School social work: An introductory course for MSW students

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Abstract
The purpose of this dissertation is to create a first-year, MSW-level course on school social work. It was assessed that there is a lack of school social work courses offered at local universities with accredited social work programs in addition to a consensus in the specialized school social work community that specific competencies are taught and mastered to social work students interested in working in a school. The conceptual framework used are the four governing bodies for school social workers in Pennsylvania: CSWE, NASW, PDE, SSSAA. A 14-week semester long course was developed, titled Foundations in School Social Work. Competencies, standards, and guidelines from the governing bodies are used to guide the course syllabus. The course syllabus consists of: course description, course objectives, grading and assignment descriptions, weekly topics, readings, and an annotated bibliography for the readings.

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SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK: AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE FOR MSW STUDENTS

Jamie Siegel

A DISSERTATION

In Social Work

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

In

Partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Social Work

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ABSTRACT

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Jamie Siegel, MSW, LSW

Joretha Bourjolly, Ph.D., MSW, Dissertation Chair

The purpose of this dissertation is to create a first year, MSW-level course on school social work. It was assessed that there is a lack of school social work courses offered at local universities with accredited social work programs in addition to a consensus in the specialized school social work community that specific competencies are taught and mastered to social work students interested in working in a school. The conceptual framework used are the four governing bodies for school social workers in Pennsylvania: CSWE, NASW, PDE, SSWAA. A 14-week semester long course was developed, titled Foundations in School Social Work. Competencies, standards, and guidelines from the governing bodies are used to guide the course syllabus. The course syllabus consists of: course description, course objectives, grading and assignment descriptions, weekly topics, readings, and an annotated bibliography for the readings.
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Introduction

With the number of school shootings, suicides, drug overdoses, incarcerations and eventually drop outs occurring daily in our country, schools are being forced to bring mental health and other community services into the education setting. We know that psychological, health, and social issues can affect a student’s performance in school. Ko et al. (2008) points out that schools have shown to be a great starting place to introduce families to mental health services for their students. Unfortunately, “teachers, school psychologists, counselors, and school social workers typically receive little formal training or continuing education about the impact of trauma on students and ways they can help traumatized students achieve better educational outcomes” (Ko et al., 2008, p. 398). School social workers are able to handle these multi-faceted issues occurring with our youth. However, we need to ensure that they are trained to adequately be equipped to address any student’s need. Said training should be standardized and grounded within specific learning competencies that are agreed upon and set forth by scholars in the field.

Social work education is grounded in education policies and accreditation standards (EPAS) set forth by the Council for Social Work Education with guidance from the National Association for Social Workers. Educational competencies are guided by the 2015 EPAS. With only ten practice specialties promoted by the NASW for advanced social work practice, school social work made the cut. However, although school social work is a recognized specialization, at this time common requirements for a school social work certificate or license across the country are inconsistent and lacking. More specifically, opportunities for a school social work course at the master-level in Pennsylvania are slim, let alone a specialization track or specific certificate. With the
number of social workers projected to go into the school setting to increase exponentially in the coming years and with the needs of our country’s children growing more complex, we cannot ignore this glaring need.

It seems that Pennsylvania, in comparison with the United States, is a bit behind in acknowledging and backing school social work as a specialization in the profession of social work. Pennsylvania is one of the few states that does not require specific specialized certification or licensure to practice school social work. Pennsylvania offers a Home & School Visitor certification through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Unfortunately, there is a misconception that the Home & School Visitor certification is Pennsylvania's version of a school social work certification. However, the Home & School Visitor certification is not required to practice as a school social worker in Pennsylvania. Further, it is not required to hold a degree in social work to possess a Home & School Visitor certification. PDE dictates the role of the Home & School Visitor is mainly to address truancy concerns among students and families. Per PDE, the position of Attendance Officer is required within a public school district; however, a Home & School Visitor may fulfill the role of an Attendance Officer. Further showing that a Home & School Visitor does not equate to that of a school social worker, PDE (2014) published separate evaluative rubrics for Home & School Visitors and school social workers. The rubrics include different components of the positions, knowledge base, and service delivery.

Additionally, at the present, opportunities for a foundational course in school social work are slim. In an online survey of school social work courses among accredited social work programs in Pennsylvania, one specific course was located at the University
Pennsylvania, implemented in the Spring 2016 term and the Home & School Visitor certification program offered at Bryn Mawr College is on hiatus with an anticipated return for the Fall 2017 term. Temple University’s social work students interested in school social work or the Home & School Visitor certification must dually enroll at Bryn Mawr. With Bryn Mawr’s program on hiatus, social work students at Temple do not have access to the partnership to gain access to school social work courses. Lastly, Widener University’s Home & School Visitor certification program is offered through their Graduate Center for Education, not the Center for Social Work.

Social work education is supported by the philosophy of field practice. Accredited social work programs require a practicum experience to bring the classroom experience to life. This real world experience in the field is considered the gold standard of education. At the present, within Pennsylvania, relying on practicum field supervisors as the lone provider of school social work education in addition to the varying time requirements of field placement by MSW programs in Pennsylvania is negligent. This course will take a step to change that. Due to these discrepancies, an introductory school social work course for MSW students is needed and will lend itself to leveling the playing field for MSW students interested in school social work.

The NASW determined that school social work was a specialized field of social work more than a quarter century ago (Subcommittee on Specialization, 1979; SSWAA, 2005). In Pennsylvania, social workers employed in school settings usually hold the position of Home and School Visitor instead of school social worker. NASW suggests that titling the position of a school social worker to anything but school social worker, takes away from the legitimacy of the profession (NASW Standards for School Social
However, social workers interested in working in schools in Pennsylvania have the opportunity to become certified as a Home and School Visitor. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) places this certification under the category of Educational Specialist (PDE, nd). Given the category specifying education, Schools of Education or Education Departments may have adopted these programs without advertising to social work students. With federal and state legislation calling for more mental health supports in schools and students exhibiting more complex needs in the school setting, specialized training of a social worker is imperative. For example, the new federal legislation such as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), acknowledges and calls upon specialized instructional support personnel. This term is used to identify the importance of “school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists; and other qualified professional personnel... involved in providing assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic, and other necessary services as part of a comprehensive program to meet student needs” (Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015).

The portrait of Pennsylvania’s School Social Workers from the 2nd National School Social Work survey in 2014 reports that the largest challenge faced by Pennsylvania’s School Social Workers is that they “do not feel adequately prepared” for service delivery (Kelly et al., 2015). This feeling of not feeling adequately prepared resulted as the highest frustration and barrier of the profession with a composite score of 79% out of 100, with the “high score indicating greater frustration and more perceived barriers” (Kelly et al., 2015, p. 2). Additionally, it is predicted that “employment of child, family, and school social workers will grow by 15 percent from 2012 through 2022, faster than the average for all occupations” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014, p. 1). In order to ensure that social
workers have the necessary training to excel in the specialized field, School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) calls for higher education to meet the demand (SSWAA, 2003). With “national trends pressing all states to move forward toward school social work specialization” (Massat et al., 2009, p. 134) a first year master-level course curriculum outlining foundation topics specific to practicing social work in a school setting would undeniably be an excellent step in the right direction. A foundation year master-level course curriculum is needed to ensure that foundation topics specific to practicing social work in a school setting are accessible to social work students.

**Critical Literature**

“School social work is a specialized area of practice within the broad field of the social work profession” (SSWAA, 2005, p. 1). School social work is the practice of social work within a host setting, a school. Navigating the numerous systems that influence an educational institution is a skillful task. The role of a school social worker is unique given the duality needed to understand policy and act as a clinician. As such, in 2000, the School Social Work Specialist certification was created by NASW after conducting a national survey in 1998 in which they received a high amount of interest in a national certification program for the specializations acknowledged by NASW. The purpose of the specialty certification program is to “enhance professional and public recognition, increase visibility as specialized social workers, and to attain association with a select group of specialized social workers who have attained national distinction” (NASW, n.d., p. 1). Although the certification is not required to practice school social work in schools, eligibility requirements for this certification include at least 2,160 hours of paid, supervised, post-MSW social work experience as a school social work in a
school setting and initial and annual application fees of $165-$450 (NASW, nd). These eligibility requirements make this national certification program unattainable for many school social workers as the majority of school social workers are not supervised by social workers and the initial and annual fees are exorbitant. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) finds that “there are more than 37,000 school social workers” (p. 1). With that number of social workers in the school setting, we need to insure that they are receiving proper training. Among the accredited social work programs in Pennsylvania, offerings of a course focusing on social work practice in schools are slim.

The NASW-CSWE Task Force on Specialization came out with a report in 1979 which outlines standards for a specialization to be defined as follows: “1) there had to be an identified population experiencing a common condition to be altered or nurtured; 2) there had to be a body of skills and demonstrated practice effectiveness; and 3) the conditions that would characterize the population and the competence required of social workers must be sufficiently complex to require the guidance of a substantial body of knowledge” (Subcommittee on Specialization, 1979, p. 3). At the time, the thought was to have specializations begin during a 2nd year MSW program under this idea of a concentration, but unfortunately many colleges and universities were not ready to implement this recommendation (Constable & Alvarez, 2006). However, many Midwestern states such as Illinois and Michigan were able to implement this recommendation and thus the development of a school social work concentration in these states laid the foundation for rich possibilities to emerge in this specialty (Constable & Alvarez, 2006). Meanwhile, at the present, out of the 44 accredited social work programs
in Pennsylvania, there are no accredited programs that offer a school social work concentration (CSWE, 2015).

A school social worker should have advanced knowledge, skill set, and specialized training. Kelly and Stone (2009) describe the variety of aspects of a school social worker’s job such as working with the individual, group, and community by way of clinical and administrative tasks. The NASW Standards for School Social Work Services (2012) states that “school social worker is the position title that correctly identifies the educational background, profession, and function of a social worker employed by a local education agency. Other titles, such as attendance officer, pupil personnel worker, home and school visitor, home-school coordinator, visiting teacher, family collaborative worker, family specialist, or home family specialist, project incomplete and misleading notions of school social workers’ qualifications and functions and should not be used” (p. 15). SSWAA (2014) agrees that when the title of the position changes, the purpose of the position grows incongruent to the role. Further, when a school social worker’s title is changed to anything but school social worker, the legitimacy of the profession is threatened. Especially within Pennsylvania’s colleges and universities, a Master-level course on school social work is needed because the demands on school social workers are intensifying but the level of training is not. If the profession is to continue to maintain its integrity, higher education institutions need to meet the challenge by producing adequately trained school social workers.

With updates made to the federal No Child Left Behind Act, Constable and Alvarez (2006) describe the weight being placed on the state and local education agencies to detail what outcomes are needed and what training needs to be done to get there.
Constable and Alvarez (2006) suggest that the specialty is threatened as a result of the deficient encouragement of both clinicians and social work institutions and educators. Constable and Alvarez (2006) go on to state “specialized practice would demand a different relationship between practice and education and an expanded investment of social work schools in particular areas of practice” (p.120).

The 2nd National School Social Work survey is “the largest survey of school social workers ever conducted in the history of the profession” (Kelly et al., 2015, p.182). The aim of the survey was to capture data from as many school social workers as possible, to create a snap shot of what tasks they performed, skills needed, and barriers faced by school social workers to practice effectively, and to inform institutions of higher education on ways to improve the education of social workers that plan to work in school settings (Kelly et al., 2015). The major findings of this study provide implications for professional preparation and continuing education. Data collected resulted in demographic information on respondents such as level of education and licensure of participants, work settings and environment, types of students served and student issues, and types of practice activities such as direct and prevention. Takeaways from the survey results are that there is still a need to promote a prevention orientation and it is important for school social workers to have a solid understanding of treatment options among other systems. These findings confirm that school social workers need to be professionally equipped to serve high-risk, multi-problem youth in a school setting. Additionally, although research suggests that prevention is key, Pennsylvania school social workers are not able to spend as much time on prevention when compared to the national average and the ideal which suggests that tools are needed to do so more effectively. In conclusion,
the need to practice from a prevention framework and draw on a systems perspective is needed as “a recent review of school social work syllabi indicates that these ideas have yet to take root in many school social work curricula” (Berzin & O’Connor, 2010, In Kelly et al., 2015, p. 181). Further, “intensive and evidence-based child-focused and family-based approaches ought to become an increased focus of school social worker training and education, highlighting the need to train school social workers in evidence-based engagement strategies such as motivational interviewing as well as behavior intervention planning and wraparound planning” (Frey et al., 2013, In Kelly et al., 2015, p. 181).

