Defining School Social Work

Review of Louisiana statewide initiative for school social work

Current changes and challenges

Background/Reasons behind initiative

Summary of Louisiana survey results

Link to other survey results

Introduction of school social work marketing campaign

Introduction of statewide definition and job description of school social work

Louisiana School Social Work Practice Model

Preview of School Social Work Effectiveness Evaluation Tool (SWEET)
School Social Work A Growing Profession

- School social work has grown to a profession of over 20,000, with national and state organizations (Schools Social Work Association of America [SSWAA])

- School social work has a growing international presence with estimates of over 50,000 practitioners in more than 40 countries (Huxtable, 2006 as cited in Kelly, 2008).
Defining School Social Work

- Practiced in a school setting

- School social workers provide support in all aspects of a student’s life (school, family, community) to ensure that students reach their full potential in the educational setting (Constable, 2009).

- Bridge between home, school, and community

- Continued discussion and developments of standards, competencies, and roles in micro and macro practice.
Challenges to Defining SSW

- Connecting Assessment based on an Ecological Framework to Intervention
- The historically fragmented and broadly defined role make developing a national definition incredibly challenging
- At the same time, coming to some understanding and consensus of the role is critical as policy changes have either placed new demands on school social workers or neglected their roles entirely.
Role of the School Social Worker

- Studies have found confusion in school social work roles.
- Role Ambiguity
- Far removed changes in roles
Current Changes and Challenges

- Response To Intervention (RTI)
  - Data-based decision making

- No Child Left Behind
  - Evidence-based practice
  - Accountability
  - Less concern for social emotional needs

- Increasing mental health concerns and increase in populations that have limited access to mental health services.

- Continued School Reform efforts
  - Where is the school social worker voice in this process?
LOUISIANA

- ~115 school districts
  - public, RSD, charter
- ~797,944 students
- ~66% Free/Reduced lunch
- 487 school social workers

- May 2010
  - Value added measure for teachers
  - Race to the Top grant application
- June 2010
  - DOE/LSU partnership formed
Results of Role Ambiguity

- Stress
- Decreased job satisfaction
- Burnout
- Turnover

- Creates competition between professional groups and can lead to less collaboration and less effective teams.

- When role ambiguity is felt, an employee will find ways to avoid the situation (ie, excessive absences or leaving the job)
Louisiana School Social Work Project

- YEAR 1 (2010-2011)
- YEAR 2 (2011-2012)
- YEAR 3 (2012-2013)
Year 1

- Survey of Louisiana School Social Workers
- Development of School Social Work Effectiveness Evaluation Tool (SWEET)
- Focus groups about SWEET
Why Survey?

- Find way to measure accountability
- Inform districts about school social work
- Develop consistency
- School social work university specialization
Survey Conducted

Information gathered:

Statewide—78% response

Demographics of social workers

Practice parameters/roles identified

Student information
RESULTS
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>(N)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American, Black, or African Descent</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian or White</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Origin or Descent</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>(N)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>312</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Social Worker Licensure</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>(N)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Social Worker (GSW)</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified School Social Worker Specialist (CSSWS)</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified School Social Worker (Dept. of Ed)</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Practice Experience</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>10.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Schools Served</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload Size</td>
<td>63.75</td>
<td>151.57</td>
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</table>
Activities Frequently Engaged In

- Assessment and Evaluation
- Case Management
- Direct Services
- Indirect Services
- Professional Development

Percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and Evaluation</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Management</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct Services</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Services</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>30</td>
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</table>
Table 3: Job Title and Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>N</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Title</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil Appraisal Social Worker</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Based Social Worker</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior Interventionist</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Levels Served</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary (PreK-5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle/Junior High (6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; – 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School (9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;-12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Student Referral Reason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Problems</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Problems</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Problems</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percent Providing Response to Intervention

- Academic: 30%
- Behavior: 70%
- Neither: 20%
### Issues

#### Most Important Issues Facing School Social Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Caseload Size</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect by Other Professionals</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient Salary</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Annual Evaluation Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Measure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Observation of Social Worker</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Growth Plan</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic Evaluation for all employees</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Social Work Effectiveness Evaluation Tool (SWEET)

