



International Network for School Social Work

<http://internationalnetwork-schoolsocialwork.htmlplanet.com>

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School Social Work in the United States

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School social work services have been provided to students in the US for over 100 years. Early on, the title “Visiting Teacher” was used to describe this work. Today we find many job titles in addition to the preferred “School Social Worker” that are used for members of our profession. Regardless of job title, the common thread always is a concern for student success at school and helping the home, school and community to assist that student in becoming successful.

In the United States, there are an estimated 20,000 school social workers practicing in schools. The majority of these are employed in public school settings although we find school social workers in private schools and at the university level as well. School social workers seek to remove barriers to the academic success of students and do so by addressing social, emotional, mental health and community concerns. Sometimes school social workers are assigned to special classrooms or special programs and at other times they are assigned to a single school building, several school buildings or perhaps can even be assigned to serve an entire school district.

There is not a single national model for school social work practice as that usually is determined at the local level by a school district, depending on student needs. Variability and flexibility are words that often describe the different practice models found in our profession. School social workers typically provide individual counseling, group counseling, consultation services, referral services and assessment services in their practice, and often much more to students at all grade levels from preschool through high school and beyond.

The School Social Work Association of America recommends that school social workers have a Masters Degree in Social Work (MSW) and that they participate in school social work course work as a part of their graduate degree program. A supervised practicum in a school setting is also recommended. School social work is a specialty practice area within the broader social work profession and requires specialized preparation in order to properly prepare a graduate student for successful employment.

Most of our 50 states require some sort of certification or license before a school social worker can be eligible for employment in a school setting. The specific details can and do vary from state to state, so prospective school social workers need to familiarize themselves with the

requirements for the state where they wish to seek employment. Although many states recognize certification from another state, that too can vary and should be explored in advance. Information on these requirements can be obtained from the Department of Education in each state.

The School Social Work Association of America is an organization that empowers school social workers and promotes the profession of school social work. We have an annual school social work conference which will be held in St. Louis, Missouri this coming April, 2010. More information about the profession of school social work and the School Social Work Association of America can be found at sswaa.org, including some examples from the web site in the text box below.



SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

"... we are dedicated to promoting the profession of School Social Work and the professional development of School Social Workers ..."

SSWAA members have access to an interactive Website and member's only section, which provides a wide range of additional professional resources including e-forums, position statements, Ethical Guideline Series and numerous links to other professional organizations. Check out the opportunity to post a question of your colleagues and get the benefit of their experiences and expertise.

SSWAA membership supports Myrna Mandlawitz in her efforts as our Government Relations Director. Myrna effectively lobbies in Washington DC on behalf of the School Social Work profession and the children and families we serve. Look at our web site to see the list of organizations SSWAA partners with.

Our Mission

The School Social Work Association of America is dedicated to promoting the profession of school social work and the professional development of school social workers in order to enhance the educational experience of students and their families.

School Social Work - A Life Changing Career



This bright brochure is designed to highlight school social work services. It is an appropriate resource for social work educators and those interested in knowing more about a career in this specialty practice field of social work. It can also serve as a great introduction for anyone who is not familiar with school employed social workers.