

Information Regarding the Profession of School Social Worker in Comparison to the Mental Health Counselor

A. School Social Worker

- a. New York State Granted Social Workers Licensure in 2004.
 - i. Social Workers may be licensed as a Licensed Master Social Worker, or Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Note the following provisions of law:
 1. Education Law, Article 154, Section 7704 provides for Social Work Licensure.
 2. Part 74 and Section 52.30 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education provide specific rules for granting licensure
 - ii. School Social Work Certifications are issued by the New York State Department of Education's Office for Teaching Initiatives.
- b. Scope of Practice for School Social Worker
 - i. Practice Licensed Master Social Work or Licensed Clinical Social Work in New York State Public Schools.
- c. Two methods to obtain School Social Worker Certification (pursuant to Commissioner's Regulations- 8A NYCRR 80-2.3(f)).
 - i. Individual Evaluation-Demonstrate the following:
 1. Completed Master of Social Work (MSW);
 2. College supervised internship;
 3. Licensed as a LMSW or LCSW;
 4. 2 years paid full time pupil personnel experience;
 5. Completed workshops in:
 - a. Child abuse identification; and
 - b. School violence intervention and prevention;
 6. Fingerprint clearance.
 - ii. Certificate Progression
 1. Must hold valid provisional certificate as School Social Worker;
 2. Completed MSW;
 3. Licensed as a LMSW or LCSW;
 4. 2 years paid full time pupil personnel experience;
 5. Completed Workshops in:
 - a. Child Abuse Identification;
 - b. School Violence intervention and prevention;
 6. Fingerprint clearance.
- d. New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)
 - i. "School social workers perform case work service with individual pupils to correct certain personal, social or emotional adjustments; they perform case work service with parents as an integral part of helping pupils increase their parents' understanding, participation and use of appropriate resources; consult and collaborate with other school personnel to establish and plan for respective roles in modifying the pupil's behavior. They also cooperate with other

members of the pupil personnel service team in the referral of pupils, cooperation with parents, contact with community social agencies and coordination of school social work services with the work of these agencies.” (NYSUT’s description of School Social Worker).

- e. School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA)
 - i. School social workers are trained qualified professionals, who meet state requirements to practice social work specifically in the school setting. They provide direct services to students who experience academic and social difficulties, developing relationships that bolster self-esteem and reward positive behavior. School social workers support teachers by offering options for addressing students needs and by participating on the student support team. School social workers work with families and communities to coordinate services to the student and family.(From School Social Work Association of America-SSWAA).
 - ii. SSWAA advocates for a maximum ratio of one school social worker to 400 students and staff.
 - iii. SSWAA identifies the following as part of the scope of responsibilities and involvement of the school social worker:
 - 1. Prevention and intervention services;
 - 2. Assessments;
 - 3. Counseling services (individual, group, and family counseling; alcohol and drug counseling);
 - 4. Consultation (classroom observations, teacher consultations, case conferences, consultation with administration on program needs);
 - 5. Parent and community liaison;
 - 6. Reducing violence (child abuse recognition and reporting, crisis intervention, peer mediation, anger management, bully proofing);
 - 7. Referrals and Collaboration (linking students to community resources, collaborating with outside agencies);
 - 8. Assuring compliance with federal mandates;
 - 9. School involvement;
 - 10. Training (social skills training, parenting skills, staff in-service, parent-teacher organization training)
 - 11. The planning, organization and documentation of the above functions.

B. Mental Health Counseling (Ch. 676 of the Laws of 2002).

- a. Provided for in Section 8402 of the Education Law/ Section 52.32 and Subpart 79-9 of the New York State Commissioner of Education’s Regulations.
 - i. Defined as, “the evaluation, assessment, amelioration, treatment modification or adjustment to a disability, problem or disorder,

character development, emotion, personality or relationships by the use of verbal or behavioral methods with individuals, couples, families or groups in private practice, group or organized settings and

- ii. The use of assessment instruments and mental health counseling and psychotherapy to identify, evaluate and treat dysfunctions and disorders for purposes of providing appropriate mental health counseling services.

