

# *North Carolina Professional School Social Work Standards*

AS APPROVED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON DECEMBER 4, 2008

## **A New Vision for School Social Work**

The demands of twenty-first century education dictate new roles for school social workers. Schools need school social workers who are adept at creating and utilizing systems for change and at building relationships within the school community. School social workers create nurturing relationships with students that enhance students' academic achievement and personal success as globally productive citizens in the twenty-first century. Utilizing leadership, advocacy, and collaboration, school social workers promote overall academic success by providing services that strengthen home, school, and community partnerships and alleviate barriers to learning.

In order to deliver a comprehensive school social work program, the school social worker should understand and be competent in the following areas:

- Assessment and screening
- Counseling and support groups
- Crisis intervention
- Advocacy
- Home-school-community collaboration
- Partnerships with community agencies and organizations
- Services to school staff
- Program resource and policy development
- Systems change to improve learning and support services

## **Intended Purpose of the Standards**

The North Carolina Standards for School Social Work have been developed as a guide for school social workers as they continually improve their effectiveness. It is incumbent upon the school social worker to provide services as part of a comprehensive multi-disciplinary team with complementary knowledge, skills, and experiences.

The school social work standards will

- guide professional development as school social workers move forward in the twenty-first century

so that school social workers can attain the skills and knowledge needed,

- provide the focus for schools and districts as they support, monitor, and evaluate their school social workers, and
- assist higher education programs in developing the content and requirements of school social work education curricula.

## **Standard 1: School Social Workers Demonstrate Leadership**

School social workers demonstrate leadership by promoting and enhancing the overall academic mission by providing services that strengthen home, school, and community partnerships. School social workers use their professional training, depth of knowledge, and experience to work with individuals and teams to facilitate partnerships that support the school and district mission. The School social worker contributes significantly to the development of a healthy, safe, and caring school environment by advancing the understanding of the social, emotional, psychological, and academic needs of students. School social workers initiate the development of community, district, and school resources to address unmet needs that affect academic achievement and alleviate barriers to learning in the twenty-first century. School social workers are knowledgeable of relevant laws, policies, and procedures and provide staff development and training regarding these areas to educate and encourage compliance.

### **School Social Workers demonstrate leadership in the school.**

School social workers collaboratively engage all school personnel to create a professional learning community. School social workers develop and maintain a written plan of data-driven goals and strategies for effective delivery of the school social work program based on national best practices, individual school data, current relevant research

findings, and the School Improvement Plan. School social workers provide input in the selection of professional development to impart staff with the knowledge to meet the educational needs of students. They participate in the hiring process and collaborate with their colleagues to mentor and support school social workers to improve the effectiveness of student support services.

- Work collaboratively with all school personnel to create a positive learning community
- Develop and maintain a written plan of data driven goals and strategies for effective delivery of the school social work program based on national best practices, individual school data, current relevant research findings, and the School Improvement Plan
- Assist in identifying professional development opportunities
- Participate in the hiring process
- Collaborate and mentor colleagues to support school social workers to improve the effectiveness of student support services

### **School Social Workers enhance the social work profession.**

School social workers strive to enhance the social work profession. School social workers contribute to the establishment of positive working conditions in their schools, districts, state, and nation. School social workers actively participate in and advocate for decision-making structures in education and government that utilize the expertise of school social workers. School social workers communicate the goals of the school social work program to stakeholders. School social workers maintain current and appropriate resources to improve the relationship among home, school, and community. School social workers promote professional growth and collaborate with their colleagues to improve the profession.

- Strive to enhance the profession
- Contribute to the establishment of positive working conditions
- Participate and advocate in decision-making structures
- Communicate the goals of the school social work program to stakeholders
- Maintain current and appropriate resources to improve the relationship among home, school, and community
- Promote professional growth and collaborate with their colleagues

### **School Social Workers advocate for students, families, schools, and communities.**

School social workers advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning. School social workers support the School Improvement Plan and student academic success through developing and utilizing internal and external partnerships and resources. They participate in the implementation of initiatives to improve educational and support services.

- Advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning
- Develop and utilize internal and external partnerships and resources
- Participate in the implementation of initiatives to improve student educational and support services

### **School Social Workers demonstrate high ethical standards.**

School Social Workers adhere to the laws, policies, procedures, and ethical standards of the social work profession. School Social Workers demonstrate ethical principles including honesty, integrity, fair treatment, and respect for others. School Social Workers uphold the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, revised 1999. (<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>) The Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators (effective June 1, 1997) and the Standards for Professional Conduct adopted April 1, 1998 ([www.ncptsc.org](http://www.ncptsc.org)).

- Adhere to the laws, policies, procedures, and ethical standards of the social work profession
- Demonstrate ethical principles
- Uphold the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics
- Uphold the Code of Ethics and Standards for the Professional Conduct

## **Standard 2: School Social Workers Promote a Respectful Environment for Diverse Populations**

School social workers promote a positive school environment in which individual differences are respected. School social workers educate school personnel on the correlation between a positive school climate and student achievement. School social workers understand and respect the impact of how student learning is influenced by culture, community,

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family, and individual experiences. School social workers recognize the need to educate the school staff on emerging issues within the home, school, and community. The school social worker understands the ways in which similar behaviors may have different meanings to people in different cultures.

**School Social Workers promote an environment in which each student has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults.**

School social workers encourage an environment that is inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible. School social workers provide leadership and collaborate with other school personnel to provide effective school social work services. School social workers implement developmentally-appropriate and prevention-oriented group activities to meet student needs and school goals.

- Encourage an environment that is inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible
- Provide leadership and collaborate with other school personnel to provide effective school social work services
- Implement developmentally-appropriate and prevention-oriented group activities to meet student needs and school goals

**School Social Workers embrace diversity in the school, home, community, and world.**

School social workers demonstrate their knowledge of diverse cultures. School social workers also understand the role of diverse cultures in shaping global, state, and school issues. School social workers recognize the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, language, and other aspects of culture on a student’s development and personality. School social workers strive to understand how students’ culture and background may influence their school performance. School social workers consider and incorporate different points of view in the professional development provided for school personnel. School social workers actively select materials and develop activities that counteract stereotypes and incorporate histories and contributions of all cultures.

- Demonstrate their knowledge of diverse cultures
- Understand the role of diverse cultures in shaping global, state, and school issues
- Recognize the influences of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, language, and other aspects of culture on a student’s development and personality
- Understand how students’ culture and background may influence their school performance

- Consider and incorporate different points of view
- Select materials and develop activities that counteract stereotypes and incorporate contributions of all cultures

**School Social Workers treat students as individuals.**

School social workers maintain high expectations, including graduation from high school, for students of all backgrounds. School social workers appreciate differences and value the contributions of each student in the learning environment by building positive, appropriate relationships. School social workers assist students, individually and/or in groups, with developing academic, social, emotional, and psychological skills.

- Maintain high expectations for all students
- Appreciate differences and value the contributions of each student in the learning environment by building positive, appropriate relationships
- Assist students, individually and/or in groups, with developing academic, social, emotional, and psychological skills

**School Social Workers provide services that benefit students with special needs.**

School social workers collaborate with administrators, teachers, and a range of specialists to help meet the special needs of all students. School social workers may participate in the evaluation process by conducting the student social/developmental history and parent interviews.

School social workers engage students to ensure that their academic, social, emotional, and psychological needs are effectively met by conducting individual/group counseling.

- Collaborate with administrators, teachers, and a range of specialists to help meet the special needs of all students
- Participate in the evaluation process by conducting the student social/developmental history and parent interviews
- Engage students to ensure that their academic, social, emotional, and psychological needs are effectively met by conducting individual/group counseling

**School Social Workers work collaboratively with families and significant adults in the lives of students.**

School social workers recognize that educating students is a shared responsibility involving the students, families, schools, and communities. School social workers

improve communication and collaboration among the school, home, and community in order to promote trust and understanding and to build partnerships with all segments of the school community. School social workers seek solutions to barriers that inhibit effective familial and community involvement in the education of students.

- Improve communication and collaboration among the school, home, and community
- Promote trust and understanding to build partnerships among school, home, and community
- Seek solutions to barriers that inhibit familial and community involvement in the education of students

### **Standard 3: School Social Workers Apply the Skills and Knowledge of Their Profession Within Educational Settings**

School social workers utilize theories and skills necessary to enhance the interconnectedness of home, school, community, and student success. School social workers consult and collaborate through multidisciplinary teams to improve service delivery. School social workers encourage and model relationships that are critical to a rigorous and relevant education. School social workers provide proven and promising interventions that address barriers to academic achievement. School social workers align their services with the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* and national best practices.

