



# School Social Work Association of America

## Macro Level Advocacy Toolkit

### The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams

#### Purpose of the Macro Level Advocacy Toolkit

As leaders of our profession, SSWAA hopes to empower you to find your advocacy comfort level and to reach beyond it. This toolkit will provide tools to increase your knowledge about how to be an effective advocate for the children and families you serve as well as how to promote the role, expertise, and value that school social workers bring to the educational team.

Each module provides the components to develop a strategic plan around macro-level advocacy for state associations or leadership teams. This toolkit serves as a framework for developing an advocacy and legislative action plan. You may need to modify the implementation based on your needs, resources, and association or leadership team structure.

## **Acknowledgment**

SSWAA would like to acknowledge the work of the Advocacy and Legislative Action Committee in updating the Macro Level Advocacy Toolkit.

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# **The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams**

## **Module 1: Introduction**

### **Macro Level Advocacy is Essential for State School Social Work Associations and Leadership Teams**

Embedded in our professional values and ethics is a commitment to the value of social justice. As social workers, challenging social injustice is fundamental to our practice as outlined in NASW Code of Ethics: *“Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers’ social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.”* Additionally, social workers have an ethical responsibility to the profession. *“Social workers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession.”* These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in professional organizations.

For state associations and leadership teams, macro-level advocacy is a critical component for promoting our profession and being an advocate for our students, families, and communities. School social work’s unique understanding of systems such as family, education, and mental health provides the knowledge to educate others about how these systems impact one another positively and negatively.

There is a lack of understanding regarding who is considered a mental health professional/practitioner, the scope of their practice, and whether schools provide mental health services. Intentionally developing a state school social work association macro-level advocacy plan is vital to elevating the voices of the communities we serve, ensuring our school social work perspective is at the table when key decisions are being made. Lack of engagement in macro-level advocacy can result in missed opportunities and a failure to communicate the realities, needs, and barriers facing our students and their families, as well as the potential of laws or policies that can negatively impact the overall well-being of children, youth, and families.

### **Impact of Macro Level Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations and/or Leadership Teams**

Effective communication can help achieve the goals and objectives of school social work, whether that is trying to improve services at the individual school or district levels, advocating for state policies, or shaping national policy.



## **Action Steps**

Taking a look at your current structure and processes around macro-level advocacy is a great place to start. It is important to look at:

- As the state school social work association or leadership team, review what is working well in the advocacy arena and identify strengths of your legislative initiatives and/or legislative committee.
- Review and discuss what is missing in your association or team's processes and the current barriers related to advocating on a macro level.
- Identify specific issues your association or team is passionate about right now and the broader issues impacting students, families, education, communities and the school social work profession. Consider what our Code of Ethics requires of social workers in the arena of social injustice, racism, and inequality.
- Finally, if you do not currently have a legislative committee, form one! Identify a few key members of your association or leadership team interested in advocacy, policy, and/or legislative activities, and start by making an advocacy plan.

## **Resources**

[Community Toolbox](#)

## The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams

### Module 2: Overview of School Social Work Services

As your state associations begin developing your message and a plan to educate legislators and other decision-makers on the value and necessity of school social work services for students, it is essential to have tools to share that provide an overview of our services. Although the roles of school social workers can vary from school to school, district to district, and state to state, it is important for legislators and other decision-makers like building administrators, school boards, special education directors, community leaders, etc., to know that our roles are based on the needs of the students, the school and funding. Whether a school social worker is providing direct services to students in the regular education setting or the special education setting, they can expect core competencies from their social worker to fulfill the needs of their students and the responsibilities of their role as a mental health professional on the educational team. Unfortunately, some people still believe that school social workers only provide direct services to students with identified educational disabilities receiving special education support. Remember always to share examples from your work as you are the expert. Your examples bring awareness and understanding of a day in the life of a school social worker and the value you provide to the educational community.

Within this Module, there are several tools to allow you to have conversations regarding the services we provide. Providing copies of these materials as a reference when you meet with legislators and other decision-makers is also helpful in getting your message across. You may also want to develop state-specific examples as well.

- The [SSWAA National Practice Model](#) is a one-page handout illustrating the professional competencies built into school social work practice. You can also find a [power-point](#) of SSWAA's National Practice Model to assist you in your educational and advocacy endeavors.
- You can also share a [Venn Diagram](#) showing some of the unique skills that school workers, school counselors, and school psychologists possess while also demonstrating how combining our skill sets as a multidisciplinary team enhances our ability to holistically meet the social, emotional, physical and academic needs of all students.
- [Iowa](#) has created a school social work service overview using multi-tiered services and supports model.
- SSWAA has also created an infographic on [Who are School Social Workers](#).
- SSWAA's Position Papers on [Clinical Social Work: Responding to the Mental Health Needs of Students](#), [School Social Workers' Role in Addressing Students' Mental Health Needs and Increasing Academic Achievement](#), and the [Definition of a Highly Qualified School Social Worker](#) are also useful tools in clarifying our education, knowledge, and expertise while also explaining the essential role for a multi-disciplinary team approach to thoroughly meet the needs of students and their families ensuring academic achievement.

- You may want to make a one-page handout to provide during your advocacy sessions that is specific to your state. Minnesota has offered an example of this one-page handout titled [An Overview of School Social Work Services](#).

These are just a few examples of tools you can use to build awareness and understanding regarding the pivotal connection between our role in reducing barriers to academic success and attaining positive educational outcomes. As a SSWAA member, you have access to other valuable [position statements](#) that can further your advocacy efforts. Simply visit the [SSWAA website](#) to find a plethora of resources you can use to support your mission as a state association or to strengthen your macro-level practice as an individual practitioner.

## **The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams**

### **Module 3: Creating an Advocacy and Legislative Action Committee to Strengthen Advocacy Efforts**

SSWAA recommends that each State School Social Work Association develop an Advocacy and Legislative Action Committee. This can be one of the most valuable committees for any state school social work association.

#### **Goals of an Advocacy and Legislation Action Committee**

Ideally this committee meets monthly during the year or biweekly during the legislative session to achieve the following goals:

- Educate policy makers on the professional role of school social workers in providing evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services, promoting a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence, and maximizing access to school-based and community-based resources
- Monitor legislation and address legislative action needs
- Produce and endorse legislative priorities outlined in an agenda
- Host an annual Day at the Capitol professional development event for School Social Workers for CEU's
- Contract with a lobbyist to assist your state association in meeting your legislative goals and keep your state association current on relevant education and mental health policy being proposed or pending that may have an impact on the students we serve, families or our profession

#### **Composition of an Advocacy and Legislation Action Committee**

Like all other committees, state presidents or state leadership appoint an Advocacy and Legislative Action Chairperson. The Advocacy and Legislative Action Committee typically consists of a **group of volunteer state school social work members**.

#### **Role of the Legislative Chairperson:**

- Schedule regular meetings in person or through video conferencing.
- Create an agenda for the meeting.
- Document minutes from the meeting to report back to the state school social work association or state leadership team and to share with committee members.
- Set up meetings with decision-makers such as legislators, Secondary Principals' Associations, Elementary Principals' Associations, School Boards Associations, Superintendents Associations, School Counselor Associations, School Psychologist Associations, School Nurse Associations, and other relevant associations. These

meetings allow you to educate state leaders about the value and expertise of School Social Workers to ensure academic achievement for all children and youth. Building alliances is essential. Setting up yearly meetings with key stakeholders builds an understanding of the necessity for hiring school social workers. There may also be legislation or policies that all stakeholders have a shared interest in collaborating on, presenting a unified front.

- Develop a Legislative Agenda.
- Develop and send action alerts.
- Facilitate and coordinate with the State School Social Work Association a “Day at the Capitol” as a professional development event.

### **Soliciting volunteers to support the work of the Advocacy and Legislative Action Committee**

Recruiting members to serve on an Advocacy and Legislative Action Committee is a critical task. SSWAA offers a few examples of how to facilitate this:

- On your membership form, you can create a section specifically for committee membership.
- The legislative chair or committee leadership can write a quarterly newsletter article, email, or other communication to inform members about the committee’s activities and updates on state legislative priorities.
- The state association president or leadership team can send a brief description of committees to members with the chairperson's contact information.
- During an annual membership meeting held during your state conference, the president or leadership team can introduce the committee chairs or leaders and have to talk about the goals and mission of each committee. Remember to have a sign-up sheet available for members to sign up for particular committees.

### **Structure and Design of Committee Meetings**

Developing a consistent structure and meeting schedule is important for any committee. You may need to modify or adjust the recommendations based on your needs and resources.

- In the fall, develop legislative priorities and create an agenda that can be disseminated to policymakers, membership, and other key stakeholders. Please see the attached example of [MSSWA’s Legislative Agenda 2021](#).
- Develop a plan on how to address your association's legislative or advocacy priorities, such as setting up meetings with specific decision-makers, creating materials and talking points for members, offering an advocacy breakout session at your conference, and planning a Day at the Capitol event.
- Disseminate information from the committee related to state, regional, and national policies. It is important to create a plan to share information with members on a

consistent basis. Relevant state (and federal issues) that impact education, students, families, schools, communities, and school social workers may include child welfare reform, truancy policies, special education, mental and behavioral health services for children and families, LGBTQIA+ rights, immigration, social justice, educational equity, juvenile justice, workforce shortages, training, or school social workers being certified through your state's department of education.

- Create a school social work service and roles overview to provide to stakeholders.
- Compile data about the relevance and impact of school social work interventions to share with decision-makers.
- Create action alerts with your specific message to send. It is often easier if you create an alert with a sample letter where members only have to add their name and contact information as a constituent. Also include instructions on how members can find the name, email, and phone number of their state representative or state senator.
- If you have a lobbyist, that person will be integral in helping develop legislative and advocacy priorities by monitoring education, mental health, and other proposed policies that could positively or negatively impact school social work, education, students, families, and communities. Your lobbyist can also help set up meetings with specific legislators assigned to education policy committees or legislators that can help author legislation your state may develop.
- If you do not have a lobbyist at this time, try to connect with allies who have a lobbyist, such as your state chapter of NASW. This will help develop a partnership where to monitor legislation that impacts school social work, children, mental health, and education.
- Invite your lobbyist or NASW lobbyist to your committee meetings.

