



International Network for School Social Work

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Editor: Marion Huxtable

Advocating for School Social Work and Children Across the Globe



School Social Work
Association of America

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Advocating for the Profession

The mission of The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) lies in empowering school social workers, promoting the profession, and enhancing the social and emotional growth of the students we serve. SSWAA strives to make sure that school social work will be an important part of the educational process for all children. SSWAA was formed in 1994 and is the only national organization dedicated to the promotion of school social work in the U.S.

The profession of school social work in the United States dates back to the early 1900's and has evolved tremendously over the last several decades, assuming new roles for practice and facing new challenges. SSWAA has been at the forefront of addressing these changes by providing a vision for school social work and tools for addressing the challenges. SSWAA developed the national school social work model, which addresses home-school linkages, ethical practice and policy, data-based decision making, and educational rights and advocacy. This model provides a tool for school social workers to evaluate and reflect on their own roles and practice as well as communicating with others such as teachers, school administrators, community members, and parents about what school social workers do. The National School Social Work Model, Standards for practice and many other resources are available on the SSWAA website at <http://www.sswaa.org>.

SSWAA hosts a Leadership/Legislative Institute in Washington DC each summer to help members become advocates for school children. The event also develops leadership for state association board members and persons aspiring to state board office. All SSWAA members are encouraged to participate in this Institute whether they are in a state leadership position or not. A strong legislative component is included which provides updates from key WA/DC officials, key agency personnel and is paired with a visit to Capitol Hill where SSWAA members have the opportunity to speak to their elected members of the US Senate and the US House of Representatives. Members are trained in using the SSWAA legislative talking points and learn to be effective lobbyists both in DC and also when they return to their state following the Institute.

Professional Development and Community Building

SSWAA hosts an annual conference where school social workers have an opportunity to exchange ideas, resources, and learn about the latest evidence-based practices in the field. Not only does the conference attract hundreds of participants from around the U.S., but also numerous participants from other countries. In 2017, the SSWAA conference had approximately 30 school social workers from other countries including China, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, and Cameroon. It is also possible to participate in the conference through live stream. The next SSWAA conference will be held in Orlando, Florida April 3 through 6, 2019. In addition to the yearly conference, SSWAA hosts experts in the field to conduct webinars on various topics such as ethics and evidence-based approaches to addressing issues such as bullying, truancy, trauma, and many others. Be on the lookout for an upcoming professional development opportunity to participate in an online book club focused on leadership development.

International Collaboration and Resources

While SSWAA strongly advocates for school social work and children in the U.S., SSWAA recognizes that this is an increasingly globalized world, and that SSWAA must work collaboratively and provide ways for school social workers to support one another across national boundaries. With that in mind, SSWAA has supported various international initiatives. For the last several years, SSWAA has supported the development of an international collaborative of school social workers, the International Committee on School Social Work Collaborations (ICSSWC), that meets via Skype approximately every two months. The goal of this group is to develop an international credential program, strengthen the international presence of school social work, and promote the exchange of expertise across national boundaries. In this way, ICSSWC and SSWAA hope to address the needs of children globally by ensuring quality school social work services. If you are interested in joining this group, please send an email to Leticia Villarreal Sosa at lvillarreal@dom.edu or leticia.villarr@gmail.com for more information.

The second major international initiative taken on by SSWAA is the launching of an open access online journal called the International Journal for School Social Work at <http://newprairiepress.org/ijssw/>. SSWAA just launched the second issue with four articles, including one that focuses on school social work in Germany. We hope the journal will become another avenue for sharing best practices and having conversations as a global community about the profession and our response to challenges facing children in this globalized world. If you are interested in serving as a reviewer for this journal or on the editorial board, you may contact Leticia Villarreal Sosa at the email mentioned above and consider submitting your own article for publication.

SSWAA Membership

Involvement in professional associations is an important way to be a part of moving the profession forward and building community among school social workers. The efforts that SSWAA has undertaken to support school social work globally are only possible with the support of a strong member base. Membership in SSWAA also has benefits for you as an individual such as “members only” websites, participation in webinars, technical assistance, and discounts on publications by Oxford Press. International members can join for a special rate of \$65.

The leadership of SSWAA welcomes you to join these international efforts, to become a member and to attend one of our yearly conferences.