


MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor
The Honorable Emanuel “Chris” Welch, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Tony McCombie, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Don Harmon, Senate President
The Honorable John Curran, Senate Minority Leader

FROM: Dr. Tony Sanders 
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: December 12, 2025

SUBJECT: SJR 49

The Illinois State Board of Education respectfully submits the summary of findings related to Senate Joint Resolution 49, which directs “the Professional Review Panel and the Illinois State Board of Education to conduct the analysis and financial modeling required to evaluate the implications of implementing the recommended maximum caseloads for school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses and speech language pathologists working in schools.”

This report is transmitted on behalf of the state superintendent of education. For additional information, please contact the Legislative Affairs Department at 217-782-6510 or LegislativeAffairs@isbe.net.

cc: Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the House
Legislative Research Unit
State Government Report Center



Illinois Senate Joint Resolution 49

(SJR 49)

December 2025

Executive Summary

This report is provided in response to Illinois Senate Joint Resolution 49, which directs “the Professional Review Panel and the Illinois State Board of Education to conduct the analysis and financial modeling required to evaluate the implications of implementing the recommended maximum caseloads for school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses and speech language pathologists working in schools.” This report uses school support personnel data reported by the Educator Licensure Information System from July 2022 through June 2024. Additionally, this report uses employment data reported by districts for the 2023-24 school year. Estimates regarding financial modeling are provided on changing ratios used to construct Adequacy Targets.

Introduction

This report presents data on the total number of educators holding proper licensure for School Support Personnel endorsements and available student-to-staff ratios across the state of Illinois. Financial estimates and cost modeling are presented in consideration of recommendations made by national associations on student-to-staff service ratios.

The analysis is structured into four sections, which include:

- National association student-to-staff ratio recommendations
- The number of newly issued school support personnel licenses for the 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 school years
- The total number of Professional Educator Licenses for the five school support personnel categories
- The full-time and part-time head count of school support personnel employees reported by districts for the 2023-24 school year
- Financial estimates and possible changes to modeling and Adequacy Targets toward the Evidence-Based Funding formula (EBF)

Table 1. Summary of Available Data

School Support Personnel	State Association	National Association	National Association Recommendation	Illinois Data School Year 2023-24
School Counselor	Illinois School Counselor Association (ISCA)	American School Counselor Association (ASCA)	250:1	494:1
School Nurse	Illinois Association of School Nurses (IASN)	National Association of School Nurses (NASN)	750:1	1,531:1
School Psychologist	Illinois School Psychologists Association (ISPA)	National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)	500:1	885:1

School Social Worker	Illinois Association of School Social Workers (IASSW)	National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and School Social Work Association of America (SSWA)	250:1	432:1
Speech Language Pathologist	Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ISHA)	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)	Workload Analysis ILCS 226.735 Caseload Limit of 60	Average Caseload: 42

Analysis Section 1: National Association Recommendations and Illinois Data

The first section of the report provides a comparison between national associations' student-to-staff ratio recommendations and the student-to-staff ratio reported for each of the five school support personnel positions in Illinois. The student-to-staff ratios for school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers are reported by the 2024 Illinois Report Card snapshot. The average caseload for speech language pathologists of 42 students is taken from a 2022 survey conducted by the national American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)¹.

For the 2023-24 school year, the reported student-to-staff ratios were found to be above the national association maximum caseload recommendations, with school support personnel potentially serving more students than suggested. The 2022 survey conducted by ASHA suggests that in Illinois, the average caseload for speech language pathologists was below the statutory limit of 60.

Table 2. Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS)

School Support Personnel	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
School Counselor	336	339	331
School Guidance	0	0	1
School Nurse	149	138	171
School Psychologist	180	153	221
School Social Worker	547	438	479
Speech Language Pathologist	422	490	512

Analysis Section 2: Newly Issued School Support Personnel Licenses

The second section of the report provides a snapshot of the number of newly issued personnel licenses issued between July 2022 and June 2024 collected in the Educator Licensure Information System. In fiscal years 2022-2024, the number of speech language pathologist licenses steadily increased while the number of school counselors remained relatively constant. The number of issued licenses for school

¹ American Speech-Language-Hearing Association 2022 Schools Survey: SLP Caseload and Workload Characteristics. asha.org/siteassets/surveys/2022-schools-survey-slp-caseload.pdf

social workers dropped significantly from fiscal year 2022 to fiscal year 2023, with a slight increase in the numbers issued in 2024. The data indicates that the total number of licenses issued for school nurses and school psychologists rose slightly between July 2022 and June 2024.

Table 3. Total Number of Professional Educator Licenses

School Support Personnel	School year 2021-22	School year 2022-23	School year 2023-24
School Counselor	5,891	6,197	6,393
School Guidance	2,576	2,576	2,576
School Nurse	1,543	1,692	1,814
School Psychologist	3,714	3,900	4,054
School Social Worker	7,531	8,024	8,359
Speech Language Pathologist	6,317	6,819	7,150
Total	27,572	29,208	30,346

Analysis Section 3: Active School Support Personnel Licenses

The third section summarizes the total number of active School Support Personnel Professional Educator Licenses (PEL) for school counselors, guidance, nurses, psychologists, social workers, and speech language pathologists. For the 2021-22 school year, 27,572 active licenses are reported in the Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS). This total number increased to 29,208 and 30,346, respectively, for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years.

Note that active licenses are issued for a five-year period. To maintain active status, an educator must complete the renewal requirements. The total number of licenses also includes retired school support personnel who have maintained active status. For the 2021-22 school year, 1,692 school support personnel retired and are included in the total number of school support personnel. For the 2022-23 school year, 1,884 retired school support personnel with active licenses are included in the total number. In the 2023-24 school year, 2,056 school support personnel retired but retained active licensure and are included in the total number.

Table 4. Districts Reporting School Support Personnel for School Year 2023-24 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.182)

School Support Personnel Endorsement	Headcount Full-Time Employees	Headcount Part-Time Employees
School Counselor & School Guidance	4,858	61
School Nurse	972	11
School Psychologist	2,423	43
School Social Worker	5,303	65
Speech Language Pathologist	3,545	78
Total	17,101	258

Analysis Section 4: District School Support Personnel Headcount

The fourth section of the report includes the total number of full-time and part-time school counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, and speech language pathologists employed in Illinois. The number of full-time and part-time school guidance is included in the headcount with counselors. Three school support personnel positions considered in this report are used as cost factors to construct Adequacy Targets in EBF. Those values represent the cost of providing an education and are calculated individually each year for Local Education Agencies. Positions not separately calculated for Adequacy Targets would require third-party research. Changes to any of the cost factors require statutory amendment.

ISBE modeled the impact of changing ratios set in statute and used to construct Adequacy Targets based on the FY 2026 data set. Changes to the Statewide Adequacy Target were estimated as follows:

- School Counselor: \$141.4 million increase, or 0.5%
- School Nurse: No change
- School Psychologist: \$202.7 million increase, or 0.7%
- School Social Worker: No cost factor exists
- Speech Language Pathologist: No cost factor exists

Conclusion

In summary, data on licensure suggests positive trends in the number of Professional Educator Licenses in school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, school social workers, and speech language pathologists. With the exception of speech language pathologists' average caseload, the student-to-staff ratios do not meet national association recommendations. This report estimates a minimum increase of \$344.1 million toward the Statewide Adequacy Target. This estimate is to be calculated each year; cost factors do not exist for school social worker and speech language pathologist positions and therefore are not included in the estimated analysis.