**Action examples of ways to engage in macro advocacy:**

- Share a lobbyist with your state NASW chapter. Contracting with another ally organization can split the costs of a lobbyist to address common issues
- Provide written and spoken testimony to the state legislature as well as opinion letters written to local newspapers
- Serve on education or mental health coalitions and boards at the local, state, or national level
- Participate in the Legislative Institute sponsored by SSWAA
- Join and actively participate in education unions and social work organizations
- Review state legislative agendas every year and select bills on which to provide comments and develop talking points
- Consult with SSWAA's Advocacy and Legislative Action Committee regarding advocacy efforts and needs

- Have at least one state member join SSWAA's Advocacy and Legislative Action Committee
- Establish collaborative relationships with other professional education and student services organizations
- Present at various conferences inside and outside of school social work

## **The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams**

### **Module 4: Developing Your State Advocacy and Legislative Priorities**

It is important for state associations or leadership teams to develop a consistent platform of 2 or 3 relevant issues to focus advocacy efforts. To start developing these, consider the following questions:

1. *What is something that you are passionate about right now that you would like to be different for your profession, your students, your school, or your community?*
2. *What current issues are affecting your profession, your students, your school, or your community?*
3. *What is your goal or objective with your advocacy efforts?*

To accomplish this task, it will be important for your state association or leadership team to build time into one of your board meetings (summer or fall) to brainstorm and agree on specific issues requiring increased advocacy efforts prior to talking about them publicly. For example, your focus may be specifically on educating on the role, knowledge, skills, and value school social workers bring to the educational community. You also may want to focus on describing mental health service delivery in schools based on a collaborative continuum of care that includes school-employed mental health providers, school-linked mental health programs, and community mental health providers.

Most often, areas of concern requiring intentional advocacy efforts should be linked and mutually support each other. Having a message that is too broad or that has competing priorities can cause inaction or confusion.

Listed below, you will find the detailed steps on how to develop your state's advocacy and legislative priorities.

#### ***What are your state advocacy and legislative priorities?***

- Brainstorm a list of priorities (what do you want to change, enhance, or inform)
- Identify the top 2 to 5 priorities that will define your advocacy and legislative action plan for the upcoming year
- Develop brief talking points around the importance and impact of these priorities

#### **Resources**

[Community Toolbox: Developing a Strategic Plan](#)

[What is your vision for change?](#)



## **The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams**

### **Module 5: Developing Toolkits to Support Your Advocacy and Legislative Priorities**

When thinking about your state's advocacy and legislative priorities, these might include broad priorities or specific legislation/policies you want to address. It is critical that you develop a deep understanding of your concerns. When developing talking points, social media alerts, handouts, emails, or any other advocacy efforts, you should be an expert in your issue. That means you should have an overall understanding of the area of concern, be able to answer why it is important to address, the impact of addressing and not addressing the issue, the school social worker's role, and even opposition views so you can have data which counters these views.

The goal of developing toolkits is to:

- Raise awareness of a specific issue such as bullying prevention and intervention, the achievement gap, the role of school social workers in helping to reduce the achievement gap, fully funding basic education, closing the opportunity gap, chronic absenteeism, disproportionality in discipline, increasing graduation rates, and mental health
- As you consider topics, it is important to think about what other movements are going on in your state that you can tie your message to that school social workers can support. Build support for specific policy/resource needs
- Be relevant by articulating the impact on students/school
- Provide supporting points and personalize with your district's or state's examples
- Appeal to emotion as well as intellect
- Be a resource by encouraging stakeholders and decision-makers to seek further information from you. It is helpful to provide contact information and remember you are the expert

For each priority, legislation, or policy, there are guiding questions to answer, which will help develop your supportive materials in the subsequent modules. These are guiding questions, and not all of them need to be answered necessarily.

#### **Overview/Definition of the Issue:**

- What is an overview of the problem/need?
- What is the issue?
- What is the nature of the problem/issue?
- Are there any underlying factors that make this an issue?
- What makes this an issue worth addressing?

## **Importance**

- Why is this an important issue to resolve?
- Why should someone care about resolving this issue?
- What happens if this issue is not resolved?
- What changes if this issue is resolved?

## **Scope of the issue (Science of Advocacy)**

- Level of action required (federal, state, district)?
- How specific is the issue (ie, immigration reform versus funding for ESL students)?
- How widespread is the issue?
- How many people are affected?
- Who is affected and how?
- What is the economic cost associated with this issue?

## **School Social Workers' Role**

- What role do school social workers play in resolving this issue?
- What makes school social workers essential in being involved in the solution?
- What added value do school social workers bring?

## **Cost**

- What is the monetary cost of addressing this issue?

## **Impact**

- What is the social/academic/justice/economic/political cost of not addressing (in terms of long-term outcomes)?
- What happens if this issue is addressed (long-term outcomes)?
- What are the barriers to addressing this issue?
- Are there other factors that also need to be addressed that might contribute to this issue?
- What is the cost savings of addressing this issue?

## **What is the ask?**

- What needs to be done for this issue to be resolved?
- What is the minimum action that can be taken?
- What is the ideal solution?

## **Additional Supports**

- What additional resources do SSWAA or others have that can support this issue (additional documents, websites, laws, regulations, etc.)?
- What is needed to help make the case for this issue?
- Who are other allies that care about this issue, and why do they care?

## Action Steps

- What are potential actions or steps that could help resolve this issue?
  - Additional legislation or policies that are needed
  - Guidance on current legislation or policies
  - Adjusting or removing legislation or policies
  - Adding new programs, services, or approaches
- Who are your allies or potential collaborators to expand your reach and resources?
  - State school psychologists' association, school counselors' association, education association
- What role(s) are you comfortable taking on, and where will you need additional support?
  - Social Media
  - Gathering additional information
  - Reviewing and writing legislation or policies
  - Speaking with key stakeholders
  - Supporting other groups in their efforts vs. leading efforts
- What are the biggest barriers to implementing changes?
- Who are other experts on this issue that can support or supplement your knowledge/expertise?
- What current legislation or policies exist to guide your efforts?
- What additional resources can you access to help?
- Who can effect change on this issue?
  - How will you engage them in your cause?
- Where will you focus your efforts for the maximum impact (force field analysis)?
- What consistent message do you and your allies want to convey?
- What can you realistically do next?

## Resources

[Who are School Social Workers?](#)

[SSWAA National Certification Fact Sheet](#)

[Community Toolbox: Advocating for Change](#)

## **Bill support process**

### **Criteria**

- Does this bill align with WASSW's vision and mission statements?
- Does this bill match/conflict with the LAC legislative agenda?
- Does this bill match/conflict with the SSWAA national agenda?
- Does this bill rise to the occasion of expending committee resources (i.e., volunteer, staff, and lobbyist time) to track order of testimony?
- Would it reflect positively/negatively on WASSW if we did/did not weigh in?
- Would weighing in pros/cons advance our association/profession's goals?

### **What does it mean to Track?**

- WASSW finds this bill potentially beneficial or potentially harmful to the LAC legislative agenda
- WASSW will expend committee resources to follow the bill's progress
- WASSW will spend time in committee discussion about the bill and whether to advance support to endorse or advance to oppose, depending on the bill's progress and/or developments

### **What does it mean to Endorse?**

- WASSW finds this bill beneficial to the LAC legislative agenda
- WASSW will expend committee resources to testify and/or write letters
- WASSW will request the resources and efforts of our lobbyists
- WASSW will request the support of NASW-WA LAC
- WASSW would request the support of WEA
- WASSW would request the support of other ESA groups as appropriate
- WASSW will request that members call/write their legislators

### **What does it mean to Oppose?**

- WASSW finds this bill harmful to the LAC legislative agenda
- WASSW will expend committee resources to testify and/or write a letter in opposition to this bill
- WASSW will request that members call/write their legislators in opposition to this bill

## The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams

### Module 6: How to Develop Talking Points

Once you have developed a clear understanding of your advocacy priorities, legislative or policy changes, you will want to think about the message you want to convey. This might be to support a specific area of school social work, or it might involve opposing a bill that has been introduced. The key questions you answered in Module 5 will help develop your talking points.

Talking points are the key "bullets" that support your message and guide conversations with legislators, staff, other advocates, or any stakeholders. Concise talking points are important to ensure all your members deliver the same message while allowing the flexibility to insert personal stories and add local and state specifics.

Here are some "how-to's":

1. Think brief!

You only need 3-4 key points. Beyond that, you risk being nervous and reading the talking points. A few solid talking points provide a good conversation starter. Remember, you may only have 5 or 10 minutes of the legislator's, staff member's, or stakeholder's time, so it is important to make those minutes count.

2. What's the point?

Each of your talking points should support your goal with the priority, legislative or policy changes. That goal might be just to educate the listener about the role of the school social worker in order to garner support for more social workers in schools. On the other hand, your goal may be to get the legislator's vote or support for a specific bill. Finally, you may ask to eliminate or stop a policy from taking effect. If a talking point doesn't advance your goal, rewrite or eliminate it.

3. In my experience...

In addition to the formal talking points, you should add an open-ended bullet. That's where the school social worker adds his/her personal experiences. Connecting your experiences to the local perspective in the state/district the person you're speaking with represents is especially valuable. You may also consider adding the perspective of those affected by the legislative or policy issue. Those personal experiences should be directly related to the message and the goal.

4. Name that bill

If you are speaking about a specific bill or policy, include in your talking points the exact title of the legislation and the number of the bill. There are often a number of bills addressing the same issue, so you want the legislator/staff member to know exactly which one you mean.

5. Why should I care about that?

This is where you can make the case of why the legislator should be concerned about the issue. Have you researched any vote he/she may have taken on similar bills? Is the legislator on the education committee or other relevant committees? Check the legislator's social media, press releases, or website for mention of key phrases/words. Most importantly, is there a situation in the legislator's district/state that makes this issue a priority for constituents?

6. Show me the numbers

Even though you're just going to have a few talking points, you should always try to bring more information with you. Any data from the schools or school district and the state where you work can be very helpful in backing up your talking points. You can develop a one-page information sheet to leave behind that will remind the legislator/staff member about the need to address this issue.

### Example

Here's an example of talking points on a specific bill from a past SSWAA Summer Legislative Institute:

GOAL: Getting the legislator to co-sponsor the [School Social Workers Improving Student Success Act, H.R. 7037](#); sponsor: Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI).

- We are asking the representative/senator (legislator) to co-sponsor this important bill.
- This bill would improve school mental health services by giving grants to high-need school districts to hire more school-employed social workers and keep those already working there.
- School social workers hired under these grants would:
  - Identify and target services to the highest-need students in each school where they work.
  - Address social, emotional, and mental health needs to ensure better school outcomes, provide assistance to teachers in designing behavioral interventions, and connect students and families to community services, among many other services.
- ADD personal story.
- ADD any statistics from your district or state to support why there is a critical need for more school social workers or the impact of school social work services on student success
- And don't forget to repeat the "ASK": Will you agree to co-sponsor this bill that is so important to your district/state?

## **The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams**

### **Module 7: Identifying Legislators and Key Allies to Address your Advocacy Priorities**

Advocacy work is never done alone and often involves engaging allies to support your cause. These allies might include legislators, elected officials, school administrators, or other professional organizations. Identifying and evaluating their role in supporting your advocacy priorities is a crucial step.

