School Social Work In North Carolina

Prepared by
Dr. Gary L. Shaffer, UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work
for the National Association of Social Workers-NC Chapter and the
North Carolina School Social Workers Association © 2008

Design services by Miki Kersgard, UNC-CH School of Social Work
School Social Workers Eliminate Barriers to Learning
Historical Notes

- First school social workers in U.S. employed at the turn of last century
- Arose from the settlement house tradition
  - addressed barriers to learning
    - health
    - immigration
    - housing
    - child labor
    - ESL
    - welfare issues
Historical Notes

- Enactment of PL 94-142
  - Education of All Handicapped Children Act—1975
  - Social workers enter schools nationally in large numbers
Historical Notes

- Few North Carolina schools employed school social workers until the 1980s.
- Some have employed them for decades:
  - Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
  - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
  - Cumberland County Schools
School Social Workers

increase academic achievement by . . .

- Working with students in groups or individually
- Working with families in homes and communities
- Serving as liaison among schools, homes, communities
- Working to reduce the achievement gap among some low-income or minority students
- Working to keep schools safe and drug-free
Support of School Social Workers

- The Basic Education Program (BEP)
  - passed by General Assembly in 1985
  - provided impetus for growth in school social work
Staffing Under BEP

- Staffing ratio for State reimbursement
  - One School Social Worker for every 2,500 students and at least one per county
BEP’s definition of school social work services went far beyond “traditional” role of Truant Officer
School Social Workers

- Provide liaison between school, home, community
- Help in crisis situations
- Ensure educational, legal, personal rights
- Counsel and refer students for help
  - substance abuse
  - family violence
  - child abuse
  - neglect
School Social Work Regulations

- North Carolina is one of approximately 33 states that regulate school social work.
- Most license or certify school social workers at masters level only.
Licensed Professionals

- Licensed by Department of Public Instruction at
  - Advanced MSW & Ph.D. level
  - MSW level
  - BSW level
NC Colleges & Universities

- Recommendations for licensure
  - made by college and university programs
  - accredited by the Council on Social Work Education
  - approved by DPI
Among DPI approved programs...

- UNC at Chapel Hill  MSW & Advanced MSW
- ECU  BSW, MSW & Advanced
- NC State University  BSW
- UNC at Greensboro  BSW, MSW*
- NC A&T  BSW, MSW*
  - * Joint MSW Program
  - Current 04/01/08

All are CSWE accredited
Approved Programs

- Vary in requirements

- Minimum requirements
  - Satisfactory grades
  - Public school practicum of 400–700+ hours with social work supervision
  - Course in school social work
Additional Requirements

- Additional course work in
  - Education
  - Services to children and families
  - Mental health services
Service Challenge

- Most serve multiple schools
  - often 3–4
  - multiple locations
  - large number of students

- Ratio of 1:2500 fails to recognize differences
  - schools
  - communities
  - special student populations
Some Serve Only One School

- Often special programs or clinics
  - Alternative schools
  - School based health clinics
  - Homeless schools
  - Special needs children and youth
  - Community in Schools programs
Some Districts Still Have None…

- Alexander
- Beaufort
- Camden
- Caswell
- Clay
- Edenton/Chowan
- Elkin
- Granville
- Hickory
- Jones
- Macon
- Mitchell
- Mt. Airy
- Newton/Conover
- Polk
- Thomasville
- Washington

Source: DPI Data 01/2007
NC Counties with DPI Licensed School Social Workers (blue)

Prepared by Gary_Shaffer@unc.edu
School Social Workers

- Help make learning possible by carrying out a range of professional functions in the home, school and community
School Social Work Functions

- Services with families and communities
- Direct services with students
- Program planning, evaluation
- Advocacy
- Consultation, education
- Professional practice, development, management
Services with Families and Communities

- Parent involvement
- Information and referral
- Educational groups
- Interpret school policies and procedures
- Identify and help resolve school-wide and community needs
- Case management
Parent Involvement is Critical

