

**Revisiting the Visiting Teacher: A Historical Analysis of School Social Work Identity**

**A Dissertation**

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**Doctorate of Social Work**

**By Dee Stalnecker**

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## **Dedication**

This is dedicated to the pioneers of school social work; Mary Marot, Sara Holbrook, Jane Day, and Mrs. Joseph Lee. Without their ingenuity, genius, and compassion, I would not have the joy of working in such an amazing profession.

## Acknowledgements

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To have achieved this level of education, I needed a strong foundation which I received from my parents. They taught me the value of an education and that education creates opportunity. They have always supported me, encouraged me, and loved me unconditionally. Throughout my many struggles and successes, they have been there. My success, and who I am as a mother, woman, and professional is because of you. I love you both so very much!!

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**Abstract of Dissertation**  
**Revisiting the Visiting Teacher: A Historical Analysis**  
**of School Social Work Identity**

**By**

**Dee Stalnecker**

**Millersville University, 2020**

**Millersville, Pennsylvania**

**Directed by- Dr. Leonora Foels**

The original assignment of school social work was that of the home and school liaison and although some school social workers continue this duty, the tasks of school social workers have become very diverse. Research has been rich in exploring school social workers' perceptions in helping to identify their tasks that make their roles unique and in creating a professional identity. This qualitative and phenomenological study used grey literature, published articles, and interviews to explore the evolution of school social work from 1906 to present day by analyzing societal influences in specific eras and how they were interpreted by educational professionals who shaped the tasks which ultimately led to the identity of school social work. Results of this study found home visiting to connect families to services, address truancy, and being a liaison between the home and school has never wavered as the unique skill and task of school social work. The findings of this study can be used to inform school social workers in their practice of home visiting, collaborating more with teachers, and clearly carving out their roles in schools to avoid role overlap and role ambiguity. The findings can also inform the Council for Social Work Education to include curriculum about the effectiveness, purpose, and skills necessary for home visiting.

Signature of Investigator \_\_\_\_\_Dee Stalnecker\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_March 12, 2020\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

School social workers have historically served as the bridge between the home and school by assisting families in their environments and educating teachers about the life circumstance involving their students outside of school. School social workers were initially called ‘visiting teachers,’ because they acted as a liaison between the school and home (Allen-Mears, 2004, 2006; Costin, 1969; Sugrue, 2017). However, the definition of school social work has changed throughout the last hundred years and home visiting has not always been ranked as a priority task (Allen-Mears, 2004, 2006; Costin, 1969). Instead of maximizing on this skill and social work knowledge that sets school social work apart from other education professionals such as school counselors and psychologists, school social workers have yielded to the needs of society at the time, therefore never fully creating a consistent identity. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the historical development and evolution of how school social workers defined themselves from the beginning of school social work in 1906 to present day by analyzing societal influences in specific eras, such as changes in federal education laws, and how they shaped the tasks and ultimately the identity of school social work.

### **Problem Statement**

A consistent definition of school social work has been elusive, but not for a lack of effort. The original assignment of school social work was that of the home and school liaison; connecting with caregivers, understanding the circumstances of the student, and communicating assessments of the home environment back to the school (Allen, 1928; Sugrue, 2017), and although some school social workers continue this duty, the tasks of school social workers have become very diverse (Allen-Mears, 1996, 2004, 2006; Costin, 1969). For example, school social workers provide individual and group therapy, participate in multitiered support systems, provide

community resource expertise to families, and serve on special education teams ('Role of the School Social Worker,' 2019). The diversity of tasks that a school social worker can execute makes them an asset to their school district, but it also so expansive that educational professionals often ask, "What exactly does a school social worker do?"

Throughout the last century, school social workers have attempted to not only define their role in schools, but also frame their professional identity by seeking the perceptions from other professionals such as school administrators, counselors, teachers, and psychologists (Agresta, 2002, 2004, 2006; Bye, Shepard, Patridge, & Alvarez, 2009; Constable & Montgomery, 1985; Isaksson & Larson, 2017; Poppy, 2012; Tower, 2000). Inquiry of administrative perceptions have focused on the tasks of the school social worker that are connected to expected educational outcomes such as graduation and attendance (Bye et al, 2009; Constable & Montgomery, 1985; Poppy, 2012) and their role in mental health supports to students (Iachini, Pitner, Morgan, & Rhodes, 2016). The perceptions of school social workers, school psychologists, and school counselors was also explored in relation to the amount of time each group spent on shared tasks, the appropriateness of their own roles as perceived by the other groups, and overall feelings of competitiveness with the other groups (Altshuler & Webb, 2009; Agresta, 200, 2004; Sosa and McGrath, 2013). Studies also acquired the general public's perceptions of social workers and found the public maintained some favorable attitudes about the profession, such as being helpful to those who are economically disadvantaged, but many stereotypes and misperceptions of the profession remained, such as the perception that the primary task of social work is removing children from their homes (Arguello, Baiocchi, & Wolf, 2018; Condie, Hanson, Lang, & Kane, 1978; LeCroy & Stinson, 2004).

## **History of School Social Work**

School social work has its roots in the fundamental social work values of helping the under-privileged employed through settlement houses (Allen, 1928; Allen-Mears, 1996,2004, 2006; Costin, 1969; Sugrue, 2017). Initially called, “visiting teachers,” school social workers acted as a liaison between home and school by emphasizing the value of education to parents and informing teachers some of the barriers students experience at home (Allen-Mears, 2004, 2006; Costin, 1969; Sugrue, 2017). The profession emerged circa 1906 when, almost simultaneously, three major cities, Boston, MA, New York, NY, and Hartford, CT responded to a need for better communication between schools and homes (Allen-Mears, 2004, 2006; Costin, 1969; Sugrue, 2017). Often omitted in the abbreviated history of school social work, original works by Ethel B. Allen (1928) and Julius Oppenheimer (1924) identified not only the pioneering efforts of visiting teachers as a profession, but the names of the women who laid the foundation of school social work and are owed due recognition.

Mary Marot, a teacher, is credited with the idea of school-home visiting and in the winter of 1905 began to flesh out her idea by visiting several schools in Chicago and New York City before landing at the Lighthouse Settlement, Philadelphia. There, she was able to extend purposeful visits from the school to the home and shared school report information with the families (Allen, 1928; Oppenheimer, 1924; Staring, Aldridge, & Bouchard, 2015). She returned to New York City in the spring of 1906 to implement her experimental idea and went to the Hartley House Settlement to continue her work as a liaison between schools and homes with a goal to provide better education for the whole child (Allen, 1928; Oppenheimer, 1924; Staring et al., 2015). About the same time, Miss Elisabeth Roemer, head worker of New York City’s Greenwich House, also identified a need for visiting teachers to courier information between the

homes and school and allowed many teachers who were interested in student's home life to accompany social workers so they too could garner an understanding of their pupil's circumstances and improve a child's educational experience (Allen, 1928; Allen-Mears, 2004, 2006; Costin, 1969).

New York also led the visiting teacher movement by hosting the first formal meeting to discuss the practice of home and school visiting. In the summer of 1906 under the name "Committee on Home and School Visiting", Mary Marot, along with Elizabeth Williams from the College Settlement, Philadelphia; Elisabeth Roemer, Richmond Hill House, Philadelphia; and Effie Abrams, Greenwich House, and the Public Education Association, assembled to share experiences toward the advancement of their work in home and school visiting (Allen, 1928). As a result, the Public Education Association became the first organization to formally employ a visiting teacher in October of 1907 (Allen, 1928; Oppenheimer, 1924). They chose Miss Jane Day who initially worked in Louisville, Kentucky as a teacher and became interested in visiting teaching as a means of linking the home and school. In 1907, she traveled to New York City to study social work and lived at Richmond Hill House where she honed her social work skills (Allen, 1928). Later that year she was hired by the Public Education Association, was given the title 'Home and School Visitor', and worked in lower New York City School District (Allen, 1928; Oppenheimer, 1924). The following year her title was changed to 'Visiting Teacher' and those in the profession held that title until 1942 when the profession became known as 'School Social Work' (Allen, 1928; McCullagh, 1986).

While New York was discovering the usefulness of visiting teachers in 1906, so were Hartford and Boston. Sara Holbrook was an assistant to Dr. George E. Dawson, Director of the Psychological Clinic in Hartford, Connecticut, who conducted psychological testing at the

Barnard School (Allen, 1928; Oppenheimer, 1924). She was first identified as a ‘Special Teacher’ (Oppenheimer, 1924) because she visited homes to complete social histories and implemented treatment plans for children in the clinic (Allen-Mears, 2004, 2006). As a result of her multiple environment assessment, observations of the student’s home and environment were added to the report and provided valuable information to educating the whole child (Sugrae, 2017).

Meanwhile in Boston, Massachusetts, Mrs. Joseph Lee is credited with initiating home visiting programs, similar to that of New York, in settlement houses where the need for a cooperative union between homes and schools was identified due to the ongoing misunderstandings of both environments resulting in educational injustices of the student (Allen, 1928, Oppenheimer, 1924). The Women’s Education Association in Boston initially financed the visiting teacher in the South End (Boston was delineated by directional sections) and after successfully demonstrating the effectiveness of a visiting teacher, expanded their support throughout the city until 1913, when schools began to hire and finance their own visiting teachers (Allen, 1928).

Between 1913-1921, Boards of Education and the National Committee on Visiting Teachers placed visiting teachers in schools along the east coast into Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Vermont; to the south in Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Alabama, and expanded to the west through Ohio, Illinois, South Dakota, Missouri, Michigan, Iowa, Minneapolis, and Kansas (Oppenheimer, 1924). In addition, in November 1921, the Commonwealth Fund financed a national visiting teacher program by placing thirty visiting teachers in rural and urban communities as part of their efforts in the Program for the Prevention of Delinquency (Allen, 1928, Allen-Mears, 2004, 2006). The experiment was successful and

when the funds were withdrawn in 1930, twenty-one communities continued to financially support the visiting teachers and thirty-one states accounted for the 244 school social workers placed in schools (Allen-Mears 2004, 2006).

The first twenty years of school social work were considered the period of adoption and expansion (Oppenheimer, 1924). The mid-twentieth century school social workers saw a change in service as social casework, a more clinical orientation that moved away from home-school liaison, became the foundation from which all social workers practiced (Allen-Mears, 2004, 2006). The era between the 1970s and 1990s witnessed the implementation of many federal laws including the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142, Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Family Rights and Privacy Act, some of which resulted in allocation of funding to school districts for social work services to assist in meeting new federal guidelines (Allen-Mears, 2004). The current state of social work is multifaceted with social workers providing mental health therapy in schools (Lynn, McKay, & Atkins, 2003), participating on multitiered systems of support (MTSS) teams (Constable, 2016), assisting in implementing educational programming for children with special needs (“Role of the School Social Worker”, 2019), advancing the profession through the development and growth of school social work professional organizations (Allen-Mears, 2004), and coordinating family, school, and community services (Allen-Mears, 2004). School social work has evolved exponentially from the humble beginnings of the visiting teacher in 1906 to the multiple roles of the school social worker in the twenty-first century.

### **Identity Through Professional Organization**

The first organization of visiting teachers was the “Committee on Home and School Visiting” led by Mary Marot in 1906, which included visiting teachers who were experimenting



with their practice (Allen, 1928; Staring, Aldridge, & Bouchard, 2015). The Public Education Association was interested in the advancement of public schools and curious about Marot's movement (Allen, 1928; Staring, et al., 2015). Therefore, they welcomed the Committee on Home and School Visiting into their auspices and provided their strong political and organization support to the expansion of this new profession (Allen, 1928; Staring, et al., 2015).

The National Visiting Teachers Association (NVTA) was formed in 1916 and three years later the NVTA re-organized as the National Association of Visiting Teachers and Home and School Visitors with Jane Culbert as president (Allen, 1928; Staring et al., 2015; Flexner, 1915). The primary purpose of the NVTA was to define the role of school social workers, develop standards of practice and training, and develop school social work programming in all schools (Allen, 1928; Flexner, 1915). The organization went through many name changes; American Association of Visiting Teachers [1929], American Association of School Social Workers [1942], and the National Association of School Social Workers [1945] (McCullagh, 1986). However, in 1955, The National Association of School Social Workers merged with The National Association of Social Work (NASW), along with six other national, but separate, social work organizations: American Association of Social Workers; American Association of Medical Social Workers; American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers; American Association of Group Workers; Association for the Study of Community Organization; and Social Work Research Group (Massat, Kelly & Constable, 2016; "Facts about NASW", 2019). The NASW is currently one of the largest membership organization in the world ("Facts about NASW", 2019).

Although the merging of all branches of social work professions may have been appropriate for the time, generalized social work did not consistently meet the needs of

specialized fields (Allen-Meares, 1999; McDonald, Constable, & Holly, 1999). As a result, NASW developed practice standards for a variety of specialized social work fields including school social work. The first set of standards were developed in 1978 and included thirty-two standards; three standards for the attainment of competence, eleven standards for organization and administration, and eighteen standards for professional practice (NASW, 1978). Noteworthy of the first set of standards was the clear identification that ‘social workers who work in a school shall be designated as school social workers’ (NASW, 1978). Although that standard remained for two more revisions, it was not included in the 2012 standards. Additionally, the first three sets of standards (1978, 1991, and 2002) included many responsibilities of the local education agency. For example, “the administrative structure...shall provide for professional social work supervision...” (NASW, 1978, p.7), “...shall provide a work setting that permits social workers to use their competence as effectively as possible...” (NASW, 1992, p.15). Responsibilities for the local education agencies were replicated and expanded for two subsequent revisions, however, it is unclear how these standards could be enforced and why they were included since they were not behaviors for the practitioner.

In addition to the standards for administrative structure and support from the local education agencies, the 1978, 1992, and 2002 standards also separated into sections standards for professional practice and competence, and professional development. These highlighted the need for school social workers to adhere to NASW’s Code of Ethics, work collaboratively with schools and communities, empower students and families, and be trained in mediation and conflict resolution.

The NASW standards written in 2012 were vastly different from the earlier versions. For example, there were thirty-two initial standards in 1978, thirty-three in 1992, and forty-two in

2002; many of which were replicated or minimally revised each year. However, in 2012, the authors chose to remove the standards for local educational agencies and condensed the remaining principles into broader categories while maintaining the rigor of quality (“NASW Practice Standards & Guidelines”, 2019). The school social work standards are reflective of NASW code of ethics and core values: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the individual, importance and centrality of human relationships, integrity, and competence (NASW, 2012). There are three guiding principles: education/school reform, social justice, and multitier interventions; and eleven standards which are listed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

*2012 School Social Work Standards*

---

- 1 Ethics and Values
  - 2 Qualifications
  - 3 Assessment
  - 4 Intervention
  - 5 Decision Making and Practice Evaluation
  - 6 Record Keeping
  - 7 Workload Management
  - 8 Professional Development
  - 9 Cultural Competence
  - 10 Interdisciplinary Leadership and Collaboration
  - 11 Advocacy
- 

*Note.* 2012 School Social Work Standards. Adapted from “NASW Standards for School Social Work Services” by NASW, Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

These principles and standards are revised every ten years to meet fluctuations in political and social climate and changes in federal law (NASW, 2012). This is most clearly seen in the addition of multitier interventions which were added to the 2012 version and is reflective of Response to Intervention (RtI), Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS), and Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS) used to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students, typical and atypical, in schools.

Although the National Association of Social Work (NASW) is supportive of all social workers, both nationally and internationally, school social workers identified a need to collaborate and advocate for the legitimization and expansion of the unique field of school social work. The School Social Workers Association of America (SSWAA) was formed in 1994 through the unification of 20 state-level school social work organizations and stands as a national and international organization that promotes the profession of school social work through research, developing a national school social work practice model, professional development, and advocacy (Massat et al., 2016). Currently there are 29 states that are organized and are affiliated with SSWAA with several more nearing formal organization (“State, Regional, and International Associations”, 2019).

A national organization such as the School Social Work Association of America serves as a foundation toward legitimization of school social workers in all schools. Psychologists and school counselors have had a similar history to school social workers in seeking legitimacy in schools, but they have been successful in advocating for their place within the education system (Florrel, 2018; Pope, 2000).

School psychologists are a specialized area of applied psychology. It was during the World War I era that schools recognized some students were in need of additional supports and applied psychologists were used for educational testing and assessment (D’Amato, Zafiris, McConnell, & Dean, 2011; Florrel, 2018). Although not fully supported and backed by the American Psychological Association (APA), school psychologists saw a need in schools and in 1915, the term ‘school psychologist’ was used (D’Amato et al., 2011). In 1945, the APA approved school psychology as a separate division, however the APA fought to restrict the use of the term ‘psychologist’ to only include those with a doctoral degree (Florrel, 2018). In the late

1960's the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) was formed followed by the first school psychology program in 1971 (Abramowitz, 1981). In 1976, NASP wrote the *Handbook of Certification/Licensure Requirements for School Psychologists* which was used to encourage states to adopt, and ultimately fortify, their profession by increasing school psychologists in schools throughout the country (Abramowitz, 1981).

School counselors had a similar journey in identity development and theirs began as vocational counselors (Pope, 2000). In the early 1900s vocational counselors taught classes on vocations and assisted students in career development. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 required schools to provide vocational counseling and George-Deen Act of 1938 provided funding (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Pope, 2000). In the 1950's the four largest vocational and school counselor organization merged to create the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) which is currently known as the American Counseling Association [ACA] (Pope, 2000). The greatest push for vocational counseling came in the aftermath of Sputnik and the enactment of The National Defense Act of where schools were charged with identifying students gifted in math and science to be used to challenge the advancement of Russia's space program (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Pope, 2000). Changes in federal special education laws such as the Education for Handicapped Children Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, and The Family Rights and Privacy Act placed much of the responsibility on school counselors during the 1970's and 80's (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). However, they were greatly ignored during education reforms in the 1990s but they responded by creating their own national standards, promoted their necessity and value in schools, and changed their title from 'guidance counselors' to 'school counselors' (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Pope, 2000).

School social workers followed a similar path of emergence as a new profession, responding to societal needs and federal laws, and developing national organizations with guidelines and standards. However, school social workers are not employed in every school district across the nation, but school counselors and psychologists have firmly advocated for their need in every school. Educational certification may be one factor to consider.

Currently, forty-nine states provide state certification for school psychologists and all fifty states provide for school counselors (Altshuler & Webb, 2009). School social work is not as aligned with their professional school counterparts where only thirty-two states provide certification opportunities, of which only twenty states require a master's degree (Altshuler & Webb, 2009). In response, the School Social Work Association of America, (SSWAA) is developing a national certification, similar in excellence to the national board certification for educators, which would advance school social workers nationally as highly qualified professionals, especially in states that do not provide certification (Sabatino, Alvarez, & Anderson-Ketchmark, 2011).

### **Professional Identity**

School social work is a specialized area of practice within the field of the social work profession working in the host environment of education. The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) defines a school social workers as:

trained mental health professionals with a degree in social work who provide services related to a person's social, emotional, and life adjustment to school and/or society. School social workers are the link between the home, school, and community in providing direct as well as indirect services to students, families, and school personnel to promote and support students' academic and social success (“Role of School Social Worker”, 2019).

Many social workers perform their functions in environments that have different goals from that of social work such as hospitals, schools, military, or juvenile courts (Dane & Simon, 1991; Jansson & Simmons, 1986). However, in order for the social worker to be deemed valuable to that organization, they must demonstrate effective outcomes toward the goal of the host organization while also serving ethically (Dane & Simon, 1991). According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), the goals of Every Student Succeeds Act identifies four indicators of student success; (1) Academic proficiency in English Language Arts and Mathematics as measured by test scores. (2) Graduation rates. (3) English Learners growth in achieving proficiency in English language. (4) Academic progress (“Indicators”, 2019). School social workers assist schools with these goals by removing barriers that may otherwise impede a student from learning albeit from homelessness, mental health, truancy, language, or access to medical care (“Role of School Social Worker”, 2019). To accomplish these tasks, school social workers collaborate with all educational professionals (Agresta, 2002; Bowen, 2004; Bye, Shepard, Partridge & Alvarez, 2009). They work with teachers to develop social-emotional plans (Bowen, 2004; McDonald, Constable, & Holley, 1999; Staudt, 1991); with school counselors and psychologists on the provision of mental health services and response to intervention (RtI) programming, (Sosa & McGrath, 2013); with administrators and principals to assess where the school social worker can have the most impact with students (Bye et al., 2009; Iachini, Pitner, Morgan & Rhodes, 2016; Staudt, 1991); with students to help them increase their attendance (Bye et al., 2009; Teasley, 2004; Webber, 2018); or provide school based mental health (Kelly et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2016); with the community to identify gaps in services for students and families (Allen-Mears, 2006; McDonald et al., 1999); and with the family to

provide resources that interfere with the child's physical and emotional presence at school and encourage the home school connection (Constable & Walberg, 1999; McDonald et al., 1999).

The tasks of school social work have changed and evolved throughout the last century in response to the political climate of the country and educational policy enactment (Reisch & Jarman-Rohde, 2000). Early studies identified the primary tasks to be interpreters of the home and school environments, truancy, clinical treatment of children with emotional problems, and liaison between the family and school (Costin, 1969; Allen-Mears, 1977, 1994). More recent research indicates that responding to the mental health needs of students through assessments and screening, individual and group counseling, and facilitating home-school collaboration are the most important tasks of the school social worker (Kelly, et al., 2010; Kelly et al, 2016; Peckover, Vasquez, VanHousen, Saundres, & Allen, 2013). Regardless of the political environment or policy development, acting as the home and school link has not changed in importance for school social workers (Kelly et al., 2016).

Public perceptions have also played a significant role in how school social workers are viewed by families with whom they work. LeCroy and Stinson (2004) identified that although the general public views social work in a positive light, social workers are still stigmatized as those who remove children from their homes. As a result, when parents receive a call or visit from a school social worker, this stereotyped perception may interfere with their openness to acknowledging deficits in the home for fear of the social worker removing their child (Arguello et al., 2018; Cooper, 2016; Tower, 2000). These misperceptions are a barrier to effective social case work.

School social work has historically found its uniqueness as the link between the home, school, and community, but the profession has yet to create and promote a constant definition



which they can advocate for and promote as their own professional identify. Although the public perception of general social work has improved over the years due to increased visibility in various host settings, the media continues to portray social workers negatively (LeCroy & Stinson, 2004). In addition, while educators view school social workers as valuable, educators fail to have a clear understanding of school social worker tasks or outcomes. (Higy et al., 2012; Scott, 2017; Tower, 2000). Therefore, it is crucial to for the field of school social work to offer a conclusive definition based on past and present tasks and perceptions.

### **Theoretical Perspectives of School Social Work**

In this section the theory of culture and climate of an organization will be discussed to understand how school social workers are perceived by others, and sometimes marginalized, while working in a host environment. In addition, attitude theory will be applied to further explain how perceptions of school social workers are formulated and acted upon. Role theory will add to the discussion by identifying to what degree role expectations and role ambiguity can further marginalize the school social worker followed by a discussion of strategies to avoid role conflict.

**Organizational theory of climate and culture.** School social workers function within educational systems where research has been conducted to assess culture (Detert, Schroeder, & Cudeck, 2002) and impact climate (Durhan, Bettenrcourt, & Connoll, 2014). The culture of an organization can influence how a school social worker is accepted into the work environment and the climate can determine how other professionals view the role (Glisson, 2015).

The climate of an organization refers to the workers' perceptions of the emotionality of the work environment on their own personal well-being (Glisson, 2015; Spielfogel, Leathers, & Christian, 2016). Climate is the workplace morale or collective mood, or more specifically, the

organization's attitude (Glisson, 2015). Culture refers to the shared norms and expectations of workers and can be outwardly observed through colleague relationships and patterns of work behavior that serve to shape the standard of the organization's achievement and goals (Spielfogel et al., 2016, Teasley, 2017). Glisson (2007) summarized the concepts as "culture is the property of the organization and climate is the property of the individual" (p.739). However, organizational climate is derived from *psychological climate*, which is agreement between colleagues in subsets of the same work environment about the psychological impact of their work (Glisson, 2007, 2015). Therefore, psychological climate begets organizational climate (Glisson, 2007, 2015).

The culture of an organization informs social workers about a host setting that is defined as "an organization in which the primary purpose is something other than the provision of social work services" (Allen & Spitzer, 2016, p. 490). Furthermore, social workers who work in a host setting such as hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and prisons are considered resident guests (Dane & Simon, 1991). Those who work in host settings face several challenges that differ from those of the host majority because the dominant group make the majority of the decisions, set the culture, and determine the policies (Dane & Simon, 1991). In host environments such as a school, a social worker may struggle for resources such as a room to develop a food pantry and have little to no voice in budgetary decisions (Dane & Simon, 1991; Jansson & Simmons, 1986). Finally, social workers in host settings are marginalized and not typically considered for leadership positions because they are thought to not have the necessary qualifications (Sherman, 2016).

