

OSSWA ANNUAL REPORT

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear OSSWA Members,

I first want to take this time to say "THANK YOU!" Thank you for showing up every day for our students, staffs, schools and communities. The last several years have not been easy, especially on us that are always taking care of others. Yet, we continue to show up every day to advocate, support and love those who need it most. YOU are definitely SEEN and APPRECIATED!!!

Secondly, thank you for your continued support of the Ohio School Social Work Association. There is so much going on around our state, in the area of school social work, and we want you to know we are here for you! We are here to provide meaningful professional learning experiences to help you with the important work you do. We are here to advocate for students, families and school social work in Ohio, to make sure EVERY student has access to what they need- socially, academically, physically, and emotionally.

We have had many exciting things happening with OSSWA. We have been invited to the table to discuss whole child initiatives as well as increasing school social work capacity in the schools. We have also been present and visible at important conferences such as the Ohio School Board Association (OSBA) and the National Association of School Social Workers (NASW). And now, with the capacity of Zoom, we have been able to offer many professional development opportunities online. Our association has grown a lot in the last 5 years and we are continuing to grow. It is time to get involved and start building even more capacity of school social work in the state of Ohio!!!

Once again, thank you for all you do to keep students at the center of all your work!

Sincerely,

Jill Miller- OSSWA President

AWARDS 2022

School Social Worker of the Year

Lara Ruffing, LISW-S

Lara Ruffing has been a school social worker since 1993, and has served as the Mental Health Team Leader in Worthington Schools for 15 years and counting. She is a Level 1 Trauma Informed Certified social worker, and she has been a member of OSSWA for many years. Lara earned her MSW at Wayne State in Detroit, MI, and started her school social work career in Dearborn, MI. Moving back to the Columbus area in 2005. Lara started working for the ESC in 2006. Over the next few years, Lara increased her service time with the Worthington School district eventually becoming a full-time behavior consultant, supporting all of the schools pre-K thru high school. Lara has been integral in bringing more mental health support to the students of Worthington. She currently supervises a team of ten social workers and counselors in the district - a team that she helped advocate for and hire. Additionally, Lara is a full time Mental Health Specialist at Worthingway Middle School. She has been on the district's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Team both at the district level and building level, implementing MTSS with fidelity throughout the district. In particular, Lara excels at focusing on Tier 1 interventions in schools to make each of our buildings better places for all students. Lara helps evaluate student behaviors, and make plans to support students with behavioral disabilities. She has even earned the honor of being recognized for her work in Margaret Searle's book *Causes & Cures: Getting to the Root of Academic and Behavior Problems*. Lara continuously creates and implements teacher and parent training, such as those that focus on executive functions, best practices in supporting our LGBTQ+ students, and managing student anxiety, to name a few. Lara serves in our district as a Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) trainer, and she also serves as an important member of the district's Academic Achievement and Professional Learning Committee.