Altshuler and Webb (2009) suggest that school social workers seem to lack professional authority. This may be a result of inadequate pre-service requirements. Franklin (2005) concurs with this conclusion and states “unfortunately, however, the education levels and credentials for school social work are the least consistent of any of the school-based services professions” (p. 169). Altshuler and Webb (2009) highlight that there is a lack of consistency for school social work certification requirements, and there is stronger internal consistency for school psychologists and school counselors (i.e. defined roles and expectations). More specifically, Altshuler and Webb (2009) show that “18 states have no certification standard for school social workers,” “states’ school social work requirements for internship or practicum experience vary widely,” (p. 213) and that “there are examination requirements in 11 states for school social work certification” (p. 215). Additionally, Kelly et al. (2015) reports on the results of the 2nd National School Social Work Survey. Of a sample size of 3,769 self-described school social workers, “a majority of participants reported having a master’s degree in social work (88.8%). Many
respondents reported being licensed-either as a licensed clinical social worker (43.1%), a school social work specialist (8.5%), or certified as a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers (5.8%)" (Kelly et al., 2015, p. 177). This data suggests that there are a variety of levels and requirements needed to be a practicing school social worker; thus there seems to be a need to standardize requirements of the profession in the work force to support the complexity of the specialized profession.

Currently, most states offer specific school social work licensure and / or certification. According to SSWAA’s School Social Work Data Set, compiled by Minnesota State University – Mankato, the following states do not offer an accredited concentration, specialization, or certification in school social work: Arizona, Minnesota, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia. Pennsylvania currently only offers the Home & School Visitor certification. The Home & School Visitor certification does not require one to hold a degree in social work, nor does the certification require one to work in an educational setting, but is suggested. Additionally, the Home & School Visitor certification was designed and dictated to schools of social work by the Pennsylvania Department Education. This alone invalidates social work as a profession by negating the professions ability to be a part of the decision-making process. In summary, Altshuler and Webb (2009) recommend that clear and consistent requirements and outcomes around education and performance would likely result in higher levels of success when working with clients and families with dynamic needs.

In an effort to continue this work, the NASW and the SSWAA have compiled some beginning recommendations for school social workers. One recommendation is as follows: “an MSW degree from a CSWE approved program that includes a public-school
based internship or practicum, at least one course that thoroughly covers school law and special education knowledge, assessment, and evaluation, at least one course that thoroughly covers the policies and practice of school social work” (p. 216). Constable (2009) reminds us that the role of a school social worker can vary by school, thus a school social worker needs to know what is needed to be the most effective professional.

The SSWAA (2003) states that “to ensure students are prepared for the rigorous demands of the profession, SSWAA supports high quality pre-service training in school social work” (p. 1). Before a school social worker goes out into the field, one needs the foundation work specific to policy and practice in a school setting. Kelly et al. (2010) asserts that an introduction to the pedagogy, grounded in modern day literature, must occur first if practice choices are to remain in line with the research. In Pennsylvania, that means we can no longer leave the training of school social workers largely up to the field placement experience. The SSWAA (2003) states that “school social workers’ training should include specialized preparation in cultural diversity, systems theory, social justice, risk assessment and intervention, consultation and collaboration, and clinical intervention strategies to address the mental health needs of students” (p. 1). Kelly and Stone (2009) find that “there has been surprisingly little scholarship, from either a conceptual or an empirical perspective, articulating the factors that shape school social worker practice choices” (p. 163). Kelly et al. (2010) note that “knowledge of the prevention and intervention research and contemporary education models seems unlikely to be communicated by practitioners if few are practicing based on this knowledge base and its guiding frameworks” (p. 24). Thus, this foundation needs to be imparted on social work students so they have the option and ability to practice effectively.
Frameworks from Governing Bodies in School Social Work

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), National Association for Social Workers (NASW), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) are the four main governing and accrediting bodies for social work education and the school social work specialization. Each body has specific competencies, standards, and guidelines that accrediting social work educational programs and training programs must follow. Together, these governing bodies create 32 competencies, standards, and guidelines.

Currently, all accredited social work programs at the Master-level are rigorously reviewed and approved by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE’s Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), call for social work programs to ensure that 9 core competencies are mastered by the students of these programs during their foundation year. CSWE’s (2015) EPAS 9 competencies [see Appendix A] are as follows:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research informed practice
5. Engage in policy practice
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
9. Evaluate practice individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Additionally, field practicum hours are required to support a hands-on learning philosophy endorsed by the field.

In 2012, the NASW published Standards for School Social Work Services. In that, 11 standards have been edited and published with the specific goal of aligning with the NASW Code of Ethics in an effort to establish broad expectations for school social workers, training in the specialized field, and protection of its clients. The NASW's Standards for School Social Work Services (2012) [see Appendix B] are as follows:

1. Ethics and Values
2. Qualifications
3. Assessment
4. Intervention
5. Making and Practice Evaluation
6. Record Keeping
7. Workload Management
8. Professional Development
9. Cultural Competence
10. Interdisciplinary Leadership and Collaboration
11. Advocacy

Most notably, standard two speaks to provisions needed to gain the specific knowledge set required in the specialized field. The interpretation offered by the NASW regarding Qualification Standards is as follows: “as a distinct specialty within the social work
profession, school social work requires specialized knowledge and understanding of education systems, which should be provided by social work education programs” (NASW, 2012, p. 8).

In Pennsylvania, school social workers are often identified as Home & School Visitors. A brief history regarding the employment of such position goes back to 1929. School attendance laws were passed nearly 30 years prior making all children required to attend school, no longer just the elite and wealthy. Drawing children of a variety of socioeconomic classes together, the education system realized that educators at that time were not prepared to address the issues that they were seeing. These issues ranged from truancy to mental health concerns and everything in between, but most importantly, these concerns were observable and noted as symptoms of greater issues. When educators and lawmakers realized that their old methods of problem solving were no longer productive, Home & School Visitors were brought in to “find the cause of the [student’s] maladjustment and to work out a plan of social adjustment for the child” (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, 1936, p. 7). Thus, “section 1432 of the Pennsylvania School Laws was changed by the General Assembly in 1929 to permit the employment of home and school visitors” (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, 1936, p. 7):

In Pennsylvania, Bryn Mawr College, Marywood University, Widener University, the University of Pittsburgh, and the University of Pennsylvania offer a Home & School Visitor certification. The Home & School Visitor certification is found under the Educational Specialist certification programs. The Home & School Visitor certification can be offered in three different ways. The first way is the Home & School Visitor
Certification may be completed during an MSW degree program. The second way is the Home & School Visitor Certification may be completed post MSW degree program. The third way is the Home & School Visitor Certification may be completed as a separate program. The certification is offered in various ways within these institutions. At Bryn Mawr College, Marywood University, Widener University, and the University of Pittsburgh, the certification is offered all three ways. At the University of Pennsylvania, the certification is only offered while completing the MSW degree program at the institution. Additionally, at the University of Pennsylvania, the four required courses for certificate completion are embedded in the 16 required courses for the MSW degree. All three options to complete the certification must be accompanied by a field practicum in a school setting.

In addition, The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) (2008) published the Accommodations and Adaptations for Diverse Learners Guidelines to support Chapter 49 of the PA School Code. This document [see Appendix C] describes two competencies required for all Educational Specialist Preparation Programs. The competencies are as follows:

1. Accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting

2. Needs of English Language Learners

The first competency is essentially described as all encompassing. For example, types of disabilities, development, and language are covered under this competency, in addition to the role of environment(s), communication, and assessment(s) on a student. This competency acknowledges the varying systems that shape a student and effective
strategies to utilize when working with students. The second-competency highlights the necessity of cultural competency. With English Language Learners, the way in which language and culture are interpreted and utilized may vary. This competency guides an Educational Specialist in being mindful of differences that may not meet the eye.

PDE acknowledges the Home & School Visitor role as an Educational Specialist to which there are specific program guidelines for preparing Home & School Visitors. To begin, PDE requires that a Home & School Visitor training program occur at no less than a baccalaureate level. Further, a training program is required to have students “demonstrate their knowledge and competence in coordinating and implementing social services for school age children” (PDE, nd, p. 1). A field experience of 360 hours is also required under the supervision of a Home & School Visitor to adequately assess performance and professionalism. PDE states the five competencies [see Appendix D] that must be addressed and mastered through a Home & School Visitor training program are:

I. A. The role and function of the Home and School Visitor in working with students, families, schools and community organizations

I.B. [The understanding of] the educational system as it relates to models of social work and intervention

I.C. Theories of human behavior and development and their implications for the child’s participation in the learning process

I.D. The characteristics of pupil populations and how they impact student behavior in the school
I.E. Contemporary issues in public education, legislation, case law, and due process affecting the educational adjustment of children

Lastly, the SSWAA published a National School Social Work Practice Model in 2013. The purpose of this publication was to advance the profession by addressing the uniqueness of the profession and endorse uniformity on a national level (Frey, et al., 2013). The practice model describes four key constructs in school social work practice as follows [see Appendix E]:

1. Home – school – community linkages
2. Ethical guidelines and educational policy
3. Education rights and advocacy
4. Data-based decision-making

Overall, the CSWE, NASW, PDE, and SSWAA are the foremost governing bodies on school social work education. Their required competencies, standards, and guidelines cover the same or similar content with some areas more related than others, and thus will be used as a beginning framework for shaping the proposed course. In summary, the following table outlines each body’s educational criteria for accrediting programs:

Table 1. Education Criteria for School Social Work

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<td>Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior</td>
<td>Ethics and values</td>
<td>The role and function of the Home &amp; School Visitor in working</td>
<td>Accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusion setting</td>
<td>Ethical guidelines and educational policy</td>
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<td><strong>Engage diversity and difference in practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Qualifications</strong></td>
<td><strong>The education system as it relates to models of social work and intervention</strong></td>
<td><strong>Needs of English Language Learners</strong></td>
<td><strong>Home – school – community linkages</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theories of human behavior and development and their implication for the child’s participation in the learning process</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Education rights and advocacy</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Engage in practice-informed research and research informed practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intervention</strong></td>
<td><strong>The characteristics of pupil populations and how they impact student behavior in school</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Data-based decision making</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Engage in policy practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Decision making and practice evaluation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Contemporary issues in public education, legislation, case law, and due process affecting the educational adjustment of children</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations,</strong></td>
<td><strong>Record keeping</strong></td>
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<td>and communities</td>
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<td>Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities</td>
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<td>Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
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<td>Evaluate practice individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities</td>
<td>Cultural competence</td>
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<td>Interdisciplinary leadership and collaboration</td>
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**Methodology**

A comprehensive review of literature on school social work education and a survey of available school social work syllabi were used to design an introductory school social work course syllabus. The review of literature revealed a few things. First, many are advocating for a national certification requirement for school social work that is appropriate and attainable. This would further legitimize the profession as other helping professionals in schools have national certifications such as school counselors and school psychologists. Additionally, this step would remediate the inconsistency of education
requirements, practice, and degrees among school social workers. Further, this review highlights the need for a conceptual framework to understand and teach practice choices with more of a prevention context. The end product of this dissertation is a course syllabus.

The syllabi selected to review were those that were available on the internet and selected from different regions of the United States. Available school social work syllabi reviewed were from the following schools: San Jose State University School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey School of Social Work, and University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice. Similarities noted among the syllabi were assignments varied to include writing assignments and classroom presentations; classroom presentations, whether individual or group, were seen as professional development or in-service presentation practice; and assigned readings by experts in the field overlapped such as Kelly et al. (2010), Raines and Constable (2009), Jarolmen (2014), and Alvarez (2013). Overall, there was a lack of foundation level courses, or first year MSW course offerings, and weekly topics were only aligned with CSWE’s competencies, not NASW or SSWAA.

