



School Social Work  
Association of America

## ILLUMINATE THE IMPACT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS - INVESTED IN MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDRESSING THE ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS



### IGNITION POINTS

These points will help emphasize the important role of School Social Workers in creating equitable educational environments for all students and supporting student success.

- 🔥 **Role of School Social Workers:** Trained mental health professionals who bring a social work perspective to education, focusing on access, equity, advocacy, and student well-being.
- 🔥 **Specialized Training:** Trained in mental health assessment, intervention, and systems navigation, allowing School Social Workers to help students, especially those facing poverty, discrimination, or structural disadvantages, overcome educational barriers to success.
- 🔥 **SSWAA Standards:** The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) recommends that School Social Workers be master's level practitioners, with extensive graduate coursework and practicum experience to prepare them for complex student and family needs.
- 🔥 **Shifting the Narrative:** Often, the focus is on individual behavior when students struggle, but research shows shifting the narrative to address the broader environmental and policy factors that affect student success is crucial for understanding and addressing inequities in educational access.
- 🔥 **Systemic Barriers:** Take a systems perspective to address challenges such as food insecurity, lack of access to mental health care, housing instability, and racial disparities in school discipline, which are systemic barriers, not just personal hardships.
- 🔥 **Advocacy for Equity:** Advocate for trauma-informed policies, such as reducing suspensions, to ensure students—particularly students of color—stay in the classroom and have access to education.
- 🔥 **Connecting Families to Resources:** Connect families to stable housing and financial assistance, so students can focus on learning rather than worrying about basic needs.
- 🔥 **Access to Mental Health Services:** Push for expanded access to school-based mental health services, ensuring that issues like anxiety, depression, or trauma do not hinder students' academic success.
- 🔥 **Impact of Addressing Structural Barriers:** By addressing these structural barriers, School Social Workers create long-lasting change, not just for individual students, but for entire school communities.
- 🔥 **Investing in Success:** Investing in School Social Workers is an investment in an education system where success is determined by a student's talents and efforts, not their ZIP code, family income, or racial background.