

Lincoln Public Schools
Family Specialists/School Social Worker
SIM Report

January 2001

**FAMILY SPECIALIST/SCHOOL
SOCIAL WORKERS COMMITTEE**

Leslie Andrew, LMHP, CMSW

Susan Bond, LMHP, CMSW

Dr. John Dudley

Maureen Fowler, LMHP, CMSW

Kris Lewis, LMHP, CMSW

Becca Rivers, MSW

Sheila Stratton, MSW

SIM COMMITTEE AT-LARGE

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Pat Decker

Jerry Harrenstein

Dan Larson

Cathy Rauch

Annie Scott

Cindy Sellon

Ann Stokes

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INTRODUCTION

The School Social Work Program began the SIM process in the spring of 1998 by the formation of a committee of six Family Specialists/School Social Workers. The key components of the SIM process have been to develop a program mission statement (congruent with that of LPS), define the systems (domains: home, school, community) in which we work, determine program goals and competencies, and establish a process for program accountability. This process involved the input of an at-large committee, made up of school administrators, counselors, and psychologists, as well as the entire Family Specialist/School Social Work staff. Presentations of the SIM committee's progress were made to the at-large committee, as well as to administrators at all levels. The work this committee completed emphasized the National Association of Social Work Standards for school social workers and social work practice, as well as the ideas and philosophies of other school social work programs.

The SIM committee focused on defining the role of social work in the educational system by identifying the strengths and unique perspective the social work profession can bring to the educational setting. Our vision for the program will continue to be developed and evaluated through a 3-5 year planning committee.

LPS SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the LPS School Social Work Program is to assist in making school a successful and relevant experience for ALL students. As a member of the educational team, School Social Workers collaborate with families, students, school staff, community agencies and others to assess and intervene for students who are experiencing social, emotional, family or academic issues. The mission extends to helping students, families and schools prevent problems that could interfere with educational and social success.

ROLES AND PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

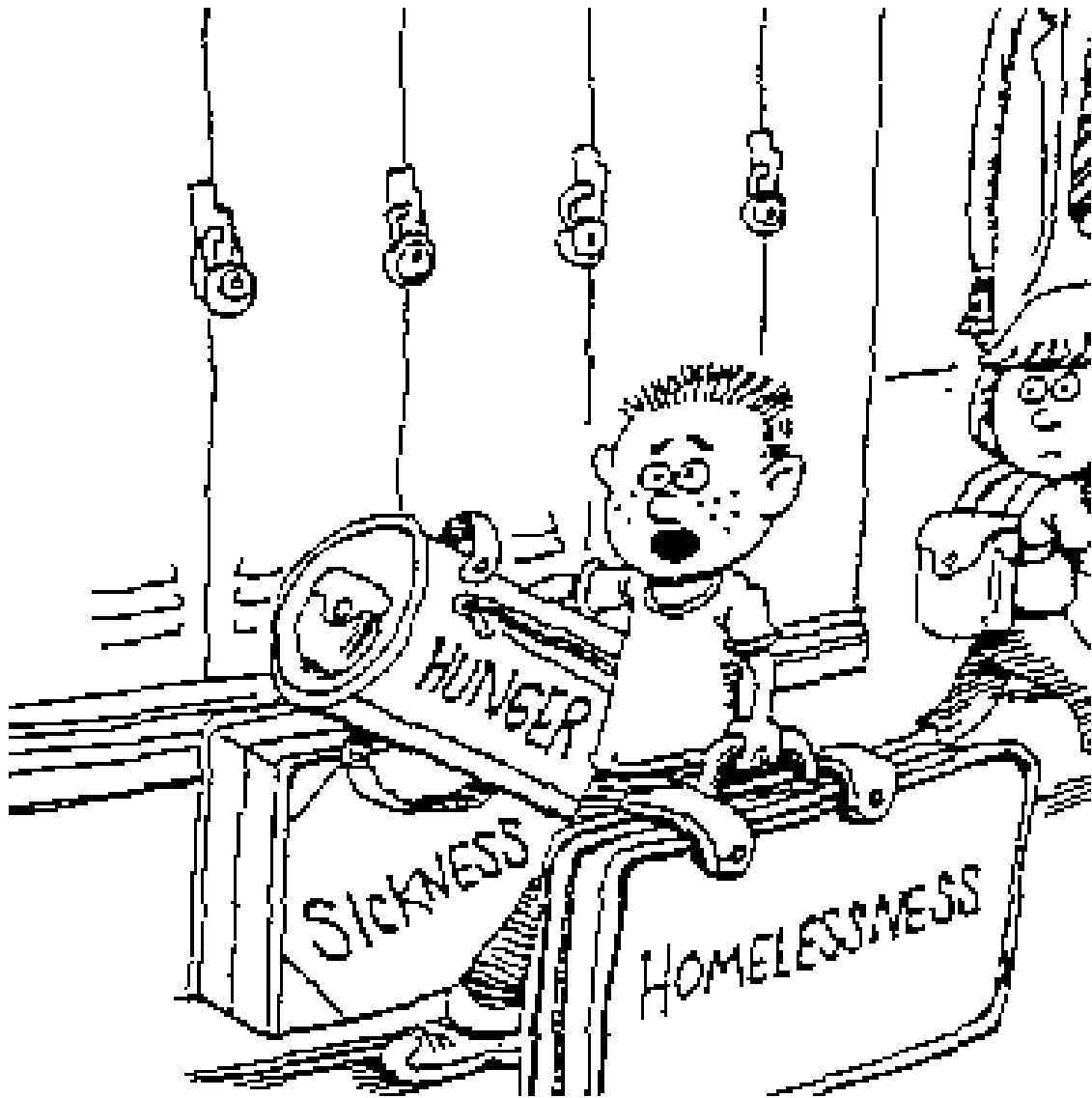
Educational Background:

