The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) is dedicated to promoting the professional development of school social workers in order to enhance the educational experience of students and their families. To fulfill this mission, it is imperative that school social workers receive quality university training. In addition to strong pre-service training, school social workers must also participate in regular continuing education to ensure a solid understanding of school systems, client concerns, and the sometimes conflicting priorities of each.

SSWAA calls upon schools of social work in colleges and universities across the country to provide high-quality coursework specific to training school social workers and to ensure that appropriate coursework is available to prepare social work students to meet state requirements as School Social Workers. To make available the best-trained and most highly qualified individuals to work with our students, schools of social work must provide comprehensive and state of the art training. These courses must be both rigorous and dynamic to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of the myriad challenges facing students and families in the educational system and to enable students to meet high educational expectations.

School social work is a specialty area of social work requiring graduate coursework in child development, child psychology, psychological testing, and providing social work services in schools. School social workers must be conversant in the legal requirements of special education law and have a working knowledge of various disabilities, including the ability to accurately assess the presence of a disability. School social workers must be trained in the evaluation process and know how to interpret assessment data. School social workers must be able to provide interventions that meet best practice standards and remove barriers to learning for students facing temporary crises or long standing educational, emotional, mental health or behavioral difficulties.

To ensure students are prepared for the rigorous demands of the profession, SSWAA supports high quality pre-service training in school social work. School social work programs should be available on-site at colleges and universities, and through distance learning opportunities for students in areas without access to campus based programs.


Approved by the SSWAA Board of Directors on July 19, 2003
© 2003, School Social Work Association of America