

# Standards for the School Social Worker

## [23.140]

### *STANDARD 1 - Content*

**The competent school social worker understands the theories and skills needed to provide individual, group, and family counseling; crisis intervention; case management; advocacy; consultation; in-service and parent education; prevention programs; conflict resolution services; and community organization and development. The school social worker utilizes these theories and skills to enhance the environment of the local educational agency (LEA).**

#### **Knowledge Indicators - *The competent school social worker:***

- 1A. has attained a master's degree in social work with a specialization in school social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
- 1B. understands methods of practice, including counseling, crisis intervention, case work, and individual, group, and family therapies.
- 1C. understands and develops skills in advocacy, case management, consultation, classroom groups, and community organization.
- 1D. understands theories of normal and exceptional development in early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood and their application to all students.
- 1E. understands the effects of mental illness on students' ability to participate in learning.
- 1F. understands the person-in-environment context of social work.
- 1G. understands the effects of biological, family, social, health, and cultural factors on human development and social functioning.
- 1H. understands characteristics and implications for education of children with academic and/or behavioral challenges.
- 1I. understands systems theories as they relate to classrooms, schools, families, and community.
- 1J. understands methods of advocacy on behalf of individuals, families, and school systems.
- 1K. understands the application of social learning theories to identify and develop broad-based prevention and intervention programs.

#### **Performance Indicators - *The competent school social worker:***

- 1L. uses empathy in interpersonal relationships.
- 1M. uses diverse interview techniques and written communication with all persons within the student's system.
- 1N. gathers and interprets appropriate information to document and assess environmental, emotional, cultural, socioeconomic, educational, biological, medical, psychosocial, and legal factors that affect children's learning.
- 1O. makes accurate mental health diagnoses based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (1994), published by the American Psychiatric Association, 1400 K St., N.W., Washington DC 20005; no later amendments to or editions of these standards are incorporated by this Section.
- 1P. selects and applies the most appropriate methods of intervention to enhance students' educational experience.
- 1Q. demonstrates effective leadership of and participation in interdisciplinary teams.

## *STANDARD 2 - Service Delivery*

**The competent school social worker utilizes a variety of intervention strategies that support and enhance students' educational and emotional development.**

**Knowledge Indicators** - The competent school social worker:

- 2A. understands methods of individual, group, family, and crisis counseling.
- 2B. understands methods of social work service delivery.
- 2C. understands and develops skills in advocacy, case management, community organization, consultation and in-service training.
- 2D. understands the application of social learning theories to identify and develop broad-based prevention and interventions.
- 2E. understands the interdisciplinary approach to service delivery within the educational environment.
- 2F. understands how to integrate content knowledge for service delivery.
- 2G. understands the role of mandated reporters and the function of the State's child welfare agency.

**Performance Indicators** - The competent school social worker:

- 2H. Develops and implements prevention and intervention plans that enable children to benefit from their educational experiences.
- 2I. Provides individual, group, and/or family counseling and other services to enhance success in the educational process.
- 2J. Provides crisis intervention counseling and other services to the school community.
- 2K. Provides consultation to teachers, administrators, parents, and community agencies.
- 2L. Develops and provides training and educational programs in the school and community.
- 2M. Conducts diagnostic assessments and participates in eligibility conferences for special education and other programmatic options, students' educational planning conferences, and conferences with parents.
- 2N. Initiates referrals and linkages to community agencies and maintains follow-up services on behalf of identified students.
- 2O. Mobilizes the resources of the school and community to meet the needs of children and their families.
- 2P. Initiates reports of suspected child abuse and neglect to the State's child welfare agency.

## *STANDARD 3 - Planning*

**The competent school social worker designs services based upon knowledge of the educational setting, as well as information about the students, families, and community.**

**Knowledge Indicators** - The competent school social worker:

- 3A. understands learning theory and human development as it applies to the content and curriculum of educational planning and intervention.
- 3B. understands the process of needs assessment, referral, and resource development.
- 3C. understands how to develop long- and short-term intervention plans consistent with curriculum and students' diversity and strengths, life experiences, and social/emotional factors.