Champion of Children



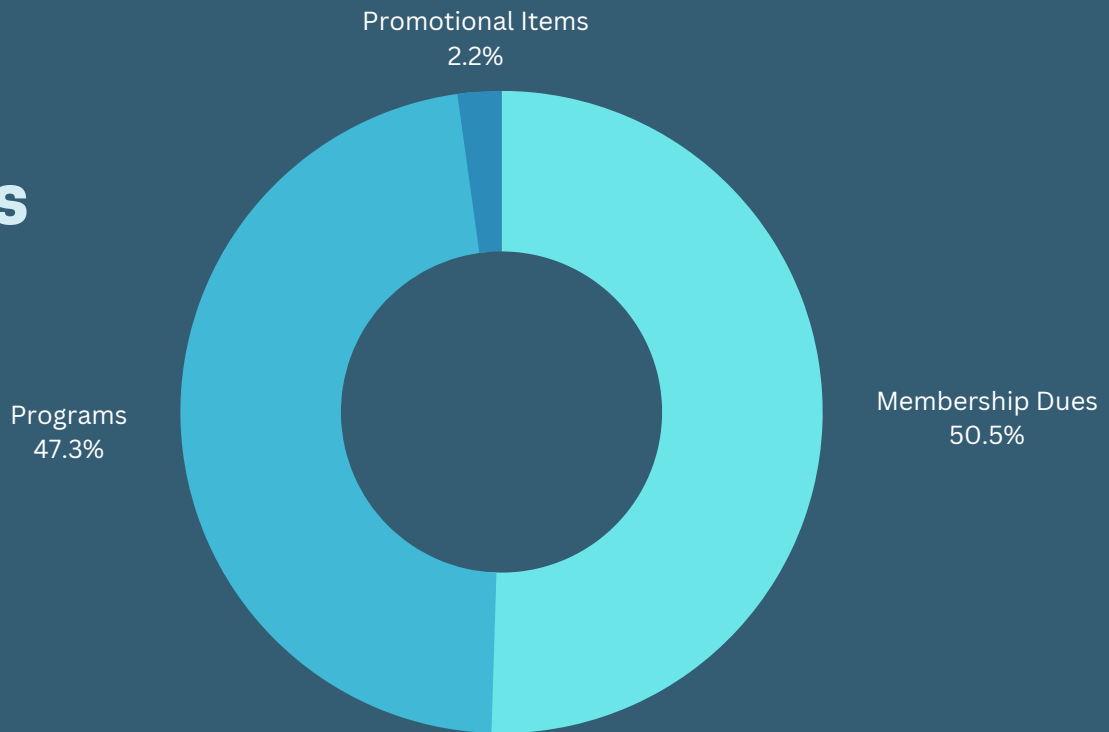
Senator Nathan Manning

Ohio Senator Nathan Manning, Senate District 13 serving Lorain and Huron Counties, has supported school social work during the past ten years.

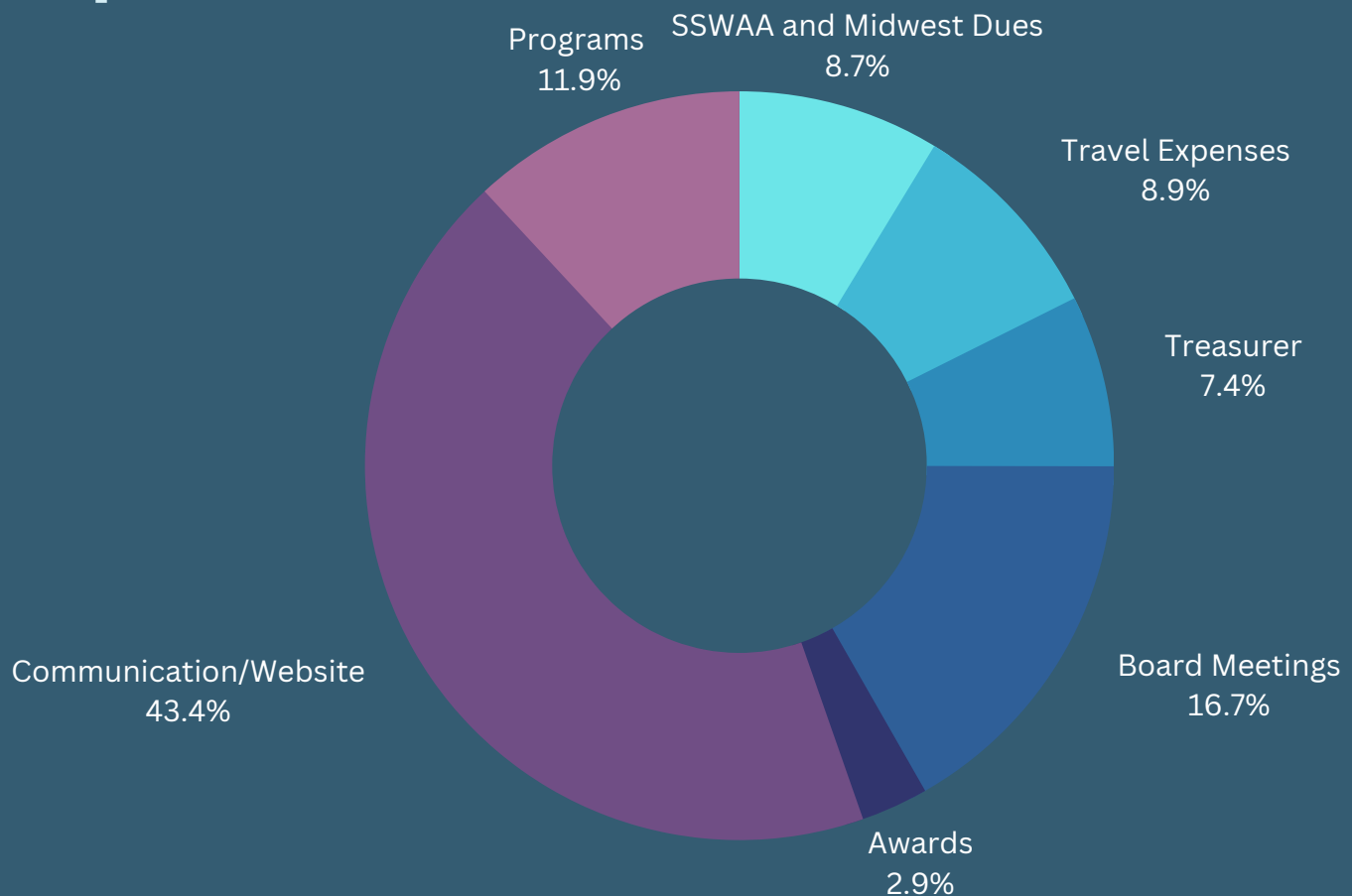
Prior to his election to the senate, Senator Manning served his hometown region as a member of the Ohio House of Representatives. In both positions, Manning has supported meeting the needs of students and families in the state through school social work. Senator Manning's personal history with education and the work of school social work is related to his mother as well as his wife's experience as teachers in the area. Senator Manning previously worked as an attorney in domestic relations and juvenile justice. Senator Manning has worked to support restorative practices for students who exhibit chronic and habitual truancy, as well as an advocate to employ more school social workers in our public schools. Senator Manning has offered information, advice and support to the Legislative Committee of OSSWA in its efforts to advocate for and expand the role of and funding for school social work in the state of Ohio as well as expand access to behavioral health services for students exhibit suicidal or homicidal crisis but have parents who are disengaged or detached from the importance of crisis services.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Income Sources