Schools assess culture and climate by surveying staff, students, and communities as a means to improve educational outcomes such as attendance and graduation (Durhan, et al., 2014;

Detert, et al., 2002). However, those surveys do not fully inform the school social worker of the context in which they will work because the goals of school surveys do not match the goals of social work service outcomes. The Organizational Social Context (OSC) survey is a psychometrically tested survey used in child welfare agencies (Glisson, Green & Williams, 2012), but can provide a theoretical framework from which a school social worker can identify the various school environments and potential attitudes of the other professionals with whom they work.

The theoretical foundation of organizational social context delineates three dimensions of climate; engagement, functionality, and stress and three dimensions of culture; proficient, rigidity, and resistance (Glisson et al., 2012; Spielfogel, Leathers, & Christian, 2016; Patterson Silver Wolf, Dulmus, Maguin, Kessler, & Powell, 2014). Climate is based on individual perceptions; therefore, all three dimensions are grounded in workers' feelings (Glisson et al., 2012). The dimension of engagement refers to the employee's perceptions of the personalization they feel about the work they do with their clients and the feelings of accomplishments of that work (Glisson et al., 2012; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2014; Speilfogel et al., 2016).

Functionality refers to workers' perceptions that they are supported by colleagues and administrators to complete their work; the tasks are clearly defined within the context of organizational goals; and there is a pathway for professional growth (Glisson et al., 2012; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2014; Speilfogel et al., 2016). In a functional climate, those with similar roles would have their tasks clearly assigned, which would prevent role overlap and role ambiguity (Glisson et al., 2012). All staff, in a functional climate, recognize that everyone's roles and tasks are clear and support the mission of the school (Glisson et al., 2012).

Role overlap between school social work, school psychologists, and counselors have been studied because the tasks can be very similar (Agresta 2002, 2004, 2006). Role overlap and role conflict are symptoms in organizations with stressful climates and are characterized by emotional exhaustion and feeling overwhelmed (Glisson et al., 2012; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2014; Speilfogel et al., 2016). School social workers whose roles duplicate, or conflict, with school psychologists and counselors could lead to feelings of competition (Agresta, 2004) and lower job satisfaction (Agresta, 2006).

Culture dimensions are defined by how the organization perceives the work and the values of the collective group (Glisson, 2007; Glisson et al., 2012; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2014; Speilfogel et al., 2016). Proficient organizations are motivated to ensure their workers are provided current professional development opportunities and are equipped to provide exceptional services to their clients (Glisson, 2007; Glisson et al., 2012; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2014; Speilfogel et al., 2016). Organizations that have a proficient culture expend resources to provide staff professional development that is reflective of their staff's needs and further support the staff to implement newly acquired knowledge (Glisson, 2007; Glisson et al., 2012; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2014; Speilfogel et al., 2016).

When an organization has a rigid dimension, the hierarchal structure identifies only a small group of people who are responsible for decisions and the workers are tied to bureaucratic procedures where flexibility is extremely limited (Glisson et al., 2015; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2014; Speilfogel et al., 2016). The tasks and roles of those working in this environment are clear and employees have minimal decision-making abilities (Glisson et al., 2015).

Resistant dimensions of an organization are most challenging to an organization's culture because it refers to the way an organization will resist change through apathy and suppressive

behaviors (Glisson, 2007; Glisson et al., 2012; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2014; Speilfogel et al., 2016). School social workers are especially vulnerable to being marginalized in rigid organizations because if the dominant group views social workers as outsiders and is resistant to the change they represent, then they will not seek out social workers in an effort to acculturate them and will continue to be marginalized (Bankovskaya, 2014; Simmel, 1950).

In addition to culture and climate, the theory of marginality in sociological terms helps to understand people who work in host settings because they function between two different worlds (Bankovskaya, 2014) and the theory can assist in understanding misconceptions about school social workers. Marginality theory has its roots in sociology and was introduced by George Simmel (1908) in his paper titled *The Stranger* whereby he posits circumstances that result in people being ‘between’ two groups such as race or newness to a group. The concept of marginality has also been applied to persons who identify as being more than one race, such as African American and Caucasian (Dickie-Clark, 1966). They are considered by society, and their own races, as both Caucasian and African American as well as neither African American and Caucasian; thus, they are ‘between’ races (Dickie-Clark, 1966). The theory can also be applied to education organizational structures in that school social workers are ‘between’ or ‘strangers’ because they exist between the goals of education and the goals of social work (Dane & Simon, 1991). Marginal theorists built upon this theory by associating the stranger as one who does not inherently belong to a group, but enters it, and thereby changes the environment (Bankovskaya, 2014; Simmel, 1950). School social workers in their marginal position have greater objectivity of their host environment because they are not bound by the educational culture (Bankovskaya, 2014) and can impact change through advocacy of students and families, social casework, and informing school staff of a child’s home environment as an antecedent to behavior and academic

challenges. In addition, school social workers are well skilled in building relationships which can aid in the development of building a positive school culture (Teasley, 2017).

The culture and climate of an organization informs school social workers of their work environment and the challenges and pathways for change for that particular school (Glisson, 2007; Glisson et al., 2012; Speilfogel et al., 2016). A school social worker in one district may be welcomed and acculturated by staff and administration from the onset, while in another district social workers may be perceived as intrusive or unnecessary to the educational outcomes of a school. Glisson et al. (2012) identified that organizations that exhibit the most openness to innovation are those that have higher levels of proficiency, that is they are provided up-to-date knowledge and practice skills, maintain low levels of resistance and rigidity, and suppress change and bureaucratic barriers to work. It is beneficial for school social workers to be aware of their schools' climate and culture which can inform their approach of building relationships and developing successful school social work programs (Glisson et al., 2012).

**Attitude theory.** The construct of attitudes is rooted in the field of social psychology and was once thought of as the most essential concept upon which other theories were built (Brinol & Petty, 2012; Visser & Cooper, 2003). Social psychologist, Louis Thurston, first defined an attitude in 1928 as “the sum total of a man’s inclination and feelings, prejudice and bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats and convictions about any specified topic” (Thurstone, 1946, p. 531). It was considered a truthful internal process where one expressed their opinion along a linear continuum of a more or less judgement (Thurstone, 1946). George Allport (1935) built upon Thurstone’s model and added that the person’s attitude was not only a thought, but also a behavior albeit overt or covert. Most social psychologists agree that behavior is part of the cognitive process of attitudes (Allport, 1935; Bahomadonde-Birke, Kunert, Link, & de Dios

Ortuzar, 2015; Rokeach & Kliejunas, 1972). In fact, an attitude was once used to refer to one's body posture and expression (Galton, 1884 cited in Brinol & Petty, 2012). For example, a person standing with their arms crossed, eyes glaring, and mouth pursed may be described as someone with an aggressive attitude.

The tripartite, or classic three-component view, of attitudes put forth that attitudes are first an unobservable psychological construct (thought), followed by beliefs or feelings about the construct (emotion), and then there is a (behavioral) response to the construct (Fazio & Olson, 2003; Pickens, 2005). This theory posits that an attitude is held internally by the individual and is observed by the reported thoughts and behavior that correlate with the attitude (Fazio & Olson, 2003). Hence, attitudes predict behavior (Fazio & Olson, 2003; Pickens, 2005) For example, a person's strong attitude about environmental preservation can predict that the person recycles (Schultz & Ozkamp, 1996). An attitude is not only how someone feels about a particular stimulus such as a person, object, or topic, but also the behavior that follows (Pickens, 2005).

An attitude helps people understand their world, what they like or dislike, how they feel about another person, their position about a political candidate, and how they evaluate all the elements of their environment (Pickens, 2005). They are developed through life experience with others, can change when presented objective information, and have different strengths (Pickens, 2005). For example, when television media repeatedly portray social workers as only child welfare workers that wrongly removes children from their home, people develop a negative attitude about social workers because the media portrayal may be the only knowledge they have of social workers (LeCroy & Stinson, 2004; Tower, 2000).

Attitude theory may inform the extent to which school professionals include or exclude school social workers in collaboration, policy development, and programming (Agresta, 2004;

Tower, 2000). Max Weber's theory of closure posits that relationships that are *open* allow outsiders to join, but a relationship that is *closed* prevents or limits certain people from participating, or gaining resources, based on the rules of exclusion (Braedel-Kuhner & Elst, 2012; Murphy, 1984, 1986). If attitudes about school social workers are positive then the person holding that attitude will be more apt to include the social worker in collaboration, share their positive attitudes with others, and perceive their value in the school system (Agresta, 2004; Tower, 2000). However, should the majority group hold a negative attitude toward the minority group, which already lacks power, the minority group is further excluded (Tower, 2000). Allport (1935) identified school social workers as the minority group and stated that "individual social workers are members of the minority group, and as such, are perceived by special educators (the majority group) as if all social workers are the same" (Tower, 2000, p.90). Therefore, when someone develops an attitude about one social worker, the attitude then extends to all social workers (Tower, 2000).

Exposure is an experience that also affects a person's attitude (Tower, 2000). In Nevada during the 1990s, school social workers attempted to build services within schools, but because the special educators lacked exposure to school social workers, the special educators developed a negative attitude toward school social work which greatly limited their progress (Tower, 2000). However, the same study found a significant relationship as educators' knowledge about the social work role increased, so did the positive attitude toward the social worker (Tower, 2000). Significant experience and exposure to high quality school social workers and clarity of the tasks and functions they perform, can greatly increase positive attitudes about school social work (LeCroy & Stinson, 2004; Pickens, 2005; Tower, 2000).



The measurement of attitudes is a process used in a multitude of professions. Thurstone's original definition of evaluation 'the degree of like or dislike' laid the foundation upon which most measurements of attitude are based (Edmondson, 2005; Mueller, 1986). Thurstone's scale involved using judges to rate several items to determine which should be included on a final survey or questionnaire (Edmondson, 2005). This process was very arduous and required substantial resources. Rensis Likert, believed that attitudes were not fixed and instead fell within a range of intensity (Edmondson, 2005). Likert conducted several pilots of using his five-point scaling technique, where the value of 1 was on the negative side and 5 was positive, and found that his method possessed higher reliability than Thurstone's method (Edmondson, 2005). The Likert scale continues to be used today in numerous research capacities and in various different professions. In addition, numerous quantitative studies use the Likert scale to measure attitudes about social workers (Agresta, 2000, 2004, 2006; Constable, 1985; Higy, Haberkorn, Pope, & Gilmore, 2012; LeCroy & Stinson, 2004; Staudt, 1991; Teasley & Miller, 2011; Tower, 2000).

Within the attitude domain are additional evaluative terms such as opinions, perceptions, beliefs, and feelings (Mueller, 1986). Although lay persons may use the terms attitude and perceptions interchangeably, social psychologists identify the two terms separately (Mueller, 1986, Pickens, 2005). *Perception* is the processes of how a person interprets their environment (Pickens, 2005) and an *attitude* follows a perception and is a tendency to act in a certain manner based on a person's experience (Allport, 1935; Lindsay & Norman, 1972). For example, a person that has an adverse experience with a person who identifies as transgender may develop a negative attitude about the whole LBGTQIA community and participate in demonstrations against the group (Pickens, 2005).

**Role theory.** School social workers have attempted to define their roles in school settings by evaluating the tasks they perform (Costin, 1969, 1977, 1994; Gherandi & Whittlesey-Jerome, 2018; Kelly et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2016). Visiting teachers perceived their role as connectors and interpreters between the home and school (Allen-Mears, 1996, 2004, 2006; Sugrue, 2017) and as the profession grew, school social workers identified more as clinical caseworkers and mental health interventionists (Kelly et al., 2010). These studies have identified trends in not only how school social workers perceive themselves, but how others view the role of the school social worker.

Role theory has its foundations in symbolic interactionism where identity is developed through interactions with others (Biddle, 2008; Robbins, Chatterjee & Canda, 1998). Social psychologist G.H. Mead, who is considered a founder of symbolic interactionism, developed his theory in the early twentieth century from his work with the disenfranchised (Deegan & Burger, 1978) and in Settlement houses in Chicago (Robbins, et al., 1998). His theory posited that people develop a sense of self only through the interactions with others (Robbins et al., 1998; Jakovina & Jakovina, 2017).

Roles are patterns of behaviors based on the expectations of a person's social category, or position, and are either achieved through behaviors or ascribed based on one's race, gender, sex, or ethnicity (Agresta, 2002, 2004, 2006; Robbins, et al., 1998). An ascribed role is a social identity based on factors with which the person has not choice (Robbins, et al., 1998). In the United States, the ascribed role 'elderly' is someone over 65 years old. Achieved roles are the opposite where the person attains a certain position or status they choose or earns (Robbins et al., 1998). For example, persons who choose to educate themselves in the field of social work and

meet the criteria outlined by their state may call themselves social worker, which is an achieved role.

Role expectations, regardless if they are ascribed or achieved, are the tasks or behaviors associated with the role, but are often influenced by ascribed factors which are based on an individual's perception of that role (Biddle, 2008; Robins et al., 1998; Solomon, Suprenant, Czepiel, & Gutman, 1985). For example, a role expectation of a physician is to wear a white coat while working in a hospital. This expectation is not only developed by the physician, but also by others because society, including the medical profession, has encouraged and expects physicians in hospitals to wear white coats (Biddle, 2008).

Role expectations are developed by society, or groups, who determine what behaviors are expected of that role as well as those who are motivated to teach others about behavioral expectations (Biddle, 1978). Role expectations in school social work can be identified in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) School Social Work Standards (NASWpde, 2012). These standards and guiding principles clearly describe the expectations of the role of the school social worker and are connected to the NASW ethical standards as an overarching profession. The concept of role expectation can be identified in the goals of the standards:

- To establish expectations for school social work practices and services;
  - To ensure that school social work services are guided by the NASW code of ethics;
  - To ensure the highest quality of school social work services will be provided to students and families;
  - To provide a basis for advocating for clients' rights to be treated with respect and dignity, confidentiality, access to supportive services, and appropriate inclusion in decision making;
  - To provide a basis for the preparation of school social workers and the development of continuing education materials and programs related to school social work services; and
  - To encourage school social workers to participate in the development and refinement of public policy, at the local, state, and federal levels, to support school success.
- (NASW Standards for School Social Work Services, 2012, p.6)

The NASW goals of the standards for school social work services broadly exemplify the role expectations of school social work and also teach the profession as a whole of those expectations. Without clearly identified role expectations, school social workers risk being undervalued and rendered ineffective (Altshuler & Webb, 2009; Webber, 2018). These school social work standards determine highly qualified school social workers and demonstrate to educational systems that school social work services are firmly based in ethical codes (Frey et al., 2012).

Role ambiguity is troublesome for school social workers. Role ambiguity refers to the uncertainty of the behavior or task expectation of others or of oneself (Rai, 2016). Dupper (2003) stated that when roles are ambiguous, school social workers are at risk for being undervalued and misunderstood to educational professionals and policy makers. Other professionals such as school counselors and school psychologists, who have had a similar journey in clarifying their roles in a school, validated their roles in schools through a unification of their professions and pushed their mission toward national models resulting in their respective professions' advancement and recognized educational certification which adds to their legitimization in schools (Altshuler & Webb, 2009; Frey et al., 2012; Sherman, 2016). School social workers also need to seek state and national certification (Sherman, 2016) and advocate for a national model involving National Association of Social Work (NASW), School Social Worker Association of America (SSWAA) and the Council for Social Work Education (CSWE) to collaborate, set standards and practice requirements, and clearly define the role of the school social worker (Altshuler & Webb, 2009).

Role conflict can also be difficult for the school social worker. Role conflict is the “degree to which expectations of a role of an individual are incompatible or incongruent with the

values, abilities, and expertise of the role incumbent” (Rai, 2016, p.508). Webber (2018) indicated that, without clear expectations of roles, school social workers can be assigned daily duties, such as monitoring the cafeteria, which are in conflict with the school social worker’s role expectation of home visits, crisis counseling, and connector to resources. The conflict between what the school identifies as necessary tasks and the tasks identified by the school social worker causes conflict.

Role theory also defines one’s behaviors, positions in society, or norms into categories (Agresta, 2002, 2004, 2006; Robbins, et al., 1998). The way society identifies what is called mother, Christian, or American is based on the expectations and behaviors associated with that category (Robbins, et al., 1998). Role confusion or role conflict can occur when the parameters of a particular role are ambiguous or overlap with other people’s roles (Rai, 2016). Agresta (2002, 2004) used role theory to identify the professional role perceptions of psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers and found that there are some tasks that can be performed by more than one of the professions (Agresta, 2000), but clear role expectation are necessary to prevent conflict (Webber, 2018).

To understand how educational professionals’ perception of school social workers is developed and acted upon within schools, the principles of culture and climate, attitude theory, and role theory are relevant to assist the school social worker to develop strategies to work with and within the educational system.

### **Aims of Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this dissertation aims at investigating the development of the definition of school social work by pinpointing critical societal influences that shaped the tasks of school social workers and how those factors resulted in an ever-evolving school social work identity.

A review of historical documents and interviews with school social workers and education professionals will be used to collect data and develop themes of tasks and identity.

**Research questions.**

1. How did the societal influences in each of the identified times frames shape the tasks of school social work?
2. What were the tasks of school social workers that impacted how education professionals perceived their role?
3. How do school social workers define their own professional identity?

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will provide a description of the evolution of school social work organizations and the development of guiding principles, practice standards, and research efforts to forge an identity and legitimize the profession. This chapter also highlights research on the perceptions of school social workers from the views of school personnel, the general public, and parents along with the gaps in the literature and identifies areas for additional research.

### **Defining the role: Analysis of Tasks**

There has been substantial research on the roles and tasks performed by school social workers (Alderson & Krishef, 1973; Costin, 1969; Allen-Meares, 1977, 1994; Gherandi & Whittlesey-Jerome, 2018; Kelly et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2016; Peckover et al., 2013). Tasks identified in the earlier years were that of casework and interpreting school social work services (Anderson & Krishef, 1973; Costin, 1969; Allen-Meares, 1977) and later as members of tiered interventions and mental health specialists (Kelly et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2016; Peckover et al., 2013). A review of the evolution of tasks helps define the uniqueness of the school social worker.

Lela B. Costin (1969) provided the quantitative foundation study upon which other researchers replicated to identify the tasks perceived as most important by the school social worker. The aim of her study was to identify how school social workers defined their tasks, the relative importance of tasks, and if they would assign any tasks to other professional staff with different levels of education (Costin, 1969). She used a randomized sample of 354 names from a list of 1,456 who were registered with the National Association of Social Work in the area of school social work throughout the country (Costin, 1969). The respondents ( $n=257$ ) rated 107 tasks based on a four-point Likert scale from not important to very important (Costin, 1969).

After each task, the social worker was then asked to rate the level of importance of the task in order to attain their goals within the school system and also if the task could be assigned to someone else with less education (Costin, 1969). The study revealed eight factors, in order of importance, that warranted further discussion: casework service to the child and his parents; caseload management; interpreting school social work service; clinical treatment of children with emotional problems; liaison between the family and community agencies; interpreting the child to the teacher; educational counseling with the child and his parents; leadership and policy making (Costin, 1969, p. 277). In general, social workers were reluctant to give up any of their tasks to someone else. Costin (1969) concluded that, regardless of the efforts in previous decades to move beyond the tasks of home-school liaison and create a specialized casework services reserved for those with graduate social work education, the profession of school social work did not in fact evolve. Costin's study provided a stepping stone for other studies as a means of identifying tasks that define a school social worker.

Paula Allen-Meares replicated Costin's study in 1977 and again in 1994. The 1977 study sought the same aims as Costin's 1969 study, but also explored differences in answers between the two (Allen-Meares, 1977). In addition, Allen-Meares modified the list of tasks from 107 items to 84 which reflected the literature on professional behavior terms at the time (Allen-Meares, 1977). The 1977 study found similar results to Costin's original work in 1969, particularly in ranking leadership and policy lowest in importance of tasks, but differed in the school social workers' perception that their role extended beyond the school walls to include family and community contexts for assessment of student problems (Allen-Meares, 1977).

Allen-Meares (1994) conducted a different study from the two earlier national surveys by clustering tasks into five dimensions that were developed by a panel of experts and field tested



for reliability and validity. The dimensions contained a total of 104 tasks and respondents were asked to rate importance of task for an entry-level social worker, how often the task was performed, and if the task was mandated, preferred, or both (Allen-Meares, 1994). The study found that respondents ( $n=862$ ) from across the nation identified ‘administrative and professional tasks’ as most important which included professional development and record keeping, followed by ‘home-school liaison’ and then ‘educational counseling with children’ (Allen-Meares, 1994). The researcher found ‘leadership and policy making’ still ranked lowest of importance similar to the two earlier studies. All three studies, Allen-Meares’ 1977, 1994 and Costin 1969, found that school social workers did not perceive their role in leadership and policy making as important tasks. This led Allen-Meares to conclude that school social work did not evolve in their perception of themselves during the 26 years of these studies.

Costin also influenced two state focused surveys; Alderson and Krishef’s (1973) study of Florida school social workers and Peckover et al.’s (2012) study of Iowa school social workers. Alderson and Krishef’s (1973) study of Florida school social workers replicated Costin’s aim of study: to identify how school social workers defined their tasks, the relative importance of tasks, and if they would assign any tasks to other professional staff with different levels of education. The researchers also used Costin’s questionnaire. However, the sample in Alderson and Krishef’s study included only Florida school social workers, where only about ten percent of school social workers held Masters in Social Work degrees, compared to Costin’s national sample where all participants held Masters in Social Work degrees (Alderson & Krishef, 1973). Regardless of education, Florida respondents ranked interpreting school social work services and leadership and policy making as the top two tasks in level of importance (Alderson & Krishef, 1973).

Peckover et al.'s (2013) study of Iowa's school social workers also replicated Costin's (1969) original work, but modified the survey language to reflect educational trends such as Response to Intervention (RtI). In addition to asking social workers to rank importance of tasks listed in the questionnaire, they were also asked to report their level of competence and how much time they spent on each task, as well as their overall job satisfaction (Peckover et al., 2013). Social workers ranked collaboration with other school professionals and behavioral and emotional screening as most important tasks (Peckover et al., 2012). Additionally, over ninety percent of the respondents reported being satisfied with their jobs. (Peckover et al., 2012). This study also incorporated one open ended question that asked social workers to identify one thing they wish they could change about their job. Social workers highlighted a need to improve their professional identity and to clarify their roles to avoid misperceptions and role confusion (Peckover et al., 2012).

Although the studies mentioned thus far are considered comparative in the literature, it should be noted that Costin's study was not identically replicated. Like Costin, Allen-Meares ensured that a randomized sample of MSW school social workers was surveyed, but she modified the tasks developed by Costin in both her studies. She removed some tasks that were not proven useful and changed the terminology to be reflective of the literature at the time of professional behaviors (Allen-Meares, 1977). The 1994 study also modified the tasks and grouped them into dimensions. The resulting five dimensions were reported: (1) administrative and professional tasks, (2) home-school liaison, (3) educational counseling with children, (4) facilitating and advocating families use of community resources, and (5) leadership and policy-making (Allen-Meares, 1994, p. 563). Therefore, the results of Allen-Meares 1994 study ranks the five dimensions compared to her 1977 study and Costin's (1969) study where individual

tasks were ranked by the participants. Alderson and Kristoff's 1973 study used Costin's survey in its entirety, but their sample was not a randomized national sample like Costin and Allen-Meares, rather they used a non-randomized purposive sample strategy of school social workers registered with the Florida Department of Education and included those with varying educational degrees including MSW's, other master's degrees, and those with bachelor degrees all of whom were practicing school social workers (Alderson & Kristoff, 1973; Allen-Meares et al., 1986).

Kelly et al. (2010) introduced the findings from a national survey of school social workers that sought to identify practice contexts and interventions being employed by school social workers in response to the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which required schools to use evidence based practices in academic and behavioral interventions. Additionally, the study aimed to determine the types of activities school social workers would like to be engaged versus activities they were actually engaged (Kelly et al., 2010). They found that school social workers were primarily involved in mental health services for individual students who were previously identified with academic or behavioral problems, but school social workers wanted to be more involved in prevention planning (Kelly et al., 2010). In addition, they also found that respondents were not involved in leadership or policy development (Kelly et al., 2010).

In 2016, Kelly et al., conducted a second national survey aimed to identify how the findings of the 2010 national survey evolved over six years and to assess how the School Social Work Association of America's (SSWAA) new national practice model aligned with the realities of school social work practice. The national model identified three practice goals: (1) Provide evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services (2) Promote a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence, and (3) Maximize access to

school-based and community-based resources (Frey et al, 2013; Kelly et al., 2016; SSWAA, 2013). The results of the study found that the national model was reflective of actual school social work practices (Kelly et al., 2016).

### **Professional Perceptions of School Social Work**

The large body of school social work research has primarily focused on trying to identify the tasks that make school social work unique (Alderson & Krishef, 1973; Costin, 1969; Allen-Meares, 1977, 1994; Gherandi & Whittlesey-Jerome, 2018; Kelly et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2016; Peckover et al., 2013). However, exploring the perceptions of educational professionals such as psychologists, school counselors, teachers, and administrators can help define the role of school social work.

Perceptions of those with similar roles in the school system, such as school counselors and psychologists, are important because if those roles are not clearly defined, role overlap could result in competitiveness for educational resources and job security (Agresta, 2004). Professional tasks such as individual counseling, professional development, parent and teacher consultations, and behavior intervention were identified as most often shared by counselors, psychologists, and school social workers (Altshuler & Webb, 2009).

