

Ohio School Social Work Association

School Social Workers Are Helping Students Succeed

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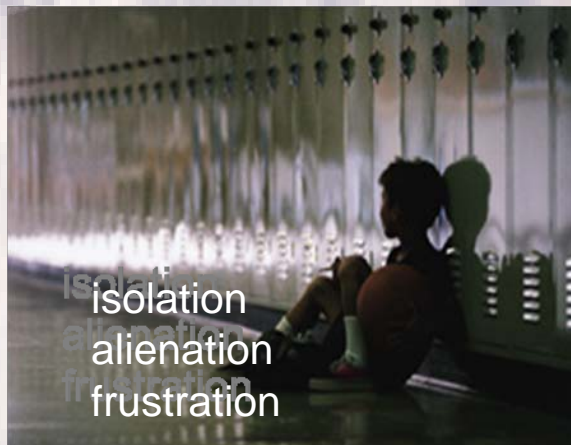
Dear School Administrator,

The unique skills of school social workers need to be deployed for the maximum benefit of the children they serve. There is a growing need for school districts to provide programs and services to at-risk students and to address problems such as child abuse, teenage pregnancy, school violence, drugs, alcohol and homelessness. According to the National Mental Health Association, fewer than one in five of the 17.5 million children in need of mental health services actually receives them. School social workers, in their intervention with the child and his or her family and working together with school personnel and community resources, can contribute to the amelioration of mental health problems of many children and youth in the schools.

As a result of mainstreaming and classroom inclusion, an increasing number of children with disabilities are enrolled in regular classrooms. These changes, along with evolving special education mandates, have resulted in some local schools seeking the services of school social workers to facilitate effective collaboration between families and school personnel to help students with disabilities, who may be at risk, to achieve behavioral and academic success. School social workers, in their interaction with school personnel and community resources, provide a comprehensive approach in meeting the needs of students with disabilities through early screening, detection, intervention and prevention.

We have developed the materials in this brochure to assist school administrators in the selection, assignment and evaluation of school social workers. We hope that you will find this information useful. Please share it with other administrators in your district who are responsible for selecting or supervising school social workers.

Sincerely,
Sarah Lundeen, MSSA, LISW-S
Former President



Studies have shown that students who perceive their parents, peers and teachers as working together to provide high levels of student support have:

- Recorded better attendance
- Reported more hours studying
- Exhibited less problem behavior
- Expressed higher school satisfaction
- Maintained more involvement in school
- Cultivated higher self-esteem
- Experienced a greater sense of capability
- Earned better grades

Reach. Grasp. Bridge. Succeed.

School social work services can be critical in bridging the gulf between teachers, parents, counselors and administrators, the community and community resources to ensure student success.

School social worker services have been proved to be especially effective means of orchestrating the efforts of teachers, parents, counselors and administrators, fostering an environment in which students can learn and grow. They are trained, qualified professionals who meet state requirements to practice social work specifically in the school setting. They provide direct services to students who experience academic and social difficulties, developing relationships that bolster self-esteem and reward positive behavior. School social workers support teachers by offering options for addressing a student's needs and by participating on the student support team. They also work with families and communities to coordinate services to the student. School social workers reflect the basic values of their profession, which include:

- Providing and/or locating services
- Seeking social justice
- Maintaining the dignity and worth of the person
- Emphasizing the importance of human relationships
- Maximizing an individual's potential.

In addition, school social workers trained at an approved graduate program in social work possess the specialized education, training and skills to intervene effectively with children and families of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds, as well as families of low income who may be less likely to become actively involved with school personnel. School social workers complement the efforts of traditional clinical or therapeutic intervention and dramatically improve a school's ability to respond quickly to the concerns of teachers, parents, guidance counselors and students. They often prove to be a major factor in the success of students. In nearly every case, student academic performance and social behavior improves as expectations are understood and barriers to positive academic performance and appropriate social behaviors are overcome.

School social workers:

- **Support the attainment** of academic performance indicators as well as non-academic ones such as attendance and classroom behavior.
- **Cultivate better communication** between teachers, students and parents, making education a part of a family's day-to-day life.
- **Provide peer mediation**, improving conflict resolution capabilities.
- **Intervene at crucial times**, helping develop IEPs and Behavior Intervention Plans while helping students deal with issues of self-esteem, anger management, impulse control, social skills development, grief, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and feelings of alienation.
- **Serve as a liaison**, coordinating the efforts of schools and families with such community resources as universities, social work agencies, juvenile justice departments and mental health and health care providers.
- **Make home visits** to provide assistance to students, their parents and their families.
- **Remain current with the latest developments** concerning Ohio's special education laws.



In one study, schools employing social workers as part of their educational team saw their dropout rate fall from 20% in 1989 to 8% in 1996.

Perhaps most importantly, through school social work initiatives, violence has been reduced in schools where violence intervention and prevention programs were introduced under the supervision of school social workers. T.S. Lane (1998) Social Work in Education, 20 (37-47)

"School social workers are a necessity in public schools. Principals can attest to the changes in our schools in the past decade, and few communities have escaped the societal decay of increased dysfunctionality of families, depression, poverty, violence, and substance abuse. Teachers cannot be effective until they can instruct the whole child. To do so, educators must address critical issues in the child's home. School social workers play a critical role for sustained school success."