Every School Social Worker has an M.S.W. degree. This degree is practice oriented and this practice is research based. Upon graduation, M.S.W.'s have completed 2000 (approximate) hours of practice experience.* Social Workers are employed in a variety of settings (hospitals, human service agencies, private clinical practice, legislative settings, etc.).

The educational background prepares Social Workers to become licensed by the state as Mental Health Practitioners which requires additional hours of experience with supervision and successful completion of a national test.

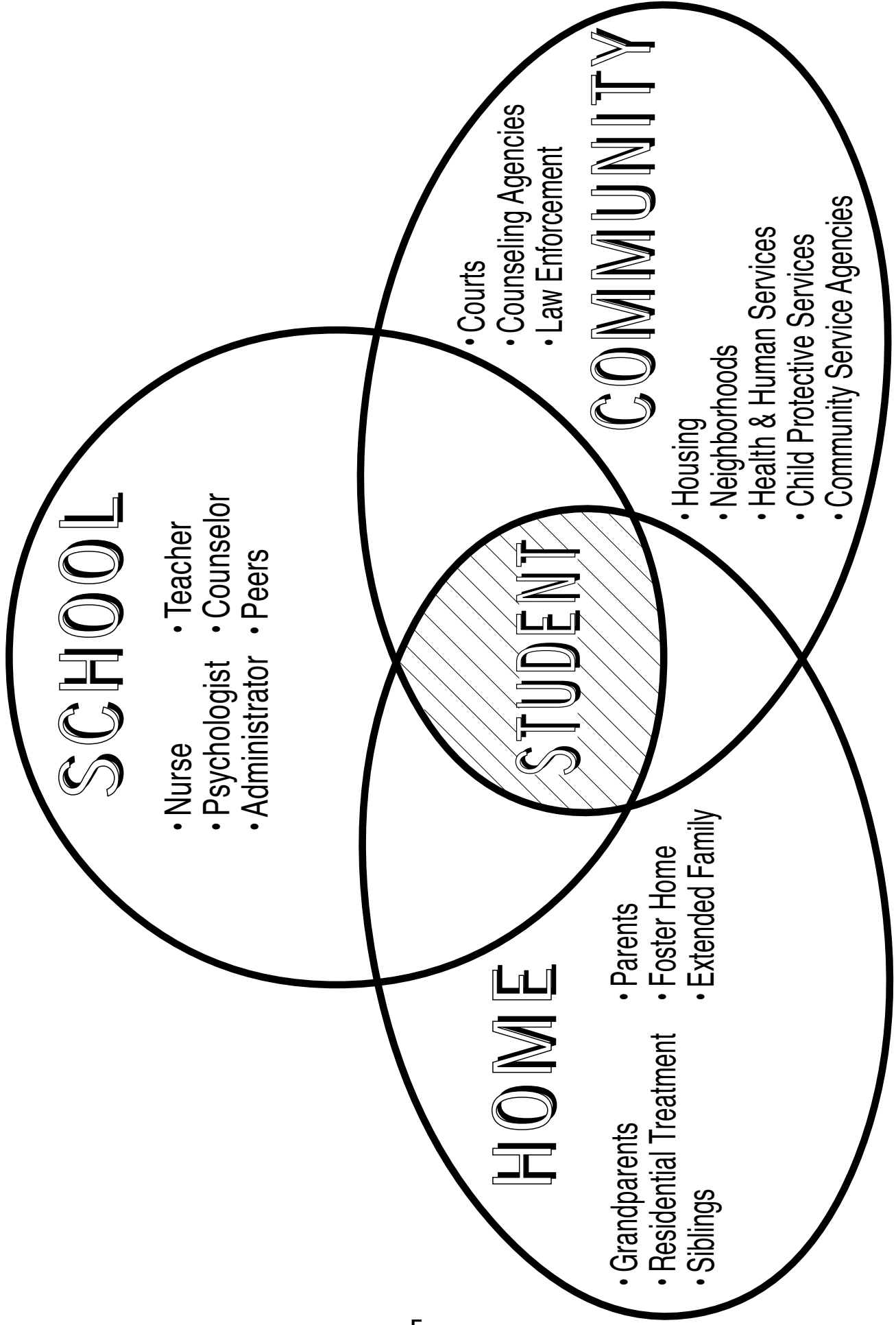
Fundamental Perspectives/Values Related to Social Work Practice:

- 1) We believe in the basic human rights and worth of individuals, including the right to self-determination in identifying problems, needs and goals.
- 2) Models of practice are strength-based, developmental and system-based. We are focused on assessing and investigating individual functioning and how various systems impact and influence the individual.
- 3) We see ourselves as “change agents”. Our goal is to intervene in a situation, help individuals and families identify needs within various systems, and facilitate a desired change.
- 4) Social Workers develop relationships with the individual and with the systems impacting the individual. In schools the purpose of these relationships is to facilitate the desired changes identified by the student and family.
- 5) We believe that change is a process and occurs over time.
- 6) As Social Workers, we select various interventions (activities) to achieve a desired outcome. In schools, activities are chosen based on the relationship with the particular student, family and situation. Needs will vary depending on where the student and family are in the change process. Social Workers address the needs of each student differently, just as teachers choose different teaching methods to address the needs of different students.