Thus, the syllabus created is designed as a first year, MSW-level introduction to school social work. The course will be titled Foundations in School Social Work. The syllabus is guided by the education criteria of the governing and accreditation bodies of the specialization. These bodies include CSWE, NASW, PDE, and SSWAA and were used to guide and select weekly topics for the syllabus and skill reinforcement.
The syllabus was developed around the following main components also used in the majority of syllabi reviewed: course description, course objectives, assignments and descriptions, and weekly topics. In brief, the course developed is described as an introduction to the specialized profession of school social work and will observe the way in which clinical and macro practice are woven together. The course will review historic components of the profession to the present seeing as to move forward, we need to know where we came from. The course objectives listed are clearly aligned with CSWE’s competencies, in addition to NASW, PDE, and SSWAA. Additionally, course assignments integrate policy and practice, are multi-modal, provide real life application, and allow the student to interact with the material, practice critical thinking, and do not penalize for the learning process. For example, current events bring context to the course material as students will not be required to be in a concurrent school field placement while taking the course. The educational experience reflection brings the concept of reflexivity to the forefront due to social workers’ need to constantly self-reflect regarding one’s use of self, skills, and resources during interactions and how past experiences and biases can affect clients and service delivery. The policy presentation is a group assignment. The purpose of this assignment is to expose students to policy at different levels. With policy comes legal jargon and the legislative process at a variety levels which can be daunting. Lastly, the case conceptualization paper is a paper that directly integrates policy and practice. Students will have the opportunity to share their process regarding assessment, intervention and policy application to show that different approaches, grounded in theory and evidence, can lend themselves to successful results.
This process is similar to preparation for a professional case presentation or case conference.

Keeping a 14-week semester long course in mind, most of the 32 total competencies, standards, and guidelines put forth by the above mentioned governing bodies in school social work were consolidated into 14 topics for a foundation course in school social work. Further, the feedback regarding Pennsylvania school social workers’ self-reported frustrations and barriers from the 2nd National School Social Work Survey aided in determining weekly topics. Large caseloads were seen as frustrations, and barriers such as role restriction by district policy, lack of teacher cooperation, language or cultural barriers, and not feeling adequately prepared were all seen as barriers to social work service. This data assisted in creating weekly course topics in the syllabus. A few examples are caseload management is addressed in a weekly topic as well as understanding layers of policy such as district, local, state, and federal policies, consultation and working among multidisciplinary teams of teachers, school psychologists, counselors, nurses, and cultural competency. The largest barrier reported by Pennsylvania school social workers was that they do not feel adequately prepared. This is why this course syllabus is created. This syllabus is grounded in these real-world results. In addition to the competencies and standards that are guiding the course work, prevention and systems frameworks will heavily influence the literature selected to support the weekly topics as the research reflects that this is a deficit found in current syllabi and reported by practicing school social workers (Berzin & O’Connor, 2010; Kelly et al., 2015).
There are two textbooks selected for the course: Social Work Services in Schools and School Social Work: Practice, Policy, and Research. The textbooks selected are current, comprehensive, school social work-focused, as opposed to mental health, counseling, psychology focused, or centered around techniques in working with students, and relatively up to date. The stress on school social work is imperative to continue to support and legitimize the profession. The textbooks cover both direct practice and policy work which together reflect the numerous roles that a social worker can take on in an educational setting. With both textbooks printed within the last ten years, 2015 and 2009 respectively, the information is relevant and relatable. Additionally, the assigned readings support the weekly topics and are made up of journal articles, chapters from the text, and readings. An annotated bibliography is included for the assigned readings.

The topic of week 1 will be an Introduction. This topic will encompass the history of school social work as a profession to the present and how one can start to explore where they fit in to the community, professionally. This topic will cover CSWE’s competency of advancing human rights, NASW’s standard regarding professional qualifications and advocacy, PDE’s competency regarding the education system as it relates to models of social work and intervention and SSWAA’s practice model key constructs regarding education rights and advocacy. Class discussion will review the one-hundred-year history of the profession and we will discuss the ways in which we think about education as system. Additionally, we will review the evaluative rubric for School Social Workers and Home & School Visitors published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to get an overall picture of professional and the knowledge base that one should hold.
The topic of week 2 will be *What does School Social Work look like?* This topic will cover the tasks that a school social worker may find themselves completing. This topic covers CSWE’s competency of demonstrating ethical and professional behavior, NASW’s standards around professional qualifications and professional development, and advocacy, PDE’s competency of defining the role and function of the Home & School Visitor in working with students, families, schools, and community organizations, and SSWAA’s practice model key construct regarding home-school-community linkages. This week will cover the variety of tasks that a school social worker may need to have knowledge of to be effective on the direct practice and policy levels. The three readings selected to address this week’s topic and supporting standards and competencies describe the variety of social work services that can be provided in a school and the numerous systems, both within and outside of the school, that can affect service delivery. The readings will give students the opportunity to look at social work services in schools through an ecological lens, to begin to understand the many moving parts.

The topic of week 3 will be a brief overview of *Child and Adolescent Development*. The educational setting is where the majority of a student’s socialization occurs. This topic will entail theory around child and adolescent development and its effects on behavior and the learning process. As a foundation course, notable theories will be highlighted to cover CSWE’s competencies regarding engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, NASW’s standard for assessment and intervention, PDE’s guideline for programs to include theories of human behavior and development and their impact on learning in addition to characteristics of pupil populations and their impact on school
behavior, and SSWAA’s key constructs around education rights and advocacy. To avoid redundancy among other human development courses, the readings selected for this week describe types of students, different ways to screen for normal or a-typical behaviors utilizing standardized screening tools, and ways to improve service delivery for specific populations rather than simply review the stages of development according to popular psychological theorist like Freud, Piaget, and Erikson. Normative and abnormal development is reviewed which is imperative to determining whether behaviors are age appropriate or not. The readings generally review types of at-risk students that are most likely to receive social worker services or interact with a social worker in schools, and the screening and assessment process.

The topic of week 4 will be School Policies: Making Sense of Acronyms. This topic will cover CSWE’s competency of engaging in policy practice, NASW’s standard of advocacy, PDE’s competencies of understanding accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities, needs of English language learners, and contemporary issues in public education, and two of the four key constructs of SSWAA’s practice model, education rights and advocacy and ethical guidelines and educational policy. In a general overview, this topic will cover IDEA (the Individuals with Disabilities Act), FAPE (the right to a free and appropriate public education), and accommodations that can fall under this legislation such as an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and 504 Plans for those with identified disabilities and diagnoses. The three readings for this week will give students a comprehensive understanding of general rights of families and students within the education system and what special needs are in the world of education and the process behind determining as such within the legal perimeter.
The topics of week 5 and 6 will cover ethics and specific ethical issues in practicing social work in a school setting. Week 5 will cover *Identifying the Client* and week 6 will cover *Ethical Considerations* specific to a school setting. These topics will be guided by CSWE’s competency of demonstrating ethical and professional behavior and engaging in policy practice, NASW’s standard of ethics and values, PDE’s competency of understanding the role and function of the Home & School Visitor and contemporary issues in public education, and SSWAA’s key constructs of ethical guidelines and educational policy and education rights and advocacy. The readings selected build upon the NASW Code of Ethics, the foundation to which all social work is dictated. Navigating the needs and allegiance of administration, stakeholders, and families and students can become quite overwhelming. The NASW Code of Ethics places assumptions on setting and client and social worker relationship. Within a school, a host setting, these assumptions become vague. The readings selected are supplements to a social worker’s professional Code of Ethics. Additionally, a key discrepancy comes from two federal departments, Department of Human Services and Department of Education in regards to how they interpret ethical and legal issues such as confidentiality, consent, and age of the client. A social worker in a host setting such as a school needs to be confident in knowing which federal legislation is applicable to each instance.

The topic of week 7 will cover *Systems*. Social workers are trained to conceptualize in terms of an ecological perspective. School social workers specifically must be aware of the micro, meso, and macro interplay and how it may affect one professionally and how it may effect a client or school environment as a whole. CSWE’s competency of advancing human rights, NASW’s standard of Interdisciplinary leadership
and collaboration, PDE’s guideline of understanding the educational system as it relates to models of social work and interventions, contemporary issues in public education, and needs of English language learners, and SSWAA’s key construct of home-school-community linkages. The selected readings will support the student in taking a deeper look at the systems that intertwine themselves with the educational system. Systems that will be covered in more depth will be the criminal justice system, those that do not place themselves in the gender binary (i.e. LGBTQ identified youth), and the child welfare system.

The topic of week 8 will briefly cover *Problem Solving* on a direct practice and policy level by reviewing the stages of change, the benefits of consultation, and how to utilize supervision to yield maximum benefits. This topic will cover CSWE’s competency of demonstrating ethical and professional behavior and engaging in practice-informed research and research informed practice, NASW’s standard of decision making and practice evaluation, and SSWAA’s key construct of data-based decision making. The readings selected cover consultation, an under-utilized skill which requires effective communication to yield desired outcomes.

The topic of week 9 will cover *Assessments and Interventions*, their purpose and those that are used most commonly, and effective skills within the school environment. For example, risk assessments for suicidal ideation, behavior rating scales for signs and symptoms of ADHD and depression, and drug and alcohol assessments for dependency and willingness to get treatment. This topic will cover CSWE’s competency of engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, NASW’s standards for assessment and intervention, decision making and
practice evaluation, PDE’s guideline of accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting, and SSWAA’s key construct of data-based decision making. The readings will discuss variables that may place a student in the at-risk category, and if warranted, how to begin the initial assessment process within a systemic, multi-modal method. The readings draw from a strengths-based, person-in-environment approach in how the school social worker identifies and observes behavior within a variety of environments in the educational setting. A student will learn how to identify the problem, assessing the problem, develop a goal oriented, multi-tiered, evidence-based intervention, and evaluate for effectiveness.

The topic of week 10 will briefly cover *Evidence-Based and Evidence-Informed Practice and Programs*. This topic will discuss the evaluation and integration of evidence-based programs for direct practice. This topic will cover CSWE’s competency of engaging in practice-informed research informed practice, NASW’s standard of decision making and practice evaluation, PDE’s guideline of theories of human behavior and development and their implication for the child’s participation in the learning process, and SSWAA’s key construct of data-based decision making. As a social worker practicing within a host setting, our practice is often guided by a variety of stakeholders. These stakeholders can impact our practice by putting requirements and policies in place. One of these policies is that school social workers practice effectively and as such use effective practices. The reading will review what is evidence-based practice and how to use the evidence as a guide to practice; the process of which is cyclical in nature. The lack of research completed in the field of school social work will also be discussed as a hindrance to building a solid knowledge foundation and legitimacy within the field.
The topic of week 11 will give an overview of Cultural Competency and its importance in the school setting. Specifically, understanding the historical context of minorities and access to education, navigating biracial dating relationships in high school, and supporting religious affiliated groups within a public school setting. This topic will cover CSWE’s competency of engaging in diversity and difference in practice, NASW’s standard of cultural competency, PDE’s guideline of understanding accommodations and adaptations of for students with disabilities in an inclusion setting and the needs of English language learners, and SSWAA’s key constructs of education rights and advocacy. The readings selected discuss what culture is and the relationship between the school social worker’s views, their client’s views, and the setting in which they interact.

The history of the treatment of different groups of people based on their culture, race, and gender will be discussed in addition to how this history resulted in present day policies. This discussion will frame the notion of a culturally competent practice in which the students will critically review their own perspectives and how that may affect all that is around them.

The topic of week 12 will touch on the Policies that Effect Practice, on numerous levels, that effect practice in a school setting. These policies vary from federal legislation like special education laws and the McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Child and Youth Assistance Act, to state policies around compulsory school attendance laws and age of consent for treatment of mental health services and drug and alcohol treatment, to local policy creation. This topic will cover CSWE’s competency on engaging in policy practice, NASW’s standard of advocacy, PDE’s guideline of understanding contemporary issues in public education, legislation, case law, and due process affecting the educational
adjustment of children, and SSWAA’s key constructs of ethical guidelines and education policy. Reviewed this week will be policies and landmark decisions that assert the rights of the student and rights and role of the school.