Agresta (2002, 2004, 2006) extensively examined the interprofessional relationships of school counselors, psychologists, and school social workers to determine if role overlap impacted job satisfaction (2006) and how these three groups perceived themselves compared to the others regarding the amount of time spent on related tasks, the appropriateness of their own roles as perceived by the other groups, and overall feelings of competitiveness with the other groups (2002, 2004). School social workers reported spending most of their time counseling and wanted to spend more time on this task (Agresta, 2004). They also reported wanting to

participate in more professional development and less time report writing. When psychologists and school counselors were asked to identify the most appropriate task for the school social worker, both groups indicated community outreach and personal professional development (Agresta, 2004). School social workers agreed that community outreach was one of the most appropriate tasks, but also ranked crisis intervention, parent consultation, and administrator and/or teacher consultation equally important (Agresta, 2004). Agresta found that when there was less role discrepancy between school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists, school social workers experienced more job satisfaction (Agresta, 2006). Regardless of role discrepancy, however, Agresta (2002) reported the three groups seldom or never had feelings of competitiveness with one another.

The literature is deficient in seeking teacher perceptions of school social work, particularly from general education teachers. Tower (2000) ask special educators to assign a nominal value to school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers and found teachers ranked social workers lower in value than the other two groups. Additionally, she found that when teachers had knowledge of the school social work role, they assigned a higher value to the social worker than those teachers who did not have such knowledge (Tower, 2000). Isaksson & Larsson, (2017) found teachers in their study identified a need for school social workers and that social workers provided a valuable service to students and their families. However, the difference in philosophical approaches between teachers and social workers to handling student problems was at the crux of conflict (Isaksson & Larson, 2017). Social workers were found to defer to the reality of working in a host environment and therefore, focused solely on the student needs while teachers felt social workers did not take into account the school as part of an organizational process which led to issues of boundaries and jurisdiction (Isaksson & Larson,

2017). Both of these studies reflect that teachers perceive school social work as a necessary position, but there is work to be done to carve out specific roles and expectations.

School administrators and superintendents typically determine the tasks and goals for outcomes of the school social worker in their buildings (Higy, Haberkorn, Poke, & Gilmore, 2012). However, although administrators identified a need for more school social work, (Constable, 1985; Iachini et al., 2015; Poppy, 2012; Staudt, 1991) school social workers failed to promote their value to their professional counterparts through exposure or reporting outcomes to their administrators (Bye, Shepard, Partridge & Alvarez, 2009; Higy et al., 2012).

Inquiry of administrative perceptions focused on the tasks of the school social worker that were connected to expected educational outcomes (Bye et al., 2009; Constable & Montgomery, 1985; Poppy, 2012) and their role in mental health supports to students (Iachini, Pitner, Morgan, & Rhodes, 2016). Principals found value in having a school social worker in their building because they were effective in addressing mental health needs of students, encouraged parent participation, and provided professional development with teachers (Iachini et al., 2016; Tower, 2000). However, in other studies, data indicated that although the school social worker was viewed positively, principals and teachers perceived the school social worker could only devote a small amount of time to the great many tasks the school districts assigned them which resulted in a slight dissatisfaction with the services (Higy et al., 2012; Iachini et al., 2016, Staudt, 1991).

Higy et al. (2012) used a convenience sample of Master of School Administration (MSA) interns and surveyed their perceptions of the role of the school social worker. MSAs were provided a list of tasks and asked to assign those tasks into three categories representing the amount of time they believed the social worker spent on each one. They found that MSA's

perceived school social workers spent small percentages of time on a wide variety of tasks (Higy et al., 2012). Bye, Shepard, Partridge, & Alvarez (2009) and Poppy (2012) also surveyed school administrators about the services provided by school social workers and outcome expectations from the perspective of the administrator. Both studies identified increasing school attendance as a primary outcome expectation. The administrators in the Bye et al. (2009) study also ranked decreasing discipline problems, improving school climate, and improving school achievement as additional outcome expectations while the administrators in Poppy (2012) study valued collaboration with teachers and increasing parent involvement. The outcomes reported differed in these two studies. Approximately one-third of the social workers in the Bye et al. (2009) study indicated they did not report their outcomes which resulted in administrators being unclear of school social work outcomes. However, only 10% of Poppy's (2012) sample of administrators were unclear of the reporting of outcomes.

### **The Public's Perceptions of Social Workers**

The public's perception is vitally important to all social workers because negative views lead to the public's mistrust and undermines the social work mission to advocate and care for the disenfranchised and vulnerable (Stanfield & Beddoe, 2013). The media may play a role in this negative perception through the over-reporting of failures of social service systems while rarely reporting accomplishments within the field (Tower, 2000). Furthermore, negative perceptions can lead to a decrease of those entering the field to become social workers (Stanfield & Beddoe, 2013) and the public's willingness to accept the services from a social worker (Arguello, Baiocchi, & Wolf, 2018; Fall et al., 2000; LeCroy & Stenson, 2004). However, social workers also fail at promoting themselves and their profession. Tower (2000) stated, "If social work is dissatisfied with its image in television, movies, and popular literature, it must cease its

dependence on people outside of the profession to portray it fairly” (p. 575). Gleaning the perceptions of others certainly has value, but using those results to inform practice and advocacy is also appropriate and necessary.

The general public has long misunderstood the profession of social work (Condie, Hanson, Long, Moss, & Kane, 1978). This is echoed in works where social work was described more akin to a trade and not considered a real profession (Flexner, 1915) and that social work lacked specificity in roles and therefore, could not be considered a profession (Padula & Munro, 1959). Barlow (1963) found that sixty percent of a sample of the general public did not know if social work was a profession, a semi-profession (14%), or not a profession at all (7%). These early studies also reinforced negative images of social workers as “a plain, middle-aged, nosy, and officious do-gooder with her head in the clouds and her hand in the public purse” (Meyerson, 1959, p. 67). Many stereotypes persist today and current research supplied mixed reviews of public perceptions.

Condie, Hanson, Lang, Moss, and Kane (1978) conducted a survey of 250 random sampled households and found that the public had a greater awareness of the roles of social work, where they practiced, and the populations they served than previous studies. However, the authors go on to explain that although respondents viewed social work as a profession that helped other people, very few would actually seek the help from a social worker.

Recent research found that the public still viewed social workers as primarily those who monitor and remove maltreated children from their homes and only half of the respondents recognized that social workers were qualified to provide mental health services (Arguello, Baiocchi, & Wolf, 2018; LeCroy & Stinson, 2004). In terms of prestige, Arguello et al. (2018) found social workers ranked very low, right below teachers and above housewives. LeCroy and



Stinson (2004) found social workers only surpassed psychiatrists and psychologists in perceived effectiveness in the areas of domestic violence and homelessness and topped psychiatrists, but not psychologists, in the area of working with abused children. Fall et al. (2000) also found that the public ranked social workers lowest in regard to appropriateness to treat mental health issues compared to clinical psychologists, Master's level counselors, and doctoral-level counselors. Even though the public viewed social workers as most often caring for those who suffer from mental illness, the public still saw social workers as being least effective and least prestigious in addressing mental health issues (Fall et al., 2000). Furthermore, the recent studies confirmed earlier studies and saw no change in public seeking the assistance and help from a social worker (Arguello et al., 2018; Fall et al., 2000; LeCroy & Stenson, 2004).

### **Caretaker Perceptions of School Social Work**

Another key stakeholder regarding the value of school social work is that of the families who work with school social workers. Although there is little research of caregiver perceptions of school social workers, there are some encouraging studies with parents of children with special needs.

There were several studies that examined the perceptions of caregivers who participated in the individualized education programming process that revealed a gap in education services, but could be filled by a school social worker (Childre & Chambers, 2005; Curle et al., 2016; Dunst, 2002; McKenna & Millen, 2013; Mazer, Dion & Moryoussef, 2016; Villeneuve et al., 2013). These studies identified that parents felt they were not provided access to community resources that would assist them with their child's specific disability (Curle et al., 2016; Mazer et al., 2016), there was a need for an identified key person to support families throughout transitions (Villeneuve et al., 2013), and that families and students should be empowered through

family- centered practices to be realized as equal participants in the development of special education services (Childre & Chambers, 2005; Dunst, 2002; McKenna & Millen, 2013; Villeneuve et al., 2013).

Another study also identified areas where school social workers could meet the needs of families was conducted by Nash, Rounds, and Bowen (1992) who found that when a school social worker was part of the individualized education program (IEP) team, educators perceived a higher level of parental involvement with school personnel. One specific qualitative study led by Smrekar and Cohen-Vogel (2018), the researchers, both of whom specialize in public policy and education, utilized a social work approach of interviewing parents in their homes about their perceptions of parent involvement. Their intentional use of the home environment produced rich data regarding how administrators and teachers failed to recognize the barriers families faced that prevented their involvement in school (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2018). All of these studies identified areas where school social workers could address gaps in services in the school settings to improve educational practices and outcomes.

There is only one study that was identified where the perceptions of a parent, or caregiver, was ascertained specifically about school social workers. Lind (2012), in her qualitative dissertation, interviewed twelve mothers of children identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) regarding their perceptions of the school social worker's role in the Individual Education Programming (IEP) process and specific family-centered 'helpgiving practices' that increased parent participation and satisfaction with the IEP process. Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, (2007), describe family-centered helpgiving practice as an approach that treats families with dignity and respect, provides information and offers choices about services, and views the family as partners within the parent/professional context. These authors emphasize there is not agreed

upon definition within their literature on helpgiving practice. Lind (2012) found that mothers valued a family-centered approach that utilizes helpgiving practice where families and schools are considered partners collaborating together by being communicative, respectful, and flexible. Lind's (2012) study confirmed two profound themes that were indicative of the helpgiving categories defined by Dunst, Boyd, Trivette, and Hamby (2002); relational practices and participatory practices.

Relational practices include active listening, empathy, and authenticity whereas participatory practices involve actively seeking input from others in the identification of goals and problem-solving plans (Dunst 2002; Dunst et al., 2002; Lind 2012). Lind's (2012) study found that IEP teams tended to utilize *professionally-centered practices* where the educators are considered the experts and develop the goals and plans, independent of family input. Her findings recommended that school social workers could extend their expertise in relational practices by welcoming parents before the meeting, sitting with them, advocating when their voice wasn't being heard and model these skills for other IEP team members. Furthermore, Lind (2012) also identified areas where social workers could assist in participatory practices such as educating parents about IEP language, their educational rights, and empowering them to advocate for programming for their child.

### **Future Research**

The quantity of research meant to define the tasks of the school social worker coupled with the numerous studies about school social work from the perspective of administrators, psychologists, and school counselors have assisted in further legitimizing the role of social work in schools. Most of these studies have been quantitative and provided a solid understanding of how school social workers ranked tasks they found important (Anderson & Krishef, 1973;

Costin, 1969; Allen-Meares, 1977,1994). However, few studies have explored a deeper perception of how school social workers arrived at their conclusions (Prather, 2010; Scott, 2017). Stakeholder perceptions, such as psychologists, administrators, teachers, and school counselors have added to the discussion of interprofessional collaboration, educational outcomes, and the role of school social work in special education through mostly quantitative research (Agrega, 2002, 2004, 2006; Bye et al., 2009; Constable & Montgomery, 1985; Poppy, 2012). The gap in research is twofold: one that lacks the depth of the lived experience as told by school social workers and also from their education professional counterparts such as administrators, school counselors, teachers, and school psychologists and two, analyzing the evolution of the school social work profession by exploring societal influences in specific eras such as changes in federal education laws and how they were interpreted by educational professionals who shaped the tasks which ultimately led to the identity of school social

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The original assignment of school social work was that of the home and school liaison (Costin, 1969; Allen-Mears, 1977, 1994) and although some school social workers continue this duty, the tasks of those in the profession have become very diverse. School social workers provide individual and group therapy, participate in multitiered systems of support, provide community resource expertise to families, and serve on special education teams. The purpose of this study was to investigate the historical development and evolution of how school social workers defined themselves from its beginning in 1906 to present day by analyzing societal influences in specific eras, such as changes in federal education laws, and how they were interpreted by educational professionals who shaped the tasks which ultimately led to the identity of school social work.

The research method in this study was a qualitative research design. According to Holosko (2010), qualitative inquiry is primarily phenomenological and seeks to understand the phenomena from the perspective of the participants. Additionally, there are six reasons why qualitative research would be an appropriate method for a researcher to choose: (a) to explore a topic or phenomenon where little is known; (b) the topic or study may be emotional or sensitive in nature; (c) to capture the lived experience from those who have experienced the phenomena of study; (d) to further explore programs and interventions; (e) the quantitative work has been exhausted; and (f) explicate the voice from vulnerable populations toward social activism (Holosko, 2010, p. 345). It was also the aim of this study to seek the lived experiences of those who worked as school social workers and educational professionals such as teachers, administrators, school psychologists, school counselors within specified time frames identified by the researcher. Therefore, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate method for this

study. Other than Allen-Meares (2004), little has been written about the history of school social work in a context that connected social trends to the tasks of school social workers.

Phenomenological studies are best suited for inquiries of multiple individuals in a shared experience of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection for phenomenological studies include interviews with individuals, documents, observations, and art (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, the phenomenon was the development of school social work identity through tasks and societal influences and data were collected through document analysis and interviews.

This chapter will outline four historical eras, developed by the researcher, from 1906 to present, based on critical societal changes and educational policy that influenced the evolution of school social work. Each era will include justification for the specific years chosen, studies that were written during that period that explored the tasks and identity of school social work, and how the data were collected through historical document analysis, interviews, or both. Finally, this chapter will outline several methodological considerations for interviews and document analysis: (a) sampling procedures; (b) inclusion and exclusion criteria for document analysis; (c) data collection methods; (d) data analysis; and (e) trustworthiness.

### **Positionality Statement**

I have been a social worker in a school setting for twenty years. As such, I have collaborated and worked with administrators, teachers, school psychologists, and school counselors in a multitude of ways. There have been times when our roles were not clearly defined and issues of territory emerged. There have also been times when each role was equally valued and collaboration was seamless. These experiences have shaped my perceptions of the other professions and although I enter professional relationships with openness to collaborative

opportunities, I am cautious to not offend, yet I remain staunch in my resolve to make my role visible, viable, and valuable.

I am also the vice-president of the Pennsylvania Association of School Social Workers Personnel (PASSWP) which is a state organization that works to provide professional education and support to school social workers across the state. In addition, I am part of a committee that is working with the Pennsylvania State Education Association to support legislation that will create a school social work certification. Finally, I am the Northeast Regional Representative Board Member for the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) which is a national school social work organization. Both SSWAA and PASSWP work toward legitimizing school social work. These macro-level associations and works predispose me toward seeking justification for school social workers and legitimizing our roles within the educational system.

I am also a daughter of parents who recognized that education provides opportunity and they strongly encouraged me to advance my education to the fullest. I was raised in an upper-middle class, white family and attended a vastly diverse school; both in race and socio-economic class. My parents taught me that integrity was the most important quality a person could have. This lesson was reinforced while navigating middle and high school. I learned that changing who I was to meet the perceptions of others neither benefitted me or others. Therefore, I learned that staying true to myself, demonstrating integrity, would make me a person others accepted.

Although my ultimate goal as a board member of PASSWP and SSWAA is to further legitimize the field of school social work in Pennsylvania and nationwide, it is my integrity that will guide me in my work as a DSW student and as a researcher. My integrity is paramount to my identity and to the work I submit to the school social work professional community.

Therefore, to guard against bias, I will use multiple forms of data collection such as interviews

and documents and will use member checking of interview analysis to add to the trustworthiness of my study.

### **Time Periods of Study**

**Era 1: 1905 – 1929 – The Beginning, adoption, and national expansion.** Julius Oppenheimer (1924) identified this time period to be further broken down in to three distinct times: Period of Beginnings (1906-1914), Period of Adoptions by Boards of Education (1914 – 1921) and Period of National Expansion (1921-1924). Much of this period was presented in Chapter 1 through the emergence of visiting teachers led by Mary Marot, New York, NY; Sara Holbrook, Hartford, CT; and Mrs. Joseph Lee in Boston, MA. The period of adoption was also previously discussed which included the Board of Education placing visiting teachers in schools in numerous states and the Commonwealth Fund that financed these national expansions.

This era marked the very beginnings of school social work identity as the liaison between the school and the student's home by connecting with caregivers, understanding the circumstances of the student, and then communicating assessments of the home environment back to the school environment (Allen, 1928; Oppeneheimer, 1924). Some visiting teachers were relegated to the appointment of truancy officer when the country responded to a call for compulsory school attendance laws in the early part of the twentieth century, but that task was typically reserved for retired police officers and was looked down upon by visiting teachers of the time (Allen-Mears, 2004; Tyack & Berkowitz, 1977). The mental hygiene movement of the 1920's provided a strong avenue for skilled visiting teachers to assist in the treatment of those students who demonstrated emotional disturbances that interfered with them taking full advantage of their educational opportunities (Allen Mears, 2004).



The first *National Visiting Teacher Bulletin* (1922) reported the results of a questionnaire given to visiting teachers throughout the country. This is perhaps the very first analysis of tasks and exploration of how visiting teachers viewed their professional identity. Julius Oppenheimer's dissertation (1924) also explored the tasks and identity of visiting teachers. Both of these publications were examined as part of this era. Several additional historical documents that were examined were Allen, 1928; Culbert, 1916; Culbert, 1921, Gleim, 1921; National Visiting Teacher Bulletins, 1922-1929.

**Era 2: 1930-1969 Period of decline, re-emergence, and shift.** The Great Depression affected the number of visiting teachers employed in schools as public schools struggled to finance the basic needs to operate a school district (Costin, 1969). Many visiting teachers were no longer financed and returned to community work. The primary tasks involved social casework of providing basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing (Costin, 1969).

After the end of WWII, there was a population explosion and the country rebounded financially (Allen-Meares, 2004). Visiting teacher programs were expanded and financed to meet the needs of students. Focus of service moved from community work necessary during the Depression era toward social casework where the individual student became the emphasis of services (Costin, 1969). Group work also emerged as a new approach and was being used by social workers to improve the mental health of various populations (Allen-Meares, 2004).

As schools expanded services by employing more guidance/vocational counselors and school psychologists to meet the needs of students, especially those who demonstrated emotional disturbance, there was increase role confusion between those professions working with children on non-academic outcomes (Sugrue, 2017). Visiting teachers continued to provide interpretation for school personnel, but found themselves jockeying for tasks that were being claimed by

guidance/vocational counselors and psychologists (National Committee on Visiting Teachers [NCVT], 1926).

A critical educational legal decision during this time period was *Brown vs Board of Education, Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). This supreme court ruling denounced the “separate but equal” 1896 case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and found that racial segregation was unconstitutional. Social workers played a significant role as committee members that assisted Dr. Kenneth Clark’s written statement to the Supreme Court that helped inform the Court’s decision (Leighninger, 2005). Social workers also assisted communities and civil rights groups in their fight against discrimination and enforce the new legal mandate (Leighninger, 2005). As desegregation decreased, the achievement gap between students living in poverty and those from middle and upper class families increased (Paul, 2016). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 sought to decrease this gap by providing funding for professional development and resources to support educational programs and included what is known as ‘Title Funds’ that were earmarked for specific endeavors such as reading, writing and math [Title 1] (Paul, 2016).

National social work organizations also made a major shift in this time period. In 1955, the National Association of School Social Workers merged with The National Association of Social Work (NASW), along with six other national, but separate, social work organizations (“Facts about NASW”, 2019). This merger created a strong and united social work organization with a new identity.

The studies examined that explore the tasks and identity of visiting teachers in this era were Costin, 1969; Shaw 1967; Sikkema, 1953; Wile, 1934; Wolf, 1964. The historical documents to be examined will be AAVT News Letters January 1935 and December 1936; NASSW membership newsletters, 1948-1955; NAVT Bulletins 1930- 1955.

**Era 3: 1970-1990 – Education for ALL students.** bias. The first civil rights law that protected qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability was the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (504), 1973 (Alexander & Alexander, 2019). This law prevented discrimination in work situations and those seeking equal education opportunities. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 1974, also known as the Buckley Amendment, was a federal law that protected student education records (Alexander & Alexander, 2019). These laws aligned well with social work values and ethics because the focus was on confidentiality and social justice.

The Education for All Handicapped Children’s Act (EAHCA) 1975 (P.L. 94-142) provided children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 equal access to education and required the development of an individualized education plan to meet their specific educational needs (Alexander & Alexander, 2019; Lind, 2012). Prior to the passage of EAHCA, an estimated 1.75 million children with disabilities did not have access to a free and appropriate public education [FAPE](Lind, 2012). The Education for all Handicapped Children Act increased funding for special education services, including school social work, and mandated that parents be considered partners in the development of their child’s Individual Education Program [IEP] (Bye, et al, 2009; Lind, 2012).

The profession of school social work found that although the merging of all branches of social work professions may have been appropriate in the 1950’s, generalized social work did not consistently meet the needs of specialized fields (Allen-Meares, 1999; McDonald, Constable, & Holly, 1999). As a result, the National Association of Social Work (NASW) developed practice standards for a variety of specialized social work fields including school social work. The first standards were written in 1978 and rewritten in 1992, 2002, and 2012.

Studies exploring the tasks and identity of visiting teachers in this era were Alderson & Kristoff, 1973; Allen-Meares, 1977. The documents exploring the tasks and identity of visiting teachers in this era were *NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin* 1984 – 1989; *NASW Standards for Social Work Services in Schools*. Data collection was also acquired through interviews with school social workers, school administrators, psychologists, teachers, and school counselors who worked during this time period.

**Era 4: 1990-2019 Reauthorizations and identity.** This era saw the reauthorization of several key federal initiatives that included federal funds for school social workers and expanded their role in working with students in early childhood education such as Head Start, early intervention services, and alternative education (Allen-Meares, 2004).

In 1990, the Education for All Handicapped Children’s Act was reauthorized and renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, also known as IDEA (Alexander & Alexander, 2019). IDEA also identified and provided funding for ‘related services’ which included counseling services “...provided by qualified social workers, psychologist, guidance counselors, and other qualified personnel” (Alexander & Alexander, 2019, p. 722). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and increased accountability to school districts to use evidence informed practices to make academic and behavioral decisions (Constable, 2016). The emergence of Response to Intervention (RtI), Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), and Multitier System of Support (MTSS) provided a system for school social workers to demonstrate their skills and effectiveness with students. The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 was also a reauthorization of ESEA and removed the punitive practices that deepened the gap between impoverished schools and affluent schools set forth by NCLB (McGuinn, 2016).

This era also saw a dramatic increase in school violence and shootings during the first eighteen years of the twenty-first century (Katsiyannis, Whitford, & Ennis, 2016). Additionally, suicide in teens also increased since its lowest point in 2009 of 6% of high school teens who reported serious thoughts of committing suicide to 17% in 2017 ('Child Trends', 2019). School social workers are not only qualified to respond to traumatic events, but can also provide preventative programming (Mirabito & Callahan, 2016). However, school social workers are not the first profession to be considered when developing programming or interventions for students even though they are the primary mental health providers for students in schools (Kelly et al., 2010).

Pennsylvania Department of Education does not provide an educational certification for school social workers. They do, however, provide a Home and School Visitor (HSV) certification for anyone with a Bachelor degree who completes the required courses at an accredited school in order to be certified ("Summary of Changes, 2019"). According to the 2018-2019 Pennsylvania Department of Education Professional Personnel Data, there are 353 school social workers and 268 home and school visitors working in schools across the state ("Professional Personnel Individual Staff", 2019). However, it is unclear how many of those were persons with only an HSV certification, or were purely Masters level school social workers, or who were school social workers who also held an HSV certification. This distinction is important because many HSVs do not have social work educations. The Pennsylvania Association of School Social Work Personnel (PASSWP), along with the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), have been attempting to gain school social work certification for over ten years. Currently, there are three bills in the House and Senate that support school social

work (HB 390, HB 1500, and SB 749 2019-2020) and one that disregards school social work as a valuable mental health service (2019-2020 HB 1525).

Studies exploring the tasks and identity of visiting teachers in this eras were Allen-Meares (1994) and Altshuler and Webb (2009). The documents to be explored for the tasks and identity of visiting teachers in this era: Joint position paper, November 1990; *NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin* 1990 – 1994; *NASW School Social Work Standards* 1992, 2002, 2012; PA House Bill 390 & 1525 2019-2020, PA Senate Bill 749 2019-202. Data collection through interviews with school social workers, school administrators, psychologists, teachers, and school counselors also provided additional insight to the tasks and identity of school social workers in this era.

## **Research Design**

Table 3.1 provides an overview of how data were collected and analyzed for both interviews and documents within each era. The data were separated into four eras and documents were assigned a specific era based on their publication date. Documents were used as a source of data across all four eras and interviews were used for eras 3 and 4. Each era included structural and textual descriptions elicited from the data and then synthesized into a composite description. A final composite description of data across all eras was developed.