Expenses



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The most important legislation related to social work that occurred during Ohio's 134th General Assembly, is the legislation that did not pass.

Thanks to the advocacy efforts of social workers throughout the state of Ohio, the amendment to remove the requirement to have a degree in social work in order to be granted an Ohio Social Work license was omitted from House Bill 509 prior to its passage in December 2022. If the amendment had been included in the bill, anyone with a "related degree" could apply for and be granted a social work license. Since the Senate passed the bill without the language to deregulate social workers, the title and practice protection remain for social workers in Ohio. Very good news. Other positive news for school social workers were the result of the failure of several other House Bills.

HB 616 (Ohio's version of Florida's "Don't Say Gay Bill") ended the year in the House Committee. When a bill is voted out of committee or is not passed by the full house at the end of the General Assembly, the bill needs to be introduced again the following year, basically starting all over. HB 616 would have had a significant impact upon school social workers in Ohio.

According to an article by Anna Staver and published in the Columbus Dispatch, "[House Bill 616](#) would ban both instruction and materials about sexual orientation and gender identity from kindergarten through third grade in all public and most private schools. Students in grades four and higher could discuss these issues, but "any curriculum or instructional materials on sexual orientation or gender identity" would be "age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards. Teachers who violated these rules could lose their licenses and schools could lose their state funding".

HB 616 also restricted teacher discussion and training on other "divisive or inherently racist concepts" such as critical race theory, diversity, equity, and inclusion learning outcomes and "any other concept that the state board of education defines as divisive or inherently racist."

The Ohio Education Association (OEA) along with OSSWA and several other organizations joined forces with NASW-OH to oppose House Bill 327. OEA referred to HB 327 as "legislation that would force educators to whitewash our history and distract from the real issues facing Ohio's schools!" While it started out as a bill dealing with so-called "divisive topics", the latest version replaces undefinable "divisive concepts" language with vague references to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, apparently requiring Ohio educators to become constitutional law experts in order to understand what the bill's sponsors don't want them teaching. The bill carries the potential punishment of taking away teachers' licenses while allowing for members of the public to sue educators to stop teaching the truth to our kids. **HB 327 ended the year in the House Committee.**

House Bill 454, Enact the Save our Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act also ended the year in the House Committee. The Ohio Children's Defense Fund, ACLU- Ohio joined with OSSWA and NASW-Ohio to oppose HB 454. If passed, this legislation would ban safe, effective medical care for Ohio youth, despite the fact that significant research from medical experts and pediatricians across the country shows gender affirming care helps LGBTQ+ children immensely in their mental health and overall well-being.

