



WHO ARE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS?

School social workers are trained mental health professionals with a Master's Degree in social work. They enhance the school division's ability to meet its academic mission, especially where home, school and community collaboration are essential in ensuring that every student succeeds. Our school social workers provide supportive counseling and/or mental health skill building to individual students, groups of students, and parents, in order to promote optimal learning by addressing mental health and interpersonal skills. Using their understanding of family and community systems, school social workers link students and families to services that are essential for student success. In addition, they work with students who are facing a variety of challenges, such as truancy, social anxiety, aggressive behaviors, substance abuse problems and sexual identity issues. In addition, our school social workers also work with students to address immediate concerns, such as coping with stress, parental divorce, school avoidance, and grief and loss issues. School social workers provide crisis intervention, supportive counseling and/or therapeutic services to students. At the division level, school social workers use their expertise to enhance classroom and school climate, promote optimal learning, improve interpersonal skills, alleviate barriers to positive adjustment, and address attendance and drop-out issues. Our school social workers collaborate with administrators, teachers and families to promote and reinforce regular school attendance, serving as a liaison between the school and community agencies to promote the overall well-being of students and their families.

WHAT DO SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS DO?

School social workers play a unique role in the schools as they work with school staff, students, families and community agencies in removing barriers to education. ACPS social workers provide services to students to enhance their emotional well-being and improve their academic performance. Our school social workers specialize in the assessment and implementation of evidence-based mental health interventions, and in understanding the family and community systems in order to provide resources that are essential for promoting student success. Our team works with students who have a variety of challenges, such as truancy, social anxiety, aggressive behaviors, substance abuse problems, sexual identity issues and exposure to violence. Some of the many services provided by school social workers in ACPS include the following:

⇒ **CONSULTATION AND EDUCATION**

School social workers confer with school personnel to sensitize administrators to the various student-family-school-community relations which affect a student's academic performance. Providing consultation at the school level, social workers aim to enhance classroom/school climate for success, promote optimal learning, improve interpersonal skills and alleviate barriers to school adjustment.

Social workers also develop and present appropriate parent education workshops within schools. They collaborate with school personnel to develop additions to the curriculum in the areas of mental health, social welfare and family life education.

⇒ **DIRECT SERVICES TO STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

School social workers provide supportive counseling and mental health skill building to individual students, groups of students, and families that exhibit high levels of "at risk" symptoms for school failure. They manage and follow through on the multi-agency services provided to students and their families, particularly as the needs and services impact the educational needs of the student; and serve as a liaison between school and community agencies in respect to reporting child abuse/neglect. Social workers secure the services of other agency staff to assist with providing services to individual and/or groups of students.

⇒ **ATTENDANCE INTERVENTIONS**

School social workers are responsible for promoting and reinforcing regular attendance with students, families, teachers and administrators; intervening in instances of chronic truancy and non-attendance of students; and providing appropriate interventions to prevent school "drop-out" in conjunction with established school and community agencies.