Table 3.1

*Data Collection and Analysis by Era*

Eras	Era 1 1905-1929	Era 2 1930-1969	Era 3 1970-1989	Era 4 1990-2019
Data Collection	Document Analysis		Interviews and Document Analysis	
Data Analysis	Phenomenological Approach			
	Theme Generation	Theme Generation	Theme Generation	Theme Generation
	Textural and Structural Description	Textural and Structural Description	Textural and Structural Description	Textural and Structural Description
	Composite Description	Composite Description	Composite Description	Composite Description
	Composite Description of all eras			

**Procedures: Documents**

**Document sampling.** Table 3.2 outlines each era and the documents that will be sampled. Randy Fisher was the first president of the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) and holds a collection

historical documents about school social work. He provided this researcher with a plethora of scanned primary sources of data dating back to 1918 that include bulletins distributed by the National Association of Visiting Teacher (NAVT), National Association of School Social Workers (NASSW), American Association of Visiting Teachers (AAVT), and The American Association of School Social Workers (AASW). These specific documents were chosen because they are primary sources of data and considered grey literature which are not included in public libraries or internet searches. These bulletins served as the principal source of data during the first two eras and served as supplemental data sources for eras 3 and 4.

There were 109 NASSW, AAVT, AASW, and NAVT Bulletins in total from Volume 1, No. 1 (December, 1924) through Volume 31, No. 1 (September, 1955). Volume 31 was the last Bulletin published before all the specialty areas of social work merged to create the National Association of School Social Workers at which time NASW then published *The Bulletin*. In this data bank there were 126 NASW Bulletins and Newsletters spanning from 1957 to 1996 and 18 NASW School Social Work Information Bulletins from 1977 - 1986.

Table 3.2

*Documents Sampled in Each Era*

1905-1929: The Beginning, Adoption, and National Expansion	1930-1969: Period of Decline, Re-emergence, and Shift	1970-1989: Education for ALL Students	1990-2019: Reauthorization and Growth
<b>Documents</b>			
<b>Studies:</b> Oppenheimer, 1924. <b>Documents:</b> Allen, 1928; Gleim, 1921; Culbert 1916, 1921; National Visiting Teacher Bulletins, 1922-1929; Chicago Women’s Club Bulletin January, February, October 1918 and February 1920; Pratt, 1920	<b>Studies:</b> Costin, 1969; Shaw, 1967; Sikkema, 1953; Cook, 1945. <b>Documents:</b> Wile, 1934; NAVT Bulletins 1930-1955, AAVT Newsletters January 1935 and December 1936; NASSW Membership newsletters, 1931-1955.	<b>Studies:</b> Alderson & Krisheff, 1973; Allen-Meares, 1977 <b>Documents:</b> NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin, 1977-1989; NASW News, 1989; NASW Standards for Social Work Services in Schools.	<b>Studies:</b> Allen-Meares, 1994; Altshuler & Webb, 2009; <b>Documents:</b> Kelly et al, 2010; Kelly et al, 2016; NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin 1990-1994; NASW News, 1990-1194; NASW School Social Work Standards 1992, 2002, 2012; PA House Bills 390 & 1525; Senate Bill 749; SSWAA Bells
18 documents	70 documents	33 documents	27 documents

There were 109 NASSW, AAVT, AASW, and NAVT Bulletins in total from Volume 1, No. 1 (December, 1924) through Volume 31, No. 1 (September, 1955). Volume 31 was the last Bulletin published before all the specialty areas of social work merged to create the National



Association of School Social Workers at which time NASW then published *The Bulletin*. In this data bank there were 126 NASW Bulletins and Newsletters spanning from 1957 to 1996 and 18 NASW School Social Work Information Bulletins from 1977 - 1986.

Additional documents that were examined were research publications (Oppenheimer, 1924; Costin, 1969; Shaw 1967; Sikkema, M. 1953; Cook, 1945; Alderson & Kristoff, 1973; Allen-Meares, 1977; Allen-Meares, 1994, Altshuler & Webb, 2009) that were identified during the literature review. These documents were either found through reference harvesting or library data base searches. A scholarly article and journal search was conducted via the Millersville University online library. These databases included EBSCOhost, ERIC, JSTOR, Sage Journals, ProsQuest, and PsycNet using the Education, Education Psychology, Psychology, and Social Work data bases. Google Scholar was also utilized to locate open access articles. The following search terms were used to locate articles specific to this study: *school social work, school social work tasks, visiting teachers, history of school social work, history of visiting teachers, and school social work identity*. Variations of these terms were used to ensure exhaustive search results. *The School Social Work Standards* from 1978 and 1992 are no longer in print. The researcher contacted NASW Press who provided the copies.

**Document inclusion and exclusion criteria.** Inclusion criteria was developed from the literature review and research questions. Three a priori codes were developed; societal influence, tasks of school social work, and identity of school social work. A priori codes are codes that are determined prior to data analysis and should be based on the research question (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, specific criteria included those writings that identified *societal influences* such as the Depression, immigration, war, educational reforms such as EAHCA, IDEA, NCLB, ESSA, ESEA; *tasks* of school social worker/visiting teachers such as

home visiting, social casework, casework, liaison, interpretation, mental health, counseling, attendance, truancy, home-school, behavior; and how *school social workers identified* themselves through their title or professional perceptions (visiting teacher, school social worker, school visitor). Documents that included content of any of these a priori codes were included for document analysis. See Appendix A for complete list of documents examined in this study.

**Document data Collection.** The researcher was provided an electronic data base from Randy Fisher that consisted of a plethora of historical documents related to school social work. Bowen (2009) states documents should be chosen based upon the research questions and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. *The Bulletin* was a visiting teacher and school social work publication that began as a source of information sharing about the emergence of the profession and evolved to a journal that shared research.

**Document data organization and management.** A spreadsheet of all documents that were examined in the database was developed. Each era was assigned a separate tab and the documents were loaded along the vertical edge. The documents were assigned a label [era - #]. For example, document [2-1] (*Visiting Teacher Bulletin*, Volume 6, number 1, March, 1930) represented a document in era 2 and was the first document listed in the study. Along the horizontal of the page was the label, the article information (volume, number, month, year), the article title, bulletin pages, codes, and notes (See Table 3.3).

Table 3.3

*Document Data Management Spreadsheet of A Priori codes*

Label	Article	First Pass Criteria			Did not meet	Notes
		Tasks	Societal Influence	Identity		
2-1	V6n1 March 1930	1		1		Mental hygiene, rest is business of association

When a code was identified in a document, a ‘1’ was placed under the specific code and horizontally associated with the document from where it was garnered. A priori codes, sub-codes, and emerging codes were also included as they developed throughout analysis along the horizontal (see Table 3.4). They were color coded and given an abbreviation which was used in analysis.

Table 3.4

*Document Data Management with Sub Codes*

Label	Article	Tasks			Societal Influence		Identity	
		HV	INT	AT	IMM	Comp	Title	
		Home visit	interpretation	Attendance	immigration	Compulsory school attendance law	Title	2 <sup>nd</sup> pass notes
1-1	V1(1) Dec. 1924	1	1	1		1	1	Results of the 1 <sup>st</sup> survey

There were also columns for first and second read notes. Documents were managed in specific files on the researcher's computer that was password protected and were also printed to hard copy for analysis.

**Document Data analysis.** All documents were hand coded on printed hard copies. Each a priori code was assigned a color for hand-coding: yellow, societal influence; pink, task; green, identity. Colored highlighters were used to identify text corresponding to the a priori code and sticky flags were used to identify the location of the text. All hard copies of the documents were kept in three-ring binders.

The researcher performed a first pass review of all documents and scanned for inclusive data; societal influence, tasks, identity. When a document contained one of the a priori codes, a '1' was placed in that box. Those that revealed no inclusive criteria were marked 'unusable' and discarded to a separate tab in excel. Table 3.3 displays how the documents were organized and is an example of an era 2 document that met inclusion data for a priori codes 'tasks' and 'identity'. Table 3.3 also shows first pass notes of that document.

Those that met the criteria for inclusion were then given a second pass reading and the researcher used a reflective journal to explore the essence of the texts, identify sub-codes and emerging codes, and acquire a general sense of the data without getting lost in the details (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Sub-codes were added to the spread sheet under the corresponding a priori code. Emerging codes were also developed based on content of the documents to reveal the participant's lived experience with the phenomena of study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The emerging codes 'perception of school social workers' and 'role theory' were developed. When a sub-code or emerging code was noted in an article, a '1' was placed in the box under that code

(See Table 3.4). This allowed the researcher to have a visual display of which codes were most prevalent across the articles.

Textual and structural descriptions were developed for this study. Structural descriptions are the settings, in this case the eras, that are experienced by the participant in a qualitative study and textual descriptions are the explication of significant statements by the participant (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Textual and structural descriptions can also be applied to document analysis. In this study, particularly poignant statements of each era were explicated and logged in a spreadsheet (see Table 3.5). The spreadsheet with the label, sub-code, theme, and textual description allowed the researcher to see relationships between the codes for analysis. These descriptions were analyzed to create a composite description which is a summary of the shared experiences throughout the data sets. Textual descriptions were also incorporated into the findings and identified by their label ([1-5], [3-8], etc.) as opposed to the article, journal, or paper. When applying document analysis, Bowen (personal communication, January 4, 2020) suggests treating documents as data by assigning labels as substitutes for document authors or titles. This clearly delineates when documents are being treated as data versus literature being reviewed or referenced.

Table 3.5

*Textural Descriptions of Documents*

<b>Label</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Textural Description</b>
<b>1-5</b>	Percep	Connect	The visiting teacher is the arm of the school extended into the home to draw the school and the home together for the benefit of the child
<b>1-6</b>	Percep	Connect	As a result of this give and take information, the plan was tried of sending out teachers trained in social work to visit the homes of maladjusted children and to bring about mutual helpfulness and better understanding between the home and the school and between the school and social agencies.

## **Procedures: Interviews**

**Interview research sample.** A nonprobability sample was an appropriate fit for this study because they are most useful when the goal is to describe the essence of the phenomena rather than generalize the findings (Monette, Sullivan, & DeJong, 2005). Additionally, nonprobability sampling is advantageous when inquiring about a certain population's experience and expertise in a particular subject matter (Denscombe, 2010). There are several types of nonprobability sampling, but purposive sampling was best suited for this study. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select subjects that fit within certain criteria based on particular qualities that will produce the most valuable data (Denscombe, 2010). By interviewing school administrators, psychologists, counselors, teachers, and school social workers, this study sought to explore school social worker identity and tasks in relation to societal influences within specific time periods, therefore, this sampling method was well-matched to the goal.

Sampling was restricted to school social workers and education professionals who serve, or have served, in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania is unique from other states regarding school social work for a number of reasons. Primarily, it is one of few states that does not have an education certification for school social workers developed by the state department of education. All other professional staff in Pennsylvania public schools have an education certification albeit teachers, school nurses, school counselors, or school psychologists. Additionally, Pennsylvania is the only state that developed, and still maintains, an education certification for a home and school visitor (HSV). The home and school visitor certification does not require a social work, or a human service, education degree but is "qualified to...engage in social casework...investigate family problems" ("Summary of Changes", 2019). Currently, there are three bills in the House and

Senate that support school social work (HB 390, HB 1500, and SB 749) and one that disregards school social work as a valuable mental health service (HB 1525). It is for these reasons, the scope of this study was focused on Pennsylvania.

**Interview setting.** The researcher conducted individual interviews through the use of Zoom Meeting, which is an online program that allows for a synchronous session and can be used to audio and video record the interview. Therefore, the setting for this study was virtual and synchronous.

**Interview recruitment.** The Pennsylvania Association of School Social Work Personnel (PASSWP) and Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) agreed to assist in recruiting school social workers, school counselors, teachers, and school psychologists as participants for this study. PASSWP is a state school social work organization with approximately 200 active members, some of which are retired members. The president of PASSWP was provided a copy of the IRB application and approval and the invitation to participate (Appendix B). PASSWP posted the invitation on their website, but no one responded to the invitation to participate. PSEA is the state education association with over 140,000 members including retirees. PSEA was provided a copy of the IRB application and approval, and the invitation to participate (Appendix D, E, & F), however, they did not send an email to their membership and no reason was provided. The most successful recruitment procedure was through the professional contacts of the researcher. The researcher emailed education colleagues with an invitation to participate (Appendix C, D, E & F) which resulted in many responses. Snowball recruiting procedures were also employed after an interview or through the researcher's connections with school staff. These connections also led to recruitment of those who were members of other state organizations and resulted in recruiting participants who met the criteria for era 3.

The invitation to participate included a link to a Qualtrics® survey. The Qualtrics® survey provided the potential participant the Consent to Participate in Research followed by a six question demographic survey (Appendix G & H). The purpose of the survey was for data collection management and asked participants for contact and professional employment data information. The researcher transferred the data into an excel spreadsheet to organize participants under each era and profession. This allowed for identification of how many potential participants were possible for each era. Phenomenological studies look for 5-25 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, at minimum it would be ideal to recruit at least five each of school administrators, school psychologists, school counselors, teachers, and school social workers, 25 for each era 1970 – 1990 and 1990 – 2019, resulting in approximately 50 total participants for interviews. A total of 29 interviews were completed. There were six interviews completed that met the criteria of era 3; 1 administrator, 2 psychologists, 1 teacher, 1 school counselor, and 1 school social worker. In era 4 there were a total of 23 interviews; 5 administrators, 3 school psychologists, 4 school counselors, 5 teachers, and 6 school social workers. There were three people who completed the survey but did not meet the criteria.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.** Persons who are, or have been, employed as a school administrator, school psychologist, teacher, school counselor and had experience working with a school social worker in their school district, in any Pennsylvania public, private, or charter schools for at least five years were considered eligible to participate in the study. Persons who are, or have been, employed as a school social worker in any Pennsylvania public, private, or charter schools for at least five years were considered eligible to participate in the study. Pennsylvania requires that administrators, psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers to have attained a Masters or Doctoral level of education, therefore, this study also



required Masters or above for these specific professionals to participate. However, school social workers who were employed as school social workers or home and school visitors with a social work background prior to PDE's development of the school social work CSPG 201 and were grandfathered as school social workers were included in this study. Teachers only required a bachelor's degree to participate. A diversity of age, race, religion, ethnicity, and gender were welcome and were exclusionary criteria from participation. Persons who were home and school visitors, but did not have a social work education either at a bachelor or masters level, were excluded.

**Data collection for interviews.** The first part of the Qualtrics® survey provided the potential participant the consent to participate form (Appendix G & H). If the potential participant was willing to participate in the study, they electronically signed the consent to participate form and then answered six demographic and school social work employment information (Appendix G & H).

The consent to participate explained the parameters of the study, that their participation was completely voluntary, they could refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time. The informed consent also notified potential participants that the interviews would be recorded and the electronic demographic data of each individual participant, acquired through via Qualtrics® survey, would be converted to pseudonyms to maintain the confidentiality of the participant from any other person interacting with the data. Finally, the informed consent explained that all Zoom recordings, transcriptions, and Qualtrics® survey identifying information would be masked and stored in a password protected data base for three years which is in accordance to federal regulations and then destroyed.

The researcher conducted interviews with only those participants who met the criteria, completed the Qualtrics® survey, digitally signed the informed consent, and agreed to be interviewed. The researcher conducted individual interviews through the use of Zoom Meeting. Interviews were audio recorded and some were video recorded if the participant chose to share their screen for recording. Video recording was not required. Interviews were arranged by a mutually agreed upon date and time through direct email correspondence with each of the participants. A Zoom link appointment was sent to each of the participants. Zoom does not require the purchase of any programming but has system requirements, such as a camera and microphone, which were included in the Zoom invitation well in advance of the meeting. Zoom also provides a phone number should the participant choose to use that mode of technology. One participant chose the phone option over the computer option for the interview and audio recording. All of these options prevented the study from being bias against those who do not have specific electronic equipment.

A semi-structured interview format was used to elicit data, with the flexibility to ask additional questions for deeper understanding. The sub-questions were developed to elicit responses that would answer the overarching research questions. The semi-structured interview instrument is included in Appendix I. Participants were offered a set time of no more than 90 minutes with the possibility of ending early or scheduling a subsequent interview if necessary. Most interviews averaged about 45 minutes with some taking as little as 37 minutes and some closer to 90 minutes. Each participant was typically asked the same primary open-ended questions but if they answered an unasked question within another answer, that unasked question was not repeated. Probing questions were used to clarify responses and explore deeper meaning.

**Interview data organization and management.** After each interview, the researcher used a reflection journal to document first impressions, reflect on the process, and summarize the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Zoom has a feature that can transcribe the interviews, but it was not completely accurate. The researcher reviewed the audio recordings provided by Zoom and fixed any errors in the transcription. The transcription of each interview was printed for coding and data analysis. Each interviewee was assigned a pseudonym and the first letter of the pseudonym corresponded with their professional group. For example, all administrators were given ‘A’ names, all school counselors were given ‘C’ names, psychologists ‘P’ names, social workers ‘S’, and teachers ‘T’ names. This allows the reader to easily identify the profession of the interviewee.

The interview data were logged into a spreadsheet similar to the one used for document analysis (See Table 3.6). Each interviewee was listed along the vertical of the page by their pseudonym, and era and sub-codes were listed across the horizontal of the spreadsheet.

Table 3.6

*Interview Data Management Spreadsheet*

		Tasks			Education Perception		Societal Influences	
		Home visit	Interpretation	Transportation	Supervision	Don't know	IDEA	NCLB
Pseud	Era	HV	INT	TRANS	SUP	?	IDEA	NCLB
Chris	3	1			1	1	1	1
Sue	3	1	1	1	1		1	

**Interview data analysis.** First, the researcher read the transcripts to explore the essence of the interviews and get a general sense of the data without getting lost in the details (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Then the researcher hand coded the data for analysis by using colored highlighters to represent each of the a priori codes. Emerging codes were also developed based on content of the interviews to reveal the participant’s lived experience with the phenomena of study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The emerging codes ‘perception of school social workers’ and ‘role theory’ were developed.

Textual and structural descriptions were developed for each era and summarized. Structural descriptions are the settings, in this case the eras, that are experienced by the participant in a qualitative study and textual descriptions are the explication of significant statements by the participant (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These descriptions were analyzed to create a composite description which is a summary of the shared experiences throughout the data sets.

Participants were asked to name the top three tasks they thought a school social worker should do. Their responses were also logged in a spread sheet (see Table 3.7). The pseudonym was not used, only the profession of the person ranking the tasks.

Table 3.7

*Interview Top 3 Tasks Data Management*

	Home-school liaison	AT	BX	MH	Collab	Agency Referral	PD	Homelessness	Advocate
Admin	1			3		2			
Psych	1	3						2	

Finally, a spread sheet of textual descriptions was developed for interviews. This allowed the researcher to identify relationships between the codes and identify themes for analysis (See Table 3.8).

Table 3.8

*Textural Descriptions of Interviews*

<b>Pseudo</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Textural Description</b>
<b>Cheryl</b>	Percep	Go-to	She was my number one support and go to just because she was there for so long and really developed relationships with the families.
<b>Abby</b>	Percep	Go-to	But I can't specifically say that I know exactly what she did, I just know she was my go-to for resources
<b>Charles</b>	Percep	Go-to	The social worker that I work with is kind of my go-to when I've run out of limitations or I've run out of resources.

**Trustworthiness**

There are several strategies for trustworthiness in qualitative research and for this study credibility was established through triangulation (Bowen, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Triangulation involves the researcher analyzing multiple sources of data. In this study, document analysis, multiple interviews, and collecting data at different periods of time (eras) was utilized to meet the criteria for triangulating the data. Document analysis was used for all time periods, but was especially useful to gain insight to the lived experience of education professionals during time periods where there was no one to interview. Interviews were used for eras 3 and 4 and member checking was implemented to increase credibility. This latter process required the researcher to verify the content of participant's responses to the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By analyzing data from different sources, findings can be corroborated and decrease bias (Bowen, 2009).

## Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter will present findings from document analysis of visiting teacher bulletins, published studies, school social work journals and interviews with school administrators, school psychologists, teachers, school counselors, and school social workers. The focus of document analysis and interviews was to explore the societal trends from the early 1900s to present that influenced the profession of school social work, to identify the tasks of school social workers over time, ascertain how educational professionals perceived the role of school social workers, and discover how school social workers viewed their professional identity. The data were divided into four eras: Era 1 (1918-1929), Era 2 (1930–1969), Era 3 (1970-1989), Era 4 (1990 – present). All four eras include document analysis, but only eras three and four include interviews.

Results will be presented through structural and textual codes. The structural codes for this study are the eras. The textual codes include the a priori codes (societal influence, tasks, and school social work identity), the emerging code (education professional's perceptions and role theory), and the sub codes that emerged in the analysis. This will be emphasized by direct quotes from both documents and interviews.

### **Era 1: 1905 – 1929 – The Beginning, adoption, and national expansion**

The earliest document examined was from the *Chicago's Women's Club Bulletin*, October, 1918. The first two sentences from a report by Miss Letitia Fyffe captured the work of the visiting teacher which still resonates today and sets the tone for the analysis of this era.

1-12: The purpose of the Visiting Teacher is to connect the school and the home. The task of helping the schoolroom teacher in her difficult problem with the individual child has forced the visiting teacher to take up those things that the school which were obvious and urgent, and which no one else seemed to be doing.

There were 18 documents analyzed for this time period: 13 bulletins, 4 papers, and 1 dissertation.

**Societal influences.** Dr. Julius Oppenheimer (1924), an educator, submitted his work, *The Visiting Teacher Movement*, for his doctoral research [1-14]. He stated the three reasons for the emergence of the visiting teacher profession were:

- [1-14] 1. social and economic conditions which include changes in the school.
2. modern social philosophy which is determining the purposes and objectives in education and child welfare.
3. the development of methods of dealing with various types of maladjustments through the advance made in psychology (including mental hygiene), sociology, and social casework.

Oppenheimer's assessment closely matches the findings in the documents examined for this study. The two most frequently referenced societal influences in the documents was the compulsory school attendance law (55%,  $n = 10$ ) and immigration (27%,  $n = 5$ ). Oppenheimer (1924) refers to immigration and migration as influences that created a number of home issues such as divorce and family instability. The additional documents examined also referred to changes in education, such as the compulsory school attendance law, which increased the number of students attending school and lessened the relationship teachers once had with their small one-room classrooms. These influences created a need for the visiting teacher.

***compulsory school attendance law.*** When the first law was created in 1852 in Massachusetts [2-54], truant officers were often retired police officers who would enforce the law and use punitive actions. One description of truant officers offered:

- 1-5: We then developed that creature of opprobrium, the truant officer, who laid his heavy thumb across the ear of the reluctant ones.

Those in the field of education began to see that truancy was a symptom of a greater issue and encouraged developing a relationship with parents by using visiting teachers to address truancy rather than the punitive efforts of truant officers.

1-5: Undaunted, we set about socializing our attendance departments, which means that we adopted more sympathetic and enlightened points of view and equipped our bureaus with workers who understood social ailments and knew what to do and where to turn for help in dealing with them.

Pennsylvania passed their first compulsory school attendance law in 1895 and Philadelphia hired their first attendance officer in 1897 [2-54]. In the 1920's, Philadelphia schools elevated the qualifications of attendance officers as needing "at least some knowledge of social casework" [2-54]. This shift of attitude of how to address truancy was prevalent and it was the visiting teacher who embraced this additional responsibility.

*immigration.* The work of the visiting teacher originated from immigration and settlement houses: Mary Marot at the Lighthouse Settlement in Philadelphia and later the Hartley House in New York City, Miss Elisabeth Roemer at the Greenwich House and Miss Jane Day at the Richmond Hill House. It was the visiting teacher who developed trusting relationships with newly immigrated families.

1-5: Whom better can they trust than the visiting teacher, who realizes the conditions from which they have come in the old country; who can sympathize with their struggles, their handicaps, their ambitions; who knows the customs, standards, and laws of their newly adopted country; who understands their language and, in that language, is able to advise and guide them toward a better and happier adjustment? Whom better can they trust to interpret to them America, then the visiting teacher who represents the school which their child attends?

Additionally, their role was also to teach the family the laws and culture of America which was often times contradictory to the country from where they came. Regarding compulsory school attendance law, visiting teachers had to educate parents about the requirement of children to



attend school even though the parents did not need to send their children to school in their country of origin.

1-5: We lived in a small village and no one cared whether we went to school or not, just so we paid the school tax levy to the officials.

**Tasks.** A lot of work was accomplished during this first era through surveys and professional conferences to gain a collective understanding of what visiting teachers were doing across the country and how they were being perceived by their schools and communities. The first *National Association of Visiting Teachers (NAVT) Bulletin* set the tone for the remainder of bulletins published during this era because it outlined the results of what could be called the very first analysis of tasks. In May, 1924 the NAVT sent out a survey to all known visiting teachers and those known to be doing similar work. The results were published in *The Bulletin* [1-1] but did not include the original survey, only summarized responses from visiting teachers and organized them by states. The results indicated that the work was diverse.

1-1: The material brings out the fact that among visiting teachers throughout the country, there is much similarity in the basic work of adjusting individual problem children, but that there is considerable variety of specialization.