- 7) Working as a member of an interdisciplinary team is very important. In schools, we want to “team” together with other staff to help students become more successful in school. As Social Workers, we can facilitate effective links to other systems (family, community) impacting the student.



*“Could someone help me with these?
I’m late for math class.”*

VEN DIAGRAM OF SYSTEMS/DOMAINS



LPS SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM DOMAINS AND GOALS SHORT FORM

DOMAIN: HOME

School Social Workers support students by helping home/families . . .

- Goal 1:** participate more fully/effectively in their children's education.
- Goal 2:** identify the child's material, social and emotional needs.
- Goal 3:** meet the child's material, social and emotional needs.
- Goal 4:** access and utilize available school and community programs and resources effectively.

DOMAIN: SCHOOL

School Social Workers support students in school by helping students . . .

- Goal 1:** increase academic success.
- Goal 2:** maximize educational opportunities.
- Goal 3:** develop self-awareness.
- Goal 4:** enhance relationships between home, school and community.

School Social Workers support students in school by helping educators . . .

- Goal 1:** understand better how factors such as family, culture, SES, and physical and mental health can affect student's school performance.
- Goal 2:** enhance student's school success.
- Goal 3:** use community resources to meet student's needs.
- Goal 4:** enhance home-school relationships.
- Goal 5:** develop school programs, policies, procedures and legal requirements that will be congruent/sensitive to family situation and needs.

