

Educating the **WHOLE** Child *Specialized Instructional Support and the Role of School Social Work*

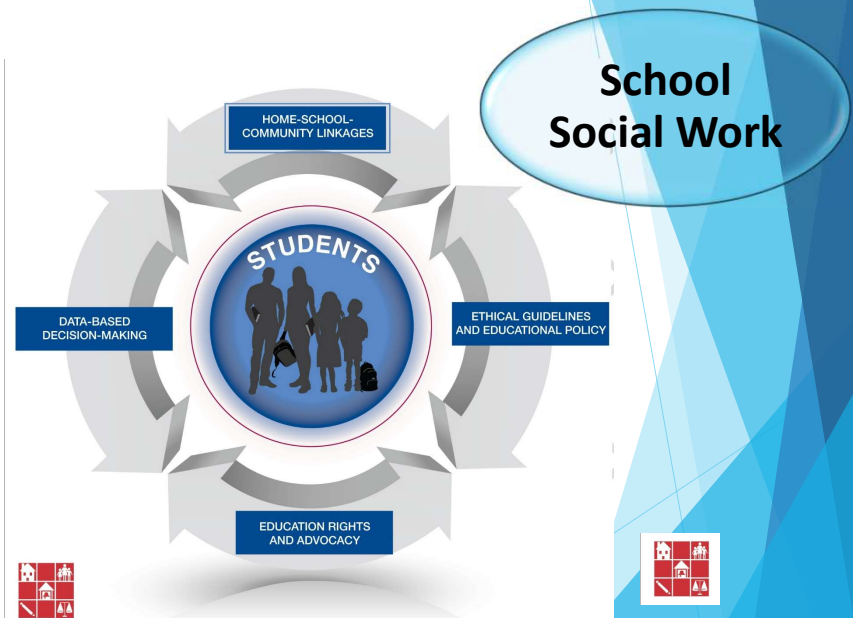
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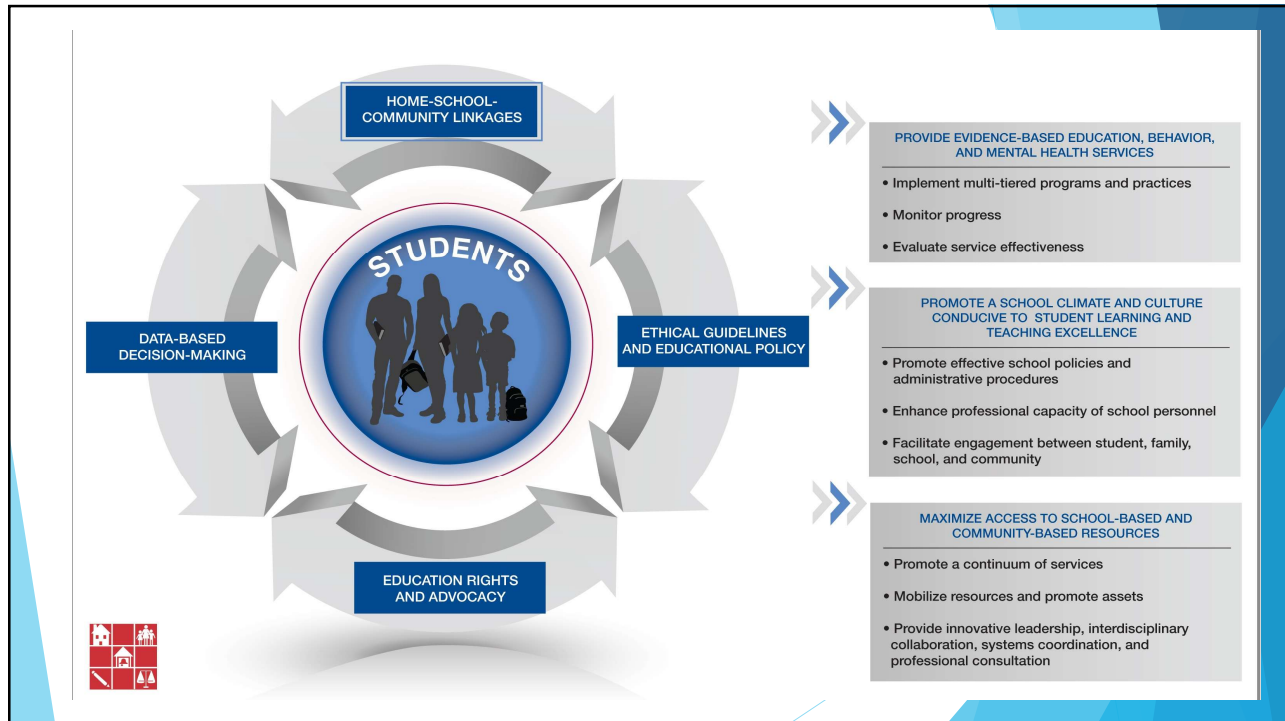
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Governor's Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education