#### **School Social Workers deliver comprehensive services unique to their specialty area.**

School social workers bring a richness and depth of understanding of students, families, schools, and communities. School social workers utilize skills such as advocacy, assessment, consultation, counseling, and collaboration to create and implement developmentally appropriate and targeted interventions to meet the identified needs of students, families, schools, and communities. School social workers support and encourage student and family involvement in the school process.

- Understand students, families, schools, and communities
- Utilize skills such as advocacy, assessment, consultation, counseling, and collaboration to create and implement developmentally appropriate and targeted interventions to meet the identified needs of students, families, schools, and communities
- Support and encourage student and family involvement

#### **School Social Workers possess effective communication skills.**

School social workers are perceptive listeners and are able to communicate effectively with students, families, school staff, and communities even when language is a barrier.

- Communicate effectively with students, families, school staff, and communities even when language is a barrier

#### **School Social Workers recognize the interconnectedness of academic, social, emotional, and psychological development and societal challenges.**

School social workers comprehend the link between school social work services and the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*. School social workers understand the implications of demographic and socio-economic factors that influence student achievement. School social workers promote global awareness and its relevance to the development of the whole child for the twenty-first century.

- Understand the implications of demographic and socio-economic factors that influence student achievement
- Promote global awareness and its relevance to the development of the whole child for the twenty-first century

#### **School Social Workers facilitate student acquisition of twenty-first century skills.**

School social workers incorporate twenty-first century life skills deliberately, strategically, and broadly into their services. These skills include leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, interpersonal skills, self-direction, and social responsibility. School social workers help students understand the relationship between the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* and twenty-first century content, which includes global awareness; financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, and health and wellness awareness. School social workers facilitate student understanding of the twenty-first century content relevant to academic, social, emotional, and psychological success.

- Incorporate life skills which include leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, interpersonal skills, self-direction, and social responsibility
- Demonstrate the relationship between the core content and twenty-first century content that

- includes global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; and health and wellness awareness
- Facilitate student understanding of the twenty-first century content relevant to academic, social, emotional, and psychological success

- Provide professional development to promote early identification of unmet needs, increase awareness of relevant laws, policies, and procedures, and encourage empathy and understanding of the whole child

### **School Social Workers help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.**

School social workers address issues that interfere with the students' ability to problem solve and think critically. School social workers assist students in developing skills necessary to communicate effectively, synthesize knowledge, think creatively, and make informed decisions through individual and group work.

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- Assist students in developing skills necessary to communicate effectively, synthesize knowledge, think creatively, and make informed decisions through individual and group work

### **School Social Workers support students as they develop leadership qualities.**

School social workers help students strengthen interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, improve communication skills, understand cultural differences, and develop leadership qualities.

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## **Standard 5: School Social Workers Actively Reflect on Their Practice**

School social workers are accountable for managing and providing services that strengthen home, school, and community partnerships in support of student learning. School social workers use formal and informal assessments to collect, analyze, and evaluate strategies for effective service delivery. School social workers utilize collaborative relationships with colleagues, families, and communities to reflect and improve their practice.

### **School Social Workers analyze student learning.**

School social workers think systematically and critically about students' social, emotional, psychological, and academic success. School social

## **Standard 4: School Social Workers Support Student Learning**

The school social worker understands how the students' social, emotional, psychological, and environmental factors influence academic performance and achievement. School social workers understand the need for early intervention and prevention when addressing these factors. School social workers collaborate with parents to aid their understanding of their role as an active participant in the student's education performance. School social workers develop intervention plans that address student needs and promote academic success.

### **School Social Workers use a variety of strength-based methods.**

School social workers address the achievement gap by assessing student strengths and needs and by implementing proven and promising interventions. School social workers provide a wide range of prevention, early intervention, and crisis response strategies to address social, emotional, psychological, and academic needs. School social workers collaborate and consult with administrators, instructional and support staff, parents, and the community to support student learning. School social workers provide professional development to promote early identification of unmet needs, increase awareness of relevant laws, policies, and procedures, and encourage empathy and understanding of the whole child.