- 3D. understands environmental factors when planning interventions to create an effective bridge between students' experiences and goals.
- 3E. understands how to integrate and use technology for assessments, interventions, and information management.

**Performance Indicators** - The competent school social worker:

- 3F. assists in establishing expectations for student learning consistent with students' strengths and educational systems' goals.
- 3G. conducts needs assessments to plan for service delivery.
- 3H. assists students in creating long- and short-term plans to meet expectations for learning.
- 3I. creates and adapts learning opportunities and materials to provide effective interventions.
- 3J. plans interventions that integrate students' life experiences and future career goals.
- 3K. maintains relevant data to assist in planning, management and evaluation of school social work.
- 3L. collects, analyzes and interprets data to evaluate and modify interventions when necessary.
- 3M. supports approaches to learning that address individual student needs.
- 3N. integrates and uses technology for assessments, interventions, and information management.

## *STANDARD 4 - Assessment and Evaluation*

**The competent school social worker understands various formal and informal assessment and evaluation strategies and uses them to support the development of all students.**

**Knowledge Indicators** - The competent school social worker:

- 4A. understands strength-based assessments and practices that support growth and development.
- 4B. understands various types of research, measurement theory, and concepts of validity, reliability, bias, scoring, and interpretation of results.
- 4C. understands multiple assessment techniques, such as observation, structured/clinical interviews, and standardized assessments, and their purposes, characteristics, and limitations.
- 4D. understands how to conduct formal and informal assessment of adaptive behavior, self-esteem, social skills, attitudes, behavior, interests, and emotional/mental health.
- 4E. understands the use of assessment as a means to evaluate the student's emotional/mental health and social functioning, including:
  - the child's physical, cognitive, and emotional development;
  - family history and factors that influence the child's overall functioning;
  - the child's behavior and attitude in different settings;
  - patterns of interpersonal relationships in all spheres of the child's environment;
  - patterns of achievement and adjustment at critical points in the child's growth and development;
  - adaptive behavior and cultural factors that may influence learning.
- 4F. understands the social-developmental study with its focus on the student's functioning within the educational environment.
- 4G. is familiar with the components of the case study evaluation.
- 4H. understands the relationship between assessment, eligibility, and placement decisions, including the development of Individualized Education Programs.
- 4I. understands parent/guardian and student rights regarding assessment and evaluation.
- 4J. is familiar with the diagnostic tools used by other professionals in the school.
- 4K. understands the use of assessment and evaluation results to develop student interventions.

**Performance Indicators - The competent school social worker:**

- 4L. appropriately uses a variety of non-discriminatory formal and informal tools and techniques, including observation, interview and standardized instruments to evaluate the understanding, progress, and performance of students in the school environment.
- 4M. uses assessment results to identify student learning needs and to assist in aligning and modifying instruction and designing intervention strategies.
- 4N. uses assessment and evaluation results to make appropriate interventions, including recommendations for eligibility and placement.
- 4O. involves students in self-assessment activities to help them become aware of their strengths and needs and to establish goals.
- 4P. presents assessment results in an easily understandable manner.
- 4Q. documents assessment and evaluation results.
- 4R. collaborates with parents/guardians and other professionals regarding the assessment process.
- 4S. informs parents/guardians of their rights and the rights of students regarding assessment.
- 4T. uses a variety of non-discriminatory formal and informal tools and techniques to help determine the efficacy of intervention and programs.

**STANDARD 5 - Consultation and Collaborative Relationships**

**The competent school social worker develops consultative and collaborative relationships with colleagues, parents, and the community to support students' learning and well being.**

**Knowledge Indicators - The competent school social worker:**

- 5A. understands the principles, practices, and processes of individual and organizational consultation.
- 5B. understands the collaborative process with parents, school personnel, community-based organizations, and agencies to enhance the student's educational functioning.
- 5C. understands the school's role within the context of the larger community.
- 5D. understands the variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures and their effect on interactions among group members.
- 5E. understands the importance of audience and purpose when selecting ways to communicate ideas.
- 5F. understands how formal and informal political implications affect communication.
- 5G. understands language development, communication techniques, and the role of communication in the learning environment.
- 5H. understands the role of school personnel as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.