Strategies to identify key legislators include reviewing the list of elected officials and contacting those who serve as chairs, co-chairs, or vice-chairs and of the ranking minority member of the committee of subcommittees for relevant issues. In particular, review the list for social workers or educators. After identifying elected officials that can be potential allies, make initial contact either via a phone call or an email to introduce yourself, your organization and to gauge willingness to discuss your organization's legislative priorities. Elected officials appreciate and respond to trustworthiness, dependability, and being able to clearly understand how the issue you are addressing is connected to your work.

Considering who to partner with at local, state, and national levels is essential. Developing, maintaining, and nurturing relationships with all key allies can help school social workers advocate for key legislation, track important rule changes and position themselves to optimize different funding opportunities. This is time intensive work, and state organizations should do an honest self-assessment to determine which members can take the lead on these activities and how much time they can realistically spend. Since time is often limited, it is helpful to prioritize and determine where your state organization can be the most impactful. Your state association should decide on which issues you will take the lead on and which ones you can support other allies in their efforts.

You can start with a few organizations/people or with multiple organizations depending on the time that can be devoted. It is possible for one member of the board to be the main point of contact for collaboration/networking.

Identifying where you will start is an essential first step. Make sure you understand the history and politics between different professional groups prior to reaching out for help and partnership. Think about school social work holistically and the need for increased visibility at many levels.

This is a list of potential partners to help your organization get started:

- Legislators from your district are a great starting point. For large districts or state organizations, this can mean starting with the representatives of people on the legislative committee.
  - Being a constituent matters and elected officials will often meet with you or delegate a staff member to meet with you
  - Ask for guidance and suggestions on who else to speak with about particular pieces of legislation or committee work
  - Legislators who sit on the Education Committees for both your state Senate and the House of Representatives
  
- The state chapter of the National Association of Social Workers

- Other state organizations that support student services in the schools such as school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses
- State level parent teacher organizations
- State level special education interest groups
- State level special education parent teacher organizations
- Social work faculty/professors from universities that provide an MSW program and the necessary coursework for school social work (if your state requires specific coursework)
  - Consider speaking to a class about school social work
  - Host an information table at student events/job fairs
- Your state department of education/professional educator standards board
- Your state association for school principals
- Your state association for school board directors
- Other school related organizations – such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Your state education association
- District, state and national level unions
- Lobbyists for various organizations (it is helpful to know who each of their lobbyists are, you might not need to contact them at first, but it may be helpful to know who they are later)

### **Action Steps**

After you have decided which organizations/people you would like to focus on, the following ideas may be helpful in planning your next steps.

- Contact via email/phone for introductions (who you are, what school social work is, why you would like to talk with them)
- Ask for a follow up meeting in person to discuss school social work and your specific advocacy priorities (ask for a 15-30 minute meeting)
- Bring current data on school social work services in your state (how is school social work defined in your state, what services are provided (general education, special education, crisis, prevention, intervention, etc.), number of school social workers employed in your state, number of graduate programs in the state (if possible, get the number of students



in MSW programs), districts who employ the most school social workers (can find this out through a public records request), what are the current threats to the profession, and any other data related to your advocacy efforts

- Bring data that shows the link between school social work services and increased graduation rates, increased academic achievement, decrease in discipline rates, decrease in chronic absenteeism and other outcomes relevant to your specific advocacy issues
- Be specific about your "ask". What would you like them to do with this information? What are the next steps? How will you follow up? It could be helpful to have an outline of the conversation with key talking points (on note cards or in notebooks)
  - Always follow up meetings with thank you emails and/or cards
- Identify specific follow up communications through email or phone calls. Try to set up future meetings and provide any printed or digital materials – any promotional materials (brochures, flyers, etc.), business cards, news articles, or even SSWAA advocacy materials
- Follow up after the meeting and every three to four months afterwards. You can also follow up as specific pieces of legislation are introduced or as new developments occur in your state.
  - Does your state organization have a regular newsletter or email distribution list that you could add your legislator to?

## **Resources**

[Community Toolbox: Creating and Maintaining Coalitions and Partnerships](#)

[Engaging Allies and Building Coalitions](#)

[Journal of Policy Practice, article Influencing State Legislators: A Framework for Developing Effective Social Work Interest Groups](#)

## The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams

### Module 8: How to Get Your Message Heard by Policymakers

Policymakers/legislators are just regular folks. It doesn't matter if it's a school board member, a local or state legislator, or a member of Congress; how you deal with them is pretty much the same. Your goal with any or all of them is to establish an ongoing "personal" relationship that gives you access and hopefully allows you to influence their positions on specific issues related to school social work. You may also contact several stakeholders and it is important to adapt your message to each person. *While this module references legislators specifically, these steps are applicable to all key decision and policymakers and may need to be adapted to their specific roles.*

Here are a few basic tips for talking with policymakers:

- 1. Before initiating contact, consider your audience's:**
  - Role (state legislators, school board, admin, or stakeholders)
  - Level of knowledge and awareness
  - Primary concerns/expectations
  - Perspective
  - Background: Know the background of whichever Senator, House of Representative (or their staff) you are meeting with. What committees do they sit on? What bills (or types of bills) have they sponsored? What are some of their current projects? What are they passionate about? Which district are they from, and what is going on in their district (it is helpful to tie in your message with something that is meaningful to them).
  - Possible barriers to understanding
  - Ability and likelihood to take action
  - Time Limitations: How much time do you have to communicate?
- 2. Do your homework. Before you begin your quest for that important relationship, do the following:**
  - Focus on the policymakers who represent you. As a constituent, you will more likely have their ear, so make sure you're targeting the right folks.
  - Research where the policymaker stands on education issues. You can do that on their websites by asking key education groups (for example, NEA/AFT affiliates), reading the local press, or keeping up with them through their own newsletters.
  - Find out on which committees they sit. Local, state, and federal legislative bodies have education and other committees that will be relevant to school social workers.
  - Learn why the policymaker's constituents might support your issues and determine how best to convey that support to the legislator.
  - Determine if other advocates might help pave the way for you
  - Research any personal information that might point to a sympathetic legislator. For example, do you know anyone who knows the legislator, worked on their campaign or is somehow related to them? Do your kids swim on the same team? Does he or she have a child with a disability or other "special interest" connection? Is a friend or relative of the legislator in the mental health and/or education field?

**3. Once you've done your homework, you're ready to make the initial step toward forming that relationship. That means requesting a meeting.**

- Who do I reach out to?
  - State Level: Contact information to meet with your legislators is usually available on their websites and/or the state legislature's website. This varies by state.
  - Federal Level: Scheduling a meeting with your Congress members should be done through the Scheduler. This staffer controls the Member's calendar. Usually, you can contact them via a form on the office's website. If the Member is unavailable, they may have you meet directly with a legislative staffer; these staffers are usually subject matter experts on education and can provide details on legislative actions and the Member's stance. Relationships with federal Congressional staff are important because they often have some decision-making power for their Member.
- What should I say?
  - Meeting Request: State Association of School Social Workers

*Hello Senator/Representative Last name,*

*I am a (title) from (city/state) working with (XYZ school district). I am writing to request a meeting to discuss the importance of school social workers in our state.*

*(2-3 sentences about the topic of the meeting. Data/stats such as the number of students served, etc. and linking your website or attaching key pieces of information is helpful).*

*Are you available to meet with me (in-person in City X/virtually) on (2-3 dates)? I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Thank you,*

*Your Name and Contact Information*

**4. Preparing for and executing a scheduled meeting.**

- Before any meeting, strategize. It's always best to have at least two people making a visit to a legislative office. You should have your talking points ready to go, including what specifically you might be asking the legislator to do.
- If the initial meeting is solely to develop a relationship, you may just want to educate the legislator about school social work and start to lay the foundation before asking for anything specific in future visits.
- Don't use jargon or assume the legislator knows anything about school social work. It's better to be pleasantly surprised than to assume too much.
- You will want to take a passionate, rather than combative, approach, no matter what your research showed. If you alienate the person or make assumptions based on past votes, you may be missing out on a potential ally.
- Know your issue well, including having data to back up your position.
- Stay on message. Legislators sometimes will try to shift the conversation and ask about other things. This could be an opportunity to engage an ally on a different issue you didn't expect.

- Feel free to repeat, "I came here to discuss..." and then move the discussion back to school social work issues.
- Be prepared for opposing views and decide how you might address those.
- Be as good a listener as you are a talker. Practice reading body language: Have you hit a sore point? Are you getting your message across? Is it time to wind up the meeting?
- Never be disrespectful or issue ultimatums. Not everyone is going to agree with you.
- Respect the legislator and/or their staff's time by watching the clock. If you only scheduled a half hour, be sure to keep remarks around that length. Leaving time for Q&A is also important.
- Assume that this will not be the only meeting with the legislator. If you have a lot of ground to cover, there is no need to fit everything you need to say into the first introductory meeting. This should be an ongoing relationship.

#### **5. Procedural issues.**

- If the legislator says the party leadership is supporting or opposing the position you're discussing, that legislator most likely is expected to follow the party line. Think in advance of some incremental steps that might be taken to get to your final goal. For example, if you were arguing for a program to hire school social workers, ask for a pilot program in three school districts that would allow data to be gathered on the effectiveness of those SSW services. That data might lead to a larger program.
- If you are talking about a specific bill, know the bill number and maybe even have a short summary you can pass to the legislator. Be specific about what you want – support, amendments, opposition.
- Feel free to check back, especially if the legislator has given a commitment.
- Always follow up with a thank you note.

#### **6. Be a resource for the legislator.**

- Nurture that role through regular contacts – new information, reports, and data, especially if it is linked to the legislator's constituency. A brief monthly email is a good way to do this.
- Be available, if possible, to testify at hearings or town hall meetings.
- Get to know the legislator's staff. In fact, you may more often meet or talk to staff than to the legislator. That's OK, as long as your message is getting through. Staff members provide a lot of information and can also exert influence over the legislators.
- Remember, lots of "special interests" are trying to reach legislators. You have to convince legislators that your issue is "extra special" and that they are critical to making things better for their constituents.

#### **Additional Action Steps**

There are additional action steps you may consider when working to get your message heard.

- Provide materials to leave behind
  - Have printed materials with your contact information (business cards), your message, data from your state (where are school social workers working – in which districts), primary roles fulfilled, outcomes for students, etc. that you can leave behind.
  - Leave them with something tangible as a reminder (this was a tip from a House of Representative in WA state). Cookies, candy, or even seeds for planting with

your association information are some ideas. Have your message/ask attached to whatever you are giving to them.

- Consider making a booklet of materials from the SSWAA website or from your district/state with data/statistics. This would provide your stakeholders with something tangible to reference when making decisions.