The topic for week 13 will be *School Social Work Practice Specific to Pennsylvania*. This topic will discuss state mandates and practice initiatives such as, how Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) is implemented in Pennsylvania, School Assistance Programming, types of schools found in Pennsylvania such as public, charter, private, independent, and religious schools, liability insurance, and mandated reporting. This topic will cover CSWE’s competency of demonstrating ethical and professional behavior, NASW’s standard of professional development, PDE’s guideline of understanding the role and function of the Home & School Visitor in working with students, families, schools, and community organizations, and SSWAA’s key constructs of ethical guidelines and education policy. A video clip and reading have been selected to support this topic. The video clip shows RtII in action. Additionally, the reading selected describes how Pennsylvania put a unique spin on the implementation of the Student Assistance Program. Classroom discussion may include where social work services fit into this model and support.

Lastly, week 14 will cover *Practical Guidance* for once a person is working as a school social worker. Topics covered will be record keeping and workload management and how to remain relevant in the field once out of school; all three of which are NASW standards. Additionally, CSWE’s competency of demonstrating ethical and professional behavior, PDE’s guideline of understanding the education system as it relates to models
of social work and intervention, and SSWAA’s key constructs of education rights and advocacy will be covered.

As a foundational course at the Master-level, this course includes assignments aimed at a variety of learners. Reading, writing, and visual/oral assignments will be assigned. Those who are not comfortable participating in group discussions will be given the chance to show that they are prepared for class by completing the short, weekly reading quizzes. Individual and group projects that include written expression components and oral presentations will also be assigned.

**Implications and Limitations**

An implication of this work is to develop an introductory course on school social work in MSW programs in Pennsylvania. This course would fill the void of foundational school social work education at the master-level in Pennsylvania. The purpose of this course syllabus is to paint a broad stroke of what school social work is and facilitate basic knowledge of the specialized profession onto a first year MSW student. By no means is the course syllabus intended to cover all facets of school social work. This introductory course syllabus is meant to emphasize the broad scope of school social work, planting the seed for students to go deeper into specifics facets of the work at a later point. For example, recovery high schools are starting to gain traction across the country. Drug and alcohol assessments and interventions within a school setting would be a specific advanced area of study within the school social work genre that could be studied later. Additionally, behavior analysis is an advanced evidence based practice using learning theory as the foundation to assess and intervene with behavior change. It is important for school social workers to understand the principles of behavior analysis to assist students
with making positive behavior changes; however, behavior analysis is an advanced practice completed by a licensed professional which a school social worker could become later.

State specific findings from the National School Social Work Survey 2014 report on numerous Pennsylvania practitioners’ frustrations and barriers such as “lack of supervision or guidance” and not feeling “adequately prepared” in the field (Kelly et al., 2015, p. 2). An introductory course on school social work would meet NASW’s call for social work education programs to provide this “specialized knowledge and understanding of education systems (NASW, 2012, p. 8) and SSWAA’s support of “high quality pre-service training in school social work (SSWAA, 2003, p. 1) which would result in increasing professional preparedness and integrity of the profession.

Limitations of this dissertation are that this foundational syllabus will not cover everything laid out by the governing bodies. An advanced course will be needed to further elaborate on the profession and to cover CSWE’s competency of advancing human rights and NASW’s standards of advocacy and interdisciplinary leadership and collaboration.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the need for social workers in schools is increasing. With the needs of our youth and their families becoming more complex and multi-layered, we can no longer rely on an MSW student’s optional, brief experience in a school field placement or generalist social work course work to adequately prepare a social work student for professional practice in schools. With the offering and implementation of this introductory course at a minimum, school social workers will be prepared to adequately
practice in such a specialized host setting at a beginner's level. If social workers do not step up to meet this presenting need, other helping professionals will step forward to attempt to meet these needs.
SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

Syllabus

University of Pennsylvania

School of Social Policy and Practice

Course: Foundations in School Social Work

Lecturer: 
Class Day & Time: 
Classroom Location: 
Cell Phone: 
E-mail: 
Office Hours:

Course Description
In this course students will be introduced to the foundational principles of school social work. Since the 70s, school social work has been considered a specialization within the social work profession. Students will be introduced to the unique knowledge base and skill set needed to be successful as a social worker in a host setting. Students will learn about the century old history of school social work and how the profession has evolved, how to critically evaluate, navigate, and integrate the multiple layers of educational policy, welfare policy, and criminal justice policy, and the complexities that arise when working within and across several disciplines. Students will work within the ecological practice model to strengthen skills used for engagement, prevention, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and effectively advocate for their clients. This course is considered both a macro and clinical practice course.

This course may also be counted towards the requirements for the Home & School Visitor Certification.

Course Objectives
After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the functions of a school social worker within the practice context, both historically and currently.
2. Identify and demonstrate an understanding of key concepts of the ecological practice model and how it relates to school social work.
3. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of skills used to identify, assess, intervene, and evaluate outcomes.
4. Develop and demonstrate an understanding and skillset to work effectively among a multidisciplinary team and advocate for their clients.
5. Demonstrate the ability to apply the integration of policy and practice by identifying local, state, and federal legislation that effect practice outcomes.

Course Expectations
Be on time for class and prepared with necessary materials for class. Be respectful of the learning environment. This includes ensuring your cell phone’s ringer is muted. If you are not able to make it to class, please notify the instructor in advance. If you miss a class, a 1-2-page typed reflection on the assigned reading for the missed class will need to be submitted by the next class. All papers must be typed following APA format.

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

*Academic honesty is fundamental to our community. The Pennbook contains our Code of Academic Integrity. A confirmed violation of that Code in this course will result in failure for the course.*

- *Link* to the University’s Code of Academic Integrity: https://provost.upenn.edu/policies/pennbook/2013/02/13/code-of-academic-integrity
- *Link* to The Office of Student Conduct’s Frequently Asked Questions page: https://secure.www.upenn.edu/osc/
- *Link* to tips for avoiding plagiarism from the library’s online research tutorial: http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/PORT/documentation/avoidingplagiarism.html

**Grading**

10% - Class Attendance, Participation, Current Events, and Discussion  
15% - Educational Experience Reflection  
25% - Policy Group Presentation (20 minutes)  
50% - Case Conceptualization Final Paper (Parts I, II, and III)

**Assignment Descriptions**

**Participation (10% of final grade / 15 points)** – In addition to attending class each week, completing the assigned readings, and contributing to class discussion, each student will pick a week to bring a current school social work news story to class. At the beginning of class, the student will give a brief summary of the article and lead the class in discussion.

**Educational Experience Reflection (15% of final grade / 30 points)** – Self-awareness and self-reflection are ongoing skills used in good social work practice. This reflection paper will be between 3-5 pages long, detailing your own personal educational experience. This reflection can cover any time period between preschool and 12th grade and address any aspect of your experience that you wish. Your reflection may include, but is not limited to, a general overview of your education or a specific meaningful experience (i.e. a relationship with a teacher/mentor, a caretaker’s view on education, a discouraging experience, peer influence(s), community impact, access/resources). You will also need to describe what stage of development you were in during the experience you are writing about, why you selected that stage, and how that stage of development may have effected your experience.

**Policy Group Presentation (25% of final grade / 50 points)** – In small groups of 3-4, pick a local, state, or federal legislation that affects the population that you work with (or
are interested in) and explain the legislation to the class in a brief presentation. Presentations should be no more than 20 minutes in length. Pick your topic from the following list of legislation:

1) The McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act
2) Compulsory school attendance laws
3) Title IX of the Education Amendments
4) Act 71 – Suicide Awareness and Prevention
5) Act 147 - Mental Health Procedures Act
6) Minors’ Consent Act
7) Juvenile Act

Presentations should include the name of the legislation, major tenants / summary of the legislation, if the legislation has been updated or if you feel it needs to be updated, the funding mechanism for this legislation, practice implications of this legislation / how this legislation effects students and/or the population you work with, and anything else that you feel your classmates would benefit from knowing. Handouts are helpful for your peers. Be creative!

Final Paper (50% of final grade / 100 points) - The final paper will be between 8-10 pages in length. Students will vote on one of the following movies:

- *Precious* (Gabourey Sidibe) – 1 hour 50 minutes
- *Dangerous Minds* (Michelle Pfeiffer) – 1 hour 39 minutes
- *Freedom Writers* (Hilary Swank) – 2 hours 3 minutes
- *Stand and Deliver* (Edward James Olmos) – 1 hour 43 minutes

Students will watch the movie selected, then apply concepts from the semester for an in-depth analysis of a character in the selected movie. This process is also referred to as a case conceptualization. The paper will be divided into 3 parts. Students will hand in each part separately and in chronological order to allow for feedback and improvement each time submitted.

Part I: Character/Client and Problem Identification and Biopsychosocial Assessment (about 3 pages in length)

A) One page strengths-based biopsychosocial assessment (Refer to textbook: Massat et al., 2009, Chapter 22)
   i. Presenting Problem(s): How did the character/client get to you? Was there a referral?
   ii. Social History
   iii. Family Dynamics
   iv. Mental Health History
   v. Academic History
   vi. Medical History
   vii. System Involvement
   viii. Identification of risk and protective factors
B) Theoretical framework(s)
   i. Describe the theory you plan to utilize and why you think this theory helps
to explain the character/client’s presenting problem(s)

Part II: Clinical Assessment and Intervention (about 4 pages in length)
A) The assessment process
   i. Describe any standardized assessment tools used to assess the
      character/client and why?
   ii. What recommendations were made by your initial assessment/intake?
B) EBP intervention supported by your assessment and theoretical framework
   i. Describe the intervention or accommodation you selected and why (i.e.
      major tenants of the intervention, goals of the intervention, research
      completed on the intervention, the specific population aimed at utilizing
      the intervention, and time frame for the intervention)
   ii. How do you see the intervention playing out for the character (i.e.
       feasibility)?
   iii. Methods of evaluating success (i.e. data collection, how will you know
       that the intervention is working or worked?)

Part III: Policy Integration (about 3 pages in length)
A) Policies
   i. Identify local, state, and/or federal policies that help and/or harm your
      character
B) Conclusion
   i. Critique of your use of practice

The final paper should include at least 10 total citations -- a minimum of 5 citations from
assigned course readings and no less than 5 citations from other scholarly sources.

Textbooks

NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Practice, Policy, and Research (7th ed.). Chicago: Lyceum Books.

Any additional readings will be posted on Canvas, the university’s electronic course
software.

