



School Social Work
Association of America

ILLUMINATE THE IMPACT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Leadership in Education:

School Social Workers are key leaders in advocating for and supporting students, staff, and families.



Role Clarity:

Outline a framework to help evaluate roles and address barriers.



Seven Practice Domains:

Work spans seven domains including academics, behavior, and crisis intervention, all interrelated and focused on student success.



Professional Viability and Evaluation:

It's important to document the effectiveness of School Social Workers and continuously evaluate evidence-based services.

School Social Workers are leaders in the educational ecosystem. This document outlines a broad picture of roles and responsibilities that School Social Workers can perform to support their ongoing advocacy and stewardship. Amid seven practice domains – detailed below – all efforts are framed with attention to Leadership, Home-School-Community Collaboration, and Data-Informed Decision Making (e.g., Multi-Tiered Systems of Support). Each domain will be presented independently; however, all service provision is interrelated, spans macro-to-micro, and comprises ecological, holistic, and youth-centered orientations. While this document provides an all-encompassing view of roles and tasks, it is important to emphasize that no practitioner is doing all of these tasks all of the time. To avoid individualizing responsibility for school-based challenges, we describe school social work roles to provide a foundation to evaluate the field, illuminate barriers to addressing educational access, and offer guidance for administrators, scholars, and school-based leaders. This is one step among many future endeavors to build professional viability, document evidence of effectiveness, and outline a framework for the ongoing evaluation of evidenced-based service delivery, and a pathway toward holistic, youth-centered support.

Academics: School Social Workers aim to improve student academic outcomes by advocating for access and engagement with resources, collaborative consultation and intervention with key family, school, and community members, providing school-wide support and prevention, and direct student support through tiered interventions.

Behavior: School Social Workers focus on improving student behavior by applying an ecological and holistic perspective to policy and procedure review and analysis, collaborative consultation and interventions, school-wide assessments to identify strengths and challenges, and direct behavioral assessment, support, and intervention at Tier II and III levels for students with intensive needs.

Crisis Prevention and Intervention: School Social Workers ensure student safety and well-being through policy and procedure review and analysis to establish clear protocols, assess students' needs, identify student support needs, direct intervention, and postvention to provide follow-up and support.

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SUMMARY

School Social Workers lead in education, advocating for students through collaboration, data-driven decisions, and holistic support. They enhance academics, behavior, and crisis intervention, ensuring access to resources and safety. Their work helps evaluate the field, address barriers, and strengthen evidence-based services.



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Mental Health:

Review practices, provide support, & offer interventions at Tier II and III levels.



School Climate:

Address barriers, collaborate with families and staff, and support teachers.



Social Development:

Collaborate with stakeholders, support curriculum implementation, and provide interventions using a holistic, school-wide approach.



Special Education:

Assist with referrals, support accommodations, and ensure assessments.

Mental Health: School Social Workers examine practice implementation through policy and procedure review and analysis, provide collaborative consultation and intervention to support, engage in school-wide support and prevention through a holistic view of mental health, and direct mental health intervention and support at Tier II and III levels.

Safe and Supporting School Climate: School Social Workers promote positive school environments, supporting the well-being of students, ensuring access and engagement for all students by addressing barriers that prevent students from fully participating in school activities and opportunities, working with families and school personnel through collaboration and advocacy for change, and providing resources and guidance on teacher and family support.

Social and Emotional Development: School Social Workers support curriculum and practice implementation through policy and procedure review and analysis, work to collaborate, consult, and intervene with students, families, school-based professionals, teachers, and administrators, apply a holistic approach to school-wide support and prevention through assessment/universal screening, and Tier I implementation, and engage in direct social and emotional intervention and support.

Special Education: School Social Workers examine practice implementation and referral processes through policy and procedure review and analysis, engage key collaborators through collaborative consultation and support, support the implementation of student access and accommodation, utilize evidence-based approaches to assessment and eligibility determination, and support student progress through the development and implementation of individualized plans.



SUMMARY

School Social Workers play a crucial role in fostering mental health, school climate, social-emotional development, and special education support. They review policies, provide interventions, and collaborate with families and educators to ensure student well-being. By promoting positive environments, removing barriers to participation, and implementing evidence-based strategies, they support mental health, emotional growth, and special education services. Their holistic, multi-tiered approach ensures all students have access to the resources and support they need to thrive.