According to Equality Ohio, HB 454 would interfere with healthcare and youth safety in a variety of ways:
Prohibits:

- counselors and educators from concealing or encouraging adolescents to conceal their feelings of gender dysphoria from their parents.
- referrals for medicalized treatments for minors with Gender Dysphoria
- Medicaid from covering the cost of SRS for minors.
- any requirement for private insurers to cover medicalized treatments for gender dysphoria in adolescents.
- hormone blockers for Gender Dysphoria prior to the age of 18.
- cross-sex hormones for youth experiencing gender dysphoria prior to the age of 18.
- surgical interventions or Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) for minors.

Threatens to:

- remove the licensure of physicians who provide this care and threatens them with civil lawsuits.
- Withdraw public funds from any hospital at which gender affirming care occurs

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

House Bill 61, "Save Women's Sports Act", ended the year in discussion in the House Committee. HB 61 requires schools, state institutions of higher education, and private colleges to designate separate single-sex teams and sports for each sex.

The House passed House Bill 151, which banned transgender girls from playing on female sports teams in middle school and high school. While the Senate reviewed the bill, they added an amendment to the House bill which would gut the Ohio Department of Education and give more power to the governor over education policy. This action took place late on December 14, 2022. When the Senate passed version of the bill went to the House, the Senate amendment changed the name of the Ohio Department of Education to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. It also created a new director of the Department, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate instead of the Superintendent currently appointed by the Ohio Board of Education. The House did not pass the bill prior to the end of the year.

The final action of concern to OSSWA, NASW-OH and the ACLU-OH was in the form of a Resolution rather than legislation. During 2022, Ohio School Board member Mike Toal submitted a resolution to the Ohio School Board for its review and discussion. The Resolution entitled "Resolution to Oppose the Proposed Changes to Title IX and to Affirm Parental Rights and Local Control of Ohio K-12 Education" opposes protections for LGBTQ+ students community. During the year, more than 100 groups and individuals testified in person and submitted testimony expressing their support and opposition to the Resolution. OSSWA submitted testimony opposing the resolution. Despite our best efforts, on December 13, 2022, the Ohio State Board of Education voted 10-7 to adopt an amended version of Mike Toal's Resolution.

The resolution:

- defines gender identity as biological sex;
- does not recognize that federal anti-discrimination protections based on sex extend to gender identity and sexuality (see landmark decision of the US Supreme Court in *Bostock v Clayton County*);
- does not recognize Title IX anti-discrimination protections extending to LGBTQ+ students;
- opposes recent updates to the US Department of Education's Title IX agency guidance about complying with federal Title IX anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ students;
- sides with a lawsuit filed by the Ohio Attorney General, and 21 other attorneys general, suing the US Dept. of Agriculture for their rule requiring schools receiving federal nutrition funding must comply with federal anti-discrimination laws;
- asks the General Assembly to endorse and protect school districts that discriminate against LGBTQ+ students; and
- requires the acting state superintendent send a letter to every Ohio public school district and every Ohio elementary or secondary school or preschool program licensed by the Department of Education receiving federal funds stating:
 - The State Board opposes the proposed regulatory changes released by the U.S. Department of Education on June 23, 2022
 - The applicable USDOE guidance documents have been enjoined by a U.S. District Court and are, therefore, unenforceable at this time
 - The State Board disagrees with the rule promulgated by the Department of Agriculture on June 14, 2022
 - While this rule currently remains in effect, the Ohio Attorney General has joined with twenty-one other state attorneys general in seeking injunctive relief from the new USDA rule
 - This correspondence is intended to inform schools and districts, not to compel them to take a particular course of action

The full resolution as passed by the Ohio Board of Education can be accessed at

<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/State-Board/State-Board-Reports-and-Policies/24-Resolution.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

OSSWA BOARD MEMBERS



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Programs
Director



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Director



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STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

ZORAH SNAVELY | UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
KALYN BASH AND SHANNON BROWN | OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