Course Overview

<table>
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<th>Week 1</th>
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| **Topic:** *Introduction*  
Exploring the history of school social work |
CSWE’s Competencies: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior; Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice

NASW’s Standards: Qualifications; Advocacy

PDE’s Guideline: The education system as it relates to models of social work and intervention

SSWAA’s Practice-model key construct: Education rights and advocacy

**Reading:**


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**Week 2**

**Topic:** What does School Social Work look like?

Looking at the types of tasks for School Social Workers

CSWE’s Competency: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior

NASW’s Standards: Qualifications; Professional development; Advocacy

PDE’s Guideline: The role and function of the Home & School Visitor in working with students, families, schools, and community organizations

SSWAA’s Practice-model key construct: Home-School-Community linkages

**Readings:**


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**Week 3**

**Topic:** Child and Adolescent Development

Theories pertaining to normal, at-risk, and irregular child and adolescent development and the effects of development on behavior and the learning process

CSWE’s Competency: Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

NASW’s Standards: Assessment; Intervention

PDE’s Guidelines: Theories of human behavior and development and their impact on learning; The characteristics of pupil populations and their impact on school behavior

SSWAA’s Practice-model key construct: Education rights and advocacy

**Readings:**


Assignment due:
Educational Experience Reflection

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**Week 4**

**Topic:** *School Policies: Making sense of acronyms*  
(i.e. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – (IDEA), Free Appropriate Public Education – (FAPE), Every Student Succeeds Act – (ESSA)

**CSWE’s Competency:** Engage in policy practice  
**NASW’s Standard:** Advocacy  
**PDE’s Guidelines:** Contemporary issues in public education, legislation, case law, and due process affecting the educational adjustment of children  
**PDE’s Competencies:** Accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities; Needs of English Language Learners  
**SSWAA’s Practice-model key constructs:** Ethical guidelines and educational policy; Education rights and advocacy  

**Readings:**  

The Basic Special Education Process under IDEA:  


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**Week 5**

**Topic:** *Who’s the client?*  
Identifying the client and maintaining professional boundaries within a host setting.

**CSWE’s Competency:** Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior  
**NASW’s Standard:** Ethics and values  
**PDE’s Guideline:** The role and function of the Home & School Visitor in working with students, families, schools, and community organizations
SSWAA’s Practice-model key construct: Ethical guidelines and educational policy

Readings:
Supplemental Ethical Standards for School Social Work Practice:


Week 6

**Topic:** Ethical considerations
Confidentiality – FERPA and HIPPA

**CSWE’s Competencies:** Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior; Engage in policy practice

**NASW’s Standard:** Ethics and values

**PDE’s Guideline:** Contemporary issues in public education, legislation, case law, and due process affecting the educational adjustment of children

**SSWAA’s Practice-model key constructs:** Ethical guidelines and educational policy; Education rights and advocacy

Readings:

Joint Guidance on the Application of FERPA and HIPPA to Student Records:

Assignment due:
Part 1 of Final Paper

Week 7

**Topic:** Systems
Taking a closer look at systems that intersect with the educational system through an ecological lens

**CSWE’s Competency:** Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice

**NASW’s Standard:** Interdisciplinary leadership and collaboration
### Week 8
**Topic:** When in Doubt: *Problem Solving for the Professional School Social Worker*
Strength-based techniques for direct practice and policy advocacy

**CSWE’s Competencies:** Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior; Engage in practice-informed research and research informed practice

**NASW’s Standard:** Decision making and practice evaluation

**PDE’s Competency:** Accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusion setting

**SSWAA’s Practice-model key construct:** Data-based decision making

#### Readings:

#### Assignment:
Identify your group members and the policy that you plan to present to the class

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### Week 9
**Topic:** *Assessment & Intervention*
Common tools to assess and techniques to track effectiveness of strength based interventions and how to document it all within the school environment

CSWE's Competency: Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

NASW's Standards: Assessment; Intervention; Decision making and practice evaluation

PDE's Competency: Accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusion setting

SSWAA's Practice-model key construct: Data-based decision making

Readings:


Assignment due:
Be prepared to discuss a formal or informal assessment tool used at your field placement and the procedure for use

Week 10

Topic: Evidence-Based Practice
The definition and principles of Evidence-Based Practice and application

CSWE's Competency: Engage in practice-informed research and research informed practice

NASW's Standard: Decision making and practice evaluation

PDE's Guideline: Theories of human behavior and development and their implication for the child's participation in the learning process

SSWAA's Practice-model key construct: Data-based decision making

Readings:

Week 11

**Topic: Cultural Competency**

Implementing culturally competent practice in a school setting

**CSWE's Competency:** Engage in diversity and difference in practice

**NASW's Standard:** Cultural competency

**PDE's Competency:** Accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusion setting; Needs of English Language Learners

**SSWAA’s Practice-model key construct:** Education rights and advocacy

**Readings:**


**Assignment due:**

Parts I and II of Final Paper

Week 12

**Topic: Policies that Effect Practice**

Review local, state, and federal legislation that effect school social work practice

**CSWE's Competency:** Engage in policy practice
**NASW’s Standard:** Advocacy  
**PDE’s Guideline:** Contemporary issues in public education, legislation, case law, and due process affecting the educational adjustment of children  
**SSWAA’s Practice-model key construct:** Ethical guidelines and educational policy

**Reading:**  

**Assignment due:**  
Group Policy Presentations

### Week 13

**Topic:** *Practice Specific to Pennsylvania*  
Specific state mandates and practice initiatives will be discussed

**CSWE’s Competency:** Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior  
**NASW’s Standard:** Professional development  
**PDE’s Guideline:** The role and function of the Home & School Visitor in working with students, families, schools, and community organizations  
**SSWAA’s Practice-model key construct:** Ethical guidelines and educational policy

**Reading:**  
Watch: Response to Intervention in PA-Project MP3 (2008)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsAqh2Pzx0A  
http://www.dhs.pa.gov/provider/studentassistanceprogram/

### Week 14

**Topic:** *Wrap Up*  
Practical guidance for tracking caseloads, continuing professional development, profession organizations

**CSWE’s Competency:** Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior  
**NASW’s Standards:** Record keeping, workload management, and professional development  
**PDE’s Guideline:** The education system as it relates to models of social work and intervention  
**SSWAA’s Practice-model key construct:** Education rights and advocacy

**Assignment due:**  
Parts I, II, and III of Final Paper
Annotated Bibliography for Syllabus Readings

Week 1 Readings


The introductory chapter of this text discusses the historical context of the helping profession in the education system; highlighting the beginning of school social work in the 1800s and pertinent legislation which led to changes in the field and current professional standards. The text highlights political movements and legislation and policy which resulted in changes in practice models, goals, and standards within the profession. The table included in the chapters clearly expresses the development of the profession over time by utilizing ten year chunks of history to explore what was occurring the world during those years.

Week 2 Readings


This chapter utilizes an ecological framework to understand the school social worker’s role. A school social worker may wear many hats, but often their purpose is to bridge systems. Whether key players are home, school, or community, a school social worker may act as the liaison between the systems. The text describes the school social worker as a team member, coach, case manager, advocate, planner, and policy maker. This list is
not all inclusive as each individual within each system is unique; however, understanding the possibilities of the roles of school social worker may assist in developing a sense of professional self.


This article reports the results of the 2nd National School Social Work Survey. The research survey aims to depict what the profession looks like now. Characteristics reported are: gender, race, educational level, licensure, physical region of the country, setting of school and how many schools the participant worked. Additionally, participants described student issues that they work with and where they receive their practice research. More state specific data may be derived from this research.


This article suggests that collaboration as a skill is often over looked. Collaboration is a skill stressed throughout MSW training programs; however, in the field, professionals often can be found isolating their skill set. The article suggests that the evidence base recommends seeking the input of as many involved parties as possible such as parents, teachers, and nurses. Plans created collaboratively have a higher chance of producing desired outcomes when there is by-in among all parties.

**Week 3 Readings**

School social workers work with a variety of people; however, utilizing system theory, this chapter highlights a few of the most common groups of students that a school social worker would work with. The article suggests how race may affect socioeconomic status which in turn may affect school choice. At risk factors and challenges that a school social worker may be tasked to assess and or identify are directly impacted by access to systems. These systems may include: child welfare, criminal justice, low income housing, mental health and drug treatment, and those that do not identify within the gender binary. The goal of a school social worker is to increase access and level the playing field for all children, including those that are marginalized.

Caselman, T. & Self, P. (2008). Assessment instruments for measuring young children’s social-emotional behavioral development. *Children & Schools, 30*(2), 103-115. This article states that one of the key roles of a school social worker is early detection of social-emotional concerns with children as supported through IDEA. The article reviews nine screening and/or assessment tools that a school social worker may utilize in their practice. The article reports out the strengths of the tools, reliability and validity, and where there are gaps which enable a school social worker to make educated decisions about using assessment tools with specific populations.


This chapter reviews the importance of understanding adaptive functioning and formal assessments that can be utilized to further understand how individuals acclimate to their surrounds. One of the main reasons school social workers need to be trained to identified
normative and abnormal behavior is federal legislation dictates such. IDEA of 2004 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) outlines that schools must screen for and assess adaptive behavior by using a Response to Intervention model. This model is a 3-tiered approach; with universal screening and services on the bottom and more intensive assessment and intervention above. Utilizing evidence-based assessment tools and incorporating conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills, school social workers can understand the student in a more holistic manner. The chapter lists common screening measures and assessments in easy to comprehend tables that include age range, informant, and type of measure.


The disproportionate number of minority male youth with learning disabilities being detained within the criminal justice system has come to be known as the school to prison pipeline. The data suggest that the school environment is often failing to meet the needs of this population.


This article draws a relationship between a student’s ACE score and risk for drop out. The article discusses the importance of implementing prevention programs for these students to decrease risk of dropping out.

**Week 4 Readings**

This chapter highlights key legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and ways in which school social workers can advocate for students with special needs in accordance to the law. This chapter clearly explains what categories make up special needs such as: physical disabilities, medical disabilities, emotional disabilities, language disabilities.


This article discusses the following changes as a result of IDEA: terminology and classifications of disabilities, legal rights of children with disabilities, the notion of the least restrictive environment, discipline for students with identified special needs, and provisions for social work services in schools. This legislation casts a wider net to provide services to children that qualify for specially designed instruction. Children that may have not received accommodations prior to this are children who may be diagnosed with ADD or ADHD, developmental delays, Autism, and Traumatic Brain Injury, in addition to those homeless or non-native English speakers. The onus is placed on the school to seek out these children that may need additional supports. The article goes on to explain how school social workers may advocate for these students and their families. For example,
the legislation stresses the home-school-community approach to work systemically and collaboratively in the best interest of the child.

**Week 5 Readings:**


This chapter discusses not only the inconsistencies among upholding confidentiality, but also the vast difference among cultures in their comprehension and expectations of confidentiality. Additionally, explaining confidentiality and its limitations in a developmentally appropriate fashion are reviewed as good practice, something that is done consistently, not just when a concern erupts. The chapter reviews a 7 step process to utilize as a foundation when deciphering between ethical and legal obligations. Lastly, the chapters discusses FERPA, the federal legislation which gives complete access of a student’s educational record to their guardian. The difference between documents that belong in a student’s educational record and a school social worker’s personal record keeping system were explained.


This article discusses the most frequent types of unprofessional conduct of school social workers and problems implementing a streamlined approach to discipline. Dual relationships and sexual misconduct are the most common types of unprofessional
conduct of school social workers. Because of the varying requirements of social workers that practice in a host setting such as a school, there lacks a systematic way to lodge a formal complaint or formally sanction unethical behavior of a school social worker. State licensing boards can address unprofessional conduct. However, with nearly a dozen states only requiring a bachelor degree for a social worker to practice in a school sans license, it is unlikely to get to that level of discipline due to a licensing board not being involved.

Week 6 Readings:


This chapter builds on Chapter 4 by fine tuning what information should be shared with a school team or others and what should not be. The decision to share information is largely individualized and situationally based. This chapter reviews where NASW stands on the matter of ethical dilemmas and who the school social worker’s client is. NASW’s position statement discusses numerous clients that a school social work must be concerned about in a given scenario, such as staff, student, and family. Kopels argues that there is a difference between stakeholders and clients, and further, professionalism and confidentiality. The chapter offers some tools used for guidance such as the law, immediacy of the situation, age of the student, and release of information/consent forms.

Week 7 Readings:

In this chapter, key groups of students usually served by the school social worker are discussed. Key groups of students are as follows: at-risk preschooler, gifted students, truant youth, students that use substances, low socioeconomic families, migrant families, homeless children and those not residing with their parents, abused and neglected children, teen parents, and students that identify as LGBTQ youth. Understanding systems that may already be involved in these students' lives is imperative to successfully supporting these students and to increase access to education for all students.


A growing body of research suggests that trauma effects development. Neurologists can see a change in brain development and function in response to exposure to chronic trauma. However, neurologists are also reporting that the physiological responses to trauma do not have to have a lasting effect if prevention and intervention are implemented effectively. This article suggests implementing an evidenced-based, systemic approach when working with youth who have experience trauma. The approach discussed comes from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN). With the shared goal of child serving systems such as education, health care, child welfare, first responders, and juvenile justice systems, to improve outcomes for children, the notion is
that the approach should be similar. NCTSN recommends that each child-serving system increase their level of trauma awareness, knowledge, and skill when working with children who experience trauma by utilizing their training toolkit. For each system, specific recommendations are made. For example, NCTSN recommends that the child welfare system should utilize trauma screening and assessment tools. For the education system, NCTSN recommends a systematic screen tool to be used to screen for traumatic stress in addition to providing continuing education about the topic to staff. For first responders, having the knowledge base for appropriate referrals is crucial to limiting additional exposure to the child. Health care systems are urged to adopt evidence-based traumatic stress interventions as part of a family-centered approach that may be easily imbedded into quality assurance processes that are already in existence. With trauma typically being found at the core of delinquent behavior, an understanding of trauma is imperative when the goal is rehabilitation of delinquent behaviors.


