

Licensure Considerations for the Hiring of Social Workers in the School Setting

This document is intended to assist schools and districts with understanding the Ohio Department of Education (Department) license and registrations held by social workers in the state of Ohio. Social workers are an integral part of supporting the whole child, the core of Ohio's strategic plan for education. Each Child, Our Future is Ohio's shared plan for ensuring that each student is *challenged, prepared* and *empowered* for his or her future. Social workers contribute to this work by providing services that increase emotional well-being and academic achievement among students. They work with parents, caregivers and community partners to help schools meet the needs of the whole child.

Background and Current Status

Traditionally, social workers have been required to hold a Five-Year Professional Pupil Services License in the area of School Social Work to work in the school environment. However, recent changes to Ohio law created a new Pupil Services Registration option for social workers. This allows *Licensed Social Workers* and *Licensed Independent Social Workers* to work in the school environment under the pupil services registration from the Department. Any individual who holds a currently valid license from the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board (Board) to work as a social worker is eligible to apply for the Pupil Services Registration and work in the school environment.

This new registration option provides schools and districts with more flexibility in the hiring of social workers, but also requires schools and districts to have a deeper understanding of the backgrounds and the varying scopes of practice of applicants when making social worker employment decisions. The Department and the Board created this document to provide schools and districts with an understanding of:

- Each Board-issued license and Department-issued license and registration;
- The educational and experiential background the social worker will bring to the school or district; and
- The scope of practice the social worker is authorized to engage in.

Five-Year Professional Pupil Services License

To qualify for a Department-issued Five-Year Professional Pupil Services License in the area of School Social Work, an applicant must meet the following requirements:

- Hold a master's degree from an accredited college or university;
- Hold a current *Licensed Social Worker* or *Licensed Independent Social Worker* license issued by the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board; and
- Have completed an Ohio Department of Higher Education approved graduate educator program of preparation in the area of school social work. Information about applying for licensure can be found on the [Ohio Department of Education Pupil Services Licensure and Registration webpage](#).

SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HOLDS A FIVE-YEAR PROFESSIONAL PUPIL SERVICES LICENSE IN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

Social workers who hold a Department-issued professional pupil services license in the area of school social work have specialized training in school systems and laws and provide a variety of direct and indirect services. This training provides individuals with the skills and knowledge to promote safe and supportive school environments and support social, emotional, behavioral and academic growth for students. Individuals who hold a professional pupil services license in the area of school social work can provide the following services:

- Develop and implement schoolwide social, emotional and behavioral frameworks and programs

- Assist in obtaining and coordinating community resources to meet students' needs
- Make referrals and support linkage to behavioral health services as appropriate
- Participate in special education assessment and planning meetings
- Complete bio-psychosocial assessments to identify needs
- Develop and implement individual, group and classroom-based interventions
- Provide direct mental health counseling services
- Assess for safety and provide crisis intervention services
- Provide classroom-based behavior intervention support and consultation with teachers
- Provide consultation regarding school law and policy, including Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504

Five-Year Pupil Services Social Work Registration

To qualify for a Department Five-Year Pupil Services Social Work Registration, an applicant must hold a current license as a *Licensed Social Worker* or a *Licensed Independent Social Worker* from the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board. Information about applying for a registration can be found on the [Ohio Department of Education Pupil Services Licensure and Registration webpage](#).

The scope of practice for an individual who holds a pupil services registration with the Department is dependent upon the license the individual holds with the Board. School and district administrators making hiring decisions must ensure an applicant's Board-issued license aligns to the duties required of the position.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HOLDS THE DEPARTMENT REGISTRATION AND IS A BOARD LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER

Licensed Social Workers have specialized training in human development and behavioral health. They have training to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Many *Licensed Social Workers* have chosen to specialize in an area of practice such as mental health and addiction, child welfare, healthcare, criminal justice, military or aging. *Licensed Social Workers* can have a bachelor's degree or a master's degree. *Licensed Social Workers* can provide the following services:

- Develop and implement schoolwide social, emotional and behavioral frameworks and programs
- Assist in obtaining and coordinating community resources to meet students' needs
- Make referrals and support linkage to behavioral health services as appropriate
- Participate in special education assessment and planning meetings (may need training and professional development in special education law and policy)
- Complete bio-psychosocial assessments to identify needs
- Provide individual, group, classroom-based and family interventions
- Provide individual, group and family counseling under supervision from a *Licensed Independent Social Worker* or other appropriate professional
- Provide classroom-based behavior intervention support and consultation with teachers
- Assess for safety and provide crisis intervention services under supervision from a *Licensed Independent Social Worker* or other appropriate professional

SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HOLDS THE DEPARTMENT REGISTRATION AND IS A BOARD LICENSED INDEPENDENT SOCIAL WORKER

Licensed Independent Social Workers have specialized training in human development and behavioral health. They have a master's degree and the training and expertise to provide clinical services without supervision. *Licensed Independent Social Workers* can provide the following services:

- Develop and implement schoolwide social, emotional and behavioral frameworks and programs

- Assist in obtaining and coordinating community resources to meet students' needs
- Make referrals and support linkage to behavioral health services as appropriate
- Provide classroom-based behavior intervention support and consultation with teachers
- Participate in special education assessment and planning meetings (may need training and professional development in special education law and policy)
- Complete bio-psychosocial assessments to identify needs
- Conduct diagnostic assessments of mental and emotional disorders
- Develop and implement individual, group and classroom-based interventions
- Provide direct mental health counseling services
- Assess for safety and provide crisis intervention services
- Provide clinical supervision of *Licensed Social Workers* (except for their training supervision) and *Licensed Professional Counselors*

Contact the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Educator Licensure by phone at 877-644-6338 or by email at educator.licensure@education.ohio.gov if you have any questions or concerns regarding licensure or registration with the Ohio Department of Education.

Contact the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board by phone at 614-466-0912 or by email at cswmft.info@cswb.ohio.gov if you have any questions or concerns regarding licensure as a *Licensed Social Worker* or as an *Licensed Independent Social Worker*.