We have open positions on our board! If you are interested in getting involved, email us at osswadrive@gmail.com

NEW BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



HEATHER FEEHAN

My name is Heather Feehan MSW, LISW-S. I live in the Merion Village neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio. I graduated from University of Dayton in 1997 with a Bachelors in Psychology and 1999 from The Ohio State University with a Masters in Social Work. I went back to OSU to receive my School Social Worker designation/certificate. I currently work as an Ohio Health employee through the Sports Medicine department, but my work site is Dublin Jerome High School, which is part of Dublin City Schools. This is my third year as a part of the Dublin City Schools District as a school social worker. In the past, I worked from 1999 to 2001 at Culver Academies, in Culver, Indiana, as a school social worker, and also from 2005 to 2010 with Nationwide Childrens Partnership for Youth Suicide Prevention school based program in New Albany and Columbus City Schools districts. My hobbies include yoga, walking my dog, cheering on the University of Dayton Flyers basketball team, and traveling on new adventures.



MEGAN OSBORNE

Hello! My name is Megan Osborne and I am a School Social Worker in the Cleveland Heights University Heights School District. I found my passion for Social Work as an undergraduate student at Penn State University where I majored in Rehabilitation and Human Services. Although I am a proud Nittany Lion, I continued my education at The Ohio State University in the Master's of School Social Work program. Directly following my Master's I participated in an international Social Work conference in Cucuta, Columbia where we discussed the effects of migration on surrounding communities. Additionally, I spoke in Bachelor level classes at the Universidad Simon Bolivar on the topic of Social Work in the United States. I have had the privilege of working as an English teacher in Spain, an intake coordinator, Clinical Therapist at Nationwide Children's Hospital and now as a School Social Worker at Monticello Middle School here in Cleveland. I am so excited to get involved in social work advocacy here in Northeast Ohio! I hope that my experience can bring a new perspective to the OSSWA.



ZORAH SNAVELY

Zorah Snavely is a current Master of Social Work Student at University of Cincinnati graduating in April of 2023 with a concentration in Children and Families, part of the School Social Work Program, and is a Bear-CAT Fellow recipient. She received her Bachelor's in Social Work from Slippery Rock University in May of 2022. She completed her bachelors field placement in a public school district and is currently doing her masters field placement at a school-based day treatment program. She is from Cleveland, Ohio and plans to return there after graduation and hoping to secure a school social work job.

UPCOMING EVENTS



School Social Work Week

March 5-11th 2023

The theme for National School Social Work Week 2023 is “We Rise.” School Social Workers rise up - supporting their students, families, and school communities. School Social Workers rise to share hope. They rise to listen and understand. They rise to challenge inequities. They rise to support all students. For more info visit the SSWAA website.

NASW Advocacy Day, Columbus

March 21st, 2023

Every March, during Social Work Month, NASW Ohio Chapter hosts Advocacy Day to connect social workers to their state legislators. It's a time to promote our profession and issues that impact our clients. Join hundreds of social workers and social work students for a day of action. Attendees will have the chance to learn about legislative advocacy and up-to-date legislative policy relevant to social work practice and values, then take what they have learned into meetings with their State Representative & Senator's offices to actively engage in legislative advocacy. To register and for more information go to naswoh.org.



OSSWA Northeast Region Happy Hour

March 24th, 2023 - 5pm

Join OSSWA for an afternoon of networking and games at Pins Mechanical in Ohio City! To register go to osswa1.wildapricot.org



Ethical Record Keeping in the Internet Age

April 27th, 2023 - 8am-11:10am

OSSWA will be hosting an online webinar on the topic of ethical record keeping. This will include 3 Ethics CEUs for Social Workers. For more information and to register go to osswa1.wildapricot.org.



STAY CONNECTED WITH OSSWA!



OHIO SCHOOL
SOCIAL WORK
ASSOCIATION



@OSSWA_



WEBSITE:
OSSWA1.WILDAPRICOT.ORG

EMAIL US:
OSSWADRIVE@GMAIL.COM

**ALL MEMBERS ARE ALSO WELCOME TO JOIN
OUR BOARD MEETINGS:**

- APRIL 22, 2023 - 10AM-2PM, LOCATION TBD
- JUNE 10, 2023 - MORE DETAILS TO COME
ON OUR WEBSITE