**Performance Indicators - The competent school social worker:**

- 5I. initiates, develops, and implements consultative relationships.
- 5J. models and promotes ethical practices for confidential communication.
- 5K. collaborates with colleagues, parents/guardians, and community personnel about students' needs.
- 5L. encourages relationships among colleagues to promote a positive learning environment.
- 5M. participates in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving to promote students' success.
- 5N. facilitates a collaborative relationship between general and special education systems to promote a unified system of education.
- 5O. models and promotes effective communication among group members or between groups.
- 5P. uses a variety of effective communication modes with diverse target groups.
- 5Q. assists mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect in relaying and documenting information to the State's child welfare agency.

## *STANDARD 6 - Advocacy and Facilitation*

**The competent school social worker advocates and facilitates change that effectively responds to the needs of students, families, and school systems.**

### **Knowledge Indicators** - *The competent school social worker:*

- 6A. understands the role of advocacy and facilitation at all levels of the system that affect students and their families.
- 6B. is familiar with available resources for students and families within the school and community.
- 6C. understands when and how to make referrals for programs and services at the district, community, and State levels.
- 6D. understands the need to improve access to services and resources.

### **Performance Indicators** - *The competent school social worker:*

- 6E. works to empower children, their families, educators, and others to gain access to and effectively use school and community resources.
- 6F. identifies areas of need and accesses or creates resources and services.
- 6G. makes referrals to community and school resources.
- 6H. advocates for students with other members of the educational community to enhance students' functioning in the learning environment.
- 6I. supports students' transitions across environments.
- 6J. uses research and technologies to help students, families, school, and community to access resources.

## *STANDARD 7 - Learning Community*

**The competent school social worker encourages effective social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation to create a positive learning community.**

### **Knowledge Indicators** - *The competent school social worker:*

- 7A. understands principles of and strategies for effective behavior and social management within the school environment.
- 7B. understands small- and large-group dynamics.
- 7C. understands how people's attitudes within the educational environment influence behavior of individuals.
- 7D. understands how to help students work cooperatively and productively.
- 7E. understands the importance of parents' participation in fostering students' positive development.
- 7F. understands mediation and conflict-resolution strategies.
- 7G. understands effective interventions within a group or classroom.
- 7H. understands principles of and strategies for organizational functioning.
- 7I. understands how to work with administrators and other school personnel to make changes within the school environment.
- 7J. understands how service learning and volunteerism promote the development of personal and social responsibility.

**Performance Indicators - *The competent school social worker:***

- 7K. encourages the development of a learning community where students assume responsibility, participate in decision-making, and work independently as well as collaboratively in learning activities.
- 7L. analyzes educational environments and works effectively to create/enhance a supportive learning climate.
- 7M. develops strategies to encourage motivation and engagement through mutual respect and cooperation.
- 7N. develops conflict resolution programs within the school environment.
- 7O. develops needs assessments and works as a change agent to create identified services.
- 7P. collaborates with community agencies in school-linked service learning projects or other programs.
- 7Q. promotes the effective utilization of school social work services.
- 7R. promotes understanding of factors that affect the educational environment and facilitates systems improvement.
- 7S. designs, implements, and evaluates programs that enhance a student's social participation in school, family, and community.
- 7T. promotes active parental participation within the educational environment.
- 7U. collaborates with community agencies to increase access to services and resources.

***STANDARD 8 - Diversity***

**The competent school social worker understands the broad range of backgrounds and experiences that shape students' approaches to learning and helps create opportunities adapted to diverse populations of learners.**

**Knowledge Indicators - *The competent school social worker:***

- 8A. understands how students' learning is influenced by culture, family, community values, individual experiences, talents, gender, sexual orientation, language, and prior learning
- 8B. understands and identifies differences in approaches to learning and performance, including different learning styles, performance modes, and variations of perception.
- 8C. understands and respects the impact of cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender diversity and sexual orientation in the educational environment.
- 8D. understands the issues of second language acquisition, the immigrant experience, and the need to develop strategies to support students and families.
- 8E. understands ways in which similar behaviors may have different meanings to people in different cultures.
- 8F. understands various disabilities.

