

NASW School Social Work Standards

(revised 2012)

School Social Work Interns and Provisionally Certified School Social Workers shall demonstrate entry level competence in all standards except those designated with an asterisk (2, 5 and 10).

Standard 1. Ethics and Values

School social workers shall adhere to the ethics and values of the social work profession and shall use the NASW *Code of Ethics* as a guide to ethical decision making, while understanding the unique aspects of school social work practice and the needs of the students, parents, and communities they serve.

Interpretation

School social workers shall demonstrate core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. In addition, school social workers shall adhere to the professional ethical responsibilities delineated in the NASW *Code of Ethics*. School social workers shall have knowledge of and comply with local, state, and federal mandates related to informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and access to records within the context of legal and ethical rights of minors and parents. Students, families, and other professionals shall be informed of the limits of confidentiality when services are initiated. Employers and school administrators should be informed of the ethical responsibilities of the social work profession. In the event that conflicts arise among competing expectations, school social workers are directed to the NASW *Code of Ethics* as a tool in their decision making.

***Standard 2. Qualifications**

School social workers shall meet the provisions for professional practice set by NASW and their respective state department of education and possess knowledge and understanding basic to the social work profession as well as the local education system.

Interpretation

School social workers shall have a graduate degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). An MSW degree is the recommended entry-level qualification for a school social worker position. As a distinct specialty within the social work profession, school social work requires specialized knowledge and understanding of education systems, which should be provided by social work education programs. The school social worker shall actively seek this specialized training when the CSWE accredited program does not provide it. School social workers shall be licensed by state boards of social work and certified through state departments of education when available. School social workers shall have specialized knowledge and an understanding of historical and current perspectives of public school education at the local, state, and national levels, including educational reform and legislation. School social workers shall also be knowledgeable about evidence-informed approaches to teaching and learning that promote positive academic outcomes for all students.

Standard 3. Assessment

School social workers shall conduct assessments of individuals, families and systems, organizations (namely, classroom, school, neighborhood, and district, state) with the goal of improving student social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes.

Interpretation

School social workers shall possess skills in systematic assessment, data gathering, and interpretation at multiple levels using a variety of methods (for example, interview, direct observation, standardized instruments, surveys, focus groups) to assess the needs, characteristics, and interactions of students, families, and school personnel. School social workers shall conduct reliable and valid assessments of students and organizations to inform the design of interventions to remove barriers to learning. Assessments shall use ecological perspectives and functional approaches to enhance understanding of barriers to learning and the interventions that foster improvement of student well-being and academic progress.

Standard 4. Intervention

School social workers shall understand and use evidence-informed practices in their interventions.

Interpretation

School social workers shall remain current with school-based intervention research and use evidence-informed practices in service delivery. Interventions shall be designed to enhance positive educational experiences and involve the student, the family, other team members, school personnel, and community resources as appropriate. Interventions shall be based on assessments relevant to the concerns in the referral and include goals, objectives, methods of evaluation, and outcome criteria. Interventions shall be applied within the multitier framework and address the ecologies (for example, home, school, community) most relevant to the problem being addressed.

***Standard 5. Decision Making and Practice Evaluation**

School social workers shall use data to guide service delivery and to evaluate their practice regularly to improve and expand services.

Interpretation

School social workers shall collect, analyze, synthesize, and disseminate data related to their practice. School social workers shall conduct ongoing evaluation to determine the level of effectiveness of all interventions. Methods used to evaluate social work practice shall be assessed periodically to ensure that objectives, activities, and measured outcomes are aligned with the local education agency's goals and social work ethical practice.

Standard 6. Record Keeping

School social workers shall maintain accurate data and records that are relevant to planning, implementation, and evaluation of school social work services.

Interpretation

School social workers shall maintain timely, accurate, and confidential records that document school social work services, demonstrate outcomes, and promote accountability to the local education agency and community. Records shall be maintained according to federal, state, and local laws.

Standard 7. Workload Management

School social workers shall organize their workloads to fulfill their responsibilities and clarify their critical roles within the educational mission of the school or district in which they work.

Interpretation

School social workers shall manage their work in an efficient and effective manner. Priorities for practice shall be developed collaboratively between the school social worker and the supervisor. Priorities shall be established on the basis of the needs of students, professional skills of the school social worker, program needs, research, and availability of other resources. School social workers shall perform roles and responsibilities across a multitier framework for service delivery and use technology to enhance communication, obtain and organize information, demonstrate accountability, and complete workload assignments.

Standard 8. Professional Development

School social workers shall pursue continuous enhancement of knowledge and skills to provide the most current, beneficial, and culturally appropriate services to students and their families.

Interpretation

School social workers shall adhere to the *NASW Standards for Continuing Professional Education* and follow state professional regulation regarding continuing education requirements. School social workers shall access ongoing supervision and consultation to increase their professional proficiency and competence. School Social Workers shall participate in professional development activities that enhance their knowledge and skills. School Social Workers shall also contribute to the development of the profession by educating and supervising school social work interns when possible.

Standard 9. Cultural Competence

School social workers shall ensure that students and their families are provided services within the context of multicultural understanding and competence.

Interpretation

School social workers shall demonstrate self awareness, knowledge, and practice skills consistent with the *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*. School social workers shall continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding about client groups they serve and culturally appropriate resources. This understanding shall be applied in a manner that results in a positive school climate that respects and values differences. School social workers shall use evidence-informed practices, skills, and techniques that reflect the worker's understanding of the role of culture in the helping process. School social workers shall recognize barriers to academic progress relating to cultural issues within the local education agency, while supporting an environment that honors and celebrates the cultures of the population within the school.

***Standard 10. Interdisciplinary Leadership and Collaboration**

School social workers shall provide leadership in developing a positive school climate and work collaboratively with school administration, school personnel, family members, and community professionals as appropriate to increase accessibility and effectiveness of services.

Interpretation

School social workers shall serve as leaders and consultants in promoting positive school climate. School social workers shall also serve as leaders and consultants to facilitate an understanding of factors in the home, school and community that affect students' educational experiences. School social workers shall provide training and engage parents, school personnel, other professionals and community members in the removal of barriers to learning. School social workers shall also provide leadership and collaboration in the implementation of comprehensive school-based and school-linked programs that promote student well-being and positive academic outcomes.

Standard 11. Advocacy

School social workers shall engage in advocacy that seeks to ensure that all students have equal access to education and services to enhance their academic progress.

Interpretation

School social workers shall advocate for students and their families. This advocacy includes helping them gain access to and effectively use formal and informal community resources that enable families to self-advocate. School social workers, as systems' change agents, shall identify areas of need that are not being addressed by the local education agency and community and shall work to create services that address these needs. School social workers shall be informed about court decisions, legislation, rules and regulations, and policies and procedures that affect school social work practice, to effectively advocate for students.