DOMAIN: COMMUNITY

School Social Workers support students by helping the community . . .

- Goal 1:** enhance school-community relationships.
- Goal 2:** help identify and meet needs of students and families.
- Goal 3:** mobilize and develop resources to optimize student's potential.
- Goal 4:** ensure that legislation considers the needs of students, families and community resources.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SIM COMMITTEE

LPS SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

DOMAIN: HOME

Goal 1: School Social Workers support students by helping home/families participate more fully/effectively in their children's education.

Competency 1: Families can identify the school's concerns, expectations, perspectives, and plans regarding the student's school functioning and performance.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will form and maintain relationships with school staff.
2. SSW will consult with school staff.
3. SSW will listen to the family's perspective of school and their child.
4. SSW will develop rapport with the family.
5. SSW will assess overall home and school situation.
6. SSW will encourage the family and school to communicate effectively with each other.
7. SSW will share school's identified concerns with the family.

Competency 2: Families can identify how school procedures are implemented relative to their child.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will encourage families to attend school conferences and meetings.
2. SSW will interpret and reframe how school procedures are relevant to their child.
3. SSW will encourage families to spend more time at school (i.e., attending extracurricular events).

Competency 3: Families can communicate their concerns to a person at school.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will encourage and support families in communicating effectively with the school.
2. SSW will listen to the family.
3. SSW will encourage school staff to listen to the family.
4. SSW will consult with the school about how to develop rapport and communicate effectively with the family.
5. SSW will serve as a liaison between school and family.
6. SSW will provide an opportunity for the family to express their feelings and concerns.

Competency 4: Families will identify someone at school who heard their perspective and concerns.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will encourage family and school to communicate effectively with each other.
2. SSW will serve as a liaison between family and school.
3. SSW will provide an opportunity for family to express their feelings and concerns.
4. SSW will listen to the family.
5. SSW will reframe and interpret for the family.
6. SSW will encourage school staff to listen to the family.
7. SSW will consult with the school about how to develop rapport and communicate effectively with the family.

Competency 5: Families will help develop joint intervention strategies with the school.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will encourage and support families in attending school meetings.
2. SSW will advocate for student/family.
3. SSW will facilitate effective communication in the development of plans.
4. SSW will encourage and support family to provide ideas and strategies for intervention plans.
5. SSW will keep current on school programs and resources.

Goal 2: School Social Workers support students by helping home/families identify the child's material, social and emotional needs.

Competency 1: Families will be able to state their family/child's needs.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will assist family in assessing child's situational and emotional needs.
2. SSW will gather information from the family.
3. SSW will gather information from the school, community and student.
4. SSW will educate the family (i.e.. social/emotional functioning, child development, mental health, etc.).
5. SSW will share relevant assessment issues.
6. SSW will help family communicate and understand child's behaviors and possible interpretations of those behaviors.
7. SSW will help family communicate their child's needs.
8. SSW will continue to learn about family and mental health issues.

Goal 3: School Social Workers support students by helping home/families meet the child's material, social and emotional needs.

Competency 1: Families will be able to state options and resources for meeting identified needs.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will discuss options for family, school and student change.
2. SSW will discuss options for meeting identified needs.
3. SSW will share and discuss school, community and family resource information.
4. SSW will obtain current information on school and community resources and family mental health issues on an ongoing basis.

Competency 2: Families will state one action step they may take to meet the child's identified needs.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will assist families in prioritizing options and identifying time frames.
2. SSW will discuss options and possible consequences with the family.
3. SSW will support and encourage the family to take action.

Goal 4: School Social Workers support students by helping home/families access and utilize available school and community programs and resources effectively.

Competency 1: Families can state how to receive services and information from resources in order to meet their child's identified needs.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will obtain community and school resource information.
2. SSW will provide and discuss resource information with the family.
3. SSW will discuss possible barriers to services with the family.
4. SSW will consult with families about how to use resources effectively.