This article reviews the history of zero tolerance policies in schools as a response to the increased violence occurring in schools beginning in the 1980s. These discipline policies unfairly targeted marginalized populations. Additionally, these disciplinary practices directly correlate with the increase in marginalized populations involved in the juvenile justice system which lead to the term school to prison pipeline.

This study utilizes an ecological framework to further understand cross-system communication regarding school-age children that are in out-of-home child welfare placements. The results of this study find that school professionals and child welfare workers need training to fill the knowledge gaps of the educational and child welfare systems policies in order to advocate for students and support educational decisions that are in the student’s best interest. Additionally, federal legislation that effects both systems are as follows: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Keeping Children and Families Safe Act, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act. The article suggests the best way to fill in these knowledge gaps of the educational and child welfare systems policies is through continuing education. The evidence also suggests that a school-wide trauma informed approach would benefit these students.

Week 8 Readings:


Consultation is an important social work skill that often goes overlooked. Consultation is an efficient, cost-effective problem solving process. This chapter discusses a general 6 stage model for consultation with teachers, parents, and administrators.


This article documents a literature review that was conducted to find existing research on school social work and student achievement outcomes to support the importance of the
school social worker’s role. Barriers that the researchers ran into were the varied roles that school social workers take on which makes it difficult to define a school social worker in addition to the variety of titles social workers are employed under in a school system. Additionally, previous research varied when identifying educational outcomes such as grades, attendance, graduation rates as states operate under different definitions and guidelines for reporting outcomes. Further, the lack of experimental or quasi-experimental research designs in this genre limit validity of the results. The article concluded with presenting results of a survey conducted among school social workers. The sample was collected from the 100 largest school districts in the country through data retrieved from the National Center for Education Statistics. The results yielded a correlation between number of school social workers in a school district and student achievement. This research is important when reviewing implementation for interventions to increase student achievement.


This chapter recommends considering the numerous systems involved in a child’s life when assessment of need is occurring. Furthermore, the assessment process is ongoing and should be used as a guide. This chapter includes a basic 9 step guide to assessing an individual student.

Once a need has been assessed and intervention is needed, a school social worker will need to implement an empirically support intervention. This chapter reviews how to research and locate an appropriate intervention. The chapter lists clearinghouses and organizations that review and compile evidence of supported interventions. A comprehensive table of empirically supported interventions and program details is also included in the chapter. To see if the selected intervention is effective, tools to measure outcomes are also needed. The chapter includes another comprehensive table to review a variety of a measures. Further, as a school social worker, intervention can be implemented in a variety of ways. Within a school, a social worker may have the opportunity to intervene among a group. This could be with a family, small group, or classroom instruction. The last table included in the chapter lists recommended curriculums used with groups.

**Week 9 Readings:**


This chapter discusses assessment as an ongoing process, using a strengths based perspective. Establishing the purpose of the assessment, focusing on strengths to support
areas of weakness, and examples of questions are discussed when reviewing techniques. Further, the chapter utilizes a person-in-environment approach to further understand dynamics the student may contribute to by discussing the importance of observation to address functions of behavior. ABC (Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence) model is an evidence-based approach to understanding behavior in a learning environment. Steps to completing a functional behavior assessment and case study are included in this chapter.


This article reviews the prevalence of depression according to DSM criteria among elementary aged children. Due to developmental level, assessing children is difficult. This article discusses self-report as the most useful tool to measure the severity of symptomology with children. Eight self-report measures are reviewed. The article concludes with the recommendation for a school social worker to use the Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (MFQ) to assess severity of depression symptoms with elementary-aged children.

**Week 10 Readings:**


School social workers are tasked by at least two governing bodies to incorporate research into practice; however, doing so as a social worker within a host setting poses some difficulties. Usually, tools to implement evidence-based practice are directed at clinicians
who are solo practitioners. Social workers within host settings such as schools, health care, and child welfare are often part of a larger team with numerous roles, purposes, and guidance which can make feasibility, consistency, and evaluation particularly challenging. This chapter discusses how to navigate researching evidence-based practice, decision making regarding the intervention of best fit, then evaluating for progress or promise.


This chapter details specific steps for school social workers to engage in the evidence-based practice process. Wording to describe one’s practice problem in research language, research tools and databases to conduct reviews of the research, and how to apply research within a host setting are discussed. Trouble shooting for developmental, cultural, and environmental adaptations regarding implementation are also described.


This article defines evidence-based practice in relation to IDEA. This article draws on Franklin and Hopson (2004) who point out challenges of implementing EBP as school social workers at the time. EBP is an available tool that school social workers can utilize to reach treatment goals of progress. The article, mainly a literature review, concludes that the challenges school social workers were enduring over 10 years ago to implement EBP are still present.

This article describes the difference between evidence-based practice and empirically supported intervention including how to navigate research based on a multi-tiered approach found within schools. Additionally, the article provided a clear and detailed table outlining the most common and their empirically supported research for each of the three tiers dictated within the RtII (Response to Instruction and Intervention) multi-tiered framework.

**Week 11 Readings:**


This chapter discusses the historic context (dating back to pre-civil war era: 1800s) of African American pupils in the public school system. To empathize and advocate for marginalized students, a school social worker must know the history of this disenfranchised group of people in relation to the educational institution.

This chapter defines culturally competent practice within a culturally competent framework and the role that a social worker may play. A school social worker uniquely works within and draws on many different layers of a student’s environment. Skills to do so effectively are described in depth to deliver services appropriately.


This article discusses gender and racial identity development of pre-teen females in an exploratory study. The use of inappropriate language, attitudes towards minority students, and coping skills are discussed in-depth.


With school being the environment where youth spend most of their time, trauma symptoms are most often noticed within the school setting. First generation immigrant youth likely experienced a traumatic event at some point during the immigration process.

With youth of color entering the special education system at an alarming rate when compared to their white peers, the article discusses the need to promote prosocial experiences and healthy coping mechanisms at the first signs of trauma. The school setting is a consistent influence for youth. When intervention occurs sooner rather than later, positive change is more likely to occur.

Incidents of teen dating violence is on the rise. This article describes the impact of gender and ethnicity on teen relationships and types of dating violence identified by the youth participants such as sexual, relational, emotional, and physical. School social workers have a unique and opportune perspective when working with youth. This article stresses the importance of picking up on the signs of teen dating violence and intervening appropriately by describing two promising interventions.


This article documents focus groups that were held with self-identified teen religious minorities. Results of this study detailed incidents of religious discrimination occurring in public schools. Incidents reported by the youth clearly fell under the definition of hate crime, bullying, and/or microaggression. The study highlighted the importance of a school social worker’s role in identifying these incidents and ways in which tolerance can be taught.

**Week 12 Readings:**


This chapter discusses legal rights that students hold under the constitution. The first, fourth, eighth, and fourteenth amendments are reviewed at length. This chapter highlights
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specific and appropriate ways a school social worker can advocate for the rights and freedoms of students'.
References


Appendices

Appendix A: CSWE’s 2015 EPAS Competencies [selected pages 7-9] p. 73-76

Appendix B: NASW’s 2012 Standards for School Social Work Services [selected pages 5-14] p. 77-87

Appendix C: PDE’s Guidelines for Home & School Visitor Programs p. 88-89

Appendix D: PDE’s 2008 Competencies for Educational Specialists Preparation Programs p. 90-97

2015
EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS
for Baccalaureate and Master’s Social Work Programs
The nine Social Work Competencies are listed below. Programs may add competencies that are consistent with their mission and goals and respond to their context. Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency at the generalist level of practice, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

**Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

**Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereignty status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

**Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:
### Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

### Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

### Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness.
Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

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NASW Standards for School Social Work Services
demonstrating a lack of response to tier 1 interventions, students are referred for the additional support offered at tier 2. These strategies should be efficient to apply and effective in terms of producing rapid improvement in students' ability to learn and be successful in school.

Tier 3 refers to the use of evidence-informed individual and long-term interventions. Tier 3 interventions are provided to students who have serious academic, behavioral, or social–emotional problems that constitute a chronic condition that has not responded to data-driven tier 1 or tier 2 interventions. The goal of this tier is to reduce the negative impact of the condition on a student's functioning.

Tier 3 interventions involve intensive individualized strategies that are implemented for extended periods of time and frequently involve community agencies. Data from tier 3 interventions may indicate the need to consider eligibility for special education services.

In summary, school social workers not only provide direct services to children who require basic needs or exhibit challenging behavior, but also lead prevention efforts that support children through building the capacity of family members, other school staff, and community agencies to improve student outcomes.

**Goals of the Standards**

These standards were developed to broadly define the scope of services that school social workers shall provide, that school administrators should support, and that students and families
should expect. The standards are designed to enhance awareness of the skills, knowledge, values, methods, and sensitivity school social workers need to work effectively within school systems.

Ideally, these standards will stimulate the development of clear guidelines, goals, and objectives related to school social work services in social work practice, research, policy, and education.

The specific goals of the standards are:
- to establish expectations for school social work practices and services;
- to ensure that school social work services are guided by the NASW Code of Ethics;
- to ensure the highest quality of school social work services will be provided to students and families;
- to provide a basis for advocating for clients' rights to be treated with respect and dignity, confidentiality, access to supportive services, and appropriate inclusion in decision making;
- to provide a basis for the preparation of school social workers and the development of continuing education materials and programs related to school social work services; and
- to encourage school social workers to participate in the development and refinement of public policy, at the local, state, and federal levels, to support school success.
Standards

Standard 1. Ethics and Values
School social workers shall adhere to the ethics and values of the social work profession and shall use the NASW Code of Ethics as a guide to ethical decision making, while understanding the unique aspects of school social work practice and the needs of the students, parents, and communities they serve.

Interpretation
School social workers shall demonstrate core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. In addition, school social workers shall adhere to the professional ethical responsibilities delineated in the NASW Code of Ethics.

School social workers shall have knowledge of and comply with local, state, and federal mandates related to informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and access to records within the context of legal and ethical rights of minors and parents. Students, families, and other professionals shall be informed of the limits of confidentiality when services are initiated. Employers and school administrators should be informed of the ethical responsibilities of the social work profession. In the event that conflicts arise among competing expectations, school social workers are directed to the NASW Code of Ethics as a tool in their decision making.
Standard 2. Qualifications

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

Interpretation

School social workers shall have a graduate degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). An MSW degree is the recommended entry-level qualification for a school social worker position. As a distinct specialty within the social work profession, school social work requires specialized knowledge and understanding of education systems, which should be provided by social work education programs. The school social worker shall actively seek this specialized training when the CSWE accredited program does not provide it. School social workers shall be licensed by state boards of social work and certified through state departments of education when available.

School social workers shall have specialized knowledge and an understanding of historical and current perspectives of public school education at the local, state, and national levels, including educational reform and legislation. School social workers shall also be knowledgeable about evidence-informed approaches to teaching and learning that promote positive academic outcomes for all students.
Standard 3. Assessment
School social workers shall conduct assessments of individuals, families and systems/organizations (namely, classroom, school, neighborhood, district, state) with the goal of improving student social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes.

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

Standard 4. Intervention
School social workers shall understand and use evidence-informed practices in their interventions.

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

Standard 5. Decision Making and Practice Evaluation
School social workers shall use data to guide service delivery and to evaluate their practice regularly to improve and expand services.

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

Standard 6. Record Keeping
School social workers shall maintain accurate data and records that are relevant to planning, implementation, and evaluation of school social work services.

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

Standard 7. Workload Management
School social workers shall organize their workloads to fulfill their responsibilities and clarify their critical roles within the educational mission of the school or district in which they work.

