effort to systematically characterize the school nurse workforce through the 2025–2026 National School Nurse Workforce Survey.

Outcomes

Primary Outcomes:

- Describe the national school nurse workforce
- Characterize the range of models of practice used in school nursing

Secondary Outcomes:

- Evaluate which factors are associated with school nurses who intend on leaving school nursing
- Evaluate factors associated with school nurses experiencing burnout

Survey Development

Determine priorities and research goals:

- Engaged NASN’s research team and previous/currently practicing school nurses (SNs) to refine survey content and establish priorities.

Initial tests of survey tool:

- Pilot tested survey with SNs, collected feedback on survey flow, content, and question clarity (Rattray & Jones, 2007).
- Revised the survey based on pilot testing feedback.

Question design:

- Reviewed questions from prior national school nurse workforce studies (Willgerodt et al., 2018; 2024) and state-level workforce surveys.
- Incorporated a validated survey measure assessing burnout.

Cognitive interviews:

- Conducted cognitive interviews with practicing SNs across geographic regions and school settings to assess question interpretation and response processes.
- During cognitive interviews participants explain how they interpret questions and develop their responses to identify problems with question wording, comprehension, and response options (Ryan et al., 2012; Scanlon & Jamoom, 2019).
- Revised survey based on feedback.

Survey Structure & Distribution

- Licensure, Education, and Current Role (~25 questions)
- Delivery of Care (15–25 questions)
- School Funding (7 questions)
- Workforce Experiences & Burnout (6 questions)
- Demographics (7 questions)

Eligibility: Active nursing license and providing school nurse services in a school setting.

The study was reviewed and approved by the Advarra Institutional Review Board under an exempt category of review (Pro00089462).

- Convenience sample of school nurses nationwide
- Survey distributed (10/20/25-2/28/26) through NASN email lists, newsletters, social media, and partners such as the National Association of State School Nurse Consultants (NASSNC)
- Reminder emails distributed throughout the data collection period

Selected Respondent Demographics

5,725 Eligible school nurse (SN) respondents completed all or most of the survey

All 50 U.S. states (& DC) represented

Of survey respondents (n=5,725):

- 72.3% (95% Confidence Interval (CI): 71.1-73.5%) SNs
- 14.7% (95% CI: 13.8-15.7%) district SNs
- 9.2% (95% CI: 8.5-10.0%) lead SNs

