



OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

School social workers play a vital role in supporting students in the educational setting. They work collaboratively with other pupil services personnel – school psychologists, school nurses, school counselors, and chemical health specialists - to provide assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic and other necessary services (as part of a comprehensive program to meet student needs.) As mental health professionals and practitioners, School Social Workers are dual licensed by the Board of Social Work and the Minnesota Department of Education.

School Social Work Skills

School social workers bring a variety of skills and evidence based practices to the school, in both the regular education and the special education setting. These include:

I. Supporting students

- Individual and group counseling, problem-solving
- Social emotional learning
- RTI (Response to Intervention) support and intervention
- Mental health support intervention, knowledge
- Crisis prevention and response, conflict mediation
- Evaluation and assessment
- Identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect situations.

II. Supporting Families

- Advocacy
- Consultation
- Linking to community resources, supports
- Communicating student's developmental and educational needs
- Education and training

III. Supporting Staff/Administrators

- Classroom observation and feedback
- Case Consultation
- Designing and Implementing academic and behavioral interventions to enhance student success
- Communicating information about how factors such as family, culture, and socioeconomic status, physical and mental health can affect students' performance.
- Identifying and eliminating barriers to educational success

IV. Community collaboration

- Collaboration and consultation with community agencies, organizations, and other professionals.
- Coordinating community resources to meet students' needs.

Determination of Need:

Often there is discussion about ratios in terms of recommended student support service staff person per students. These ratios are not based on research or student achievement data, but rather on recommendations from various professional groups. Our school social work profession has not focused on the use of ratios, but rather on student need. It is our experience that student needs should drive the need for student support services. Our state profession has found the following factors to be useful in determining need for student support services, and in particular school social work services:

- A. Number of students with disabilities/special education needs/IEPs.
- B. Percentage/number of students with significant social-emotional/mental health issues
- C. School safety/Behavioral data/Bullying incidents
- D. Number of students who are eligible for services under McKinney Vento, who are homeless or highly mobile.
- E. Academic achievement/achievement gaps
- F. Percentage of students who are English Language Learners
- G. Other student support services available to students in the school
- H. Student Attendance Data
- I. Number of students on free or reduced lunch