- **Emails and Letters**

Your state association and SSWAA can often make this easy for members by sending an action alert. The letter should include an objective, “ask” and members just add their information. Individual letters should be personalized to send to your specific representatives. Letters or emails should have the following information in place:

- Identify yourself as a constituent and member of your state association and SSWAA
- Briefly describe the issue
- State what action you want: the ask
- Share personal stories
- Offer to be a resource
- Answer questions about your position or offer to find the answers – Provide contact information

- **Phone Calls**

Utilizing the same format as you would in an email or letter above be clear and concise. Often your first point of contact is a Legislative Assistant, therefore identify the purpose of the phone call and schedule an in-person meeting.

- **Examples**

Minnesota School Social Work Association’s Message:

- Continuum of Care that includes Specialized Instructional Support Personnel such as SSW’s, collaboration with school-linked mental health services and community mental health providers
- Support the need for local control – Districts, schools, school boards should determine the needs of the students and the appropriate staffing to address

those needs versus a ratio that mandates the number of students to a particular Specialized Instructional Support Professional

- Need for a multidisciplinary approach to meet the needs of students

Example of Washington's Message:

We have focused our efforts on defining the role of a school social worker (only one message). The language included below is directly from the piece of legislation that we are asking them to support with their "yes" vote:

- Providing a continuum of care that includes specialized instructional support personnel, such as school social workers, creates a collaboration with school-linked mental health services and community mental health providers
- WASSW strongly encourages you to support SHB 1900, which is an Act relating to defining the role of school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists.
- School social workers play a critical role in:
  - Linking home, school, and community in helping students achieve academic and social success.
  - Removing barriers and providing services that include mental health counseling, case management, crisis support, collaboration, and advocacy.
  - Providing leadership and professional expertise regarding the formation of school discipline policies and procedures.
  - Engaging with students, families, school administrators, and the community as part of an interdisciplinary team.

## Resources

[Community Toolbox: Influencing Policy Development](#)

## **The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams**

### **Module 9: Using Social Media to Increase Legislative Visibility & Awareness**

Social media has become a powerful tool to increase our professional visibility, connect with our members, and increase awareness related to our key legislative actions. Using social media does not have to be intimidating, overwhelming, or take a technology expert to figure out. The most used social media outlets (as of 2021) include:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Youtube
- Pinterest
- TikTok
- Webpage
- Blog

Before you can successfully utilize social media platforms to support legislative actions, you must first build a robust and active online community. This can be achieved by:

- Regularly posting content; 3-5 posts per day are recommended. Make sure that content is meaningful to your audience and engaging. Lastly, include a visual with every post.
- Use Hashtags # (no longer just a number sign!). These tags enhance potential members' ability to find your posts. However, you should not add irrelevant hashtags to your posts just because they are popular. Limit your posts to include only 3-5 hashtags that are relevant to your post, for example: #SSWAA #TimetoShine #schoolsocialwork #mentalhealth #Advocacyandlegislativeactioncommitteerocks.
- Interact with your followers. "Like" their responses, respond back to them and follow them back (acceptable only on Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, and TikTok).
- Invite people to follow you. Platforms like Facebook tell you who is interacting with your content, and you can send them invites. Also, ensure you put out your social media information to your members at every opportunity. These include trainings, newsletters, and emails.

#### **Time Sensitive**

Legislative updates and action alerts often are time-sensitive. During the legislative session, both House of Representative Bills and Senate Bills can move quickly through committees. The request to testify in person in support of certain Bills or to submit written or oral support (letters, emails, and phone calls) to your legislators can happen within a day or two of a deadline or vote. Social media allows you to quickly reach your audience, which often includes more than just your membership.

Due to the fast-paced nature of the legislative session, it is recommended that several board members have access to the organization's social media accounts (see an example from

Washington State below). Whenever a request to testify or for a letter of support, any board member can post the information.

### **Think Brief**

The information is often a short phrase or sentence with a link to additional information, such as: how to identify who your elected senator or representative is, how to contact your specific legislator, how to learn more about a piece of legislation, how to learn more about the history of a specific piece of legislation, who are the key supporters, who are the legislators or groups that are opposing this Bill, or what to say in your letter, phone call, or testimony. For example, in Washington State, the state school social work association board and/or legislative committee leaders provide links to the organization's website which have templates that members or other interested persons can download and use.

The idea is to keep legislative social media posts simple, with a clear request (or the post could just be informational), and allow people to access additional information. During the legislative session, social media is an important avenue for reaching members and others quickly, in order to provide information or make a request.

### **Increase Impact**

To build an impactful legislative post, you should:

- Consider the time of day. While legislative posts are time-sensitive, SSWAA has found that our posts have the greatest visibility at 7 am EST, 2 pm EST, and 6 pm EST. If you cannot get content up at those specific times, it is important to post *before* those time periods to ensure your posts get viability and traction.
- Include a visual with the post. Some marketing strategy organizations report that posts with visuals are 3x more likely to get audience engagement.
- Hashtags: For the purposes of legislative posts, hashtags are often most effective when you want to tie your post to a specific current event, situation, campaign, trend, or discussion.
- Use Bitly. Bitly is a link management platform that allows you to link additional information to your post by taking the URL and shortening, sharing, managing, and analyzing the links to your content. This is extremely helpful when linking to a sign-up, long-form content like proposed legislation, and/or asking your members for feedback. Bitly has a free option.
- Consider tagging on social media. The "@" is an opportunity to tag persons and/or agencies to your post. Tagging someone guarantees that they see your posts and almost every legislator (local and national) uses social media to connect with their constituents. Tagging can be a powerful tool when you want to ensure that a specific legislator sees your content.



# Examples

## Lobby Day

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a Facebook post. The browser's address bar shows the URL `facebook.com/wasocwork/posts`. The Facebook page header includes the name "Washington Association of School Social Workers" and a search bar. The page navigation menu includes "Page", "Messages", "Notifications", "Insights", and "Publishing Tools".


The post itself features a profile picture for the Washington Association of School Social Workers, which includes the text "Making a Difference" and an illustration of a person with arms raised between a heart and an apple. The page name is "Washington Association of School Social Workers" with the handle "@wasocwork".


The post content reads: "Monday 1/18 is Lobby Day in Olympia! Please join us and/or ask your representatives to support HB1900 defining the role of school social workers. This could be a historic bill for our profession! It goes to the Appropriations Committee Wednesday, 1/20. The time to contact them is NOW!! Check your reps at [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)."


Below the text is a link to "Legislature Home" with a description: "Get bills via web services: The Legislature makes bill, committee, and law information available via web services for developers using automated systems. For more information, see the Legislative Web Services page." and the URL `WWW.LEG.WA.GOV`.

At the bottom of the post, it indicates "25 people reached" and includes buttons for "Like", "Comment", "Share", and "Boost Post". The Windows taskbar is visible at the very bottom of the image.

## Send a message to your legislator

Write

Tweet

Call

### Compose Your Message

- State Senator
- State Representative

**Subject**

**Message Body**

Please add your own story about this issue to personalize your message

This bill

### Enter Your Info

**Your Information**

Send me text alerts

**Home Information**

 Enter Zip for **City** and **State**

Send me email alerts

Remember me

**Send Message**



## Talking Points for a Legislative Bill






### HB 899 / SB 1240: Mental Health of Students

The Mental Health Assistance Allocation within the Florida Education Finance Program is intended to provide funding to assist school districts in establishing or expanding school-based mental health care, train educators and other school staff in detecting and responding to student mental health issues, and connecting children, youth, and families who may experience behavioral health issues with appropriate services.

#### Effect of Proposed Changes

- Requires charter schools to report the removal of a student from school, school transportation, or a school-sponsored activity for an involuntary mental health examination
- Directs the DOE to share the school district reported involuntary examination data with the DCF by July 1 each year and requires the DCF to use this data in its analysis for its biennial report on involuntary examinations of minors.
- Modifies requirements for annual mental health assistance allocation plans prepared by school districts by requiring districts to:
  - Provide parents of students receiving mental health services with information regarding other services available through the student's school or local community-based mental health providers; and
  - Provide any individual living in the same household information about behavioral health services available.

**Vote YES on HB 899 / SB 1240 to expand school-based mental health services and training.**

#### Compose Your Message

- State Senator
- State Representative

**Subject**

**Message Body**

Please add your own story about this issue to personalize your message

This bill

#### Enter Your Info

**Your Information**

Prefix \*  First Name \*  Last Name \*

Email \*

Send me text alerts

Mobile Number \*

**Home Information**

Street Address \*

ZIP Code \*  Enter Zip for **City** and **State**

Send me email alerts

Remember me

*Celebration of School Social Work Week*



**Secretary Miguel Cardona** ✓

@SecCardona



School social workers provide students with mental health & behavioral support so that families & other school staff can provide well-rounded services. School communities are stronger and more effective with a diverse team of experts.

[#NationalSchoolSocialWorkWeek](#)





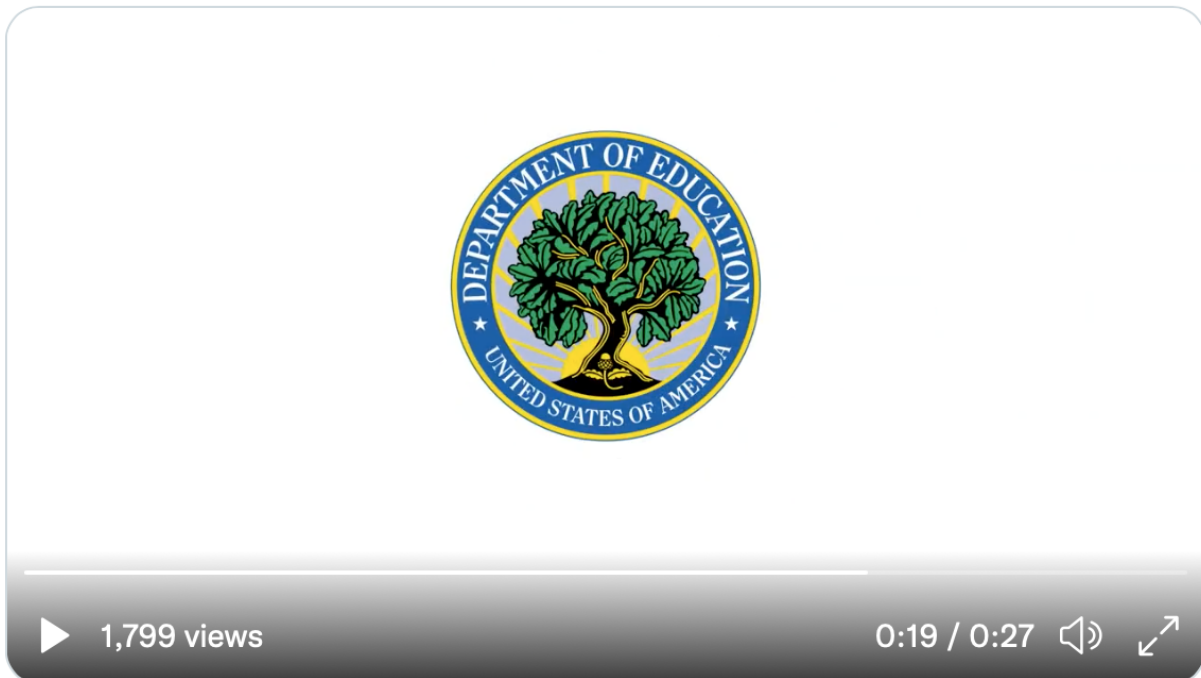
U.S. Department of Education 

@usedgov



What makes a great school social worker? Cindy, a high school student in Pennsylvania, says she's inspired by her school social worker Mrs. Heydt's kindness & ability to connect with students.