The data collected by this first survey was compiled by this researcher and summarized into a graphic (see Appendix J). This data cannot be considered reliable or valid as the survey was most likely not psychometrically tested or was held to current quantitative standards. However, information can be gleaned as descriptive data and shows the states that employed visiting teachers, their titles, presumptive events that led to their employment, and the tasks of visiting teachers. Although these data do not indicate the number of visiting teachers employed throughout the country, they do indicate 34 states, (71%) employed visiting teachers in 1924. The reporting of this data read more of a report rather than survey results. Excerpts from the survey summaries provide insight to the tasks of visiting teachers in 1924:

1-1

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The White-Williams Foundation, cooperating with the Board of Public Education, maintains a staff of school counselors (visiting teachers) working primarily with cases of unadjusted behavior, adverse home conditions, and poor school work, endeavoring to adjust – in cases reported – all the difficulties that are found, including health conditions, truancy, family problems, and the need of vocational and educational guidance.

Trenton, New Jersey: The school authorities appointed a visiting teacher to be, as she reports, “not only an aid to the failing child, but a connecting link between home and school.” She has been teaching in the public schools there and had experiences in social service work. She is assigned to two elementary schools in which nearly ninety-five per cent of the children are of foreign parentage. Through her contacts with the homes, she has created an interest in school purposes that has resulted in gradually increased attendance and in the clearing up of many misunderstandings that were handicapping the children’s progress.

New Britain, Connecticut: The Department of Attendance carries on three branches of work, one of which is the Social Service or Visiting Teacher Section. This includes the solving of problems connected with truancy, irregular attendance, leaving school to enter employment, and illegal employment of children, as well as other problems which arise such as maladjustment in scholarship or behavior, adverse home conditions, and problems of illness and physical or mental defects. There are three workers covering all the schools, from kindergarten to senior high. Between six hundred and one thousand investigations are made each month.

This first survey is reflective of the many tasks identified in the subsequent documents examined for this era. All of the documents were coded for ‘tasks’ and sub codes emerged such as ‘interpretation’ and ‘poor scholarship’ which were organized and managed on a spread sheet (see Table 3.4). Figure 4.1 shows the total number of articles in which specific tasks were identified. The most frequency mentioned tasks were interpretation, (78%,  $n=14$ ) and adjustment/behavior of the student (78%,  $n=14$ ).

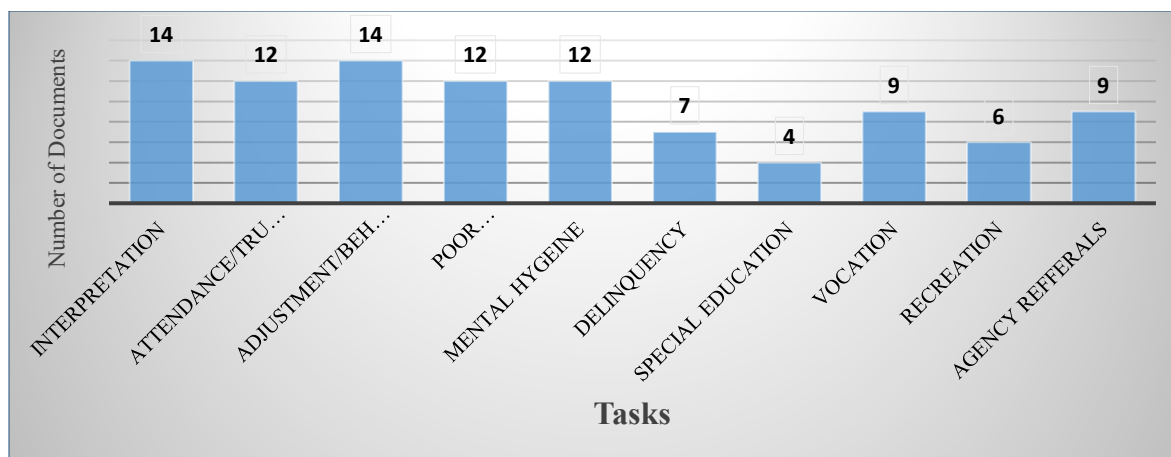


Figure 4.1. Most frequently named tasks identified in documents ( $n=18$ ) examined are shown for era 1.

Home visiting was not identified as a separate task because it was the foundation for the profession and that which gained the attention of schools to the value of visiting teachers.

However, one of the purposes of home visiting was the task of *interpretation*. Interpretation was a common theme throughout the documents and was referred to as explaining the school to the parents, the home to the school, and sometimes included agencies.

The activity of home visiting and interpretation was also described as being a ‘bridge’ or ‘connector’ or ‘liaison’ between home and school.

1-5: The visiting teacher has proven again and again in the past that by obtaining co-operation in the child's home and by giving the school, at the same time, a better understanding of his environment so that It can adapt its methods to his particular needs, the most unpromising child can not only be kept from the courts, but may be developed into a potential good citizen. No better statement of visiting teacher work have been made.

1-6: As a result of this give and take information, the plan was tried of sending out teachers trained in social work to visit the homes of maladjusted children and to bring about mutual helpfulness and better understanding between the home and the school and between the school and social agencies.

1-17: The work of the visiting teacher was undertaken in the belief that for the true education of the child the home and the school must work together. It is based on the principle that, in order to co-operate, the home must understand what the school is

attempting to do, and that the school must understand the home surroundings and interests in order to have knowledge of the child's needs.

Interpretation was also used to explain to parents about educating children with special needs. In the early 1900s, children who were identified as *handicapped*, *crippled*, *dull*, or *retarded* did not often attend public school, as they were viewed as uneducable. In some areas there were special classes or schools for children with disabilities, but parents feared discrimination or did not see a need for their child to attend school due to their disability.

Behavior issues were considered by National Committee on Visiting Teachers as the primary tasks that visiting teachers encountered [1-1] and were often referred to as 'adjustment problems' or 'maladjustment'. Visiting teachers went to the home to evaluate its physical conditions, any deficits in basic needs, and discuss school concerns with the parents. The visiting teacher then shared that information with the classroom teacher to develop a plan for the student.

1-6: without a working knowledge of the (home) circumstances and individual handicaps of the child, the class teacher is treating only the surface manifestations of his misbehavior and is leaving the causes untouched.

The tasks of visiting teachers were further exemplified in case studies [1-15] and demonstrate the lengths and success of interventions provided by visiting teachers.

1-15

(Behavior) One overworked boy slept frequently in class. The visiting teacher found him working from 3 to 6 a.m. and from 4 to 7 p.m. The proper home adjustment was made.

(Attendance) A 6-year-old Italian girl was habitually absent. Her father has ordered her to admit no visitors. A call was made when the father was home. She was found caring for an insane mother and four small children. Her mother was removed to a sanitarium and provision was made for the care of the children. After a short time the family was reunited in a new neighborhood.

(Vocation) A little girl was poorly nourished. Religious views of the family prevented her older sister from accepting a position which would have brought an increase to the family income. The situation was relieved by finding a position in a Jewish business firm.

**Professional perceptions.** The original visiting teacher organizations (Committee on Home and School Visiting, National Association on Home Visiting) were canny to collaborate with educational organizations such as Public Education Association and Boards of Education to establish themselves worthy to the schools. Visiting teacher associations held their professional conferences in conjunction with education conferences and also submitted articles for publication in education journals.

*value.* Education professionals also wrote articles for visiting teachers' bulletins and when they were quoted, or wrote articles for the bulletins, a common theme was the *value* of the visiting teacher. One principal wrote:

1-6: my experience with the revisiting teacher in my school has shown me the value of her service...no school can afford to be without this assistance.

Additionally, an assistant superintendent of the Boston Public Schools wrote about the ongoing need for visiting teachers in order to meet the goals of education:

1-9: I cannot see how it can well arrive at the success for which it aims unless visitors are made a part of our school system.

Even in the infancy of the visiting teacher profession, education professionals, particularly administrators, saw the value and need for their work within schools.

**Identity.** The National Visiting Teachers Association (NVTAs) was formed in 1916 and three years later the NVTAs re-organized as the National Association of Visiting Teachers and Home and School Visitors with Jane Culbert as president (Allen, 1928; Staring et al., 2015; Flexner, 1915). The primary purpose of the NVTAs was to define the role of school social

workers, develop standards of practice and training, and develop school social work programming in all schools (Allen, 1928; Flexner, 1915).

As the profession was emerging, the bulletins reflected themes around visiting teacher identity by defining themselves not only through tasks but by the *titles* by which they were called and the *qualifications* or standards for the profession.

***titles.*** Overwhelmingly, the title ‘visiting teacher’ was used most frequently by those in the profession. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh public schools used the term ‘school counselor’ to define the role of visiting teacher and also in Philadelphia, the Juvenile Aid Society provided a ‘home and school visitor’ to provide home visiting services to elementary schools. The title of ‘welfare worker’ was used in New Jersey.

***qualifications.*** Once the profession began to spread nationwide, the leaders in the field not only attempted to identify the tasks assigned to visiting teachers, but they also saw the need to examine the qualifications necessary to be a visiting teacher. It was typical that visiting teachers were certified or licensed in their state first as a teacher and then either had additional education in social work or social work experience. In 1921, the National Committee of Visiting Teachers recommended the following qualifications:

1-1: college education or equivalent, successful experience in teaching and social case work.

However, there was much discussion about the diversity of these qualification and what should be included as part of visiting teacher standards.

During the round table discussion at the Philadelphia Conference, June 1926 qualifications were discussed [1-8]. The participants were asked to report their responses to a variety of questions. A few are listed below along with some quoted reasons for their response:

1-8

*Should teaching experience be required?*

117 answered yes. “to better understand the teacher’s problem”

13 answered no. “a broad minded person does not need to teach to understand teaching problem.

11 did not answer

*Should social work experience be required?*

130 answered yes. “to learn the technique of case work”

1 answered no. “one visiting teacher stated that she would not like to have enough training in social work so that it would harden the worker.”

4 answered ‘desirable’

66 did not answer.

*What social work is most important?*

73 answered Family Casework

58 answered psychiatric work

32 answered psychiatric social work

35 answered child welfare work

48 answered Juvenile court work

41 answered playground work

51 answered settlement work

*Should states certificate be required?*

25 answered yes. “might keep out the undesirable”

“So that the visiting teacher will rank professionally with teachers in her group.”

57 answered no. “Personality is more importance than certificates or examination”

“If standards are high, why should it be necessary?”

These questions and responses are good examples of the inclusive process of the NAVT toward developing qualifications and standards.

**Unique to Pennsylvania.** The November, 1926 *NAVT Bulletin* [1-8] reported that State certification was required in Pennsylvania. However, no further explanation was provided to determine the governing body of the certification nor standards for which certification was granted.

The White-Williams Foundation, which is one of the oldest charities in the United States, provided grants to the development of visiting teacher who were called ‘counselors’ in Philadelphia. It also worked with visiting teachers, or school counselors, to provide monthly stipends to students who would otherwise need to go to work to help their family stay in school. The following excerpt explains the reason for the title, qualifications, and tasks of the school counselor under the White-Williams Foundation:

1-2: Although it has designated its workers school counselors, their activities have been those of visiting teachers. The name was chosen because of the angle from which the society began its work. To each of these schools there was assigned a worker who had had both teaching and social casework experience. This counselor has an office in the school and goes into the homes of the children as a representative of the school not of the society.

### **Era 1 Composite Description**

Table 4.2 depicts the composite description of era 1. The emergence of the visiting teacher profession began as teachers visiting the homes of their students to gain a better understanding of the environment that encompassed their lives outside of the classroom. The work began in response to immigration to the United States and the launch of compulsory school attendance laws as they were enacted over several years throughout the States. The tasks of the visiting teacher were diverse, but mostly involved home visiting for the purpose of interpretation, addressing behavior problems, and attendance. Even though the profession was just emerging, school officials saw the value of the work and supported hiring visiting teachers in their districts. Finally, visiting teacher associations sought to formalize the profession by identifying the various tasks to create proper qualifications and therefore develop a shared professional identity.



Table 4.2

*Era 1 Composite Description*

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1. How did the societal influences in each of the identified times frames shape the tasks of school social work?	<b>Immigration</b> - Settlement houses served as the initial point of contact for visiting teachers and their work of interpreting the school to the home and the home back to the school became the foundation of the work. <b>Compulsory School Attendance Law</b> - punitive actions toward truant students by truant officers were not successful. A more relationship based approach was found to be more successful and visiting teachers were already equipped with this skill and visiting homes, therefore it was seen as a natural fit for shift attendance work away from truant officers and to the visiting teacher.
2. What were the tasks of school social workers that impacted how education professionals perceived their role?	The most common tasks for visiting teachers was <b>interpretation</b> between the home and school through home visiting, working with students exhibiting <b>behavior or adjustment problems</b> in school, and <b>attendance</b> . Education professionals reported that visiting teachers were quite <b>valuable</b> on providing a service of interpretation.
3. How do school social workers define their own professional identity?	The titles used most often was <b>visiting teachers</b> but other titles included <b>school counselors, home and school visitors, home visitor</b> , as well as other titles. No reason was presented for the choice of title. Visiting teachers also began to create <b>qualifications</b> for the profession which included a state issued teaching certificate or license and social work education and/or experience.

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**Era 2: 1930-1969 Period of decline, re-emergence, and shift**

In contrast to era 1 where the focus of the profession was on its development through identification of tasks and qualifications, the documents examined in era 2 focused more upon the societal influences that affected the work of the visiting teacher. The Great Depression and Mental Hygiene Movement were largely responsible for the work of visiting teachers and how society leaned on the schools to meet growing needs. The compulsory school attendance laws remained an influence as well. Interpretation, behavior, and attendance continued to be primary tasks for the visiting teacher, but due to the mental hygiene movement, they began to counsel

student and worked with psychologists. Finally, there was a shift in identity from visiting teacher to school social worker which was reflected in the qualifications necessary for the profession.

**Societal influences.** The three societal influences that were prominent in this era were The Great Depression, the mental hygiene movement, and compulsory school attendance laws that were being enacted throughout the country. These events impacted the tasks of school social workers as they continued to define their role in schools.

*the Great Depression.* The Great Depression which began with the crash of the stock market of 1929 and lasted until 1939, reached its height of impact in 1933. Where schools were once seen as just a place for education, the Depression moved schools into a source of family assistance. Many of the visiting teacher bulletins in the 1930's identified that schools were seen as the central location for resources and assistance for families and visiting teachers were on the frontline to provide such services.

2-8: The Depression has placed additional child welfare responsibilities upon public education everywhere. Since the physical, mental and moral welfare of children is of primary concern to the school, school authorities must accept new social service responsibilities. Perhaps the most important relief function assigned to the schools is the supplying of clothing and one or more meals daily to destitute children.

2-54: The stock market crash of 1929 immediately preceded a decade of shocking depression years. Educators and social workers came close to the raw misery of the unemployed, the destitute, the newly impoverished, as our children and the families of these children turned desperately for help.

Not surprisingly, the Great Depression created an unusually high financial demand on schools and numerous staff were laid off, including visiting teachers. However, the bulletins also revealed that many visiting teachers maintained their jobs mostly because schools became the source for meeting the basic needs of students.

2-12: Written in September, 1934; There are more demand for visiting teachers now than there are visiting teachers to fill the positions.

2-16: Few communities that have once had a visiting teacher work on an acceptable basis have ever abandoned it; one or two that have been obliged to discontinue it during the Depression are anxious to restore it.

2-8: School funds should not be diminished but, on the other hand, the school services should be expanded to meet the existing needs. Especially the number of visiting teachers, school nurses, and teachers should be increased.

By the end of World War II, the economy began to recover and in 1947, one bulletin reflected on how visiting teachers persevered during such a tenuous time:

2-31: Many cities however, maintained the service and other inaugurated programs because the need for this special service became evident during that period.

***mental hygiene movement.*** Mental hygiene is an antiquated term synonymous with mental health. Emerging about the same time as the visiting teacher movement circa 1908, the mental hygiene movement sought to improve the conditions of sanitariums and provide appropriate treatment of individuals suffering mental defect (Bridges, 1928). The Depression and World War II resulted in an increase of people suffering from poor mental health, including children. Schools at this time recognized an increase in emotional problems among students which also created barriers to their ability to learn. Because teachers were not provided education in psychology, social casework or other classes associated with understanding human behavior, the visiting teacher became a source of professional development in schools and in colleges and universities.

2-28: ...because of the visiting teacher program, our teachers have become acquainted with mental hygiene philosophy and procedures which until recently were not provided teacher-training courses.

2-17: While the increase of interest in Mental Hygiene gave the visiting teacher movement a real impetus, educational philosophy has gradually come to accept its responsibility to the child as a social being. Visiting teacher services have therefore met a

demand from within the school as well as from without, and social work has been gradually incorporated as part of its expanding program.

**compulsory school attendance.** Not all states were quick to shift their philosophy of their treatment of truancy from enforcement to social work and the bulletins reflected visiting teachers' advocacy for the latter. As a result, several states enacted legislation and funding for visiting teachers to perform attendance work.

2-20: In Alabama...because the law provides that certain funds given the counties for the schools are in proportion to school attendance and that every school system in the state must have the service of an attendance worker... She is an attendance worker and the actual establishment of her position implied that she was a social caseworker and not an officer

2-28: In Georgia...under the 1945 legislation every county school system and independent city system must employ 'either an attendance officer or a professional worker called a visiting teacher, to see that all school age children attend regularly.

**Tasks.** The most frequently named tasks of this era were interpretation (29%,  $n=20$ ), mental hygiene/mental health (27%,  $n=19$ ), which included writing social histories for psychologists, attendance (27%,  $n=19$ ), and behavior (24%,  $n=17$ ), see Figure 4.2.

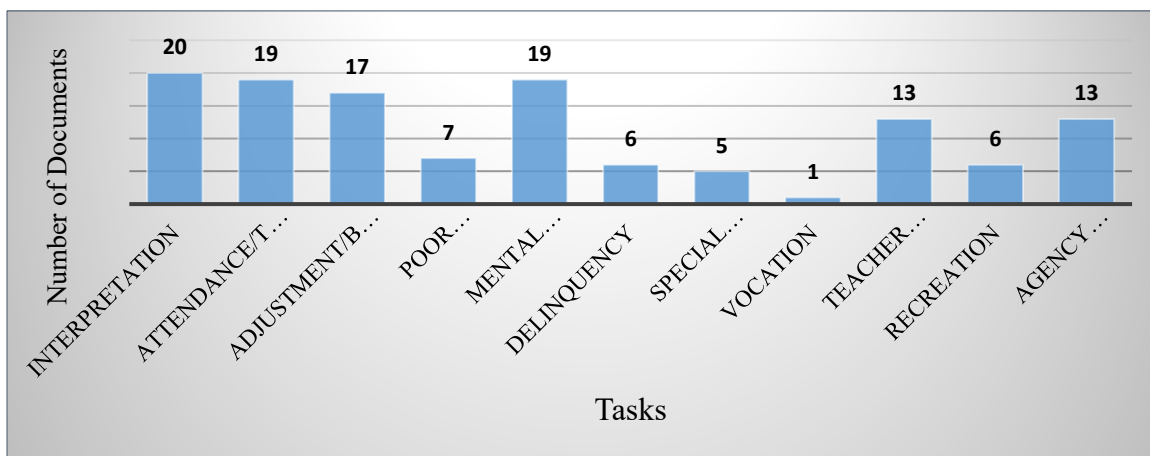


Figure 4.2. Most frequently named tasks identified in documents ( $n=50$ ) examined are shown for era 2.

**interpretation.** Interpretation continued to be a primary task of the visiting teacher, but interpretation was expanded to interpreting community resources to both the school and parents.

2-65: The school social worker can assist parents in their use of community resources when it is found that these should be tapped in the child's behalf, as in the case of applying for financial assistance, seeking a foster home placement, or using a marital counseling service.

2-39: The social worker must take responsibility for helping other professional persons whose service she is supplementing, to understand what this help can mean, not only directly to the patient or school child, but also, what it can mean to the service they, of the other profession, are giving and both work together toward a common goal.

***mental hygiene/mental health.*** Child Guidance clinics, which were sites for psychological evaluation and treatment planning for behavioral adjustment issues related to education, often utilized the assistance of visiting teachers. In connection with the mental hygiene movement and the desire to understand the whole child which included their family life, home environment, and neighborhood, visiting teachers often completed social histories for psychologists and psychiatrists. One psychologist wrote about the work of the visiting teacher to the Child Guidance Center:

2-5: In our attempt to make a definite diagnosis of his behavior mechanisms we have gone back to the home and have familiarized ourselves with his background, have attempted to secure a picture of how he functions in the family group and how his emotional experiences have molded his personality.

Furthermore, once a treatment plan was developed, it was the visiting teacher who interpreted the results to the family, the treatment plan to the school (namely the principal and teacher), and assisted the child with making changes.

2-7: ...the visiting teacher is enabled to give more time to the other aspects of treatment for which she is uniquely fitted...she utilizes techniques that are applicable to the individual needs of those children who are considered problems.

***attendance.*** Attendance work allowed visiting teachers to provide social casework and assess if additional needs of the family existed.

2-27: The attendance worker concerns herself with understanding the meaning of the truancy to the particular child and with undertaking whatever remedial measures are indicated... These remedial measures include arranging with other school personnel.

2-54: The fact that we *do* exist to enforce the law can of itself be the enabling factor which gives us the power to help those who need this very difference.

Truancy work also gave social workers opportunity to identify barriers to a child's attendance and rectify them through agency referrals or changes to educational programming.

2-33: This campaign attacks the problem of school attendance from a much more enlightened standpoint than previous methods. It substitutes the specialized and professional work of a social worker for the force of the truancy officer, and concerns itself not only with the enforcement of the compulsory school attendance statutes but also with the discovery and removal of the causes of non-attendance and with the promotion of conditions favorable to the normal development and regular attendance of school age children.

However, not all educators saw the role of attendance as an appropriate task of a visiting teacher.

A professor of education stated that:

2-2: I do not approve of any tendency to make the visiting teacher a member of the attendance organization. This associates her in the mind of the child or parent with law and force, already the enemies of the individual. This will antagonize them and deny her their confidence.

His opinion appears to be in the minority as the shift from enforcement of truancy to social casework prevailed.

*behavior.* A significant role of the visiting teacher was to alleviate the ailments of problem students in classrooms. Armed with education in human behavior, mental hygiene, and psychology, visiting teachers often worked alongside teachers and helped them with students with significant behavior problems.

2-26: The visiting teacher with her specialized back ground of understanding human behavior and skills in working with individuals can strengthen the efforts of the classroom teacher by giving teachers a greater awareness of the significance of their activities, helping them evaluate what is happening in special instances, planning jointly

for sharing responsibilities in unusually difficult situations, and developing resources to meet still others.

*professional perceptions.* In addition to the affirmation of value of employing a school social worker, a common theme in these writings was that the school social worker was seen as *an integral part* of the school staff and not a community worker.

2-37: At the present time, we no longer see social work as a service appended to the schools. We see one of our most significant social institutions establishing social work as a n integral part of its service essential to the carry out of its purpose.

2-39: I have often heard school personnel indicate that they are willing to use the social worker on the school staff, but do not want social worker from the 'outside' to come in or to work with the child away from the school.

2-37: Schools today feel the need for the social worker to be a member of the school faculty or school system in order to achieve maximum effectiveness of the service in the total school program.

These statements support Attitude Theory, one of the theoretical perspectives of this paper.

Attitude theory may inform the extent to which school professionals include or exclude school social workers in collaboration, policy development, and programming (Agresta, 2004; Tower, 2000). Statements by administrators and principals set the tone for the invitation of the school social worker.

2-53: The principal, more than any other, sets the stage for the support of the school social work in his school.

The school social worker also has a responsibility to their integration of the school system and stave off being marginalized.

2-45: The particular problems faced by each school and its faculty should be of natural interest and concern to the school social worker. Through this, school personnel will recognize and accept him as one of the staff. Only when the school social worker is able to feel he is a part of the school will he be fully accepted by school personnel, and most effectively serve the children who come to him for help.

**Identity.** One of the most important elements of identity in this era was the title by which people referred to themselves in the profession. From the beginning, most people were identified as visiting teachers and a qualification of the profession was to be licensed or certified as a teacher. However, as the profession evolved, so did the professional organizations, titles, and qualifications. The first national organization, the National Association of Visiting Teachers, became the American Association of Visiting Teachers in 1929 and then became the American Association of School Social Workers in 1942, and the National Association of School Social Workers in 1945 (McCullagh, 1986). The shift from *visiting teacher* to *school social worker* was drawn from the bulletins written in the 1940's and almost all articles by the 1950's referred to the work as school social work.

Qualifications were also changing. Social work education was taking precedence over teaching education and experience. An article from 1930 stated,

2-2: In the first place the visiting teacher should be a successful teacher of from two to five years' experience.

However, as the identity of the profession moved toward social work and away from teaching, there was less emphasis on teaching qualifications.

2-43: The social worker does not have to be an educator to acquire a working knowledge of the meaning to the child of the curriculum to which he is exposed.

2-37: Another state has indicated the most desirable qualifications as a Master's degree in social work, preferably with training in school social work.