Competency 2: Student/Family/School/Community can state that the child or family had contact with resources.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will follow up contact with student, family, school or community staff.
2. SSW will assess situation and needs with student, family, school and community staff.
3. SSW will support family efforts.

Competency 3: Families can talk about how they are using resources effectively.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will follow up with student, family, school and community resources.
2. SSW will assess situation and needs with student, family, school and community resources.
3. SSW will provide the family with feedback from school staff about the school's observations.

**DOMAIN: SCHOOL
STUDENTS**

Goal 1: School Social Workers support students in school by helping students increase educational success.

Competency 1: Students can identify their educational needs, goals and concerns.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will encourage students to talk to teachers and counselors regarding academic concerns/issues.
2. SSW will talk with and listen to students about current school concerns.

Competency 2: Students can identify barriers to their educational success.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will explore the student's perspective/situation in regards to school performance (i.e., absences; tardies, difficulty understanding school subjects, etc.).
2. SSW will work to help the student to separate and identify academic and social barriers.
3. SSW will assess overall home and school situation.

Competency 3: Students can identify strategies and options for overcoming or coping with barriers to educational success.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will help student problem solve how to deal with barriers.

Competency 4: Students can identify formal and informal resources within school, home and community for support and help.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will provide student with information regarding resources.
2. SSW will talk with and help students identify supportive individuals in his/her life.

Competency 5: Students can identify that a school staff person has listened to their feelings, concerns and perspective.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will encourage student to talk to school staff (i.e. teacher, counselor, SSW).
2. SSW will assist student in developing effective communication skills for talking with school personnel (i.e., role-playing, scripting).

Competency 6: Students will identify and take an action step for making positive change.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will support dialogue between student and identified staff.
2. SSW will discuss options and possible consequences with student.
3. SSW will assist student in prioritizing options and identifying time frames.
4. SSW will encourage and support student to take action.

Competency 7: SSW receives information indicating that a resource has been contacted by the student or family.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will follow up with student, staff, and/or family in regards to contacts made.
2. SSW will provide feedback to the student.

Goal 2: School Social Workers support students in school by helping students develop self-awareness.

Competency 1: Students can state what behaviors, attitudes, thoughts, or beliefs may be contributing to school and family problems.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will develop rapport with student.
2. SSW will provide student with opportunities for self- exploration (i.e. through 1:1 dialogue, group participation).
3. SSW will give student feedback.

Competency 2: Students can identify their personal needs and concerns.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will develop rapport with student
2. SSW will encourage student to give their perspective on specific personal needs and concerns.
3. SSW will validate student's perspective.
4. SSW will ask questions and give student feedback.

Competency 3: Students can identify their strengths.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will develop rapport.
2. SSW will encourage students to give their perspective.
3. SSW will ask questions and give student feedback.

Goal 3: School Social Workers support students in school by helping students enhance relationships with home, school and community.

Competency 1: Students can identify that a school staff person has listened to their feelings, concerns and/or perspective.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will listen to the student.
2. SSW will serve as liaison/mediator between student and school.
3. SSW will provide opportunity for student to express their feelings/concerns.
4. SSW will encourage school staff to listen to the student and provide feedback.

Competency 2: Students can identify behaviors, attitudes, thoughts or beliefs that may be interfering with their relationships at school, home or in the community.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will encourage student to give their perspective.
2. SSW will provide opportunities for self-exploration.
3. SSW will give feedback.

Competency 3: Students can identify options, strategies and plans for positive relationship changes.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will discuss options and possible consequences with the student.
2. SSW will assist student in problem-solving by prioritizing options and identifying time frames.
3. SSW will support and encourage student to take action.

Competency 4: School staff will obtain information that indicates that the student has taken an identified action step towards positive relationship change.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will follow up with student and school staff.
2. SSW will assess situation and needs with student and school staff.

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| DOMAIN: SCHOOL EDUCATORS |
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Goal 1: School Social Workers support students in school by helping educators better understand how factors such as family, culture, socio-economic status, and physical and mental health can affect students' school performance.

Competency 1: Staff can state information regarding the family's cultural, emotional functioning, physical or mental health that are significant to the child and family.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will share family information with staff as appropriate.
2. SSW will provide staff with background on behavioral/emotional issues which may coincide with family life events.
3. SSW will help staff reframe behaviors given the current context of the student's life.