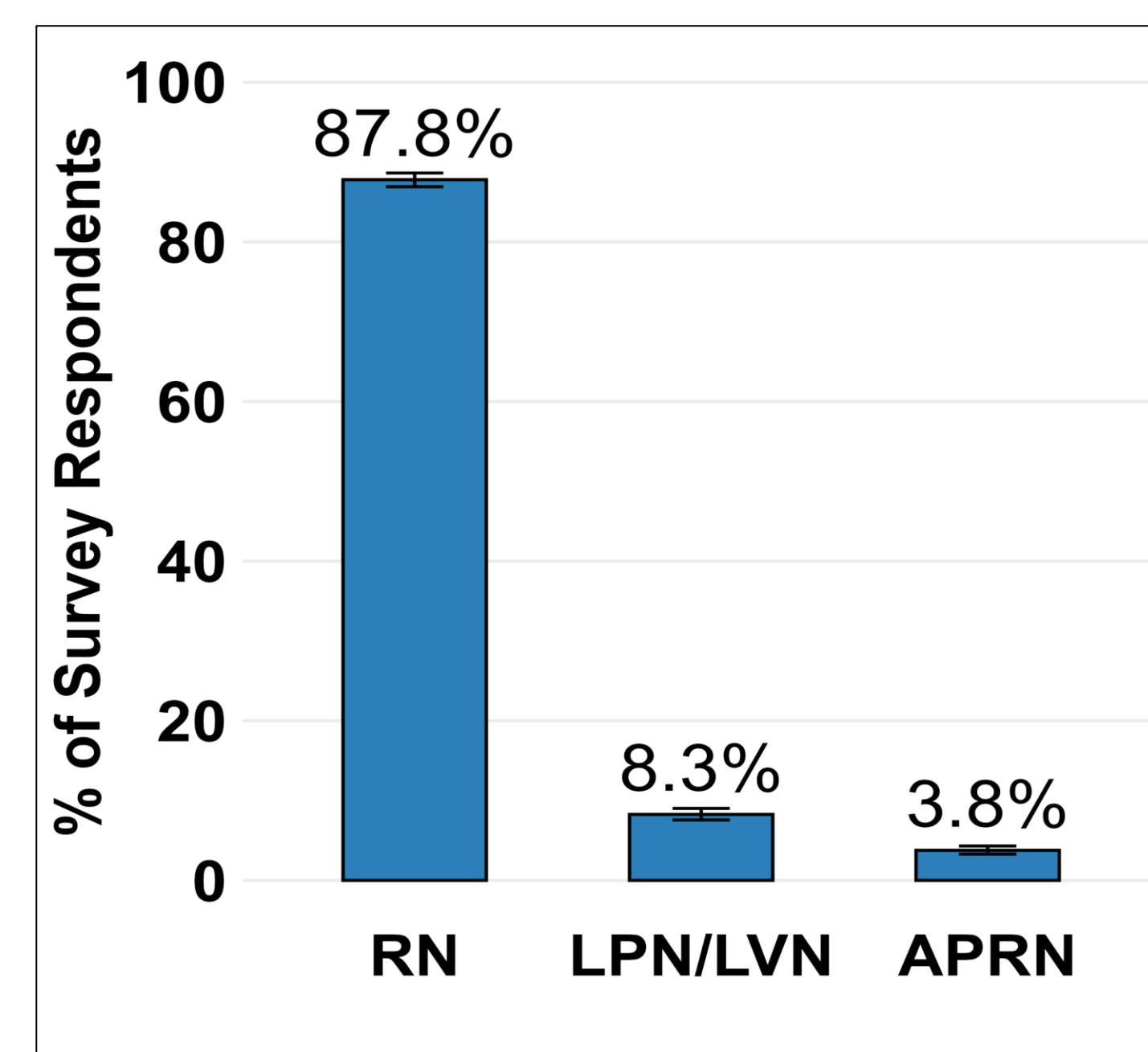


Figure 1: Highest Nursing License Held by Survey Respondents (% & 95% CI shown)