As the discussion around education and qualification of social work continued to be debated in the bulletins, the clarification that the social worker's role in a school was uniquely different from that of teachers, administrators, and vocational counselors needed to be emphasized.



During this time period, the tasks of visiting teachers mirrored the current role of ‘guidance’ or ‘school counselors’. Visiting teachers were developing educational programming for students, assigning grades to students, creating class schedules, working with students who performed poorly in school, performed academic testing and screening, monitored attendance, provided vocational counseling, and worked with teachers to develop behavior plans. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 required schools to provide vocational counseling and George-Deen Act of 1938 provided funding (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Pope, 2000) therefore, vocational counselors taught classes on vocations and assisted students in career development. By all accounts, visiting teachers assumed the tasks of grades, behavior, and some vocational counseling, but vocation counselors claimed these tasks as their own, changed their professional identity to guidance counselors, and are currently mandated in 23 states compared to school social workers who are not mandated employees in any state. This change may have been initiated in the 1950’s when the four largest vocational and school counselor organization merged to create the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) which is currently known as the American Counseling Association [ACA] (Pope, 2000). One of the documents reviewed from 1964 offers reasons why school social work moved away from the tasks so easily

2-71: ...all educational functions, guidance, seems to be the most unorganized and most subject to multiple interpretations, and that within guidance, the proper training, role, and value of the school social worker seems to be the most vulnerable to the individual whims and vagaries of the school administration.”

The author saw the proverbial ‘writing on the wall’ and the lack of school social work identity put them at risk for losing their place in schools. He concluded:

2-71: This mutual confusion—educators’ notions that they should dominate school social work and school social workers’ lack of clarity about their special roles or even their areas of competence—this mutual confusion will continue to plague us until clarification can be developed among the social workers themselves.

School social workers relinquished the guidance tasks and focused on social casework, community resources, and bridging schools to the home. This separation was further exacerbated when it was proposed that school social workers recognize that they were resident guests within schools.

2-49: From the very beginning a major problem for the school social worker has been that of inter-relationships with school personnel and the integration of her professional service into the existing school structure...representing as we a young profession within a host agency.

2-45: Unless the worker feels that his philosophy of social work and that of education essentially coincide and mutually augment one another, he cannot effectively serve the children who come to him for help.

Additionally, the school social worker was also encouraged to understand the 'personality' of their school which alludes to Organizational Theory of Culture and Climate.

2-45: It can readily be seen that the school social worker has a responsibility to know the personality of the school he serves, its influence on the children in the school and on his relations with children and teachers. The worker will, with other faculty, help modify the school's personality when it seems detrimental to its pupils.

During this era, nation-wide standards for certification, training, or education for school social work were not yet developed. The United States Office of Education provided some direction to school social work leadership on the development of certification, but never came to fruition. Additionally, without direction from that national level, universities turned to their state associations to develop curriculum which was often nothing more than extended workshops, institutes, and intensive in-service trainings to promote the profession. In Pennsylvania, the University of Pittsburgh offered a work-study plan for people who were already working but wanted training in school social work.

**Unique to Pennsylvania.** In the 1951, *National Association of School Social Work* (NASSW) *Membership Newsletter*, it was reported that a change in Pennsylvania's certification for a Home and School Visitor would:

2-57: permit employment of social work personnel with 6 credits in education courses (would be) required. Another change is in the substitutions allowed in experience. These are: one year of experience in teacher or one year of experience in a recognized social agency, or one curriculum year in a graduate school of social work.

However, the Pennsylvania Department of Education website lists February, 1961 as the initial requirements developed for Home and School Visitors. It is unclear who the governing body was for the school social work certification in 1951. Additionally, the University of Pittsburgh is one of the few institutions of higher education that offer a Home and School Visitor certification. Their website indicates the University has offered the certification since the 1930s ("Home and School Visitor Certificate," 2019).

## **Era 2 Composite Description**

Table 4.3 depicts the composite description of era 2. The results of the societal influences such as the Depression, poverty, and wars resulted in mental health issues among children. Children expressed their issues through failing to attend school, behaviors at school, poor scholarship, and delinquency. As visiting teachers continued to bridge the gap between the home and school, they also facilitated a supportive relationship between the school and the mental health field. Psychiatrists and schools, who had clashed in prior years saw a need to come together. School social workers completed social histories for school psychiatrists, interpreted the psychological recommendations to school personnel and families and provided individual and group counseling to those students whose behavior needed adjustment. School social workers continued to seek the underlying reasons for truancy and rectified barriers that prevented students from attending school. As a result, schools saw the value of the visiting teacher and

viewed them as integral members of the school system and not an outside provider. However, vocational counselors claimed in-school tasks such as academic counseling which relegated school social worker to more home-school liaison work.

Table 4.3

*Era 2 Composite Description*

1. How did the societal influences in each of the identified times frames shape the tasks of school social work?	The <b>Great Depression</b> was a force in the retention of visiting teachers during a time of fiscal constraint. The <b>Mental Hygiene Movement</b> allowed visiting teachers to fill a gap by writing social histories for school psychologist evaluations. <b>Compulsory School Attendance Law</b> continued to move visiting teachers into the role of working with families to find the cause of truancy as opposed to punishing the truant.
2. What were the tasks of school social workers that impacted how education professionals perceived their role?	The most common tasks were <b>interpretation, mental health, attendance, and behavior</b> . Schools viewed the school social worker as <b>an integral part of the school system</b> .
3. How do school social workers define their own professional identity?	Visiting teachers changed their name to <b>school social workers</b> by the end of the 1940s. Qualifications included <b>more social work education and less teacher experience</b> . National visiting teacher/school social work associations experienced many changes in name and eventually the professional association of school social work merged with the <b>National Association of Social Work</b> in 1955 and were no longer a separate organization.

**Era 3: 1970-1990 – Education for ALL students**

There were two sources of data for this era, interviews and documents. There were six people interviewed for era 3; one administrator, one school counselor, two school psychologists, one teacher, and one school social worker which were all conducted via Zoom. The documents reviewed in this era were primarily NASW School Social Work Information Bulletins and NASW News articles. In contrast to the NAVT Bulletins or the NASSW Member News

bulletins where there were reports and updates from states and papers presented at conferences, the emphasis of the documents in this era were primarily focused on national legislation albeit in education or social work and funding.

**Societal influences.** The main theme identified in the documents and interviews from this era was legislation that affected school social workers.

**legislation.** The National Association of Social Work (NASW) advocated extensively during this time on behalf of school social workers. They fought for legislation that would incorporate school social workers as a related service in Education for All Children Handicapped Act (EACHA), to expand the definition of ‘counseling’ to include school social workers, and that they be recognized as a profession to participate in pupil personnel teams.

The Education for all Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142, (EAHCA) in 1975 was groundbreaking legislation in that it provided children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 equal access to education and required the development of individualized education plans to meet specific educational needs (Alexander & Alexander, 2019; Lind, 2012). Prior to the passage of EAHCA, an estimated 1.75 million children with disabilities did not have access to a free and appropriate public education [FAPE](Lind, 2012). The Education for all Handicapped Children Act increased funding for special education services, including school social work, and mandated that parents be considered partners in the development of their child’s IEP (Bye et al, 2009; Lind, 2012). The majority of thirty-three documents reviewed (70%,  $n=23$ ) mentioned EAHCA, or the shortened acronym EHA. The documents indicated that school social workers were not mentioned as a ‘related service’ in the original 1975 writing of the law, but in 1977 the regulations changed to the following:

3-9: (2) “Counseling services” means services provided by qualified social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, or other qualified personnel

(11) “social work services in schools” include:

- (i) preparing a social or developmental history on a handicapped child
- (ii) Group and individual counseling with the child and family
- (iii) working with those problems in a child’s living situation (home, school, and community) that affect the child’s adjustment in school and
- (iv) Mobilizing school and community resources to enable the child to receive maximum benefit from his or her educational program.

Additionally, the law also called for the identification, screening, and program development for children with disabilities, including those who were not yet enrolled in schools. Payne was a new school psychologist in 1977 and he recalled his experience in response to EAHCA;

Payne: So that was like a wild flurry of activity to come into... the other thing was, we were trying to do, the job was to find kids, because, as you probably know, you know, in 1975, the reason that law was passed was we could have kids with disabilities working out of churches funded by bake sales and all that stuff. And there was really not a public initiative to work with, or to teach those kids. And so now it's 77, it was Child Find. You have to find all these kids and that included, I mean, the kids who were school age were pretty easy to find, but the other, it was a 3 to 21 law. So our job was to find the little kids and they weren't in school yet, so we were out beating the bushes for kids with disabilities.

Under the Regan administration (1981-1989), many federal education reforms such as EAHCA, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and 504 legislations were targeted for significant withdraw of funding.

3-33: Title I of the Elementary and Secondary School Act...is one of the Reagan Administration’s targets for large federal budget cuts...The administration will propose radical cutbacks in the section 504 regulations.

3-24: Reagan also proposed to repeal forty-four federal education programs, including Education for all Handicapped Children Act (PL-94-142), and Titles I (for the educationally deprived) and VI (for school desegregation aid) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and consolidate their reduced funds under one block grant.

Not only was Reagan seeking to pull funds from programming, but the Administration also sought to loosen federal requirements, including social work services in schools. A May 1982

*SSW Bulletin* reported:

3-33: the related services, e.g. social work services in school that are required to help children benefit from special education would be deleted... Thus, school social work services would no longer be specifically cited, and states could easily neglect to provide or pay for them.

Many of the documents examined in this era that spanned Reagan's two terms as president tracked the battle between his proposed budget cuts and advocates for education funding and reforms. In the end, Reagan was not successful and Payne was able to shed light on why he thought Reagan was not able to make those cuts.

Payne: ...but he wasn't successful and one of the reasons he wasn't successful is that the federal money, which he had control of, he had no control over state money.

Payne further described how EACHA created the mechanism to identify children with special needs which resulted in more children needing those services. Therefore, Reagan was not successful in cutting those funds.

Payne: ...and one of the things that kept the money flowing was that that funding then and now is still based on child count. The more kids you had the more money you got. And what happened between 1977 and 1990 is that LD (learning disabilities) went out the roof. Okay, LD started like with everything else, 1-2% and by 1990 it had shot up to, you know, very, very large numbers so that the kids with significant disabilities... Intellectual disability blindness, deafness, you know, you know, so forth. Those kids, those incidences, have always remained kind of stable, but the LD numbers went crazy for those first 12-13 years of PL 94 -142, because we were finding all these, all these kids that were hitherto provided services by Title I or whatever. And now they're getting identified as learning disabled and that was that was driving the funds up. So if Reagan was trying to cut it back, that was against the grain of just the sheer numbers going up that would have kept those funds in place.

Another piece of legislation frequently mentioned (45%,  $n=15$ ) in the documents was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 which aimed to decrease the

achievement gap between students living in poverty and those from middle and upper class by providing funding for professional development and resources to support educational programs (Paul, 2016). ESEA also included what is known as ‘Title Funds’ that were earmarked for specific endeavors such as reading and math, but also for funding for school social work services.

3-11: ...from the Office of Education HEW which allows funds provided under Title IV-B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to be used to cover salaries of school social workers.

3-8: Title I is designed to provide assistance for meeting the special emotional needs of educationally deprived children...supportive social services could be funded which link the disadvantaged child to the education process by helping in assuring school attendance and promoting the physical and emotional health so that the child may benefit from teaching.

Reagan was unsuccessful in significantly decreasing education funding and in 1988, he signed the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) under the name, The Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments. This legislation provided funding to schools, among other initiatives, “to hire and train pupil personnel services personnel” [3-22]. Pupil personnel services was a frequently mentioned term (42%,  $n=14$ ) referenced as the collaboration of services between school psychologists, guidance counselors, nurses, and school social workers, but it was also a term included in ESEA legislation that further legitimized the role of social workers in schools.

3-26: The terms “pupil services personnel” and “pupil services” mean school counselor, school social workers, school psychologists and other qualified professionals involved in providing assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic and other necessary services as part of a comprehensive program to meet student needs and the services provided by such individuals



3-22: the law specifically includes school social workers among others in defining ‘pupil services personnel.’”

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EACHA) of 1975 formally brought these professions together under the ‘related service’ section of the act, but in the late 1980’s ESEA took the cooperative relationship further by requiring these professions to work together to meet the needs of students through assessment, diagnosis, and treatment in order for schools to receive Chapter 1 funds.

**Tasks.** There were very few tasks identified in the documents reviewed because the focus of them was on national updates and news. Therefore, tasks were reported focusing on special education tasks that included the school social worker:

3-13: Related to early intervention social work services:...include making home visits, conducting psychosocial developmental assessments, providing individual and family counseling, working with problems in a child and family’s living situation, and identifying, mobilizing, and coordinating community resources.

3-19: social workers be recognized as agents in the community who are able to reach out and educate parents, and who can mediate between parents and the schools where parents have taken on advocacy roles.

The interviews resulted in more specific tasks of the school social worker (see Figure 4.3). The social worker connecting families to community resources was identified as a task by all (100%,  $n=6$ ) of the interviewees. Working with special education (83%,  $n=5$ ), which included conducting social histories and providing related services as part of the Individual Education Program (IEP) was the second most frequently named task and conducting home visits (83%,  $n=5$ ) was third. Contrary to the two previous eras where home visiting was not identified as a separate task, it was reported as a separate task in the interviews.

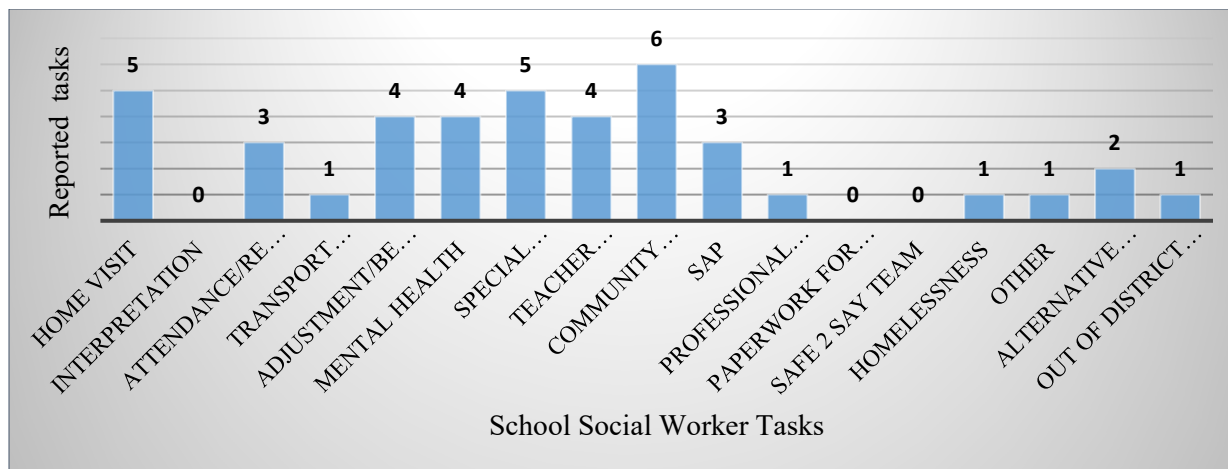


Figure 4.3. Most frequently named tasks identified in interviews ( $n=23$ ) examined are shown for era 3.

Two studies were examined for this time period in relation to identifying the tasks school social workers. Allen –Mears’ (1977) was well known for her Analysis of Tasks studies, but the one published in 1977 did not mention EAHCA at all, most likely because data collection for that study was conducted in 1975 and the regulation were just developed. However, the findings of that study are valuable and add to understanding of school social work tasks across in this era. See Table 4.4 for the rank order of tasks reported by social workers ( $n=269$ ) nationwide.

In the Allen-Meares study (1977), ‘clarifying the child’s problem to others’ was ranked as most important among respondents ( $M=3.80$ ,  $SD=0.449$ ). This task included the social worker gathering information from parents and school staff to develop an accurate picture of the student. This would be similar to ‘interpretation’ discussed in previous eras where the school social worker acted as a liaison among the various stakeholders gathering and providing information. Contrary to Allen-Meares’ findings, this study found that none of the respondents reported interpretation, or any similarly worded term, as a task for school social workers.

Table 4.4

*Allen-Meares Rank Order of Factor Means for Task Importance*

Factors	# of Tasks	Factor Mean	SD
Clarifying the child's problem to others	7	3.80	0.449
Preliminary tasks to the provision of social work services	7	3.74	0.52
Assessing the child's problem	6	3.66	0.551
Facilitating school-community-pupil relations	7	3.58	0.608
Educational counseling with the child his parents	15	3.51	0.67
Facilitating the utilization of community resources	10	3.38	0.776
Leadership and policy-making	20	3.24	0.805

\*The means of all factors differ significantly ( $p < .01$ ). Adapted from Analysis of Tasks in School Social Work by P. Allen Meares, 1977, *School Social Work*, 22, p. 198.

Additionally, the Allen-Mears study ranked 'facilitating the utilization of community resources' second to last ( $M=3.38$ ,  $SD 0.776$ ) compared to 100% ( $n=6$ ) of the respondents for this study who reported connecting families to community resources as a task specific to the school social worker.

The other well-known study examined for this era was Alderson, Krishef, and Spencer (1990) who compared a 1980-81 nationwide survey conducted by the Provisional Council on Social Work Services in the Schools to their own nationwide survey conducted in 1987-88 ( $n=327$ ) about the frequency of a list of tasks performed by school social workers in relation to EACHA (see Table 4.5). The Alderson, Krishef, and Spencer (1990) study found that there was an increase in the frequency of implementing EACHA by school social workers, but that role

Table 4.5

*Most Frequently Performed School Social Work Functions by Rank of Frequency and Percentage of Respondents*

Function	Rank	1980-1981		1987-1988		
		%	<i>n</i>	Rank	%	<i>n</i>
Liaison between home and school	2.5	81	173	2	99	264
Consultation with parents	1.5	84	179	2	99	264
Consultation with teachers and other school personnel	1.5	84	178	2	99	264
Writing reports	5	77	164	4	97	262
Periodic reviews	8	67	143	5	96	257
Assessment of children who may be handicapped	2.5	81	173	6	95	256
Participation in IEP planning	6*	73	155	7	91	245
Implementation of the IEP	9.5*	62	131	8	86	231
Coordination of school services with community	9.5*	62	131	9	82	221
Locating children who may be handicapped	7	70	150	10	80	213
Coordination of services with school	11	61*	129	11	74	197
Conducting in-service education and training	13	43	91	12	73	196
Implementing due-process provisions	14	38	80	14	68	182
Evaluation of program objectives	12	44	94	14	68	182
Due-process mediation	17	26	55	14	68	182
Leadership in policy making	16	29	62	16	64	172
Preschool screening	15	36	77	17	60	158

$R_s = .95$ .  $p < .01$ . \* denotes unclear number due to poor copy quality. Adapted from Alderson, Krishef, and Spencer, 1990.

was not ranked as the most important task. Overwhelmingly, school social workers reported that 'liaison between home and school' as not only one the most frequently performed tasks (81%,  $n=173$ ; 99%,  $n=264$ ), but also one of the most important (2.5; 2.0).

3-10: The role (liaison) is historically significant and is considered by many knowledgeable professionals to be the core of the school social workers function.

Alderson, Krishef, and Spencer's (1990) study also found that social workers' involvement with implementation of EAHCA increased between the 1980-81 and 1987-88 studies. Specifically, 'participation in IEP planning' increased in frequency from 73% to 91%, 'implementation of the IEP' from 62% to 86%, 'locating children who may be handicapped' from 70% to 80%, and 'assessment of children who may be handicapped' from 81% to 95%. Payne echoed these findings and reported that school social workers played a valuable role as a liaison between the schools, families, and agencies.

Payne: somebody had thought it was good idea to have social workers as part of the team. Which was great because a lot of what we do, we're doing, as I mentioned, was outreach to parents and communities and the other part, the two main parts of it that the social workers were really involved in was doing the networking with the families and doing home visits and so forth.

**Professional perceptions.** A theme that emerged from the non-social work professionals interviewed for this era ( $n=5$ ) reported that school social workers were *valuable* and presented a different point of view.

*valuable.* Payne reported the value of having a school social worker on the team at the implementation of EAHCA. Patrick, a school psychologist who began his career in the late 1980s spoke about how his formal education prepared him for evaluating and testing students, but didn't prepare him for understanding the collaboration with the school social worker. He

spoke about how the school social worker provided a different point of view in the gathering information in the evaluation process.

Patrick: You were looking at the child through one lens and the social worker provided you a different lens, or an additional lens to see a different perspective... I don't think I was aware of how important, you know the family situation was in relationship to the kids coming to school and doing a good job. I think I learned that through the social worker that I could, I started seeing that with the kids that were having some difficulty, where kids didn't have, you know, good family structures. So that set me off on the right, you know, path in terms of how I was looking at kids.

Payne indicated that at one time only psychiatrists were able to identify students with an emotional disturbance, but school psychologists were still involved with the evaluation and treatment planning. Psychiatrists would elicit the help of school social workers to gather social histories which were included in the evaluation. Payne reported that he valued the work of the school social as it was their report upon which the psychiatrist was making much of their assessment and recommendations.

Payne: Before the kids were seen by a school psychiatrist, the social workers were out there and they did a very complete development history which they then delivered to the school psychiatrist who basically spent an hour with the kid...and were pretty much relying on, I think, a lot of what the school social workers were coming up with in that much more elaborated and long developmental history.

Patrick and Ann also made statements about the value of a school social worker and their support for having them in schools.

Patrick: I saw the value of working with the entire family. If you didn't work with the entire family, I mean, I think I felt at a disadvantage. I mean everybody did their best and you try to help the kid but you know, I mean, the old adage they were still going home to the same problem. So that's when I realized...and I'd say, why, why isn't there some social workers in the schools. You know, why, why, why isn't that like, a you know, a mandated person?

Ann: I just think they're invaluable. I just think that you need that piece of somebody with those skills in a school these days. I just don't think you can do without that.

**Identity.** The profession of school social work found that although the merging of all branches of social work professions may have been appropriate in the 1950's, generalized social work did not consistently meet the needs of specialized fields (Allen-Meares, 1999; McDonald, Constable, & Holly, 1999). As a result, NASW developed practice standards for a variety of specialized social work fields including school social work. The first set of standards were developed in 1978 and included thirty-two standards; three standards for the attainment of competence, eleven standards for organization and administration, and eighteen standards for professional practice. Noteworthy of the first set of standards was the clear identification that "social workers who work in a school shall be designated as school social workers" [3-12].

In Pennsylvania, an education certification was developed for Home and School Visitors February, 1961 ("Summary of Changes", 2019). A revision was made in January, 1975 to include the role of social work, albeit very restrictive in that they could not be hired in place of a home and school visitor, but could serve as a non-certified attendance officer. Additionally, any social worker employed by a school district was to be supervised by a home and school visitor.

Sue, a recently retired social worker, began her career as a home and school visitor in 1986. She reported that although her title was a home and school visitor, she approached the job from a social work perspective. Initially, she performed truancy duties, but she saw a greater need with the students with whom she worked. She advocated for expanding her role to include social work services and went to Lancaster to meet with people who were social workers in schools to gather information about how the two professions functioned in one district. Sue reported that school social workers and home and school visitors in Lancaster were informally considered 'professionals' but the reality was social workers, because PDE did not provide an education certification, were considered para-professionals.

Sue: school districts really weren't that interested in hiring (school social workers) because it really wasn't, you know, considered to be a position, or a professional position so yeah, it was a, it was kind of an interesting time and rather insulting at the same time.

The identity of school social workers in this era was found in a separate specialized section of NASW, who also advocated for legislation that supported the advancement of school social workers nationally and created the first School Social Work Standards. In Pennsylvania, school social workers were considered para-professionals until members of the Pennsylvania Association of School Social Work Personnel (PASSWP) advocated to be considered professionals in schools, but not until 2011.

### **Era 3 Composite Description**

Table 4.6 depicts the composite description of era 3. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was forefront in education news and advocacy from parents and education professionals. Although Reagan attempted to significantly withdraw education funding, particularly from EAHCA, he was unsuccessful. School social workers benefited from EAHCA and ESEA by being included as a related service, a professional who could provide counseling, and a member of pupil personnel teams. The tasks of social workers reflected these changes and they provided services to children requiring special education services. However, they were also the primary source of connecting families to community resources and home visiting was identified as a separate task and not necessarily assumed to be part of the role. Finally, education professionals continued to see value employing school social workers, however, it was not reflected by the PA Department of Education as they did not establish a CSPG for social workers for a number of years. On a national level, NASW developed the first school social work standards.



Table 4.6

*Era 3 Composite Description*

1. How did the societal influences in each of the identified times frames shape the tasks of school social work?	<b>Education for All Handicapped Children Act</b> , and subsequent reauthorizations, was a main theme throughout this era. The development of <b>Pupil Personnel Services</b> and funding encouraged a collaborative relationship between school psychologist, guidance counselors, and school social workers.
2. What were the tasks of school social workers that impacted how education professionals perceived their role?	As part of EAHCA, school social workers were <b>included in special education services</b> as a related service, counseling services, and with early intervention. Other tasks such as <b>liaison</b> and <b>community resource</b> specialist continued to be primary tasks. Educators reported social workers as <b>valuable</b> .
3. How do school social workers define their own professional identity?	The <b>professional title of 'school social worker'</b> was memorialized in the first NASW School Social Work standards. In PA, <b>home and school visitors were more valued</b> than social workers because PDE created an HSV certification, but nothing for school social workers.