Competency 2: Staff can state information regarding the family's situation, needs and expectations.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will serve as a liaison between school and family.
2. SSW will encourage and support meetings between family and school staff.
3. SSW will share pertinent information with staff regarding the family's views of the situation.

Competency 3: Staff can state how a child's school behaviors may be understood given the context of their family.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will help staff reframe behaviors given the current context of the student's life.

Competency 4: Staff can state how family information could assist them in meeting the needs of the student in the school setting.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will provide staff with intervention strategies for dealing with behavioral/emotional issues which may coincide with family life events.
2. SSW will continue to serve as a liaison between family and school staff.

Goal 2: School Social Workers support students in school by helping educators enhance students' educational success.

Competency 1: Staff can develop and implement plans to enhance student's success using family information.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will work with staff to establish behavior plan for students.
2. SSW will work with staff to establish academic plan for students.
3. SSW will attend relevant school meetings with teachers and administrators related to educational issues (i.e. SAT's, MDT's, IEP's).

Competency 2: Staff can state how the family situation impacts the student's school performance and relationships on an ongoing basis and will adjust plans as needed.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will maintain contact with the family to keep current regarding family situation.
2. SSW will work with the school staff to assess student's needs on a regular basis.

Goal 3: School Social Workers support students in school by helping educators use community resources to meet students' needs.

Competency 1: Staff can state information that may connect families with appropriate community resources.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will provide staff with current information on community resources.
2. SSW will attend staff meetings to update staff on resources for families.
3. SSW will sponsor a community resource fair.
4. SSW will provide inservice opportunities for staff regarding community resources.
5. SSW will print a newsletter featuring resource opportunities.

Competency 2: Staff can state that they have communicated with community resources while respecting confidentiality.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will heighten awareness of confidentiality within school buildings.
2. SSW will encourage staff to communicate with community resources.
3. SSW will follow-up with staff to identify resources contacted.

Competency 3: Staff can identify how they have supported family involvement with community resources.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will follow-up with staff in regards to communication they have had with family regarding resources.
2. SSW will encourage staff to check in with families regarding their work with community resources.

Goal 4: School Social Workers support students in school by helping educators enhance home-school relationships.

Competency 1: Staff can identify information gained from the family.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will serve as the liaison between school and family.
2. SSW will consult with school staff.
3. SSW will encourage staff to listen to the family's perspective.

Competency 2: Staff can identify and consider the family's priorities and values.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will facilitate sharing of information between family and school.
2. SSW will advocate for consideration of family's priorities and values.

Competency 3: Staff can state strategies to effectively communicate and connect with the family.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will consult with school staff regarding identified family/student communication needs.
2. SSW will provide education about communication skills and family dynamics.

Competency 4: Staff can state identified mutual concerns with the family.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will facilitate communication between staff and family.
2. SSW will mediate, if needed, for both family and school concerns to be recognized.

Competency 5: Staff can identify joint intervention strategies developed with the family.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will facilitate problem solving process with family and staff.
2. SSW will follow up with family and staff and provide feedback.

Competency 6: Staff will create a school environment in which families can state they feel respected and welcomed.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will consult with school staff about family perspective of the school environment.
2. SSW will support educators in identifying their own values and feelings about communicating with the family and student.

Goal 5: School Social Workers support students in school by helping educators develop school programs, policies and procedures that will be sensitive to families' situations and needs.

Competency 1: The school board and district staff will be able to identify and consider family situations and needs when developing and implementing programs, policies and procedures.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will attend relevant school board meetings.
2. SSW will educate school personnel about relevant issues affecting families.
3. SSW will advocate for the needs of students and families in education.

Competency 2: Staff will be able to identify legislative issues affecting families.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will educate school personnel about relevant legislative issues affecting families.
2. SSW will advocate for the needs of students and families in education.

DOMAIN: COMMUNITY

Goal 1: School Social Workers support students by helping the community enhance school-community relationships.