Specialized area of professional practice in the broad field of social work with specific training to address barriers to student learning

Vital link between the home, school, and community, working with families and community agencies





- School Social Workers are trained mental health professionals with a degree in social work who provide services related to a person's social, emotional and life adjustment to school and/or society.
- Unique expertise in child and family work addressing school and community stressors that interfere with educational success.
- Maximize, coordinate and secure school-based and community-based resources
- Navigate service delivery systems (e.g., health, mental health, child welfare, judicial and juvenile justice).
- Promote family engagement for supporting students and strengthening classroom success

School Social Workers work to address children's unmet physical and emotional needs that interfere with their school attendance and ability to learn by

- ▶ engaging families with the school and student learning
- ▶ connecting families to needed physical and mental health community resources
- ▶ educating and assisting families with school policies and student needs
- ▶ serving as a liaison team member with other specialized instructional support personnel and school staff
- ▶ **Specific roles vary from state to state, district to district, school to school, and practitioner to practitioner depending on policy, training, experience, personnel available, caseload and need**

School Social Work

“I cannot teach the head when the heart is broken or the mind is troubled.”

Parkway School District Teacher of the Year, St. Louis, Missouri

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Some social forces that negatively affect a child’s role as a student:

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Grief and loss | Natural disasters, fires, flooding |
| Chronic diseases | Teen pregnancy |
| School Climate | Dating violence |
| Domestic violence | Stress and inability to cope |
| Substance use and abuse | Gender identity |
| Divorce | Mental Health |
| Child abuse & Neglect | Learning disabilities |
| Sexual abuse | Absences, truancy, tardiness |
| Human Trafficking | Food insecurity |
| Trauma | Homelessness |
| Behavior problems | Foster Care |
| Incarceration | Deportation |
| Unemployment/Poverty | Social Media/Drama |

SISP personnel are not interchangeable

- ❖ Each profession serves a unique role on the education team, our roles are complimentary and at times overlap. We are most effective when we have regular, ideally daily, access to one another as we work with students.
- ❖ SISP address the social, emotional and behavioral problems affecting academic success. WE ARE A TEAM working together for student achievement
- ❖ The key to a working delivery system of intervention is having a SISP team to identify, assess and implement strategies that support our students and diminish the affects of identified issues interfering student success.
- ❖ Without adequate numbers all four SISP positions, there are gaps in service delivery resulting in needs not being fully met.
- ❖ There is no “set-in stone” number that LEAs must hire of each position.
- ❖ While school counselors typically have only one school to serve, School Social Workers, School Nurses and School Psychologists typically juggle multiple schools resulting in their being spread too thin to be as effective as they could be if they were working with fewer schools.

For the 1.6 million students in North Carolina, there are 1081 school social workers currently listed at DPI as being employed by schools across the 100 LEAs --that's less than 11 school social workers per school system.

Some school districts still do not employ any SSWs, many rural counties may have only 1 or 2 SSWs covering all their schools.

Even in Wake County, the largest school system in North Carolina, with 183 schools and over 160,000 students, we have 92 SSWs assigned to schools, that's an average of 1739 students per School Social Worker to address the needs for.

The National Model for SSW is 1:250 which speaks to different states and how they utilize SSWs.

Major concerns:

No State Representative at DPI for School Social Work and no position has been available for 3, going on 4 years.

Our last State Rep was not a school social worker.

SSWs spread too thin to meet the needs of the students and families they serve.

No data collection going on, no one at the table representing SSW for these important conversations and work with other State SISP Reps to build a common message.

MSW level personnel will not be retained if pay for masters level is not reintroduced