**Era 4: 1990-2019 Reauthorizations and identity**

There were twenty-six documents examined including research studies, *NASW School Social Work Standards*, *NASW SSW Information Bulletins*, *SSWAA Bells*, and *NASW News*.

Interviews were conducted via Zoom with twenty-nine participants: five administrators, three school psychologists, five teachers, four school counselors, and six school social workers. Some of the data from participants interviewed for era three were included in this era, if the responses were specific to the era 4 time frame.

**Societal Influences.** The data from document analysis and interviews identified two education reforms that impacted the school social work; the reauthorization of Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) renamed Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESSA) under the name No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Two trends were also identified. School violence was frequently mentioned in

documents and in interviews. The second trend, elimination of school social work jobs, occurred in the 1990's in response to legislation favoring school counselors and psychologists and in 2008 during the recession. Figure 4.4 compares the documents analyzed ( $n=27$ ) for this era to the interviews ( $n=23$ ) about societal influences that affected school social workers.

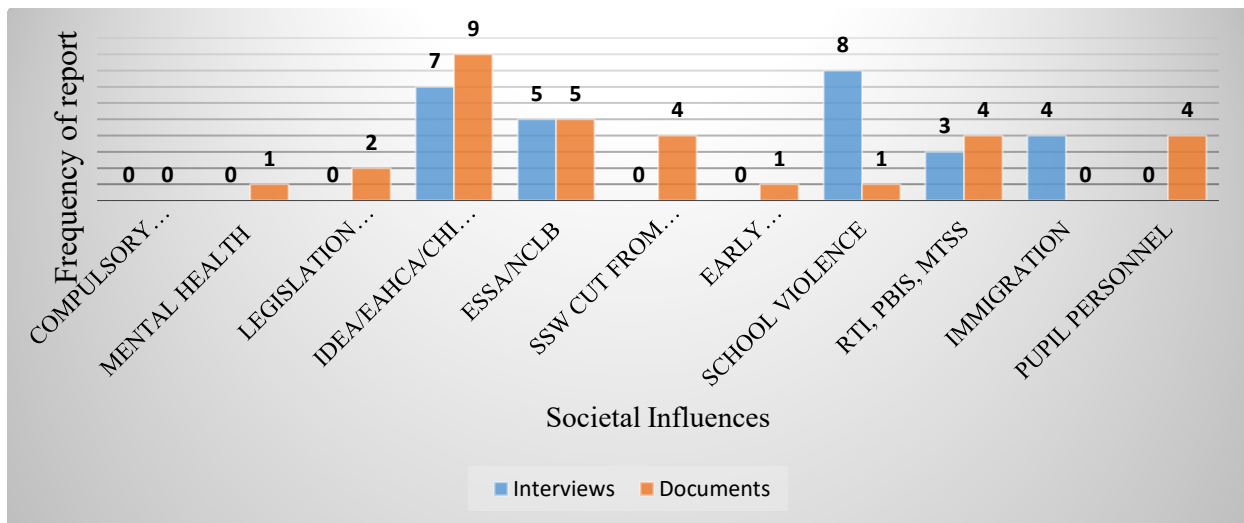


Figure 4.4. Comparison of the most frequently named societal influences identified in examined documents ( $n=25$ ) and interviews ( $n=23$ ) in era 4.

***Education for All Handicapped Children's Act.*** EAHCA/EHA was reauthorized under the name Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990. In the original draft, the Department of Education dropped 'in schools' from 'social work services in schools' which was specifically identified in EAHCA. School social workers and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) were concerned that this deletion would open the doors to social workers not associated with schools. NASW encouraged school social workers to advocate for a change in the draft and were successful.

4-23: This campaign was successful in persuading the Department withdraw the proposed deletion and to maintain the title "social work services in schools".

In 1997, an amendment was added to IDEA that specified transition services planning should begin at age 14 which provided more tasks for school social work in job training, social

security benefits, and post high school planning. Payne spoke of how school social workers played a role in providing those services.

Payne: ...they (schools) realized that all these other things that social workers are chomping at the bit to do, and people wanted them to do, like transition plans and interacting with families, connecting with agencies, so forth. They were able to do now, in the 1990s probably, were able to move into that.

***The Elementary and Secondary Education Act.*** ESEA was replaced with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002 by George W. Bush. This law provided schools with money in exchange for adequate yearly progress as proven through state assessment tests. This act created additional pressure on the academic teachers to move their students toward proficiency in math and language arts regardless of a student's disability, socio-economic status, aptitude for education, or language proficiency. As the law did not take into account the systematic barriers to education success, school social workers were also overlooked. Compared to EAHCA and IDEA, No Child Left Behind did not mention school social workers providing any type of related service to help close the achievement gap, particularly with students at risk [4-17]. Eventually, the requirements of NCLB were unworkable for schools, therefore the law was replaced with Every Student Succeeds Act 2015 where school social workers were specifically named in the definition of 'specialized instructional support personnel'.

***elimination of school social workers.*** Another societal influence identified was the elimination of school social work jobs. The documents from the early 1990's reported cutting school social workers due to district financial constraints, but sought to replace them with school counselors or school psychologists.

4-11: ...that 14 of the 27 school social workers in District 11, the city's largest school district, would be replaced with counselors.

4-8: ...will lay off nearly two-thirds of its special-education social workers by this fall and replace them with school psychologists. The Portland School Board cut 20 of its 32 special-education social work positions and hire 10 school psychologists. Of the 12 remaining social workers, nine would be reassigned to serve general as well as special education students...

4-6: NASW support early this year helped to avert replacement of school social workers with psychologists...

The respondents in the interviews recalled the recession in 2008 and how that prompted the furloughing of school social workers and other educational staff. Patrick, a psychologist, recalls the gap left when the school social workers in his district were laid off.

Patrick: I remember when they weren't there anymore...I would think back to those days when the social workers were there and saying, Gee, you know, I've worked all these years. Now, in between with no access to these types of support services, I could see a void there.

Tess, a teacher, who works in a very large district reported that her district currently has only one social worker, but at one time had three prior to the recession.

Tess: Districts kind of did away with what they deemed as non-essential personnel at that time. And I think that was really to the detriment of districts. At the time, (name of the school district) they had, I don't know if they had three and they went down to one, and they may have gotten a second one part time again. But I mean, you're talking about a very large 13 elementary, three middle schools and two high schools, a very large district.

Sarah, a school social worker at an intermediate unit, also recalls when furlough were occurring around 2008:

Sarah: ...there were some layoffs and I was to the point where I was almost the next one. They did go through a time where social workers were being laid off, a couple after me were laid off.

Sarah went on to say that several social workers were rehired after the recession.

***school violence.*** Finally, a societal trend reported only in the interviews was school violence albeit school shootings, suicide, or bullying. Participants reported on various legislative measures addressing these trends, but most specifically they reported on Pennsylvania Act 71

(2014) and Act 18 (2019). Act 71 requires districts to develop and implement policies and procedures in an effort to prevent suicide, including training staff about suicide prevention. Act 18 is more comprehensive and requires districts to train school personnel to be able to identify the signs and impact of trauma in students, provides supports to students in need, requires each district to establish threat assessment teams, and process to respond to Safe2Say Something reports. Of those interviewed, 45% ( $n=9$ ) of the participants identified school violence as a trend affecting the work of school social works and 18% ( $n=4$ ) participants identified the school social worker being a member of the district threat assessment team. However, 91% ( $n=21$ ) of the respondents reported that the social worker was involved with mental health services of students including individual and group counseling as well as crisis and threat/risk assessments. Shawn reported how she responded to Act 71:

Shawn: it was Act 71, the suicide prevention one, that's what I started an Aevedium mental health club. We started having to do assemblies. I think it was sixth grade, five and up, every grade had to have some kind of suicide prevention

**Tasks.** Figure 4.5 displays the findings of the documents analyzed and interviews regarding school social work tasks. The documents showed a somewhat equal distribution of tasks but providing special education services was reported most often. The interviews revealed four notable tasks: community resources, home visiting, mental health, and attendance.

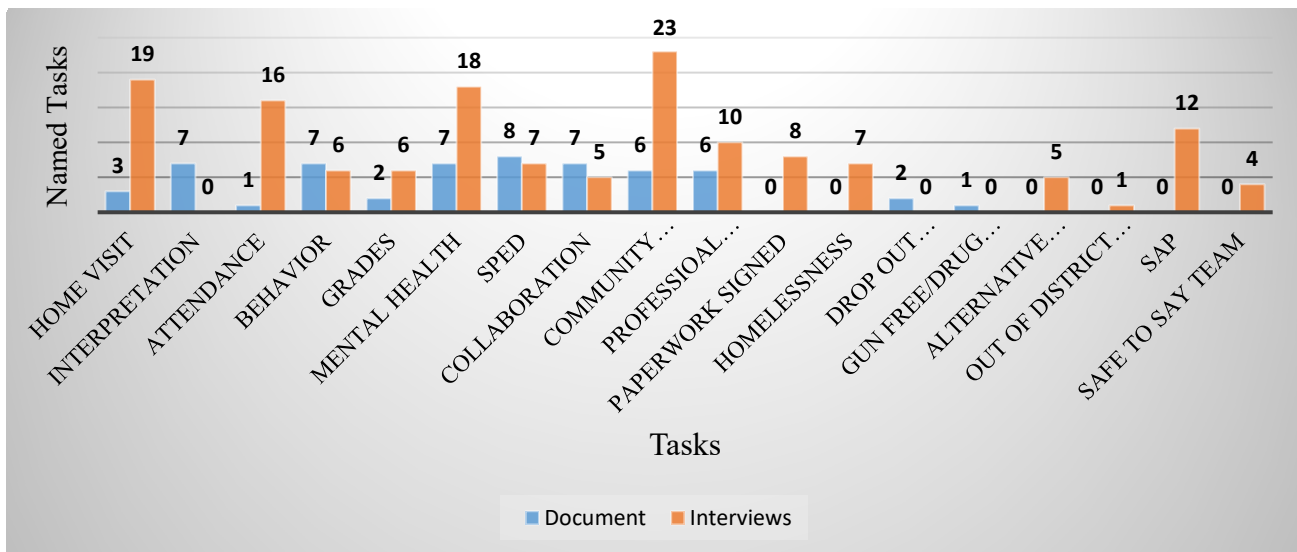


Figure 4.5. Comparison of the most frequently named tasks identified in examined documents ( $n=25$ ) and interviews ( $n=23$ ) in era 4.

**community resources.** Providing community resources to families was identified as a task by all participants ( $n=23$ ). School social workers were viewed as experts about community resources, developing the relationships with agencies, and knowing the paperwork process to connect families with resources.

Adam: She has been instrumental in working within our community to establish proactive programs, bringing families in and talking about that. With the outside resources, such that, you know, they can develop a plan that works for the family.

4-6: As school employees, social workers understand the culture of the school systems, how they operate, how they communicate. As social work professionals they also understand the operation of public and private social service agencies. They would seem to be ideally placed to facilitate the effective linkage of school and community in serving children and families.

**home visiting.** Second to community resources the task of home visiting was identified by 78% ( $n=18$ ) of those interviewed. Home visiting was viewed as a valuable service of the school social worker and provided information to educators that spanned beyond the school walls. Home visits were added as a task for this era as it was seen by the interviewees as

something specific to the school social worker's role. In previous eras, home visiting was not identified separately and was seen as an activity to complete other tasks such as interpretation or truancy. These interviews indicated that education professionals viewed home visiting as a separate task, but still connecting it with accomplishing other tasks.

Pam: if there was anything going on, you know, outside of school that you know they may be able to support, they would do home visits for attendance issues, help parents with paperwork, help connect them to outside resources.

Tina: And so this way she's there. She can make home visits. She knows like when we raise money at Christmas which families would be most affected, that kind of thing.

Albert: But she does the home visits too. So you have a kiddo not coming to school or there's a concern for, you know, provisions in the home, and that kind of thing, coordinating some of those supports albeit school district support or be it community supports for students that have financial needs or even mental health needs.

School social workers classified home visiting as a very important task. They saw it as a means of building a relationship with the family and being able to develop a better understanding to the school.

The term 'interpretation' was not seen in documents or interviews in this era, but 'being the bridge' or 'a liaison' were terms found in the data and synonymous with interpretation.

When reported, the activity of interpreting the school to the family, and the family to the school, was still prevalent. Albert, an administrator, saw the importance of the school social worker going to the home and then providing valuable information back to the school.

Albert: I mean it's a perspective I think every educator needs to have. Until you've walked down the hallway in the kids shoes you don't know what they're coming to school with or without... there's generally a reason why the kid's wearing the same clothes every day, there's generally a reason why there's an issue with hygiene, there's generally a reason for all of those factors that are that are observable in a school building, but sometimes you don't know what they are until you've got somebody that's actually been there to see what's going on in that house.

School social workers also expressed home visiting as a skill unique to school social workers and necessary for the profession. However, one school social worker felt that colleagues in her county were moving away from home visiting, but she felt it was imperative to continue the work of home visiting.

Shawn: A lot of people in our field are trying to get away from that (home visiting) and I won't, I won't do it. I have to do home visits... but I can't ethically in my mind do my best job if I don't do that now. But I'm nervous that the way that our field is going that we're getting so worried about a liability thing that we're not doing our best work, a lot of my colleagues, don't even do home visits anymore.

**mental health.** Providing mental health services to students was identified by 78% ( $n=18$ ) of the participants interviewed and social workers are being identified as one of the key professionals in a school to meet those needs ('Role of School Social Worker', 2019). However, there were mixed reports about it. Some felt counseling was appropriate to provide in school, but if the need rose to a level of ongoing therapy, then that service should be sought outside of school or through school based outpatient counseling.

Sophia: I think that's why we have therapists. I think school social work isn't therapy. I think you can provide it on occasion...But I don't think that should be our role. I think its an intervention, but I don't think it's our role.

Shawn: I have a lot of kids ask if I can be their therapist and I say, "No, I'm not your therapist." But I'm pretty much doing therapy, but I say you still need to see an outside person because I can't.

Several administrators identified that the social workers were qualified to provide mental health services, but felt if given that task, then counseling would be the only service they could provide due to the high need. They preferred school social workers providing a variety of services. However, school social workers play a significant role in mental health services. Several school social workers were reported as facilitating Aevium groups/clubs, which is a national movement that focuses efforts toward suicide prevention. In response to IDEA, many



school social workers were identified as being written into IEPs as a related service for counseling (28%,  $n=8$ ). Finally, social workers were identified as being members of threat assessment teams, Safe2Say chain, crisis response teams, and those called to conduct suicide assessments (74%,  $n=17$ ).

**attendance/residency.** The compulsory school attendance law provided opportunity for visiting teachers to deliver social casework to families. This type of work continued for the school social worker as legislation promoting the importance of school, particularly students with disabilities who were once considered not appropriate for public education. In Pennsylvania, the 2016 revision of the compulsory school law has put the onus of responsibility for student attendance on the school by requiring schools to work with parents and develop plans to improve student attendance. This task was reported by 70% ( $n=16$ ) of the interview respondents. Social workers go to the home to encourage students to attend school, facilitate attendance improvement meetings with students and families to develop Truancy Elimination Plans (TEP) or Student Attendance Improvement Plans (SAIP), and even follow up with court hearings. Social workers have also been assigned the task of checking for residency which can include investigating if the student is living at an address reported by the parent, if the student moved from an in-district address to an out-of-district address, and to check on the conditions of a student identified as homeless. Implementing social work skills, social workers build relationships with students in an effort to improve attendance and graduate.

Sophia: Some of it was for attendance, which I get, some of it was kids that I knew because I worked with them. And so that made that really, you know, having that relationship made all the difference. For some of those kids you know I'm, I'm positive that kids have finished school because I was in their corner. I'm positive of that.

However, some of those interviewed found the work of residency verification and truancy a waste of time and one school counselor felt attendance and residency were an inappropriate use of the ssw time.

Carol: ...like it takes her (school social worker) away from direct contact with kids and families and other time that she could be spending more with what her degree is in and not chasing down and playing PI.

One school social worker also felt the work of the school social work was in intervention and macro-level work rather than truancy.

Shawn: ...but that's a waste of my brain as a waste of time. That's called you're getting dumped on and that just wouldn't happen...Where can I make the most difference...and I think that's our role is to advocate and say, I think the counselors could do their own SAIPS and that would free me up to do a lot more intervention stuff.

However, this same social worker also saw the value in school social workers in the role of truancy, but only if someone was specifically assigned to just that role. She reported a discussion she had with a neighboring school districts administrator. Shawn said to the administrator:

Shawn: Oh I hear you're going to hire a social worker and they said, "well, we're hiring a reading specialist instead." And I said, "well if you can't them to come to school, how are you going to teach them to read?"

Two other tasks that were not identified in any documents, but were reported by all professions as school social work tasks, were transporting student and families to appointments in and out of school and getting special education or SAP paperwork signed by parents. Although they may be perceived as demeaning or menial tasks, social workers used the opportunity for building relationships and social casework.

Sophia: Sometimes it was to take paperwork out to get signed, which I hated because I thought, I have a Master's degree, I don't really think that I'm here to get signatures. But it would start a conversation between me and the family, and because I was able to start

that conversation, they were so grateful that school would show up. That was pretty remarkable.

Cathy: if they weren't coming to school, they would go to their home or would go pick them up. If there was an issue for like a meeting, they would go pick them up, would go to the house to get paperwork signed.

Seth: Some of the home visits are to get an IEP signed, or permission to re-evaluate...sometimes the kids can't get services until there's a signature. The psychologist might ask me to go to the house to meet with the family to get an evaluation signed. Like the parent input, where there are the rating scales and whatever the testing device the psychologist is using...So sometimes the parents don't know the answer to those questions, they might not be able to read the question and answer it appropriately. So to go there and fill those out with parents.

Tara: I know she's gone to home visits to get paperwork signed or to get parents to meetings. I'm pretty sure she's picked people up and brought them to meetings.

**Professional perceptions.** Three themes emerged from the interviews. One theme came from just teachers and two themes involved administrators, psychologists and counselors about school social workers.

*teachers don't know the school social work role.* Over half of the teachers interviewed for this era ( $n=4$ ) and one from era 3, reported they, or their colleagues, had a lack of knowledge or understanding of the role of school social work. One teacher stated:

Tori: so I could not pick my social worker out of a crowd. I don't know that I've ever met her. I don't know that I haven't. I hear about her. My impression is that I hear most about her related to kids in poverty.

Another teacher echoed that statement:

Teresa: Like I really wouldn't know what her day looks like other than I know that people have said, "Oh, well that's a (SSWs name) question" or that we should get a hold of her to tell her that information.

And Tina stated, "I think she does a lot more than what we see."

An administrator was asked about the clarity of the school social worker's role to the faculty followed by why she thinks there is a lack of knowledge about the role.

Abby: I just know she does a lot...and I only know some of what she does, but they (teachers) have absolutely no idea what she does, and I don't know if it's because, I don't

even know. I don't even know how to answer this question because I don't know myself why I don't know what she does.

***collaboration with school teams.*** A second theme that emerged was the school social worker's role in collaboration with other school professionals. Administrators reported the value of having a school social worker as part of the collaborative teams.

Alan: most of my view is that the social worker is kind of the connector between all those professionals (counselor, psych) that either identify a need or have a resource that can fit a need and then social worker becomes that binder between them.

Albert: you would see the social worker and the counselor and the school psych working with kids and assisting them with whatever those needs may be, getting them tied into resources, etc.

A school counselor also reported the integration of school social worker services as part of the pupil personnel team

Carol: She is an integral part of what we do and I feel like an extension of our office and is now in our office, you know, full time and it just makes sense that social work and counseling go hand in hand. I feel like she's another counselor, you know, what she does with our students and families and gets families connected. Things like that.

Although teachers in this study didn't always know the role of school social work, one teacher summed up the role of a social worker working with school counselors and psychologists as,

Tess: each one of them has a piece to that child, they're kind of like a puzzle, and if one of those pieces isn't meeting, or isn't being attended to, the other two can't function to the best of their abilities.

The collaboration between social workers, school counselors, school psychologists was often reported in the documents and interviews as 'pupil personnel teams'. In the early 1990s there was a push from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), American Counselors Association (ACA), American Psychologists Association (APA), and NASW to expand pupil personnel services, provide grant money for schools for these services, and to establish an Office of Pupil Personnel Services in the U.S. Department of Education [4-13]. This was to be part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [4-1, 4-13,

4-22, 4-23, 4-24]. Although not all pieces of the original proposal were authorized, this partnership between the associations, in addition to working together through special education regulations, created an opportunity for these professionals to capitalize on one another's professional strengths toward providing for the whole child.

4-13: to clarify that school social workers and other pupil-services personnel are integral members of the educational team, not only as providers of support services but also designers of those services.

Professional collaboration and role overlap between school counselors, psychologists, and school social workers was also identified in several documents and within the literature review for this study. Therefore, interviewees were asked if they knew the roles of each of those professions in their school. Table 4.7 depicts those interviewees who clearly delineated the difference between the roles. Psychologists were seen as being the key source of testing, school counselors provided academic, vocational, and mental health counseling, and school social workers provided resources to students and families outside of school.

Table 4.7

*Comparison of Respondent's perceptions about the role of school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers*

<b>Psychologist</b>	<b>Counselor</b>	<b>Social Worker</b>
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<b>Abby</b>	if kids need tested for learning support or emotional support and then delivering the results of that testing	scheduling for kids, meeting with kids having a bad day, all the way up to a kid is in crisis.	who can find other resources for students that they might not be able to provide for them in school or if a kid needs more than what they could get in school.
<b>Alan</b>	a lot of evaluations and assessments	work with our students for their academic support and for their future careers.	provide those supports for the family and make the connections in the community to resources that are outside the school's ability to provide
<b>Ann</b>	primarily involved in evaluations	Didn't have one	counseling to the students and provides resources for the families
<b>Cheryl</b>	testing and more of the databased interventions	are mainly in the schools...counseling, SAP, interventions,	encompasses the community. Social workers are mainly in and out of the school and know a lot more of the community resources
<b>Phillip</b>	working with really at risk kids	fitting into the behavior pieces of MTSS, whether that be in school or outside of school or both	(providing services) for the entire school population like guidance lessons and small group based on the behavior data
<b>Tara</b>	testing and determines eligibility, makes recommendations for instruction	is there more for the kids, meets with kids, has groups and does lessons in the classroom	social skills groups, provides families a lots of resources

These findings are supported by a study of Agresta (2002, 2004, 2006) who extensively examined the interprofessional relationships of school counselors, psychologists, and school social workers and the appropriateness of their own roles as perceived by the other groups. She

found that the perceived role of social workers was in community outreach, psychologists was in psychometric testing, and school counselors was viewed as providing academic advisement and counseling. Furthermore, she found that the clearer the roles were made to school staff, the less role confusion existed for everyone in a school.

***go-to person.*** A third theme that emerged from the interviews reported the school social worker as their ‘go-to’ in reference to the value of the school social worker expertise in community resources.

Carol: you know when I have a referral or what's the process for CHiP or whatever, she's my go-to person...she's a wealth of knowledge and has the community kind of networks that we might not have as counselors.

Cheryl: They are always one of my first go to people. She was my number one support and go to just because she was there for so long and really developed relationships with the families.

Charles: The social worker that I work with is kind of my go-to when I've run out of limitations or I've run out of resources.

Abby: I just know she was my go-to for resources.

Albert: She's an invaluable resource to me if I have questions specific to truancy or tends or things that I'm seeing or wondering, She's usually one of my go-tos

**Identity.** Two themes emerged relating to identity. Pennsylvania is one of the states that do not have professional education certification and the social workers interviewed spoke about the need for certification. Professional pride was another theme found in the interviews with school social workers.

***certification.*** To date, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has not developed a certification for school social work. In the early 2000s Pennsylvania Association of School Social Work Personnel (PASSWP) attempted to work with PDE to create a certification

similar to the home and school visitor certification. Sam, a school social worker, was involved with PASSWP and PSEA to create school social work protections. He recalled the resistance from the school counselors in the state as they feared being replaced by school social workers.

Sam: there was certainly some pushback from school counselors and people saying, ‘well, if we get more social workers then you’ll be pushing school counselors out’ and in a way that was true, because again, if you look at the national ratios there should be more social workers, there shouldn’t be as many school counselors.

PDE did not go so far as to create a certification, but did create a Certification and Staffing Policy Guidelines (CSPG) for school social workers in 2011 and added that social workers could be utilized independent of a certified home and school visitor. Sue, along with other members of PASSWP, participated in the development of the CSPG and she reflected on the advances it made for social workers in PA:

Sue: ...just this need, obviously to get this legislation done so that social workers were a real thing in schools I thought was vitally important...It was just crazy to me when I used to go back and read those job descriptions with the Department of Ed, I was just, I just couldn’t believe it. So yeah, that took a long time because that was on the books forever and so to be able to change it and actually have a real educational position for social workers. Now you’re a professional.