Competency 1: Community resource staff will identify the appropriate school staff they can communicate with.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will educate community resource agencies on the educational system.
2. SSW will form and maintain a working relationship with community resources.
3. SSW will encourage and support relationship building between community resources and schools.

Competency 2: Community resource staff will state that they have shared information about the family's, school's and their own perspectives, situation, needs, and expectations.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will maintain regular contact with community agencies.
2. SSW will educate community resource agencies on the educational system.
3. SSW will form and maintain a working relationship with community resources.
4. SSW will encourage and support relationship building between community resources and schools.

Competency 3: Community resource staff will state that they have shared information about student's functioning.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will educate community resource agencies on the educational system.
2. SSW will form and maintain a working relationship with community resources.
3. SSW will encourage and support relationship building between community resources and schools.

Goal 2: School Social Workers support students by helping the community identify and meet the needs of students and families.

Competency 1: Community resources will identify and consider school information when assessing needs.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will facilitate information sharing between the school and outside agencies.
2. SSW may serve as the contact person between school and community agencies.
3. SSW may advocate for community resources to consider school information in case plan.

Competency 2: Community resources can state the needs of the student and family.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will serve as a link between families and community resources by facilitating sharing of information.

Competency 3: Community resources can state joint strategies that they have developed with school staff to meet the needs of students and families.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will facilitate information sharing that might include written and verbal communication between the school and outside agencies.
2. SSW will consult with agencies/resources regarding combined strategies to meet student and family needs.

Competency 4: Community resources can state that needed services have been provided to students and families.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will follow-up with community resources regarding the students and families referred.

Goal 3: School Social Workers support students by helping the community mobilize and develop resources to optimize students' potential.

Competency 1: Community resources will identify gaps in community services.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will serve as a consultant with community resource agencies regarding the current needs of students and families.
2. SSW will advocate for community resource programs to better meet the needs of students and families.

Competency 2: Community resources will state consideration, development and provision of needed services.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will serve as a consultant with community resource agencies regarding the current needs of students and families.
2. SSW will advocate for community resource programs to better meet the needs of students and families.

Goal 4: School Social Workers support students by helping the community ensure that legislation considers the needs of students, families and community resources.

Competency 1: Community resources and legislators can identify issues affecting students and families.

School Social Worker Activities:

1. SSW will serve as a consultant with community resource agencies regarding the current needs of students and families.
2. SSW will assist schools and families in identifying legislative issues affecting them.
3. SSW will advocate for legislation to better meet the needs of students, families and agencies.

SIM COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School Social Workers operate under the identified LPS School Social Work Program Goals and Competencies.
2. School Social Workers participate in regular contact meetings with a multi-disciplinary team in their building (i.e. school administrator, psychologist, nurse, counselor) to ensure good communication and a team approach.
3. School Social Workers prioritize the goals for each building's population with their school contact teams.
4. The job title of "Family Specialists" changes to "School Social Workers" in order to reflect their training and profession.
5. The School Social Work Program grows as the demographics of the schools and community change.
6. In order to deliver the comprehensive services described in the SIM document (p. 7a-7l) and in compliance with the National Association of Social Work School Social Work Standards, a ratio of one (1) LPS School Social Worker per 1,050 students is recommended.
7. Continued training and workshops be made available to School Social Workers to enhance professional growth.
8. School Social Workers be provided with private work space, telephone and computer access in all working environments.
9. School Social Workers have a Program Coordinator who is a credentialed and experienced M.S.W. Social Worker.
10. The School Social Work Program staff develop a 3-5 year plan which considers:
 1. Referral Process
 2. Equitable Distribution of work load
 3. Team Structure
 4. Methods of Feedback and Documentation
 5. Program Assessment
 6. Annual Program Focus
 7. Social Work Supervision

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Domain: systems in which school social workers operate

Goals: desired outcome of school social work activities

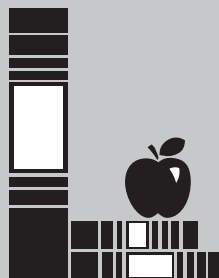
Competency: measurable outcome

Activities: used to achieve competencies and goals

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5901 O Street • Lincoln, NE 68510
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 82889 • Lincoln, NE 68501-2889

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