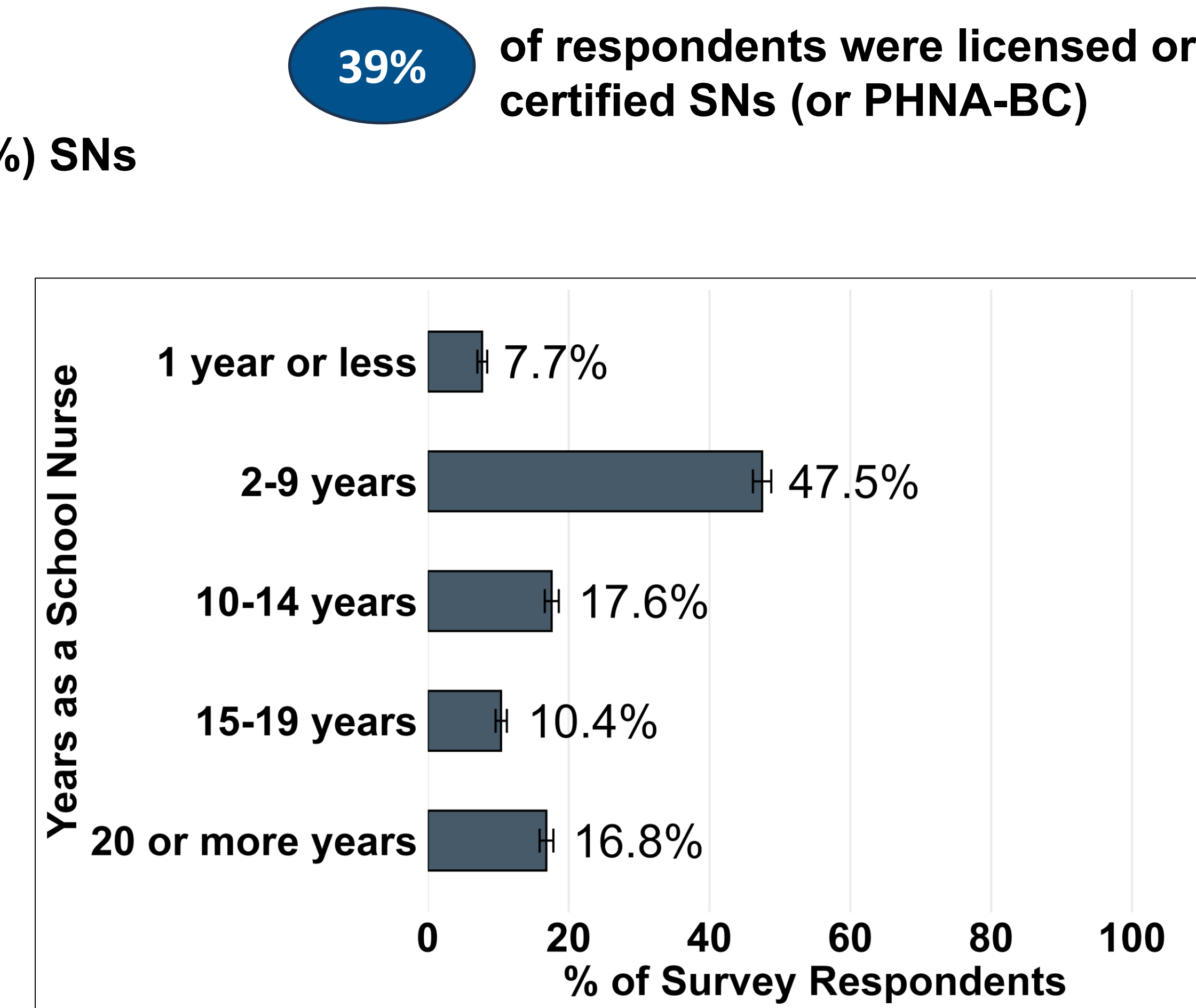
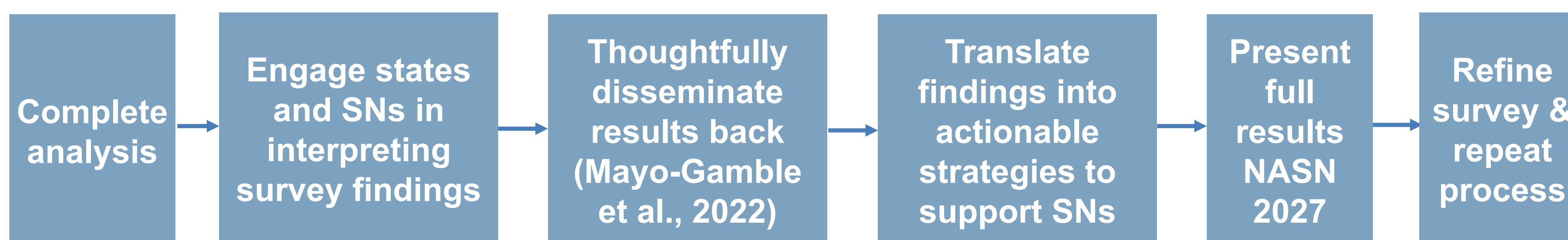


Figure 2: Years Worked as a School Nurse Among Respondents (% & 95% CI shown)

Next Steps



Implications for School Nursing

- Provides large-scale national respondent data to inform school nursing advocacy and workforce planning.
- Identifies workforce strengths and challenges that may influence recruitment, retention, and burnout.
- Establishes a foundation for monitoring workforce trends over time.