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

Standard 8. Professional Development
School social workers shall pursue continuous enhancement of knowledge and skills to provide the most current, beneficial, and culturally appropriate services to students and their families.

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

**Standard 9. Cultural Competence**

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

**Interpretation**

School social workers shall demonstrate self awareness, knowledge, and practice skills consistent with the *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*. School social workers shall continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding about client groups they serve and culturally appropriate resources. This understanding shall be applied in a manner that results in a positive school-climate that respects and values differences. School social workers shall use evidence-informed practices, skills, and techniques that reflect the worker's understanding of the role of culture in the helping process. School social workers shall recognize barriers to academic progress relating to cultural issues within the local education agency, while supporting an environment that honors and celebrates the cultures of the population within the school.
Standard 10. Interdisciplinary Leadership and Collaboration
School social workers shall provide leadership in developing a positive school climate and work collaboratively with school administration, school personnel, family members, and community professionals as appropriate to increase accessibility and effectiveness of services.

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

Standard 11. Advocacy
School social workers shall engage in advocacy that seeks to ensure that all students have equal access to education and services to enhance their academic progress.

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

Appendix A. Administrative Structure and Support

Qualifications and Title
An MSW degree is the recommended entry-level qualification for school social workers. Local education agencies should ensure that school social workers have an MSW degree from a program accredited by CSWE. However, should the local education agency employ school social workers whose highest degree is a BSW, an MSW-level social worker should provide supervision for the BSW-level social worker.

Salaries and job classifications of school social workers should be commensurate with their education, experience, and responsibilities and be comparable to similarly qualified specialized instructional support personnel employed by the local education agency.

"School social worker" is the position title that correctly identifies the educational background, profession, and function of a social worker employed by a local education agency. Other titles, such as "attendance officer," "pupil personnel worker," "home and school visitor," "home-school coordinator," "visiting teacher,"
Home and School Visitor

I. Knowing the Content

The professional education program provides evidence that Home and School Visitor certification candidates complete a clearly articulated program at a bachelor's or post-baccalaureate degree level that requires them to demonstrate their knowledge of and competence in coordinating and implementing social services for school aged children (K-12) including:

I.A. The role and function of the Home and School Visitor in working with students, families, schools and community organizations including:
   - child advocacy,
   - case management and record keeping,
   - assessment, diagnosis, monitoring, evaluation and termination,
   - interviewing and communicating with groups and individuals,
   - consultation and collaboration with school personnel and community services,
   - prevention and intervention in social and educational problems

I.B. The educational system as it relates to models of social work and intervention in the areas of:
   - school-community-pupil relations model,
   - clinical model,
   - social interaction model

I.C. Theories of human behavior and development and their implications for the child's participation in the learning process:
   - human growth and development,
   - learning theory,
   - systems theory,
   - communications theory,
   - social learning theory,
   - behavioral theory

I.D. The characteristics of pupil populations and how they impact student behavior in the school including:
   - racial, ethnic, religious, and gender identification, peer influences,
   - handicapping conditions, stress, disability, and health problems,
   - school age pregnancy and adolescent parents,
   - substance abuse, suicide, and violence,
   - dropouts, underachievers, and truants,
   - abused and neglected children, divorce and separation
I.E. Contemporary issues in public education, legislation, case law, and due process affecting the educational adjustment of children:

- Due process procedures under case law,
- PL 93-380 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment) 1974,
- Policies regarding student discipline, suspension, and expulsion,
- PL 100-77, Urgent Relief for the Homeless Act (Homeless Assistance Act),
- PL 100-297, School Improvement Act of 1997 (Hawkins-Stafford ESEA Amendments),
- The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1997 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),
- Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

II. Performances

The professional education program provides evidence that Home and School Visitor certification candidates demonstrate knowledge and competence in the content areas in coursework and a minimum of 360 hours of field experiences and a required practicum. The field experiences and practicum must be in diverse settings and require the candidates to demonstrate the exit criteria and competencies while working with students at different educational levels under the supervision of a certified home and school visitor.

III. Professionalism

The professional education program provides evidence that each certification candidate demonstrates knowledge and competencies that foster professionalism in school and community settings including:

III.A. Professional organizations, publications, and resources

III.B. Integrity and ethical behavior, professional conduct as stated in Pennsylvania’s Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators; and local, state, and federal laws and regulations

III.C. Collaborating school colleagues and other social service providers to improve student learning

III.D. Communicating effectively with parents/guardians, other agencies and the community at large to support learning by all students
ACCOMMODATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN AN INCLUSIVE SETTING AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Pennsylvania's teacher preparation programs must include the competencies and skills needed to equip teachers to accommodate and adapt instruction for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting and to assist English language learners.

Final rulemaking of the State Board of Education published in The Pennsylvania Bulletin on September 22, 2007 requires all instructional and educational specialist preparation programs to include the following by January 1, 2011:

1. At least 9 credits or 270 hours regarding accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting (instruction in literacy skills development and cognitive skill development for students with disabilities must be included); and
2. At least 3 credits or 90 hours regarding the instructional needs of English language learners. (22 PA Code, Chapter 49, §49.13(b) (relating to policies)).

Competencies and skills to accommodate and adapt instruction for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting and to assist English language learners must be identifiable during the program review process.

DESIGN

Applicable hours are limited to a combination of seat hours of classroom instruction, field observation experiences, major research assignments and development and implementation of lesson plans with accommodations and adaptations for diverse learners in an inclusive setting.

In order to help all teachers better understand ways to accommodate and adapt learning for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting, it is essential that courses and course content be developed and taught by faculty who have thorough knowledge and expertise in using evidence-based practices to teach individuals with disabilities. The preferred approach is the use of faculty with postgraduate training and certification in special education. While preparation programs may infuse the candidate competencies related to accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities into existing courses or add additional courses as appropriate, it is the explicit application and relationship to students with disabilities that require faculty who deliver the content to have thorough knowledge and expertise in Special Education.

Training for higher education faculty may include the use of modules and other educational activities prepared by special education faculty.

1 (4) Evaluation and approval of teacher education programs leading to the certification and permitting of professional personnel.

(i) The evaluation by the Department will provide assurance that, on or before January 1, 2011, teacher education programs will require at least 9 credits or 270 hours, or an equivalent combination thereof, regarding accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Within the content of these 9 credits or 270 hours, instruction in literacy skills development and cognitive skill development for students with disabilities must be included, as determined by the institution. At least 3 credits or 90 additional hours, or an equivalent combination thereof, must address the instructional needs of English language learners. For purposes of this requirement, 1 credit equals 30 hours of coursework.

Applicable hours are limited to a combination of seat hours of classroom instruction, field observation experiences, major research assignments, and development and implementation of lesson plans with accommodations and adaptations for diverse learners in an inclusive setting. (22 Pa. Code §49.13(4)(i)).
COMPETENCIES: ACCOMMODATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN AN INCLUSIVE SETTING (9 CREDITS OF 270 HOURS)

The following outline includes the competencies for the 9 credits or 270 course hours addressing the academic needs and adaptations for students with disabilities.

I. Types of Disabilities and Implications for Learning

Candidates will be able to:

A. Demonstrate an understanding of and ability to plan for: type, identification, and characteristics of different types of disabilities, as well as effective, evidence-based instructional practices and adaptations.

B. Demonstrate an understanding of the legal rights and responsibilities of the teacher related to special education referral and evaluation and the rights and procedural safeguards that students are guaranteed.

C. Demonstrate an understanding of possible causes and implications of over-representation of minorities in special education to avoid misinterpretation of behaviors that represent cultural, linguistic differences as indicative of learning problems.

II. Cognitive Skill Development to Ensure Achievement of Students with Disabilities

In Standards Aligned System to Include All School Environments

A. Cognitive – Delineate how individuals acquire and process information.
   1. Design learning environments to facilitate encoding, storage, and retrieval of knowledge and information for memory, attention, perception, action, and problem solving.
   2. Describe the development patterns of change, physical, cognitive, and psychosocial areas that have been identified for each stage of development.
   3. Apply concepts of human development to education and learning regarding attention, memory, conceptual knowledge and its formation, reasoning, decision-making, problem-solving, executive functioning, principles and mechanisms of development, intelligence, action, and motor control.
   4. Specify the experiences children need from birth to age eight to prepare them to learn, read, and succeed in school.
   5. Identify early interactions with adults and peers, the early childhood education teaching methods and curricula, and comprehensive early childhood interventions that support learning and development, specifically in domains that prepare children from diverse backgrounds for kindergarten and early grades.

B. Physical – Recognize patterns of typical physical developmental milestones and how patterns of students with disabilities may be different, and plan effectively for possible accommodations and/or modifications which may be necessary to implement effective instructional practices.

C. Social – Initiate, maintain, and manage positive social relationships with range of people in a range of contexts.
   1. Recognize areas of development for students with disabilities and plan effectively for: interpersonal processes, forming and maintaining relationships (including parent-child,
caregiver, peer, friend, sibling), and attachment models and their effects on learning.

2. Apply principles in social competence, social withdrawal, social role formation and maintenance, prosocial behaviors, and aggression as they affect learning.

D. Behavioral – Recognize patterns of typical behavior milestones and how patterns of students with disabilities may be different, and plan effectively for positive teaching of appropriate behaviors that facilitate learning.

E. Language – Apply reading predictors, analyzing the effect of individual differences in specific perceptual, linguistic, and cognitive skills and how they affect a child’s ability to read.

1. Apply principles of early learning development in the following areas: language comprehension, language expression, language form and syntax, morphology and semantics.

2. Apply and teach skills of spoken language as a precursor of reading and academic development.

F. Positive Environments for Learning for Students with Disabilities

1. Define the scientific principles influencing academic and social behavior.

2. Implement positive behavioral interventions based on a functional analysis of behavior.

3. Create an optimal learning environment by utilizing, evaluating, modifying and adapting the classroom setting, curricula, teaching strategies, materials, and equipment.

G. Collaboration and Communication

1. Identify effective co-planning and co-teaching strategies.

2. Identify collaborative consultative skills and models (i.e., understanding role on the IEP team; teaming; parallel teaching).

3. Identify instructional levels of students through collaboration with members of the IEP team.

4. Understand the role of the general educator as part of the team for transition planning across transition points (i.e., preschool to school entry, grade level to grade level, school to school, to post school outcomes).

5. Demonstrate an understanding of the meaningful roles that parents and students play in the development of the student’s education program.

6. Demonstrate sensitivity for multicultural and economic perspectives in order to encourage parent participation.

7. Demonstrate an understanding of how to support student and family communication and meaningful participation into the student’s educational program.

8. Work collaboratively with all members of the student’s instructional team including parents and non-educational agency personnel.

III. Assessments

Candidates will be able to:

A. Identify, administer, interpret, and plan instruction based on each of the following assessment components in a standards aligned system:

1. Authentic – A form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills. The assessment usually includes a task for students to perform, and a rubric is used to evaluate their performance.
2. **Screening** – Screening assessments are used to determine which students may be at risk. Poor performance on the screen assessment identifies those students needing additional, in-depth assessment of strengths and weaknesses. The primary purpose of screening assessments is to identify children early who need additional instructional (or behavioral) intervention. An essential element of using a screening assessment is implementing additional identified intervention(s) (instructional, behavioral, or medical).

3. **Diagnostic** – The purpose of diagnostic assessments is to ascertain, prior to instruction, each student’s strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills. Using diagnostic assessments enables the instructor to remediate students and adjust the curriculum to meet each pupil’s unique needs. Examples of diagnostic assessments are: DRA’s; Running Records; GRADE; GMADE.