[#NationalSchoolSocialWorkWeek](#)



# Vouchers Toolkit

## VOUCHERS: WRONG FOR IOWA

**Student First Scholarships are the wrong public policy for Iowa and an inappropriate use of public tax dollars.**

**Student first scholarships are private school vouchers. Plain and simple.** Unlike a true savings account, parents do not open the account and put in their own money. The proposal gives selected parents a taxpayer-funded debit card loaded with state taxpayer dollars to use however they wish. We agree that parents should have the choice to enroll their child in a private or religious school. But not with public taxpayer funds.

## TAKE ACTION

**Contact the Iowa House Appropriations Committee to Vote No on Vouchers.**

Below is a list of the Iowa House Appropriations members and our sample message. Remember to be respectful, personalize your message, and always use a non-work email.

*Representative,*

*As an Iowan who cares about our public schools, I am writing to express my concern with the governor's 'Students First Scholarship' legislation. This legislation would divert taxpayer dollars to non-public schools that are not required to admit and serve students equitably. Taxpayer dollars should require accountability and transparency. Diverting public resources to non-public schools removes accountability and transparency and could contribute to waste and fraud of tax-payer dollars. This proposal would spend millions to benefit just 10,000 students. Especially at a time when our public schools are facing unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic, available resources should go to support the more than 484,000 public school students in all 99 counties.*

*Please Vote No on Vouchers. Thank you for your time.*

*(Your name, city)*

### HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

RepresentativeBergan	(R, District 55)	<a href="mailto:Michael.Bergan@legis.iowa.gov">Michael.Bergan@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeBossman	(R, District 6)	<a href="mailto:Jacob.Bossman@legis.iowa.gov">Jacob.Bossman@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeBrink	(R, District 80)	<a href="mailto:Holly.Brink@legis.iowa.gov">Holly.Brink@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeBrown-Powers	(D, District 61)	<a href="mailto:Timi.Brown-Powers@legis.iowa.gov">Timi.Brown-Powers@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeDeyoe	(R, District 49)	<a href="mailto:dave.deyoe@legis.iowa.gov">dave.deyoe@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeEhlert	(D, District 70)	<a href="mailto:Tracy.Ehlert@legis.iowa.gov">Tracy.Ehlert@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeForbes	(D, District 40)	<a href="mailto:john.forbes@legis.iowa.gov">john.forbes@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeFry	(R, District 27)	<a href="mailto:joel.fry@legis.iowa.gov">joel.fry@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeHall	(D, District 13)	<a href="mailto:chris.hall@legis.iowa.gov">chris.hall@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeHolt	(R, District 18)	<a href="mailto:Steven.Holt@legis.iowa.gov">Steven.Holt@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeKerr	(R, District 88)	<a href="mailto:David.Kerr@legis.iowa.gov">David.Kerr@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeLatham	(R, District 54), Vice Chair	<a href="mailto:Shannon.Latham@legis.iowa.gov">Shannon.Latham@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeMeyer	(R, District 9)	<a href="mailto:Ann.Meyer@legis.iowa.gov">Ann.Meyer@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeMeyer	(D, District 33)	<a href="mailto:brian.meyer@legis.iowa.gov">brian.meyer@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeMohr	(R, District 94), Chair	<a href="mailto:Gary.Mohr@legis.iowa.gov">Gary.Mohr@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeMommSEN	(R, District 97)	<a href="mailto:Norlin.MommSEN@legis.iowa.gov">Norlin.MommSEN@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeOldson	(D, District 41), Ranking Member	<a href="mailto:jo.oldson@legis.iowa.gov">jo.oldson@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativePrichard	(D, District 52)	<a href="mailto:todd.prichard@legis.iowa.gov">todd.prichard@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeRunning-Marquardt	(D, District 69)	<a href="mailto:kirsten.running-marquardt@legis.iowa.gov">kirsten.running-marquardt@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeSorensen	(R, District 20)	<a href="mailto:Ray.Sorensen@legis.iowa.gov">Ray.Sorensen@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeThede	(D, District 93)	<a href="mailto:phyllis.thede@legis.iowa.gov">phyllis.thede@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeThompson	(R, District 47)	<a href="mailto:Phil.Thompson@legis.iowa.gov">Phil.Thompson@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeWilliams	(D, District 60)	<a href="mailto:Dave.Williams@legis.iowa.gov">Dave.Williams@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeWills	(R, District 1)	<a href="mailto:John.Wills@legis.iowa.gov">John.Wills@legis.iowa.gov</a>
RepresentativeWorhan	(R, District 11)	<a href="mailto:gary.worhan@legis.iowa.gov">gary.worhan@legis.iowa.gov</a>



Contact your state senator using ISEA's Every Action Tool: [Click here](#)

Tips and Reminders:

- Please be respectful in your communications
- Use a personal email address (not your work email)
- Explain where you live, remind them you are their constituent
- Get personal, share why this legislation affects you and your students

## TAKE ACTION WITH YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

Ask your local school board members to pass a resolution that vouchers are wrong for Iowa.

- [Download a draft resolution here.](#) \*Resolution Provided by IASB

## TALKING POINTS TO USE WITH LEGISLATORS

**Public dollars need to go to public education.** Public schools are required to admit and serve all students. This legislation would divert taxpayer dollars to non-public schools, which are not required to adhere to this principle of equity.

**Available resources should go to support the most students.** This proposal could cost as much as \$76 million to benefit just 10,000 students. At a time when our public schools are facing unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic, available resources should go to support the more than 484,000 public school students in all 99 counties.

**Taxpayer dollars should require accountability and transparency.** Non-public schools are not held to the same standard as public schools. The absence of public accountability for taxpayer dollars could contribute to waste and fraud of tax-payer dollars.

## RESOURCES

**Map of private schools in Iowa:** This map shows where private schools are located in Iowa and which legislative district they are in. Show your legislators that rural students will not benefit from a private school voucher program and in most of the state, public schools are their best and only choice. \*Map provided by IASB

**Overview of Current Public Funding to Non-public Education:** The non-partisan Legislative Services Agency outlined Iowa's current public investment in private and home school education in this document.

**SSB 3080:** The governor's proposed legislation that creates a private school voucher program in Iowa. The bill calls the educational savings accounts "Student First Scholarships."

Click here for a synopsis of the [2022 Omnibus Education Bill](#)

## SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

Download and share social media graphics opposing vouchers. Help spread awareness that vouchers, by any name, are wrong for Iowa.

**Tell Your Senator to Vote No on Private School Vouchers in Iowa** [Download](#)

**Public Dollars for Public Schools** [Download](#)

**Taxpayer dollars should require accountability and transparency** [Download](#)

**CONTACT YOUR  
SENATOR TODAY:**



**VOTE NO ON  
VOUCHERS**

**ISEA**  
Iowa State Education Association

**VOUCHERS** WRONG  
FOR IOWA

**#NoVouchersIA**



## The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams

### Module 10: How a Bill Becomes a Law

The process of turning a bill into a law is basically the same in state legislatures and in Congress. All but one state legislature (Nebraska) have bicameral legislatures, just like in Congress. Bicameral legislatures have an upper chamber, usually known as the Senate, and a lower chamber (House of Representatives, House of Delegates, or other names). Bills have to wind their way through both chambers before becoming laws. This also means that for a bill to become law it must be passed in both the house and senate.

The length and start date of legislative sessions varies by state and sometimes year (odd/even). For instance, in Florida in even years the session begins in January but in odd years the session begins in March. In Virginia, during even years the legislative sessions last 60 days but only 30 days in odd years.

It's important to understand that hundreds of bills may be introduced during a legislative session. However, only a few will receive any real action. Most are just referred to committees of jurisdiction (see #5) and die when the session ends. If a bill is not acted upon during a session it does not carry over and must be re-introduced the following session. Bills may be introduced in numerous legislative sessions before ever being acted on, and some will never move beyond the simple introduction.

#### Key Terms

- **Authorization:** Refers to the document (bill) that gives specific legal authority or legal powers to do some specific act. For instance, a bill may be passed to provide funding for school social workers.
- **Appropriation:** Budgetary funds used to support bills that have been authorized (laws). The appropriations process will determine how much money goes to support the implementation of the authorized bill (law). While the bill may be authorized for a maximum amount of dollars, the budgetary process may allow a lot less (but not more).
- **Regulation:** The rules set forth by the agency which has authority over the authorized bill (law). This is the interpretation of the law by the regulatory agency. In the example, the Department of Education would determine how the money is sent out and how it may be used.

#### Steps for a bill to become a law

Here are the basic steps a bill must go through before it is enacted into law:

1. An issue is raised – by a policymaker, a constituent, or a "special interest." If your state social work association (or any social worker) wants to raise an issue or idea with a legislator it is important to identify legislators whose views align with the idea.
  - You may consider doing a legislator analysis which looks at:
    - Key Votes: What are the key issues they have voted on
    - Voting Record: How did they cast their votes in the past
    - Rating Advocacy Groups: How do advocacy groups rank the candidates in support of their causes

- Funding/Support: Who supports the candidate financially through contributions by organization, industry, or PAC
  - Committee Membership: Which committees do they sit on in congress
  - Sponsored Bills: Which bills have they sponsored or co-sponsored
  - Enacted Legislation: Which of their bills were enacted
  - Major Issue Areas: What areas are they passionate about
- To help guide you, consider using the following websites (be sure to cite where the information came from):
    - Ballotpedia ([www.ballotpedia.org](http://www.ballotpedia.org))
    - Govtrack ([www.govtrack.us](http://www.govtrack.us))
    - Open Secrets ([www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org))
    - Vote Smart ([www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org))
    - Official Website
    - Social Media (including Facebook and Twitter)
2. The legislator decides to introduce a bill.
    - The legislator's staff does research on the issue, including talking to advocates like you.
    - Hearings may be held in the legislature or in the field to get more information.
  3. Staff members draft the bill.
    - Before it is formally introduced, staff members may again solicit information from advocates or other experts on the draft.
    - Staff will then tweak the draft based on that input.
    - If language already exists from other states it can be helpful to provide draft language to the legislator or staff.
  4. The policymaker introduces the bill.
    - Most bills can originate in either chamber of the legislature.
    - A similar or exact bill may be introduced at the same time in the other chamber, but not necessarily. However, for the bill to become law it MUST be eventually introduced and passed in both chambers.
    - The sponsor(s) of the bill may give a statement on the floor of the chamber to introduce the bill.
  5. Once the bill is introduced, it is assigned a bill number and is referred to the committee of jurisdiction.
    - For example, if it is an education bill, all state legislatures and Congress have an education committee which has jurisdiction over bills pertaining to that topic.
    - In some instances, more than one committee may have jurisdiction, so the bill is assigned to all committees with jurisdiction over that issue.
  6. After the bill is formally introduced, more hearings may be held.
  7. Next the bill may be "marked up" in the committee(s) of jurisdiction.
    - Committee chairmen determine what bills will be placed on the schedule in their committees.
    - If the chairman decides to call up a bill, the bill gets "marked up" – considered, amended, "reported out" on a positive vote (moving on to the next step), or killed in the committee.