**Performance Indicators - *The competent school social worker:***

- 8G. facilitates a learning community in which individual differences are respected.
- 8H. practices gender equity and avoids sex-role stereotyping.
- 8I. provides services that promote multi-cultural sensitivity.
- 8J. develops strategies to decrease negative effects of cultural barriers on education.
- 8K. utilizes students' diversity to enrich the educational experiences of all students.
- 8L. interprets information about students' families, cultures, and communities in assessments, interventions, and evaluations of student progress.
- 8M. utilizes appropriate assessment tools and intervention strategies that reflect diverse student needs.

- 8N. designs intervention strategies appropriate to student's culture, gender, sexual orientation, developmental stage, learning styles, strengths and needs.
- 8O. makes referrals for additional services or resources to assist students with diverse learning needs.

## **STANDARD 9 - Professional Conduct and Ethics**

**The competent school social worker understands education and social work as professions, maintains standards of professional conduct and ethics, and provides leadership to improve students' learning and well-being.**

### **Knowledge Indicators - *The competent school social worker:***

- 9A. understands the professional code of conduct and ethical practice guidelines stated in "NASW Standards for School Social Work Services" (1992), published by the National Association of Social Workers, 750 First Street NE, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20002-4241; no later amendments to or editions of these standards are incorporated by this Section.
- 9B. understands federal and state laws and regulations as they pertain to ethical practice.
- 9C. understands the legal and ethical principles of confidentiality as they relate to the practice of school social work.
- 9D. understands the organization and operation of school systems.
- 9E. understands school policies and procedures.
- 9F. understands legal issues in education, with special emphasis on persons with disabilities; child welfare; mental health; confidentiality; children's and adolescents' rights; and current trends.
- 9G. understands the importance of active participation and leadership in professional education and social work organizations.

### **Performance Indicators - *The competent school social worker:***

- 9H. follows the professional code of conduct and ethical practice guidelines referred to in Standard 9A of this Section.
- 9I. maintains current knowledge of and abides by federal and State laws and regulations, with emphasis on persons with disabilities, child welfare, mental health, confidentiality, and children's and adolescents' rights.
- 9J. participates in district activities such as policy design, curriculum implementation, staff development, and organizations involving parent/guardians and students.
- 9K. abides by current legal directives, school policies, and procedures.
- 9L. promotes the rights of students.
- 9M. models and promotes ethical practices for confidential communication.

## **STANDARD 10 - Professional Development**

**The competent school social worker actively seeks opportunities to grow professionally.**

### **Knowledge Indicators - *The competent school social worker:***

- 10A. understands the importance of taking responsibility for self-evaluation as a competent and ethical practitioner.
- 10B. understands the impact of personal strengths and needs on service delivery.

- 10C. understands methods of inquiry and frameworks for self-assessment and self-improvement.
- 10D. understands how to use supervision, consultation, collaboration, and continuing education to identify areas for on-going professional development.
- 10E. understands how to interpret and utilize research to evaluate and guide professional interventions.
- 10F. understands the use of empirically based practice resources available for intervention and program development.

**Performance Indicators - *The competent school social worker:***

- 10G. uses continuing education, research, professional literature, observations and experiences to enhance professional growth and to guide evaluation of professional practice.
- 10H. maintains an awareness of personal attitudes, perspectives, strengths, and needs as they relate to professional practice.
- 10I. uses self-assessment and performance evaluations to identify areas for professional growth.
- 10J. actively seeks consultation to improve professional practice.
- 10K. recognizes the limits and boundaries of the professional role.
- 10L. demonstrates a capacity and willingness to assume the roles of learner and facilitator/educator in maintaining a broad knowledge base for professional development.
- 10M. participates in professional activities and organizations that promote and enhance school social work practice.
- 10N. assumes responsibilities for enhancing practice through various professional development activities.