- Database format
- Gathers information in 4 main areas of practice:
  - Supervision
  - Macro-practice
  - Evaluation/Coordination
  - Micro-practice
School Social Work Effectiveness Evaluation Tool (SWEET)

- Links social work services to **ABCs**:
  - **Attendance**
  - **Behavior**
  - **Curriculum**
School Social Work Effectiveness Evaluation Tool (SWEET)

- Not punitive
- Provide information on needs in the areas of:
  - Training
  - Number of school social workers per district
  - Children’s needs
- **Data-driven proof that what we do matters**
Focus Groups Conducted

- Continued ownership of project by LA school social workers
- Practitioner suggestions incorporated into tool
Year 2

- Statewide definition and job description
- Piloting paper version of SWEET
- Public Relations campaign
- Completion of web-based SWEET
- Statistically-controlled method for providing ABCs
Definition and Job Description

- **Purpose**
- **Duties**
  - Macro-Practice
  - Micro-Practice
  - Evaluation/Coordination
  - Supervision
- **Responsibilities**
  - Advocacy
  - Cultural Competence
  - Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability
  - Staff, Community, and Family Collaboration
- **Employment Environment**
Supervision Skill Set

- LCSW with 5+ years experience in school setting
- Consultation
- Evaluation
- Advocacy for profession
- Education
  - Professional development
  - Workload management
  - Record keeping
  - Interdisciplinary collaboration
  - Cultural competence
  - Evidence-based practice
  - Policy development
School Social Work Supervisory Chain of Command

- **State Supervisor of social work in schools**
- **Regional School Social Work Liaison**
- **District School Social Work Supervisors**
- **Individual School Social Workers**
Macro-Practice Skill Set

- School-wide prevention
- Positive behavior supports
- Crisis intervention
- Program development
  - Truancy
  - Discipline
  - Substance abuse
- Universal mental health screening
- Parent education
- Training of school personnel
- Dissemination of information to district and community
- Collaboration with community agencies
Micro-Practice Skill Set

- One on one or group counseling
- Parent education on social-emotional needs of students
- Teacher education on social-emotional needs of students
- Intervention development
- Linkage to community services
- Suicide and violence assessments
- Child abuse reporting
Evaluation/Coordination Skill Set

- Psychosocial assessment
- Behavior assessment
- Multidisciplinary teamwork
- Coordination of activities
- Liaison between team and parents
- Writing and editing comprehensive report
- RTI Tier 2 and Tier 3 service coordination
Year 3

- Statewide implementation of web-based SWEET

- School Social Work specialization
  - For MSW students
  - For current practitioners
# National Studies on SSW Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agresta (2004: 2006) National Sample</td>
<td>2004: Higher job satisfaction associated with lower role discrepancy between ideal and actual role; Individual and group counseling were highly desired roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly et al. (2010)</td>
<td>2008: Characteristics, contexts, and practice is relatively unchanged in past 10 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Much of the school social workers time is spent on individual and group counseling of students not receiving mental health services outside of school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### State/International studies of School Social Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Individual and group treatment were most common. For most, half of their time spent serving special ed. students, average caseloads 20-50 students/week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly (2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>Top five areas of responsibilities were children at risk; attendance, dropouts; behavior management; special education; and basic needs. Top five strategies were advocacy, consultation, individual counseling, referral, and case management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitudinal 98-99, 01-02, 07-08 Dibble (2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>Most worked with special education students. Top three referral reasons were behavior or emotional problems, and attendance problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittlesey-Jerome (2010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi, India</td>
<td>Most doing direct service. In private schools, social workers going beyond individual direct service and doing prevention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anand (2010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications

- Set of standard roles allows:
  - Training
  - Accountability
  - Policy development
  - Foundation for advocacy
  - Marketability
What do you think?

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS
Bibliography

Bibliography

Bibliography