- Address the achievement gap by assessing student strengths and needs and by implementing proven and promising interventions
- Provide a wide range of prevention, early intervention, and crisis response strategies to address social, emotional, psychological, and academic needs
- Collaborate and consult with administrators, instructional and support staff, parents, and the community to support student learning

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workers collect and analyze student data to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery. School social workers adapt their practice based on current relevant research findings and data to best meet the needs of students, families, schools, and communities.

- Think systematically and critically about students' social, emotional, psychological, and academic success
- Collect and analyze student data to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery
- Adapt their practice based on current relevant research findings and data to best meet the needs of students, families, schools, and communities

**School Social Workers link professional growth to their professional goals.**

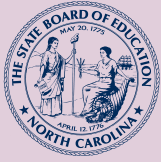
School social workers continually participate in high quality professional development specific to school social work practice. School social workers also understand a global view of educational practices, including twenty-first century skills and knowledge aligned with the State Board of Education priorities and initiatives.

- Participate in high quality professional development specific to school social work practice

**School Social Workers function effectively in a complex, dynamic environment.**

School social workers understand that change is constant; therefore, they actively investigate and consider new ideas that support students' social, emotional, psychological, and academic success. School social workers adapt their practice based on current research findings and data to best meet the needs of all students.

- Actively investigate and consider new ideas that support students' social, emotional, psychological, and academic success
- Adapt their practice based on current research findings and data



## Future-Ready Students: Goals for the 21st Century

The guiding mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century.

### NC Public Schools Will Produce Globally Competitive Students.

- Every student excels in rigorous and relevant core curriculum that reflects what students need to know and demonstrate in a global 21st Century environment, including a mastery of languages, an appreciation of the arts and competencies in the use of technology.
- Every student's achievement is measured with an assessment system that informs instruction and evaluates knowledge, skills, performance and dispositions needed in the 21st Century.
- Every student will be enrolled in a course of study designed to prepare them to stay ahead of international competition.
- Every student uses technology to access and demonstrate new knowledge and skills that will be needed as a life-long learner to be competitive in a constantly changing international environment.
- Every student has the opportunity to graduate from high school with an Associate's Degree or college transfer credit.

### NC Public Schools Will Be Led By 21st Century Professionals.

- Every teacher will have the skills to deliver 21st Century content in a 21st Century context with 21st Century tools and technology that guarantees student learning.
- Every teacher and administrator will use a 21st Century assessment system to inform instruction and measure 21st Century knowledge, skills, performance and dispositions.
- Every education professional will receive preparation in the interconnectedness of the world with knowledge and skills, including language study.
- Every education professional will have 21st Century preparation and access to ongoing, high quality professional development aligned with State Board of Education priorities.
- Every educational professional uses data to inform decisions.

### NC Public School Students Will Be Healthy and Responsible.

- Every learning environment will be inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive and flexible for student success.

- Every school provides an environment in which each child has positive, nurturing relationships with caring adults.
- Every school promotes a healthy, active lifestyle where students are encouraged to make responsible choices.
- Every school focuses on developing strong student character, personal responsibility and community/world involvement.
- Every school reflects a culture of learning that empowers and prepares students to be life-long learners.

### Leadership Will Guide Innovation in NC Public Schools.

- School professionals will collaborate with national and international partners to discover innovative transformational strategies that will facilitate change, remove barriers for 21st Century learning and understand global connections.
- School leaders will create a culture that embraces change and promotes dynamic, continuous improvement.
- Educational professionals will make decisions in collaboration with parents, students, businesses, education institutions, and faith-based and other community and civic organizations to impact student success.
- Public school professionals will collaborate with community colleges and public and private universities and colleges to provide enhanced educational opportunities for students.

### NC Public Schools Will Be Governed and Supported By 21st Century Systems.

- Processes are in place for financial planning and budgeting that focus on resource attainment and alignment with priorities to maximize student achievement.
- Twenty-first century technology and learning tools are available and are supported by school facilities that have the capacity for 21st Century learning.
- Information and fiscal accountability systems are capable of collecting relevant data and reporting strategic and operational results.
- Procedures are in place to support and sanction schools that are not meeting state standards for student achievement.

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**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA** State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

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