- In this phase the committee may make changes to the bill such as adding, changing, or removing language.
8. A committee report is written if the bill is reported out favorable, with the majority and minority explanations of the committee's intent in passing the bill.
    - If the bill does not receive a favorable vote from the committee it will “die” and never be voted upon in the full chamber.
    - Additionally the bill may never be reviewed by the committee during the legislative session and it will also “die” and never be voted upon in the full chamber.
  9. Once the bill clears the committee, it is placed on the calendar for consideration on the floor of the chamber.
    - The bill may be considered as a freestanding bill or as an amendment to another bill.
  10. If the bill passes, it is sent to the other chamber for consideration.
    - A companion bill (a similar bill previously introduced in the other chamber) would also serve the same purpose.
  11. The next step may be a conference committee.
    - There may be two different bills on the same topic moving through the two chambers, or the bill may be amended in one or both chambers.
    - That results in two similar but not identical bills, which requires a process to reconcile the two versions of the bill called a "conference committee."
    - Negotiators from each chamber are assigned to work out the differences and develop a final bill.
  12. The chamber's vote on the final conferenced bill.
  13. If the bill passes in both chambers, it is sent to the president (or governor at the state level) who can sign it into law or veto it.
    - If the bill is vetoed, the legislature may attempt to override the president's veto.
  14. Finally, the bill becomes law.

### **Importance of knowing a bill's progress**

It is also important to know where bill's are in the legislative process. This can change the “ask” we make about the bill. Each step in the legislative process can be a place to ask for support or to stop a bill from moving forward.

For instance, if the bill has never been introduced we would ask our legislator to craft and introduce a bill during the legislative session. On the other hand, if it is in a committee, we may lobby for members of that committee to support the bill. In other cases, we might ask the committee members not to allow the bill to leave committee or never get voted upon.

### **Appropriation and Regulation**

While we are often excited when bills become passed, it is really only the beginning of the process. There are two other critical steps that must be addressed and can significantly impact the implication of a law.

- Money must be allocated through the budget process to support the implementation of a bill.
- Bills are generally broad but give legal authority to an agency to carry out the law. In both practical and applied terms, the interpretation of a bill is often done by the agency which has authority over the bill.

This means once a bill has passed we can work to get appropriate funding and also how it is going to be interpreted by the agency that will have oversight.

### **Resources**

[How a bill becomes a law: Crash Course](#)

[How does a bill become a law?](#)

[The Bicameral Congress: A crash course in Government & Politics](#)

[Authorization and Appropriation](#)

# The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams

## Module 11: Understanding and Tracking Legislation

In each state you can search legislation, track its progress, and even get summaries of the bills. While the process might be slightly different in each state, you can still accomplish the same tasks.

### Find your representative

You can find your representative by going to the website Common Cause by clicking [here](#) and putting in your address. This will list your federal and state representatives.

### Tracking Federal Legislation

Federal bills are public records and can easily be viewed by going to Govtrack or Congress.gov::

- Govtrack (<https://www.govtrack.us/>)
  - You can search for a specific topic or bill by using the search engine at the top.
  - You can also search by topic area. Some of these include civil rights, crime, or even education. There are many more areas, and by selecting this you will get to see all of the bills that are in that topic area.
  - Using quotes around your topic will also narrow the search to those specific terms.

The screenshot shows the GovTrack website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the 'govtrack' logo and links for 'Home', 'Congress', 'Track', and 'About Us'. A search bar and a 'Log In' button are also present. Below the navigation bar, there is a headline 'Tracking the United States Congress' and a sub-headline 'Find your representative and senators and legislation that affects you.' Below this, it says '12,862 bills · 536 legislators · 654 votes this year'. At the bottom, there are two search boxes: one for finding a representative by home address and another for finding legislation by subject area. The search bar for finding legislation is circled in red.

- Once you find the bill you are interested in (either through the search or the topic area) you will get an overview of the bill. This will show you the sponsor of the bill, the bill text, a history of action, and often a prognosis of the bill becoming law.

## H.R. 7037: School Social Workers Improving Student Su

 [Track H.R. 7037](#)

 [Call or Write Congress](#)

 [Add to List](#)

 [Tweet](#)

**Overview**

[Cosponsors](#)

[Details](#)

[Text](#)

[Study Guide](#)

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide grants to hire and retain school social workers, and for other purposes.

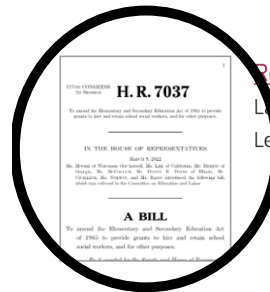
*The bill's titles are written by its sponsor.*

### Sponsor and status



**Gwen Moore**

Sponsor. Representative for Wisconsin's 4th congressional district. Democrat.



[Read Text »](#)

Last Updated: Mar 9, 2022

Length: 12 pages

**Introduced**

Mar 9, 2022

117<sup>th</sup> Congress (2021–2023)

**Status**

**Introduced on Mar 9, 2022**

This bill is in the first stage of the legislative process. It was introduced into Congress on March 9, 2022. It will typically be considered by committee next before it is possibly sent on to the House or Senate as a whole.

Other activity may have occurred on another bill with identical or similar provisions.

**Cosponsors**

[11 Cosponsors](#) (11 Democrats)

**Prognosis**

1% chance of being enacted according to [Skopos Labs \(details\)](#)

**Source**

[Congress.gov](#)

- Congress.gov: <https://www.congress.gov>
  - Congress.gov gives many of the same search features. Additionally, you can also search by bill type, the status of legislation, chamber of origin, committees, and sponsors.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of Congress.gov with the logo and links for 'Advanced Searches' and 'Browse'. On the right, there are links for 'Search Tools', 'Support', and 'Sign In'. Below the navigation bar is a search interface with a dropdown menu for 'Current Congress' and a search bar containing the text 'school social work'. Below the search bar, there are two search suggestions: 'Search for "school social work" in Current Congress (2021-2022) - All Sources' and 'Search for "school social work" in Current Congress (2021-2022) - Legislation'. On the left side, there is a 'Most-Viewed Bills | Top 10' section with links to H.R. 2471, H.R. 3076, and H.R. 55.

- On congress.gov, once you see a bill you are interested in looking further at, you will get the name, when it was introduced, the committees that have jurisdiction over the bill, latest actions, and a tracking through the legislative process.

The screenshot shows the search results page for 'school social work' in the 117th Congress. The page has a navigation bar with the Congress.gov logo and links for 'Advanced Searches' and 'Browse'. Below the navigation bar is a search bar with the text 'school social work' and a 'MORE OPTIONS' dropdown. Below the search bar is a 'Save this Search' link. The page is refined by 'school social work' and '117 (2021-2022)'. There are two 'Hide Filters' buttons and a '1-14 of 14' indicator. On the left side, there are two filter sections: 'Limit Your Search' and 'Congress'. The 'Limit Your Search' section has checkboxes for 'Legislation' (checked), 'Committee Reports' (checked), 'Committee Meetings' (checked), and 'Congressional Record' (checked). The 'Congress' section has checkboxes for '117 (2021-2022)' (checked) and '116 (2019-2020)'. Below the filter sections are sections for 'Chamber' (House, Senate) and 'Bill Type'. On the right side, there are three results. The first result is a 'RESOLUTION' titled 'H.Res.965 — 117th Congress (2021-2022)'. The second result is a 'BILL' titled 'H.R.7037 — 117th Congress (2021-2022)'. The third result is a 'BILL' titled 'H.R.6214 — 117th Congress (2021-2022)'. Each result includes a description, sponsor, committees, latest action, and a tracker.

- If you click on that bill, you can see it provides a host of other information including a summary, text, actions, amendments, cosponsors, and any related bills.

**H.R.7037 - School Social Workers Improving Student Success Act**  
117th Congress (2021-2022) | [Get alerts](#)

**BILL** Hide Overview X

**Sponsor:** [Rep. Moore, Gwen \[D-WI-4\]](#) (Introduced 03/09/2022)

**Committees:** House - Education and Labor

**Latest Action:** House - 03/09/2022 Referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor. ([All Actions](#))

**Tracker:** ● **Introduced** > Passed House > Passed Senate > To President > Became Law

**More on This Bill**  
[CBO Cost Estimates \[0\]](#)

**Subject — Policy Area:**  
Education  
[View subjects >>](#)

**Give Feedback on This Bill**  
[Contact Your Member](#)

**Summary (0)** | Text (1) | Actions (3) | Titles (2) | Amendments (0) | Cosponsors (11) | Committees (1) | Related Bills (0)

**Summary: H.R.7037 — 117th Congress (2021-2022)** [All Information](#) (Except Text)

A summary is in progress.

## Tacking State-Specific Legislation

While each state’s legislative website may have different places for the information, they will often contain the same information that you can find on the govtrack or congress.gov. For instance, we will look at Florida’s legislative website to find similar information.

**THE FLORIDA SENATE** | Home | Senators | Committees | Session | Laws | Media | About | Offices | Reference | Tracker

The Senate will convene on November 20, 2018, for the Organization Session.

Saturday, October 13, 2018

Calendar | Filed Today | Bill Actions

No events scheduled for this day.