b. Masters or Doctoral Degree in Counseling

- i. Curriculum must include:
 - 1. human growth and development;
 - 2. social and cultural foundations of counseling;
 - 3. counseling theory and practice;
 - 4. psychopathology;
 - 5. group dynamics;
 - 6. lifestyle and career development;
 - 7. assessment and appraisal of individuals, couples, families and groups;
 - 8. research and program evaluation;
 - 9. professional orientation and ethics;
 - 10. foundations of mental health counseling and consultation; and
 - 11. clinical instruction.
- ii. Supervised experience of at least 3,000 clock hours providing mental health counseling in a setting acceptable to the department of education.
 - 1. Experience must occur after the applicant completes the program required for licensure as a mental health counselor.
 - 2. Supervisor Requirements:
 - a. Supervisor must have completed a masters or higher degree program in counseling or in the subject of the field in which the supervisor is licensed, and
 - b. Supervisor must be licensed in NYS to practice:
 - i. Mental health counseling;
 - ii. Medicine;
 - iii. Physicians' Assistant;
 - iv. Psychology;
 - v. Licensed Clinical Social Worker; or
 - vi. Registered Nurse or Nurse Practitioner; and
 - c. Supervisor must have at least 3 years of full time experience in Mental Health Counseling.
- iii. Classification Systems
 - 1. May use accepted classifications of signs, symptoms, dysfunctions and disorders such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders or an equivalent

classification system as determined by the department of education.

2. It should be noted that LMSWs and LCSWs are permitted to use these accepted classifications.

c. Grand parenting Provisions (Expires on January 1, 2006).

i. Pathway 1

1. Completion of a masters or higher degree program in counseling or related mental health field (includes Social Work).
2. Program must include coursework in:
 - a. Human growth and development
 - b. Counseling theory and practice
 - c. Assessment and appraisal of individuals, couples, families and groups
 - d. Foundation of counseling and consultation
 - e. Clinical instruction and counseling
 - f. Research and program evaluation and
 - g. A supervised internship in counseling
3. Training in the identification and reporting of child abuse
4. 3,000 clock hours of mental health counseling after completion of the masters degree.

ii. Pathway 2

1. Completion of a bachelors or higher degree program in counseling or related mental health field (includes Social Work).
2. Program must include coursework in:
 - a. Human growth and development
 - b. Counseling theory and practice
 - c. Research and Program evaluation
3. Training in identification and reporting of child abuse
4. Document engagement in the practice of mental health counseling on a full time basis for seven years of the immediately preceding ten years. (960 hours per year).
5. Certifications from 3 individuals who meet supervisor status to attest applicants' good ethics and clinical competence.
6. Document one of the following
 - a. 3 years of supervised experience n mental health counseling after the bachelor degree program (can be part of 7 years of practice requirement); or
 - b. certification by national body for Mental Health Counselors; or
 - c. Completion of a post bachelor program in mental health counseling or a related field. Program must include:
 - i. Human growth and development

- ii. Counseling theory and practice
 - iii. Assessment and appraisal of individuals, couples, families and groups
 - iv. Foundation of counseling and consultation
 - v. Clinical instruction and counseling and
 - vi. Research and program evaluation.
- iii. Pathway 3
1. Bachelor or higher in counseling or related mental health field
 - a. Program must include
 - i. Human growth and development
 - ii. Counseling theory and practice; and
 - iii. Research and program evaluation
 2. Coursework or training in the identification and reporting of child abuse
 3. Engaged in the practice of mental health counseling or psychotherapy post bachelor degree on a full time basis for 10 of the immediate 15 preceding years.
 4. Attestation of 5 supervisors (meet definition for supervisor) endorsing applicant's ethics and clinical competence.

C. Summary

It is the position of NASW-NYS, that School Social Workers are better prepared, to handle the daily responsibilities associated with providing assessment, treatment and services to a school aged population. School social workers receive certification from the Department of Education, alongside other school personnel such as administrators and teachers. Furthermore, School social workers must demonstrate 2 years of full-time paid pupil personnel employment prior to obtaining their certification. *See* 8A NYCRR 80-2.3(f)(2). This regulatory requirement mandating the school social worker to work directly within the school environment makes them substantially more prepared and qualified to work with this specialized population. School Social Workers are named in Education Law §4401(1)(k), which defines specific related services to be furnished to students with disabilities. Moreover, “school social workers, given their unique training, offer schools a way to link student, family, community and the school.” *Social Work Speaks*, NASW (2006).

School Social Workers assess and intervene in the social and emotional needs of students in relation to learning, and provide meaningful and relevant consultation and in-service programs to teachers and school administrators concerning student needs and counterproductive school policies. School social workers are trained to identify students and families at risk, to provide diagnostic assessments, to understand the risk factors for individuals and families, to counsel students and families and to arrange to referrals to appropriate community resources. Furthermore, School social workers are able to implement interagency agreements between school districts and human services agencies to promote collaboration of services to all pupils.