Paul G. Young

Principal, West Elementary School
President-elect, National Association of Elementary School Administrators
Lancaster, OH



"Instructional Assistance Teams have greatly benefited from the school social worker's expertise in crisis intervention, teaching social skills, interagency collaboration and supporting and educating students and their parents."

Janice Montgomery

Director of Pupil Services, South Euclid-Lyndhurst Schools
Lyndhurst, OH

"The school social worker provides practical support to the important work of the teaching staff, therapeutic intervention to students and outreach to their families. The school social worker is a gift to urban education."

Sara Neikirk

Director, Communities in Schools
Columbus, OH

"The school social worker worked with staff, observed students in classrooms, made home visits, worked with community resources, and conducted focus groups with junior high students on current issues such as drugs, alcohol, divorce, smoking and peer relations."

Joyce St. Clair

Principal, Thomas Ewing Junior High School
Lancaster, OH

"I feel that school social workers are a much needed addition to school support services. They reach out and work with the whole family, not just the student."

John Albert

2nd Vice President, Lancaster Education Association
Lancaster, OH

"A primary goal for schools is to increase student literacy for all students. School social workers have helped us move closer to realizing that goal by filling the gaps in services that have existed for students and families. Social workers enable schools to address the needs of the whole child by helping families to connect with appropriate community-based health and social service providers. When families, school and community are working together it lays a foundation for the learning that needs to take place."

Mary Ann Frye

Director of Pupil Personnel
Reynoldsburg, OH

School Social Worker Roles

School social workers can contribute to a school environment in many different ways.

School social workers participate on school wide interdisciplinary teams:

- Building Level Support Teams
- Creating Collaborative Teams
- Contributing to assistance teams, child studies and clinical assessments

School social workers can also serve in the capacities of:

- Student and family advocacy
- Participation in building staff meetings
- Providing staff development
- Consultation with teachers and staff
- Classroom interventions
- Individual and group intervention
- Crisis intervention in cases of suicide, death of a parent, sibling or classmate, school violence and other catastrophic events.

School social workers can also serve as the community liaison with:

- Juvenile courts and police departments
- Community violence intervention centers
- Community businesses
- Local and regional social services & child protection agencies



Attendance
Process Letters
Class Participation
Peer Evaluations
Draft, Paper 1
Revision, Paper 1
Draft, Paper 2
Revision, Paper 2
Draft, Paper 3
Revision, Paper 3
Journal
Portfolio

Final Grade A

Funding Sources Are Available for Hiring School Social Workers

There are numerous funding sources for hiring school social workers in the form of **school district general funds, preschool and school age special education funds (IDEIA), alternative school grants**, partnerships, and matching funds collaborations. In addition, many communities contain within them numerous small family foundations, trusts and pools of money that have been raised for educational purposes and even specifically for school social worker positions. Foundation information can be found by utilizing the Internet, a foundation library or tax returns. (See www.guidestar.org.) Government funding at the local and county levels is often acquired through community development block grants (CDBG).

State programs and agencies serving as funding sources in Ohio include:

- Ohio Department of Education
- Ohio Department of Mental Health
- Ohio Department of Health
- Ohio Department of Youth Services
- School Readiness Resource Centers
- Families and Schools Together (FAST)

Some federal funding sources for school social worker services include:

- Head Start
- IDEIA-Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
- Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Demonstration Act
- Title I-Schoolwide Programs
- Title IV-Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities
- Title V-Promoting Equity
- Title VI-Innovative Family Program
- Title VI-B-IDEIA/Preschool and School Age**
- Title VII-Bilingual Education
- Title IX-Coordinated Services
- Safe Schools Are For Everyone (SSAFE)
- Healthy Start Grant
- Alternative Schools Grants
- The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act
- TANF**
- Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative

Additional funding information can be found at:

www.fdncenter.org www.grantstech.com
www.naswdc.org www.ed.gov

The information contained in this brochure obtained from:

The Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University
The Ohio State University College of Social Work
The Ohio Department of Education
The Ohio Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers
The Midwest School Social Work Council

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SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS: A GROWING RESOURCE IN EDUCATION

School social workers are a vital link in the total educational team of a school. These workers create partnerships between home, school and community to assure student academic success. School social workers serve many roles, including the following:

Case Workers/Consultants	Therapists	Educators
Group Facilitators	Conflict Mediators	Community Organizers
Grant Writers	Family/Child Advocates	Parent Educators
Staff Development Trainers	Project Coordinators	Behavior Interventionist

Licensed/Certified by the Ohio Department of Education, school social workers must meet the following requirements:

- **A graduate degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, and**
- **Completion of a school social work program approved by the Ohio Department of Education, and**
- **Satisfactory completion of the second-year field practicum in a school and/or**
- **One year professional experience as a social worker in a school district or chartered school, and**
- **Current license to practice social work issued by the Ohio Counselor and Social Work Board (LSW or LISW).**

There are currently two ODE-approved school social work programs in Ohio: The Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University and the Ohio State University College of Social Work. These programs meet the professional standards developed by the National Association of Social Workers. You may visit **the Mandel School for Applied Social Sciences Web site** at <http://msass.cwru.edu> and **the Ohio State College of Social Work Web site** at www.csw.ohio-state.edu.

The Ohio School Social Work Association (OSSWA) is dedicated to improving the quality of life and education for children by enhancing the professional development of school social workers.

For More Information
Contact OSSWA at <http://www.OSSWA.org>