**Recent Posts**

- Visiting Hours in Honor of Senator HuKill (PDF) October 4, 2018 - Publication by President's Office
- STATE SENATOR DAPHNE CAMPBELL HAILS FEDERAL JUDGE RULING TEMPORARILY BLOCKING TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FROM ENDING TPS October 4, 2018 - Press Release by Senator Campbell
- Announcement Regarding the Passing of Senator Dorothy HuKill (PDF) October 2, 2018 - Publication by President's Office
- Statement by President Designate Galvano Regarding the Passing of Senator HuKill October 2, 2018 - Press Release by Senator Galvano
- Statement From Incoming Senate Democratic Leader Audrey Gibson On Passing Of Senator Dorothy HuKill October 2, 2018 - Press Release by Minority Office
- Statement by President Negron Regarding Senator Dorothy HuKill September 26, 2018 - Press Release by President's Office
- Legislative Town Hall: Education & School Safety (PDF) September 25, 2018 - Publication by Senator Tashiro

**Spotlights**

**Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act**

Senate Bill 7024 represents a comprehensive approach to addressing the issues presented by the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, including firearms and school safety, and community mental health resources.

[Learn More >](#)

**Joe Negron**  
PRESIDENT

- Initiatives
- District 23
- Media & Press Releases
- Legislative Appointments

**Calendar Links**

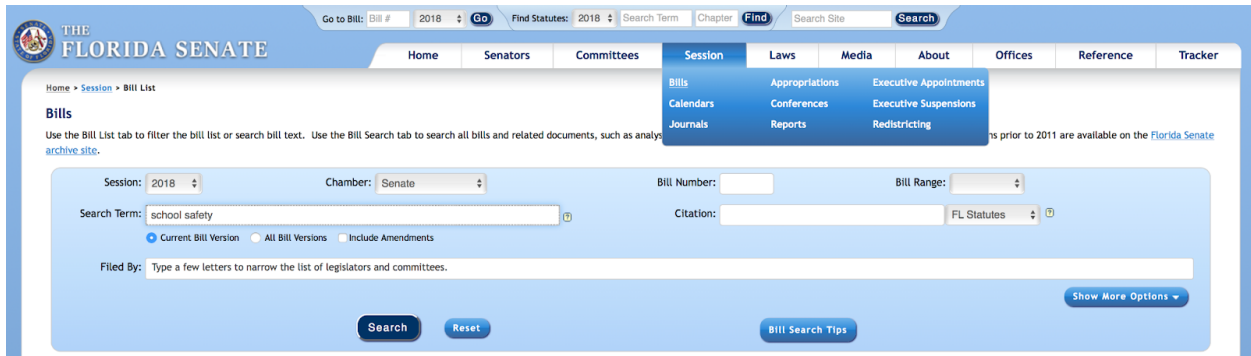
- 2019 Session Dates (PDF)
- Interim Meeting Schedule (PDF)
- Calendar/Weekly Schedules (PDF)
- Video Broadcast Schedule

**Featured Links**

- 2018 Bill Summaries
- Governor's Action on Legislation
- Prohibitions of Workplace Harassment
- Lobbyist Information
- Contact Us
- Online Scheduling
- Transparency Florida
- Florida Statutes
- My Florida 411 Telephone Directory



- You can enter search terms to search for specific topics, or look by bill number and year. For an advanced search, you can also look at additional search parameters.



- Once you have entered your search terms, you will see a list of bills, their introducing member, and even their status.

Bill Number	Topic	Introducing Member	Last Action
<a href="#">SB 1616</a>	Education	Sen. Hukill	Last Action: 3/10/2018 5 Died in Education, companion bill(s) passed, see CS/SB 7026 (Ch. 2018-3)
<a href="#">SB 1626</a>	Student Discipline	Sen. Powell	Last Action: 3/10/2018 5 Died in Education
<a href="#">SB 1700</a>	School Resource Officer Programs	Sen. Torres	Last Action: 3/10/2018 5 Died in Education
<a href="#">SB 1940</a>	Public Records and Public Meetings/School Safety	Sen. Galvano	Last Action: 3/9/2018 Chapter No. 2018-1, companion bill(s) passed, see CS/SB 7026 (Ch. 2018-3)
<a href="#">HB 6001</a>	Traffic Infraction Detectors	Rep. Avila, Ingoglia	Last Action: 3/10/2018 5 Died in Transportation
<a href="#">SB 7026</a>	Public Safety	Rules	Last Action: 3/9/2018 Chapter No. 2018-3, companion bill(s) passed, see SB 1940 (Ch. 2018-1), CS/CS/CS/HB 165 (Ch. 2018-128)
<a href="#">HB 7055</a>	Education	Appropriations Committee	Last Action: 3/12/2018 Chapter No. 2018-6, companion bill(s) passed, see HB 5001 (Ch. 2018-9)

- Clicking on the bill will provide a summary, bill history, related bills, bill text, amendments, analysis, and even the vote history.
- The analysis might be interesting to read as well since that provides summaries and fiscal impact. Each time it moves through a different committee or hearing this might be updated slightly based on any changes.

< Previous Senate Bill Next Senate Bill >

**CS/SB 7026: Public Safety**

GENERAL BILL by Appropriations ; Rules

Public Safety; Citing this act as the "Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act"; authorizing the awarding of grants through the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund for student crime watch programs; establishing the Office of Safe Schools within the Department of Education; providing that each sheriff may establish a Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program and appoint certain volunteer school employees as school guardians; prohibiting a person who has been adjudicated mentally defective or been committed to a mental institution from owning or possessing a firearm until certain relief is obtained; prohibiting a person younger than a certain age from purchasing a firearm; prohibiting specified acts relating to the sale and possession of bump-fire stocks; creating the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission within the Department of Law Enforcement, etc. APPROPRIATION: \$400,000,000.00

Effective Date: 3/9/2018  
 Last Action: 3/9/2018 - Chapter No. 2018-3, companion bill(s) passed, see SB 1940 (Ch. 2018-1), CS/CS/CS/HB 165 (Ch. 2018-128)  
 Bill Text: [Web Page](#) | [PDF](#)

Senate Committee References:  
 1. Appropriations (AP)

[Track This Bill](#)  
[View Bill Summary](#)  
[Glossary of Legislative Terms](#)

[View By Bill Version](#) [View By Category](#)

**Bill History** | Related Bills (15) | Bill Text (6) | Amendments (231) | Analyses (4) | Vote History (44) | Citations (30)

DATE	CHAMBER	ACTION
2/21/2018	Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted for consideration by Rules</li> <li>On Committee agenda-- Rules, 02/26/18, 2:30 pm, 412 Knott Building</li> </ul>
2/26/2018	Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted as Committee Bill and Reported Favorably by Rules; YEAS 9 NAYS 4</li> </ul>

## Reviewing Bill Text

Reviewing bill text is also an important step as bills are formatted in the same way:

- The line immediately preceding the title of the bill - this line shows at what stage of passage the amendment that appears in the print was made.
- If you see brackets, this indicates the text is amending an existing law. The text within the brackets is being proposed to be omitted from the law as amended.
- If you see Ellipses (\*\*\*) - used in bills amending existing laws, indicating omitted law which is not being proposed to be changed in the bill.
- Underscoring - used only in bills that amend an existing law. The underscore indicates the text does not appear in existing law but is proposed to be inserted in the law as amended. The underscored text will form part of the bill if it is finally enacted.
- Strike out type - used only in bills that have been amended either on the floor of either House or in committee. They indicate that the struck-out text appeared in a previous version of the bill, but will be deleted and not appear in the text of the new law if the bill is enacted.
- CAPITAL LETTERS - used only in amended bills which were amended either on the floor of either chamber or in committee. Capital letters indicate that the text in capitals did not appear in the bill's original print, but was inserted into the bill by an amendment in either House. The matter in capitals will be carried into the law and printed in ordinary print if the bill is enacted.

20184er

233           (c) The award of funds under this subsection is contingent  
234 upon funding provided by the Legislature ~~in the General~~  
235 ~~Appropriations Act~~ to support the preeminent state research  
236 universities program created under this section. Funding  
237 increases appropriated beyond the amounts funded in the previous  
238 fiscal year shall be distributed as follows:  
239           1. Each designated preeminent state research university  
240 that meets the criteria in paragraph (a) shall receive an equal  
241 amount of funding.

### **Things to look for in a bill review**

As you look at bills, keep in mind there are some key things to look for that might indicate it has a better chance of passing. These include:

- Is introduced early, in both houses;
- Has multiple sponsors
- Has bi-partisan support
- Assigned to few committees
- Moves through process
- Has the support of the governor and/or state agencies
- Has influential people working to pass the bill

### **What to do next?**

Many of your state or national social work associations will track bills and legislation which are important to their cause. You can also often find pertinent legislation on advocacy groups' websites.

Once you know what legislation or areas you're looking for, start exploring. Find out who to contact to change things and what is being introduced. By knowing what is going on you can advocate for changes, new legislation, and funding.

### **Resources**

[Finding, Viewing, and Tracking Legislation](#)

[Tracking legislation like a boss](#)

[How to find and track legislation](#)

[Features of congress.gov](#)

[Narrowing your legislative search](#)

## The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams

### Module 12: Hiring a Government Relations Specialist and Lobbying Firm

Hiring a lobbyist to represent your state school social work association is a powerful step in having representation at your Statehouse.

#### Who are Lobbyists or Government Relations Specialists?

According to SSWAA Government Relations Specialists firm Lobbyit “**Lobbyists** are professional advocates that work to influence political decisions on behalf of individuals and organizations. This advocacy could lead to the proposal of new legislation, or the amendment of existing laws and regulations. Lobbyists are typically people with a deep understanding of how state or federal governments work.”

Every state has a definition of what constitutes lobbying as well as laws related to the specific aspects of lobbying such as requirements for registration, gifts, disclosure, and prohibited activities. The National Conference of State Legislatures has created a table linked [here](#) that illustrates the “definitions of lobbying, lobbyist, and other related terms from the respective states’ statute”.

#### What is the benefit of hiring a Government Relations Specialist/Lobbyist?

- Hiring a lobbyist is an effective way of ensuring stakeholders such as legislators, state Departments of Education, state teacher unions, and other allies, stakeholders, or decision-makers understand the issues and views that are critical to our profession as well as the students, families, schools, and communities we serve.
- Lobbyists are an extension of your advocacy efforts to educate and persuade elected officials to create, amend, support or oppose legislation that aligns with our professional values and ethics to ensure social justice and equitable access to resources and support for all.
- “Successful lobbying involves forming and nurturing relationships with decision-makers and generating and sharing information.” (Rome & Kiser, 2021)
- “Key elements of a lobbying campaign include agenda setting, meeting with policymakers, coalition building, field organizing, testifying, and the strategic use of media.” (Rome & Kiser, 2021)

Hiring a lobbyist can also be cost-prohibitive for smaller state associations. Here are some answers to commonly asked questions when considering hiring a lobbyist.

## How do you find a lobbyist who understands and supports your association's interests?

1. Begin by researching your state legislature website for lobbyists who are registered in the state and the clients they serve. Here is an example from the Iowa Legislature:

The Iowa Legislature website navigation menu includes: SENATE/HOUSE, LEGISLATORS, LEGISLATION, COMMITTEES & SCHEDULES, IOWA LAW & RULES, LEGISLATIVE AGENCIES, PUBLICATIONS, CAPITOL TOURS & RESOURCES, **LOBBYIST INFORMATION**, and ARCHIVES. The breadcrumb trail reads: The Iowa Legislature > Lobbyist Information > Lobbyist Reports.