- The ONLY professionals in school that routinely make home visits an integral component of services to children and families
- Strengthens the family/school connection and increases parent involvement
Direct Services with Students

- Assessment of student needs
- Reduction of absences and dropouts
- Prevention of school violence
- Crisis intervention services
- Individual and group counseling
- Prevention of costly litigation
  - mediating disputes
- Coordination of service delivery
  - students with multiple needs
Program Planning & Evaluation

- School/system/community needs assessment
- Help coordinate services with school system and community
- Assess individual and department practices
- Promote a positive school climate
Advocacy

- Help implement federal & state rules and regulations
  - ensure due process
- Facilitate interagency agreements
- Provide
  - child abuse and neglect prevention
  - identification and referral
- Promote ethical, culturally sensitive practice
“Effective advocacy can best be accomplished when school social workers keep informed about court decisions, legislation, rules and regulations, and policies and procedures that affect school social work practice.”

NASW Standards for School Social Work Services
Advocacy requires knowledge of…

- CA/N Statutes
- IDEA
- Section 504
- FERPA
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- Compulsory Ed
- Corporal Punishment
- Suspension & Expulsion
- Confidentiality & Informed Consent
- Discrimination
- Title IX
- Welfare Reform
- NC – ABCs
- Safe Surrender
- Leave No Child Behind
Consultation & Education

- Help identify barriers to academic achievement
- Promote collaboration with families
- Create a caring, safe, and drug free school

- Initiate preventive interventions
- Reduce mental health and emotional impairments
- Develop problem solving skills
Professional Practice, Development & Management

- Adhere to ethical practice and values
- Seek appropriate consultation and supervision
- Support LEAs through professional renewal and using best practice
- Maintain accurate and timely records
Challenges for Social Workers

- Increase awareness of school social work knowledge and skills
- Reduce school social worker to student ratios
- Establish mentoring programs for school social work practitioners
- Standardize the basic school social work job descriptions and functions across the state
- Demonstrate practice effectiveness
1:400 Ratio Sought

- 1:2500 ratio
  - difficult for more than crisis and short term intervention

- Differentiation of staffing—factors such as...
  - poverty level
  - special education needs
  - ESL
  - low performance
  - enrollment

- A ratio of 1:400
  - would permit better use of skills
  - would more effectively serve schools and community
  - is supported by the School Social Work Association of America & the American School Health Association
1:400 Ratio

Serve schools with special education and poverty concentrations by providing:

- home-school liaison
- social developmental assessment
- teacher consultation
- crisis intervention
- information and referral to outside agencies
- program development
- in-service training
- school social work program planning & evaluation
School Social Work Salaries

- Paid on teacher scale
- Based on
  - Degree(s) earned
  - Specialized course work
  - Years of related experience
  - Local supplement, if any
Specialty MSW Salaries*

- 0 Years Experience  $32,730
- 5 Years Experience  $38,400
- 10 Years Experience $42,580
- 15 Years Experience $45,420
- 20 Years Experience $48,550

• 60 hours of graduate work
• No local supplement — which may range from 0% - 18% of base
10 months employment—2007–2008
Working Together for Change

National and State Organizations

- National Association of Social Workers
  North Carolina Chapter
- North Carolina School Social Workers Association
- School Social Work Association of America
- Council on Social Work Education
  Accredited Colleges & Universities
"In spite of the many problems permeating the schools, there is enough flexibility in the system today for one creative, energetic social worker to make a significant difference in the lives of thousands of children."

Norma Radin
School Social Work Practitioner and Educator
WWW Resources

- The National Association of Social Workers
  http://www.socialworkers.org

- The National Assoc. of Social Workers - NC Chapter
  http://www.naswnc.org

- The North Carolina School Social Workers Association
  http://www.ncssswa.org

- The Council on Social Work Education
  http://www.cswe.org

- The School Social Work Association of America
  http://www.sswaa.org

- The North Carolina Department Of Public Instruction
  http://www.ncpublicschools.org