4. **Formative** – Pennsylvania defines formative assessments as classroom based assessments that allow teachers to monitor and adjust their instructional practice in order to meet the individual needs of students. Formative assessments can consist of formal instruments or informal observations. The key is how the results are used. Results should be used to shape teaching and learning. Black and William (1998) define formative assessments broadly to include instructional formats that teachers utilize in order to get information that is used diagnostically to alter instructional practices and have a direct impact on student learning and achievement. Under this definition, formative assessment encompasses questioning strategies, active engagement check-ins (such as response cards, white boards, random selection, think-pair-share, popsicle sticks for open-ended questions, and numbered heads), and analysis of student work based on set rubrics and standards including homework and tests. Assessments are formative when the information is used to adapt instructional practices to meet individual student needs as well as to provide individual students corrective feedback that allows them to “reach” set goals and targets. Ongoing formative assessment is an integral part of effective instructional routines that provide teachers with the information they need to differentiate and make adjustments to instructional practice in order to meet the needs of individual students. When teachers know how students are progressing and where they are having trouble, they can use this information to make necessary instructional adjustments, such as re-teaching, trying alternative instructional approaches, or offering more opportunities for practice. The use of ongoing formative classroom assessment data is an imperative. Effective teachers seamlessly integrate formative assessment strategies into their daily instructional routines.

5. **Benchmark** – Assessments that are designed to provide feedback to both the teacher and the student about how the student is progressing towards demonstrating proficiency on grade level standards. Well-designed benchmark assessments and standards-based assessments measure the degree to which students have mastered a given concept; measure concepts, skills, and/or applications; are reported by referencing the standards, not other students’ performance; serve as a test to which teachers want to teach; measure performance regularly, not only at a single moment in time. Examples of benchmark assessments are: 4Sight; Riverside 9-12; DIBELS.

6. **Summative** – Summative Assessments seek to make an overall judgment of progress at the end of a defined period of instruction. Often the summative assessment occurs at the end of a school level, grade, or course, or is administered at certain grades for purposes of state or local accountability. Summative assessments are considered
Accommodations & Adaptations for Diverse Learners Guidelines, 2006

high-stakes assessments and the results are often used in conjunction with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). They are designed to produce clear data on the student's accomplishments at key points in his or her academic career. Performance on these assessments are often part of the student's permanent record and serve as an indication of overall performance on a set of standards. Results from summative assessments are of interest to parents, faculty, administration, the press, and the public. The data from summative assessments are the basis of accountability systems. Examples of summative assessment: PSSA; Terra Nova.

B. Demonstrate an understanding of the types of assessments used (e.g., screening, diagnostic, formative, summative) and the purpose of each assessment in a data-based decision making process.

C. Demonstrate the use of formal and informal assessment data for instructional, behavioral, and possible eligibility for special education based on the type of assessment, level of the students being assessed, and the purpose of and quality of instruction.

D. Demonstrate an understanding of the multi-disciplinary evaluation process and an ability to articulate the findings presented in an evaluation report including grade-level equivalents, percentie rank, standard scores, and stanines.

E. Demonstrate an understanding of the components of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process, with emphasis on understanding measurable goals based on present levels, specially designed instruction, adaptations, accommodations, supplementary aids and services, and supports for school personnel.

F. Articulate differences between achievement tests, aptitude tests, and observational data used in special education placement decisions.

G. Create an instructional plan using assessment information related to individual student achievement.

H. Analyze and interpret formative assessment (e.g., curriculum based assessment, CBA).

I. Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose and intent of standardized assessments and progress monitoring as one of the multiple indicators used in overall student evaluation.

J. Systematically monitor student performance to identify areas of need.

K. Use evaluative data on an individual, class, and district level to identify and implement instructional and/or programmatic revisions for quality improvement.

L. Demonstrate an understanding of legally acceptable modifications and accommodations for assessment for students with disabilities.

M. Demonstrate an understanding of ethical practice for assessment.

N. Recognize the need to consult with multi-disciplinary team when cultural, economic, or linguistic differences are present in order to avoid biased assessment.

IV. Literacy Development and Instruction in Core and Intervention Areas

Candidates will be able to:

A. Demonstrate an ability to match instructional research-validated literacy interventions to identified student needs.

B. Demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the components of reading and describe how these areas pose challenges for students with disabilities:
   Phonological Awareness & Phonics
   Fluency
Vocabulary
Comprehension
Language
Word Study (investigate & understand the patterns in words)
C. Demonstrate an ability to review and evaluate literacy programs for purpose, quality, effectiveness, and research-base and show knowledge of commonly available programs.
D. Identify evidence-based instructional practices to be used with students with disabilities in the area of literacy.
E. Demonstrate an understanding of the evidence-based connection between literacy and behavior.
F. Demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the components of writing and describe how these areas pose challenges for students with disabilities:
   Text production
   Spelling
   Composition for different types of writing
G. Clearly articulate and model the use of explicit and systematic instruction in the teaching of literacy (reading and writing) for students with disabilities across all reading levels.
H. Clearly articulate and model the use of explicit and systematic instruction in the teaching of content area literacy for all students with disabilities across all reading levels.
I. Demonstrate instructional strategies to enhance comprehension of material.
J. Demonstrate an understanding of the challenges that students with specific disabilities face in content area literacy.
K. Assess the readability of content area reading materials.
L. Demonstrate the ability to adapt content area material to the student’s instructional level.
M. Utilize assessment tools with appropriate accommodations in the area of literacy to identify effectiveness of the standards-based curriculum (core literacy program for students with disabilities).
N. Establish and maintain progress monitoring practices aligned with the identified needs of each student to adjust instruction and provide rigor in the area of literacy for students with disabilities.
O. Establish and maintain progress monitoring practices within the content area aligned with the identified needs of each student to adjust instruction and provide rigor in the area of literacy for all students with disabilities.

V. Effective Instructional Strategies for Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings

Candidates will be able to:

A. Identify effective instructional strategies to address areas of need.
B. Scaffold instruction to maximize instructional access to students.
C. Monitor student progress to provide mediated scaffolding and increase academic rigor when appropriate.
D. Provide feedback to students at all levels to increase awareness to areas of strength, as well as areas of concern.
E. Strategically align standard-based curriculum with effective instructional practices.
F. Identify and implement instructional adaptations based on evidence-based practices (demonstrated to be effective with students with disabilities) to provide curriculum content using a variety of methods without compromising curriculum intent.
G. Analyze performance of all learners and make appropriate modifications.
H. Design and implement programs that reflect knowledge, awareness and responsiveness to diverse needs of students with disabilities.
I. Use research supported methods for academic and non-academic instruction for students with disabilities.
J. Develop and implement universally designed instruction.
K. Demonstrate an understanding of the range and appropriate use of assistive technology (i.e., no tech, low tech, high tech).
L. Demonstrate efficient differentiated instruction and an understanding of efficient planning, coordination and delivery for effective instruction required for inclusive settings.

MEETING THE INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)
(3 Credits or 90 Hours)

The following outline includes the competencies for the 3 credits or 90 course hours addressing the academic needs and adaptations for ELL students.

I. Foundations for Pre-service Candidates

Candidates will be able to:

A. Language
   1. Demonstrate knowledge of language systems, structures, functions, and variation.
   2. Identify the process of acquiring multiple languages and literacy skills, including the general stages of language development.
   3. Identify the differences between academic language and social language.
B. Culture
   1. Identify sociocultural characteristics of ELLs including educational background and demographics.
   2. Describe how ELLs' cultural communication styles and learning styles affect the learning process.
   3. Describe how ELLs' cultural values affect their academic achievement and language development.
   4. Identify bias in instruction, materials and assessments.
   5. Demonstrate cross-cultural competence in interactions with colleagues, administrators, school and community specialists, students and their families.
   6. Observe culturally and/or linguistically diverse instructional settings.

II. Applications for Pre-Service Candidates

Candidates will be able to:

A. Standards-based instruction
   1. Apply research, concepts and theories of language acquisition to instruction.
   2. Implement appropriate research-based instructional strategies to make content comprehensible for all ELLs.
   3. Demonstrate effective instructional planning and assessment integrating the PA Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners PreK-12 (ELPS) and PA academic standards.
B. Assessment specific to ELL
1. Use PA ELPS to design content assessment.
2. Identify issues related to standards-based formative and summative assessment for all ELLs.
3. Use assessment data to differentiate and modify instruction for optimal student learning.

C. Professionalism
1. Describe the legal responsibilities related to serving ELLs.
2. Demonstrate collaborative, co-teaching models for serving ELLs.
3. Define common terms associated with English Language Learners.
4. Identify professional resources and organizations related to serving ELLs.
The role and responsibilities of school social workers vary significantly across schools, districts, states, and countries. The purpose of the School Social Work Practice Model is (1) to articulate the skills and services that parents expect from school social workers and (2) to promote consistency in undergraduate and graduate social work education, credentialing, and professional practice with the goal of improving academic and behavioral outcomes.

There are a variety of factors that influence the percentage of full-time social workers available to these different roles. The most obvious factor is the ratio of full-time equivalence to the number of students served. A hallmark of the practice and key construct in this model of practice is that, effectively, a full-time social worker represents, on average, approximately 1:500 school social worker-student ratio. This estimate will vary depending on several factors, such as the percentage of high-risk students, the experience and expertise of the school social worker, and the availability of other services in the school and the community. Other factors that may affect the job description of school social workers are the priorities and expectations of the school district.
The Practice Model encourages school social workers to (1) provide evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services; (2) promote a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence; and (3) maximize access to school-based and community-based resources. School social workers are expected to possess advanced knowledge and technical skills to guide their practice in these three areas. The proportion of their time that school social workers engage in each practice varies widely depending on contextual factors, including the needs of the community, school, families, and students served.

1) Provide evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services

Providing evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services to support academic and behavior outcomes is the primary direct service component of school social work practice. School social workers have unique expertise in child and family work because they address school and community stressors that interfere with educational success. In addition, school social workers' consultative skills can assist other school staff in implementing interventions with fidelity. This practice is accomplished by:

- Implementing multi-tiered programs and practices
- Monitoring progress, and
- Evaluating service effectiveness

2) Promote a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence

School social workers promote a psycho-social environment that fosters academic engagement and achievement. Environments are conducive to learning and teaching when they have: (1) policies and procedures that produce safe and orderly environments; (2) capacity-building efforts to promote effective practices; and (3) supportive relationships within and between students, families, school staff, and community partners. This practice is implemented by:

- Promoting effective school policies and administrative procedures
- Enhancing the professional capacity of school personnel, and
- Facilitating engagement between student, family, school, and community

3) Maximize access to school-based and community-based resources

Maximizing school-based and community-based resources is the primary indirect or macro-practice component of school social work services. This may involve coordinating available services within the school or reaching out to community partners to secure services. School social workers know the services a school system provides, and they know the scope of services available within the community. Their skills in navigating these service delivery systems (e.g., health, mental health, child welfare, and juvenile justice) are crucial in challenging barriers to school and community resources that enable academic and behavioral success. This practice is accomplished by:

- Promoting a continuum of services
- Mobilizing resources and promoting assets, and
- Providing innovative leadership, interdisciplinary collaboration, systems coordination, and professional consultation
KEY CONSTRUCTS

Each school social work practice is supported by historical scholarship and research that delineates this specialized form of professional social work practice. The following key constructs are infused into each practice.

Home-school-community linkages

Academic achievement and behavior are profoundly impacted by the environment, including relationships and interactions across home, school, and community settings. Facilitating communication and promoting linkages across these systems is a central characteristic of school social work practice.

Ethical guidelines and educational policy

School social workers follow professional ethical guidelines and carry out federal and state educational policy to provide the highest level of school social work practice. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics and School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) Ethical Guideline Series define expectations for ethical school social work practice. School social work literature further facilitates accountability by promoting the use of an ethical decision-making model when applying laws, policies, and codes to specific school dilemmas. The Code of Ethics emphasizes the need for continuous professional development to keep abreast of evidenced-based practices in the field, and reflection on evidence-based practices to ensure that they fit the context and culture of the school setting.

Education rights and advocacy

School social workers address the ways in which structural inequalities and school processes affect school quality and educational outcomes. School social work practitioners are expected to raise issues of diversity and social and economic justice that lead to school failure and educational disparities. School social workers should be able to balance their mandate as school employees to advocate for students and families with their mandate as social workers to help change policies and practices that undermine the dignity and worth of students.

Data-based decision-making

School social workers use the best current research to design and implement interventions. School social work services should be informed by the research literature, adapt empirically supported interventions to fit student needs, and routinely evaluate the effectiveness of policies, programs, and practices.

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