**Lobbyist Reports**

If you have problems or questions, please contact Lobbyist Clerk, Caroline Warmuth, at 515.281.5307 or [Caroline.Warmuth@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:Caroline.Warmuth@legis.iowa.gov) or House Lobbyist Clerk, Michelle Haults, at 515.281.5498 or [michelle.haults@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:michelle.haults@legis.iowa.gov) for guidance with filings. You may contact Charlie Smithson directly at 515.281.5307 or [charlie.smithson@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:charlie.smithson@legis.iowa.gov), or Meghan Nelson at 515.281.5383 or [Meghan.Nelson@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:Meghan.Nelson@legis.iowa.gov).

[Search Lobbyist Declarations](#) - Displays lobbyist contact information and links to additional lobbyist information.

**View List Sorted By:**

[Lobbyist](#) | [Client](#) - Displays all registered lobbyists or clients with links to additional lobbyist information.

[Client Reports](#) - Displays lobbyist client reports by client by year.

[Function Reports](#) - Displays function reports filed during session.

[Government Lobbyist Authorizations Required by the House](#) - Displays lobbyist authorization statements required by the House.

**Comments?** [webmaster@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:webmaster@legis.iowa.gov)  
(Please remember that the webmaster does not vote on bills. Direct all comments concerning legislation to State Legislators.)

Site Map | Careers | Contacts | Applications | Subscribe | ADA Policy | Online Privacy Policy | Disclaimer

2. Reach out to other state associations with similar interests such as the Minnesota Society of Clinical Social Work, State Special Education Administrators, NASW State Chapter, and your state's school nurses association, school counselors association, and school psychologists association. Questions to consider asking include:
  - Do you hire a government relations specialist/lobbying firm?
  - If you do hire a government relations specialist/lobbying firm, which one?
  - What is the cost of their services?
  - What is their knowledge or experience in the areas of education, mental health, and issues impacting children and youth?
3. When you have decided on one or more lobbying firms to consider hiring there are additional questions you will want to consider asking them.
  - What inspired you to follow a career in lobbying?
  - How many years have you been practicing as a lobbyist?
  - Share 2-3 examples of how you effectively advocated for a client.
  - What is your knowledge or experience advocating in the areas of education, mental health, issues impacting children and youth, and social work?
  - Who are some of the clients you represent now?
  - What experience do you have working with nonprofits?
  - Share some examples of the services you would offer to help elevate our voices at the state level.

Other things to consider during the interview process include asking for letters of recommendation. Additionally, it is important to be transparent about what you can afford and to be willing to negotiate the cost of the services provided.

### **What are other steps we can take if we cannot afford to hire a lobbyist?**

If your state association is not able to consider taking on the full cost of hiring a lobbying firm there are other options to consider to have representation at your Statehouse.

- Collaborate with your state NASW chapter. A member of your association can get involved with your state NASW chapter legislative committee to provide a voice for the school social work profession and the students, families, schools, and communities we serve.
- Consider collaborating with your state's school nurses association, school counselors association, and school psychologists association. You may be able to enter a collaborative contract with a lobbying firm with one of these associations.

### **Resources:**

Lobbyit. (2018). What is a Lobbyist? <https://lobbyit.com/what-is-a-lobbyist/>

National Conference of State Legislatures. (2021). How States Define Lobbying and Lobbyist. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/ethics/50-state-chart-lobby-definitions.aspx>.

Rome, S. H. & Kiser, S. G. (2021) Encyclopedia of Social Work. National Association of Social Workers Press and Oxford Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.013.974>

## The Art of Advocacy for State School Social Work Associations or Leadership Teams

### Module 13: How To Get Involved: Planning an Advocacy Day at Your State Capitol

1. Depending on whether you decide to be in person, virtual, or use a hybrid model; start by choosing a date and plan an outline for the day that includes training as well as offers specific tools to help participants in their advocacy efforts. Include some of the examples below, then spend the second half of the day visiting legislators – Please see the examples from various state associations on how they planned an advocacy ‘Day at the Capitol.’
2. Below are some planning ideas to help you begin the process:
  - Provide ethics training focused on social justice and offer as the keynote presentation for an hour, plan to have a legislator come visit and provide advice to members on how to effectively speak to legislators, have your lobbyist or legislative chair share updates regarding specific proposed legislation, etc.
  - Choose a keynote speaker
  - Talking to your Legislators 101 Training – Plan an interactive hour in the morning as part of the training to help members feel empowered for their visits
  - Review Legislative Agenda and specific talking points related to legislation or mission for that day. If you have a lobbyist or invite the lobbyist from NASW or your state teachers union to present the status of legislative initiatives impacting the profession of school social work, children, mental health, and education
  - Offer CEUs for professional development
3. Create Folders for Legislators that include pertinent information about the following:
  - Legislative Agenda
  - Handout on SSW role, expertise, and education. [Who Are School Social Workers Infographic](#)
  - [National Model of School Social Work Practice](#)
  - SSWAA Position Statements such as [Role of School Social Workers in Addressing Increasing Mental Health Needs of Students](#) and Violence Prevention
  - Facts about children’s mental health
  - Contact information to be placed inside
4. Schedule Visits with Legislators - One strategy is to focus specifically on Education Committee Members in the State House and Senate; Health and Human Services Committee Members or anyone who may be authoring/sponsoring a bill your organization is supporting.
5. Advocacy Next Steps to follow up the Day at the Capitol:
  - Invite legislators to your school - allows them to see programs in action and talk about the number of kids being served
  - Stay in contact by following his/her website, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
  - When the session is out, schedule a time to meet in the community

- Volunteer your time for the Senator or Representative especially this person is running for re-election
- Take a few moments to personalize action alerts from your state association
- Build relationships

### Examples

- Washington creates a summary of their Day on the Hill to share with members in their newsletter, on FaceBook:

*Lobby Day January 18, 2016*

*JANUARY 18, 2016: WASSW LOBBY DAY! Summary: We had an exciting day in Olympia for our 3rd annual Lobby Day on Monday, January 18th, MLK Day. We partnered with the National Association of Social Workers' WA Chapter this year and coincidentally shared our Lobby Day with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). We spent the morning with over 90 people hearing from legislators, Representatives Orwell and Pettigrew, as well as Nancy Amidei on the nuts and bolts of lobbying.*

*We also heard presentations on four bills that are prioritized this session: HB 1900 Defining School Social Workers, HB 1701 Fair Chance Act aka Ban the Box, HB 1713 Ricky's law, and HB1390 Legal Financial Obligation Reform. In the afternoon, we saw Governor Inslee speak to an impassioned Black Lives Matter group inside the dome of the Capitol Building. We also met with six different Legislators and Senators representing our districts. We walked away feeling empowered and energized about the movement in our profession through our lobbying efforts and are eager to see how this legislative session unfolds.*

*UPDATE 2/19/16: HB1900 Defining the role of School Social Workers, Counselors and Psychologists passed the House 64-33! SHB2381 Establishing a legislative task force on school counselors, psychologists, and social workers passed the House 58-39. Both bills will now move to the Senate! Stay tuned!*



- Sample Brochure from Minnesota School Social Work Association Day at the Capitol

**Reserve your place for  
MSSWA Day on the Hill by the  
Registration deadline of:  
March 5, 2021**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
MN Legislative District: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration can be made online  
at:**  
<http://msswa.org/event-4104522>

*Or*  
*Please send payment along with  
registration form to:*

MSSWA, 762 Meyer St N  
Maplewood, MN 55119

- Make checks payable to MSSWA
- No refunds for cancellations received after 3/5/21


**General Information:**

- Registration for the day is **FREE** for MSSWA members, \$25 for Non-Members & \$15 for Non-MSSWA member Students. The registration fee includes 2.5 Board of Social Work CEU's
- Pre-Registration is required!

**Minnesota School Social  
Workers Association  
(MSSWA)**


**Presents:**

**The 18th Annual MSSWA  
Day on the Hill - Virtual**



Wednesday, March 10th, 2021  
9:00am to 11:30am

Virtual Conference online  
via Zoom



[www.msswa.org](http://www.msswa.org)



**What is Day on the Hill?**  
Day at the Hill provides an opportunity for school social workers to come together to educate state lawmakers about how we address student barriers to academic success in cost effective ways. **2.5 CEUs awarded. This is a staff development/ Board of Social Work approved opportunity, not a political lobby day.**

**Keynote Presentation: Healing Centered Spaces: Why, Where & How!**

**Sheila Webb, MSW, LICSW; Judy Brown, MSW, LICSW; Kirsten Johnson, MSW, LGSW**  
All presenters are Minneapolis Public Schools Social Workers

**Learning Objectives:** Participants will acquire the knowledge & understanding of:

1. Why Healing Centered Spaces are imperative to student engagement
2. How the Healing Centered Engagement Approach is a "shift in the way we view trauma, it's causes & it's interventions"
3. Where Healing Centered Spaces can be created
4. How to create virtual and physical Healing Centered Spaces on-line, in our classrooms and in our homes

**Agenda for the Day:**

8:45-9:00.....Zoom Logon Opens

9:00-9:15.....Christy McCoy, MSSWA Legislative Chair: Welcome, Introductions & Review of Day

9:15-10:00...**Keynote: Healing Centered Spaces: Why, Where and How!**: Sheila Webb, MSW, LICSW; Judy Brown, MSW, LICSW; Kirsten Johnson, MSW, LGSW

10:00-10:15...Legislative Priorities from MSSWA Lobbyist Brad Lundell and Christy McCoy

10:15-11:25...Break

10:25-10:45...Breakout Rooms - Networking discussions centered on strengthening the impact of our advocacy at the micro, meso and macro levels to ensure educational equity and to dismantle social injustices

10:45-11:00...Large group share-out from small group discussions

11:00-11:25...Meeting with Legislators

11:25-11:30...Closing remarks and CEU's

Contact Tony Porter at [mplstonyjoel@gmail.com](mailto:mplstonyjoel@gmail.com) or (612) 803-2722 with questions or for additional information.

**Why should I attend?**

- Make a powerful connection with your personal state legislator and inform him or her how you address barriers to student academic success!
- Become energized by joining together with SSW's from across the state!
- Contribute to your professional organization, MSSWA, by spreading the word about the valuable contribution we make in schools!

**Who should attend?**

- Current or past school social workers
- Students interested in the field of school social work
- Friends and supporters of school social work and public education

**Section 6.04 (a) of the NASW Code of Ethics states social workers should get involved in the political process:**

**6.04 Social and Political Action**

**"(a).....Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation....."**

