



2026 Legislative Agenda

MSSWA LEGISLATIVE GOALS:

- *To promote the social emotional and educational well-being of children & families*
- *To strengthen the profession of School Social Work*

The Minnesota School Social Workers Association (MSSWA) has been serving children in their schools, homes and communities for 57 years. We are an association of licensed school social workers throughout Minnesota who work with students and their families to provide mental health related services and support within the school system. *“School social workers adopt a whole-child, whole-school approach to their work. They offer prevention, intervention, and postvention services at the individual student-level and at the universal school-level. School social workers support academic success by attending to students’ academics and socioemotional skills, their mental health wellness and resiliency through establishing a diverse and inclusive school climate.” (Tan, K. & SSWAA, 2023).*

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER:

- School social work is a specialized area of practice within the broad field of the social work profession. School social workers hold a degree in social work which encompasses specialized preparation in cultural diversity, systems theory, social justice, risk assessment and intervention, consultation and collaboration. (SSWAA, 2020). Social workers receive two different sets of credentials: degrees and licenses. Social work degrees are earned from accredited academic institutions. School social workers at the master level receiving clinical supervision or holding clinical licensure are prepared through their education, practicum, clinical supervision and licensure to provide clinical mental health services in a school setting.
- MN school social workers are dual licensed by the MN Board of Social Work and hold the title of “school social worker” upon receipt of Tier 3 or Tier 4 licensure from the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB). While the roles and responsibilities of school social workers may vary across schools and districts based on funding streams and the needs of the student population, school social workers operate under a scope of practice dependent upon their education, training, and level of licensure obtained by their state health licensing board, the Minnesota Board of Social Work (MSSWA, 2014).
- The Minnesota Board of Social Work Practice Act outlines that use of “Social Work” or “Social Worker” as a *professional title is restricted to only those who hold a social work degree from an institution accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or hold a license from BOSW to represent themselves* as a social worker. The statute further states that other professions must not represent themselves to the public by any title or description stating or implying that they are engaged in the practice of social work, or that they are licensed to engage in the practice of social work.



MSSWA 2026 Legislative Priorities

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER:

- Interventions provided through school social work services have shown *improved student attendance, reduction of child abuse and neglect, improved graduation rates and early identification of a disability; thus, increasing academic achievement.*
- School social workers address the social, emotional, physical and academic needs of **ALL STUDENTS** including students whose needs require special education support and services as well as students within the general education setting.
- School social workers often focus on providing supports to vulnerable populations of students at high risk for truancy and dropping out of school, such as homelessness, students in foster placement, migrant children, students transitioning between school and treatment programs or the juvenile justice system, or students experiencing domestic or community violence. (SSWAA, 2021)
- School social workers providing clinical services can generate revenue by billing Medicaid for mental health services provided.
- *School social workers serve as a resource to administrators and other educators providing consultation and training on identifying students with mental health needs and a referral process when services are sought.*

MSSWA & COALITION OF LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS 2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Ensure access to social work services in schools by preserving funding for school support personnel.
- Expand title protection to include county social workers to ensure only those with a social work degree can be called a social worker when employed by the county.

Social Work Value Based Positions

We support:

- Policies that protect and uphold the human dignity of immigrants, especially those undocumented, and guarantee their right to due process.
- State policy that protects vulnerable populations from immigration enforcement intrusion, and safeguard the safety and privacy of students, families, and community members.
- Upholding existing policies that outlaw the discredited and unethical practice of anti-LGBTQ+ conversion therapy by social workers or any other individual. [Conv Therapy Brief](#)
- Full inclusion of trans people in sports at all levels, recognizing and honoring everyone's right to self-determination and gender expression. [Trans Inclusion in Sports Policy Brief](#)
- Ensuring families have access to the supports they need to maintain safety.
- A multipronged approach to the public health crisis of gun violence. Social workers respond to the devastating impact firsthand, and at times risk their personal safety. Meaningful action requires stronger gun control, expanded access to mental health care, and addressing other contributing societal factors. [Gun Violence Policy Brief](#)

Other Coalition of Licensed Social Workers Priorities

- Promote fair and equitable compensation for social work professionals.
- Support Minnesota's efforts to secure federal approval or alternative funding for increased mental health reimbursement rates approved by the Legislature in 2025.
- Ensure mental health billing parity for clinical trainees across all health insurance companies, including Optum.