School social work certification continued to be a focus of PASSWP and they have supported Pennsylvania State Education Association’s lobbying efforts to create such certification through 2019-2020 HB 390, HB 1500, and SB 749. In January 2020, Governor Wolf announced that as part of his mental health initiative, Reach Out PA, he is going to create a path toward school social work certification. Should this come to fruition, it will be a monumental advancement for PA school social workers.

***professional pride.*** Social workers were asked to describe their own professional identity. Professional pride was identified throughout their assessments of what they do and who they are.



Sarah: my identity is probably wrapped up in a whole lot of experiences...like if you asked me something I don' know, I'm going to find out. I'm going to work until I do. It bugs the crud out of me if I can't find the resource. I do call myself the Social Work Help desk. I try to be very thorough. I put a lot on me during the work day to be able to be very, just together and make sure that I do my job really well.

Stella: I have several kids that I keep maintained through intense and therapeutic interventions, you know, and I'm proud of that because I'm really proud of these kids. They're survivors.

Stella further elaborated about her professional identity

Stella: my worth, value, maybe it does come down to feeling worth, you know. You want to have professional pride, right.

Other social workers identified themselves more creatively

Stella: my professional identity would be like a chameleon with a superhero cape on it.

Shawn: They say Pennsylvania is like the Keystone state, like we bring everyone together. I feel like that is our role as we look at all the systems and then we bring them all together to really talk about what's in the best interest of the child.

And Sophia identified how those in the social work field are just different from others:

Sophia: But not everybody will do any of that; going out into the world and kind of navigating that with families, you know. Like these are people that I know are different. But people won't like even consider putting a family in their car. ...but like what social worker would ever pass a family that, you know, is on their way to a hearing in the pouring down rain and not stopping? Go get in my car! Get in here right now! Get your dog and your, you know everything, everything gets in the car.

#### **Era 4 Composite Description**

Table 4.8 depicts the composite description of era 4. The Individuals with Disabilities Act continued to provide the school social worker a significant role as a 'related service' in special education. In 2008, some schools furloughed school staff, including school social workers, with some schools re-filling those positions. As the country responds to teen suicide, bullying, and school violence, school social workers are being included in prevention and treatment initiatives. In addition, school social workers continue to be recognized as experts in connecting families to community resources and use home visits as a tool to develop

relationships with families and address truancy. Education professionals view school social workers as integral members of pupil personnel services, however, teachers were not as knowledgeable about the school social worker role as administrators, counselors, and psychologists. Pennsylvania school social workers are proud of their roles in school and the work they do with families and therefore, continue to advocate for education certification through the Department of Education.

Table 4.8

*Era 4 Composite Description*

1. How did the societal influences in each of the identified times frames shape the tasks of school social work?	The Reauthorization of <b>IDEA</b> specified social workers <i>in schools</i> and included them as a related service, thereby providing for a clear role for school social workers in special education. The recession of 2008 also resulted in <b>furloughs</b> of school staff, including school social workers. A national response to <b>school violence, suicide awareness, and mental health</b> led to PA legislation for a trauma informed care approach working with students. Social workers play a key role in this legislation.
2. What were the tasks of school social workers that impacted how education professionals perceived their role?	<b>Community resource specialist, mental health, home visits, and attendance</b> were identified in the interviews as the primary tasks of school social workers. Professionals viewed school social workers as their ' <b>go-to</b> ' for community resources, <b>integral members of the collaborative team</b> , but <b>teachers didn't know</b> about the school role.
3. How do school social workers define their own professional identity?	There was agreement among school social workers about being <b>proud of the work</b> they do and having <b>professional pride</b> . Seeking <b>school social work certification in PA</b> was also a priority.

**Composite description of themes across all eras**

A composite description of themes across all eras in relation to the research questions was developed (see table 4.9)

Table 4.9

*Composite Description Across Eras*

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1. How did the societal influences in each of the identified times frames shape the tasks of school social work?	Compulsory school attendance and legislation for special education created opportunities for school social workers.
2. What were the tasks of school social workers that impacted how education professionals perceived their role?	The act of home visiting led to tasks that were most common among school social workers across the decades. Being the bridge, liaison, or interpreting between school and families and connecting them to community resources was a common theme. Tasks such as attendance, mental health, and special education were consistently identified throughout all eras. Professionals saw school social work services as valuable and saw the school social worker as an integral member of the pupil personnel team.
3. How do school social workers define their own professional identity?	Throughout all the decades, school social workers advocated for their position in schools albeit through their title, professional organization, qualification, legislation, or certification. School social workers are proud of their work and their profession.

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**Societal influences.** Two societal influences remained consistent throughout the evolution of school social work: compulsory school attendance law and special education. The compulsory attendance law opened the door for social workers to use a casework approach to combat truancy and that practice is in place today. Social workers responded to the educational trends of ensuring education for all children regardless of ability or disability and that they should receive a free and appropriate education. Social workers were included as a related service in providing services to students with special needs. The mental hygiene movement also played a significant role because school social workers are still viewed as key professionals in assisting students with mental health needs.

**Tasks.** The profession of school social work started with home visiting which led to other tasks such as interpretation (explaining the school to the home and visa versa), attendance, mental health, and mobilizing community resources. These were viewed as the primary functions of school social work.

Interview participants for both eras were asked to list the top three tasks they felt a school social workers should do. Count data were used to report the number of occurrences respondents reported a particular task. Figure 4.6 displays that home-school liaison was most reported as the tasks of the school social worker and received thirteen 1's, five 2's, and three 3's. Agency referrals received almost equal number of 2's ( $n=8$ ) and 3's ( $n=7$ ) and mental health received almost equal number of 1's ( $n=5$ ), 2's ( $n=4$ ) and 3's ( $n=5$ ).

Although attendance was seen as a common task throughout the eras, and supported by the interviews and compulsory school attendance laws, it was not identified by those interviewed as a top three task except by two people.

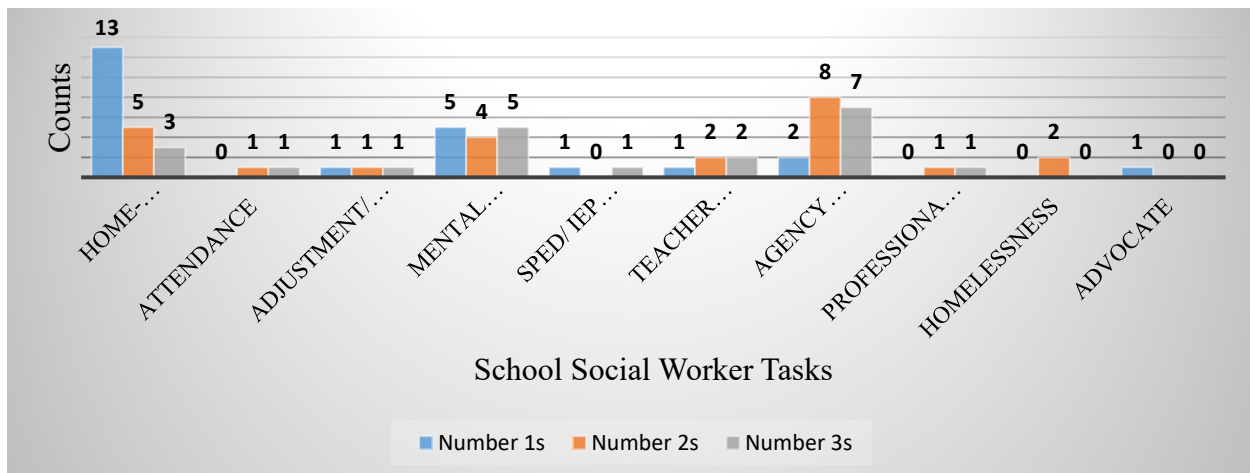


Figure 4.6. Top three tasks reported by interview respondents ( $n=29$ ).

**Education professional perceptions.** A common theme across eras was social work was seen as a valuable service and social workers were viewed as integral members of the school, faculty, and pupil personnel team.

**Social work identity.** Throughout all the decades, school social workers advocated for their position in schools albeit through their title, professional organization, qualification, legislation, or certification. School social workers are proud of their work and their profession.



## **Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Research Limitations, Implications, and Conclusions**

### **Summary of Findings**

School social workers have been providing services to students and families since 1906 and although society has changed, the tasks and value of school social work has not. Home visiting to connect families to services, addressing truancy, and being a liaison between the home and school has never wavered as the unique skill and task of school social work.

### **Limitations and Strengths**

When employing qualitative methods, researchers must be aware of bias, albeit their own or the participants, throughout their study. A concern when conducting historical document analysis is the development of apophenia, or patternicity (Langtree, Birks, & Biedermann, 2019). Apophenia is the unconscious development of connections within the data that don't necessarily exist and can lead the researcher to construct a fictitious historical version of events (Langtree, Birks, & Biedermann, 2019). Additionally, this researcher is a school social worker, a board member of the School Social Work Association of American, and the vice-president of the Pennsylvania of School Social Work Personnel which could be interpreted that the researcher seeks a specific outcome to the study. To guard against these bias', reflexivity was employed through the use of journaling and member checking with those who were interviewed.

Publication bias can also be a limitation of this study (van Aert, Wicherts, & van Assen, 2019). All the documents analyzed were mostly written by visiting teachers and school social workers and therefore could be considered bias toward the profession. Additionally, most of the documents were also from a private collection of school social work bulletins and do not

represent a sample from diverse sources. Exploring publications from other professional groups that include school social work may be beneficial.

The overall sample size of interviews was appropriate for a phenomenological study, however the professionals from each group was relatively small and it cannot be assumed their experiences speak for all of their colleagues. Era 3 was also problematic because only six interviews were conducted and only two people began their careers with a school social worker in the mid-1970's while the other four began in the late 1980's. The latter group's responses did not differentiate from era 4 responses, most likely because the majority of these interviewees' careers were spent in the era 4.

Finally, this study focused only on Pennsylvania because the requirements for school social work differ from other states. However, utilizing a national sample may have resulted in more interviews particularly in era 3. The tasks of school social work may have also been different across states due to the variation in certification and requirements of the job.

The strengths of this study include a rare examination of historical school social work documents. The majority of the documents in this study are considered grey literature because they were from a private collection produced by school social work organizations. These school social work bulletins have not been previously examined in a comprehensive manner to elicit data about the evolution of the profession over time. The history of school social work for this study was presented honoring the names of the first visiting teachers, their journey in establishing the work, and the cities which supported them. This history has been lost in the duplication of the same diluted history offered in articles and textbooks.

Another strength of this study is reintroducing the value of the school social worker visiting the home. This task was identified unique to school social work throughout all eras and a practice viewed as valuable. This study adds to the dearth amount of research about home visiting specific to the field of school social work.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings of this study can be used to inform school social workers in their practice of home visiting, collaborating more with teachers, and clearly carving out their roles in schools to avoid role overlap and role ambiguity. The findings can also inform the Council for Social Work Education for additional areas to include in school social work curriculum.

**Home visiting.** Home visiting is as important today as it was in 1906. It is also the niche of school social work, but there is little information about it in social work textbooks. In both *School Social Work* (Massat, Kelly, & Constable, 2016) and *Social Work Services in Schools* (Allen-Meares, 2004) there is very little written about home visits. In fact, the authors of the chapter in *School Social Work* (Constable & Walberg, 2016) encourage that social workers should meet families at the school and only in extenuating circumstances should a social worker go to the home. Additionally, Constable and Walberg (2016) allude to school districts not allowing social workers to use work time to go to the homes and in one case example indicated the social worker needed to use their lunch time to make that contact with the family. This is in deep contrast to the findings of this study where the social workers reported that home visiting was a valuable and integral part of their work.

Shawn: A lot of people in our field are trying to get away from that and I won't, I won't do it. I have to do home visits...but I can't ethically in my mind do my best job if I don't do that now.



The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) should include more education on home visiting to teach new social workers its purpose, value, skills, and limitations. Shawn talked about a lack of training in home visiting but relied on building a rapport as the base.

Shawn: ...people say to us, 'well, I haven't had the training.' Well, I'm not sure I've had the training, either... we don't take a class on how to talk to people in their home and make people feel comfortable. It's just a relationship building thing.

But there is more to home visiting than relying on one's skill of building rapport. Being aware of cultural norms is paramount to breaking down barriers and building bridges and entering someone's home requires a heightened level of respect. Safety is another area school social workers must have some knowledge. These areas are not always included in social work curriculum.

The purpose of home visiting is also important knowledge for school social workers so not be taken advantage. School social workers for this study reported transporting sick kids home from school because the family didn't have transportation, or going to the home to get a parent to sign permission for Student Assistance Program, but they also reported using social casework skills that could be connected to the task. However, a newer social worker may not have the knowledge of how to make those connections between a menial task and social casework, or know when to establish boundaries with her district. Stella recalled the difficulty of finding a balance:

Stella: And they use me for anything. If there is a gap, they use me to fill the gap. I really, really try not to say no because I am an invited guest. They are paying for me, handsomely from the (organization) so I super try not to say no. But sometimes they asked me to do things that are just a little bit ridiculous, like going to somebody's house at 9:00 pm to do a family kind of counseling situation. That I so say no to.

Another issue related to the CSWE providing additional education on home visiting is that many school social workers are not supervised by someone with a social work background,

let alone a licensed social worker. Therefore, they will not be provided direction or training in home visiting, appropriateness of tasks, and most importantly, the ethics involved with school social work. In this study, respondents who had knowledge of who supervised the school social worker ( $n= 20$ ) reported that duty fell to an education administrator such as a director of special education, pupil personnel supervisor, or principal. Although knowledgeable in other matters, these professionals most likely never conducted a home visit and therefore would have no knowledge of the skills necessary to make it a successful one. It is unrealistic to think social workers will be supervising other social workers in schools, therefore, the training on school social work skills needs to come from universities.

**Teachers.** One of the findings from this research found teachers were not clear or fully aware of the role of school social workers. This is troublesome since the profession was not only started by teachers, but one of the goals of the visiting teacher was to assist the classroom teacher by interpreting the home for the teacher so they could develop more appropriate academic programming for the student. The results of this study indicate that of the professions interviewed, teachers lacked a clear understanding of the role of a school social worker more than the other professions. It was also apparent that school social workers didn't share information with teachers as much as they did with principals and counselors. Confidentiality and 'need to know' were two reasons given as to why social workers didn't include teachers when information was shared. On the other hand, teachers spend the most time with students during the school day, particularly elementary teachers, and possess a significant amount of information about the student. Furthermore, although referrals to school social workers typically come from the counselors or principals, they are often initiated by the teacher who has the most direct contact with the student than other professionals in the building. It would be beneficial for social workers

and teachers to develop a more collaborative relationship where pertinent information that affect the student's ability to learn could be shared more freely. Teachers would then have a clearer understanding of the assistance they could glean from a social worker.

**Role Delineation.** It is imperative that school social workers know their roles and establish boundaries and their function within their school district. Each school has different needs that typically direct the school social worker's tasks. However, school social workers should also negotiate those tasks to ensure they align with social work ethics, school social work standards and are within the realm of the role of school social work. Shawn talked about her first year, creating her role within her district, and cautions for new school social workers.

Shawn: You have to figure out what works for you. You're just an island and navigating that and the power trips and the political stuff is tough. Teachers are talking bad about you, principals are talking to you about principals, principals will talk to you about teachers. I think we have to figure out those boundaries real quick and not get sucked in and feel like, 'oh, they love me, they want me to do stuff.' We can be a dumping ground. So a lot of that first year was just kind of figuring out the dynamics of the district and where I needed to invest my time and not get burnout.

It is also important that faculty and staff know the tasks of the school social worker compared to similar professions such as school counselors and school psychologists.

The collaboration between school social workers, school counselors, and school psychologists were shaped through the implementation of EAHCA where they were convened together under related services. As a result, it was important that the professions, while working together, also carve out their roles within schools. Dupper (2003) stated that when roles are ambiguous, school social workers are at risk for being undervalued and misunderstood to educational professionals and policy makers. This study found that those interviewed had a clear understanding of the differences between these three roles (See Table 4.7). Teachers and administrators were able to identify to whom they would turn for certain concerns and school

counselors, psychologists, and social workers shared that when the roles are clear there is a smoother process and more team work.

**Marketing.** The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) is dedicated to promoting the profession of school social work. They launched the 2020 Vision of school social workers being vital, valuable, visible, and having a voice and along with the National Association of Social Workers initiated a campaign to increase public knowledge about the value school social workers bring to districts. However, these macro level strategies need to be accompanied by micro and meso level crusades as well. Adam spoke about the importance of school social workers, but indicated they lack marketing skills.

Adam: These are very humble people. Their hearts are in the right place. They love kids. And they love, you know, making sure that our families have what they need and they work tirelessly to make that happen. But you know, they're not self-promoters by trade. Although self-promotion may not be character trait, school social workers would benefit from finding ways to bolster their significance through data.

In order for the social worker to be deemed valuable to a school, they must demonstrate effective educational outcomes (Dane & Simon, 1991). A suggestion for school social workers assigned the task of truancy prevention would be to connect their efforts to educational outcome by tracking before and after attendance data since school districts funding is attached to average daily attendance. But most goals for school social worker tasks are more difficult to connect to educational outcomes as they are non-academic in nature. Therefore, school social workers must develop data reporting tools. This could be in the form of reporting to the administration the number of IEPs they are written into as a related service, the number and reasons for home visits conducted per year, the caseload of threat assessments or suicide risk assessments conducted, and a comprehensive list of tasks they undertake each year. School Board meetings are an

effective mode to report this data as the board oversees the district finances and the meetings are open to the public.

School social workers also need to be more visible. The interviews from this study demonstrated that not all school personnel are clear on the role of the school social worker. Over half of the teachers interviewed reported not knowing the tasks of a school social worker and one school psychologist indicated he was not clear on her expectations:

Phillip: I don't really know her. I don't really work with her. I would. It's not that I, it's not I don't want to...I don't really know what her experiences are and kind of what she's setting out to do.

School social workers can increase their visibility by attending faculty meetings, creating a newsletter that includes some data or information to build capacity about a topic. Professional development was a task identified by 35% ( $n=10$ ) of the interview participants and could be an opportunity to not only increase a social workers' visibility but also their value.

### **Future Research**

The results of this study revealed a need to further explore the perceptions and attitudes of stakeholders about school social work. The results also exposed a gap in research about the effectiveness, purpose, and skills necessary for home visiting which can inform school social work curriculum. The follow are some recommendations for future research.

**Comparison of perceptions.** School social workers interviewed stated that colleagues in their district had a clear understanding of their tasks and roles, but teachers who were interviewed reported evidence to the contrary. An area of study may be to compare the perceptions of school social workers to those with whom they work. Why don't teachers know what school social workers do? Abby, an administrator, was able to explain the job expectations

of professions in her building, such as a math teacher, but struggled to explain why she didn't know what a school social worker did:

Abby: I just know she does a lot...and I only know some of what she does, but they (teachers) have absolutely no idea what she does, and I don't know if it's because, I don't even know. I don't even know how to answer this question because I don't know myself why I don't know what she does.

Compared to Shawn who is confident the staff with whom she works knows her role.

Researcher: So you think if I would ask a teacher in your district, "what does Shawn do" they know what you do?

Shawn: 100% yeah

A study to identify this gap could assist school social workers' ability to increase their visibility and ultimately their effectiveness in schools.

**Perceptions on home visiting.** Exploring caretaker perceptions about school social workers could inform the field about the perceptions of home visiting from stakeholders. The findings could be beneficial to universities in their school social work programs and provide solid foundations for effective home visiting skills. The effectiveness of home visiting has been studied through the health care (Crossman, Warfield, Kotelchuck, & Hauser-Cram, 2018; Nygren, Green, Winters, & Rockhill, 2018) and early childhood education lens' (D'Emery et al, 2019; Keilty & Kosaraju, 2018), but there is a lack of current research to reinforce the practice of home visiting. Allen & Tracy (2004), *Revitalizing the Role of Home Visiting by School Social Workers*, explored the purpose, approaches, and functions of home visiting and found that home visiting is an effective strategy for strengthening the home-school link, but more research was necessary to hone effective approaches unique to school social work.

Public perceptions have also played a significant role in how school social workers are viewed by families with whom they work. LeCroy and Stinson (2004) identified that although

the general public views social work in a positive light, social workers are still stigmatized as those who remove children from their homes. For example, when television media repeatedly portray social workers as only child welfare workers that wrongly removes children from their home, people develop a negative attitude about social workers because the media portrayal may be the only knowledge they have of social workers (LeCroy & Stinson, 2004; Tower, 2000). As a result, when parents receive a call or visit from a school social worker, this stereotyped perception may interfere with their openness to acknowledging deficits in the home for fear of the social worker removing their child (Arguello et al., 2018; Cooper, 2016; Tower, 2000). These misperceptions are a barrier to effective social case work. Findings from this research could then inform CSWE to develop effective strategies to break down those barriers.

## **Conclusion**

Since 1906, school social workers have had a consistent and positive influence on schools, students, families, and the field of social work. This is evidenced by the data extracted from the documents throughout four eras and interviews with social workers and education professionals. In fact, the quotes from documents and interviews throughout this manuscript could be applied to any era, regardless of where they originated. This means that school social workers have remained true to their original purpose and service to school districts and schools have respond by affirming the value of school social work throughout the last century. To demonstrate, the following quotes were randomly plucked from all four eras and are applicable regardless of which era they originated. (Note: the document label was removed and the term visiting teacher was replaced with school social worker for consistency and effect)

On home visiting:

putting an eye on the situation and seeing what the home life looks like is important, but I think really building rapport with the family to try to get them back involved in the education system is important too.

The work of the school social worker was undertaken in the belief that for the true education of the child the home and the school must work together. It is based on the principle that, in order to co-operate, the home must understand what the school is attempting to do, and that the school must understand the home surroundings and interests in order to have knowledge of the child's needs.

But it would start a conversation between me and the family and because I was able to start that conversation. And they were so grateful that school would show up. That was pretty remarkable.

She deals with anything referred to her by parents, principal, or teachers. She uses all the means existing in the home, as well as those within the school,

The school social worker has proven again and again in the past that by obtaining co-operation in the child's home and by giving the school, at the same time, a better understanding of his environment so that it can adapt its methods to his particular needs, the most unpromising child can not only be kept from the courts, but may be developed into a potential good citizen. No better statement of school social work have been made.

On their role:

I'm a social worker. I'm an educator... What I do is I bring to bear my skills and my expertise, my skill set, to understand these kids, where they come from and how to interact with them... and also understand the wider system in which they live, interact, or maybe fail to live in the school environment because that ultimately is why they're here.

We state our function today as: 1. to give social casework services, 2. to stimulate school and community agencies to meet health, social recreational needs of children as seen by home school counselor, 3. to act as liaison between school and community and in planning mental hygiene and allied programs

On their value to the schools:

This specialist, in my judgment, is one of the most important employees of a school system

If you can clone her and give me 10 more or I'll take 20, you know whatever you want to give me, but I would absolutely love more (SSW) in our world

I cannot see how it can well arrive at the success for which it aims unless school social workers are made a part of our school system



I just think they're invaluable. I just think that you need that piece of somebody with those skills in a school these days. I just don't think you can do without that

I can't see us not having it. I mean I don't know how we operated before other than it probably fell on the counselors and our school psychologists...I think what we're doing is getting better at meeting the needs for those kids and the folks at home"

These quotes reveal that although school social work has made advances in methods of practice, increased numbers, and the establishment of qualifications and standards, the foundation of this profession has remained resilient and steadfast. Quotes from 1926 are as applicable to the state of school social work in 1945 as they are in 1993. This should not be viewed negatively as a lack of progress, quite the contrary. The fact that school social workers have claimed home visiting as their niche, and which has not wavered, shows that this profession has a dedicated professional identity committed to its purpose and value to students, families, and school districts they serve. Mary Marot, Jane Day, Mrs. Joseph Lee, and Sara Holbrook established home visiting as the cornerstone upon which this profession has grown and are owed a great deal of praise and recognition for pioneering the proud field of school social work.

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**Appendix A**  
Documents Used in Analysis

<b>Data Label</b>	<b>Document</b>
1-1.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1924), 1(1), December.
1-2.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1925), 1(2), February.
1-3.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1925), 1(3), April.
1-4.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1925), 1(4), May.
1-5.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1926), 2(2), April.
1-6.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1926), 2(4), June.
1-7.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1926), 2(5), May
1-8.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1926), 2(6), November.
1-9.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1927), 3(1), January
1-10.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1927), 3(2), March.
1-11.	National Association of Visiting Teachers Bulletin (1928), 4(2), December.
1-12.	Chicago Women's Bulletin (1918), October.
1-13.	Chicago Women's Bulletin (1920), February.
1-14.	Oppenheimer, J. (1924). The visiting teacher movement (Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University). Published by the <i>Public Education Association of the City of New York</i> .
1-15.	Gleim, S. (1921). The visiting teacher. <i>Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education Bulletin</i> , No. 10, 5-23.
1-16.	Culbert, J. F. (1921). The visiting teacher. <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i> , 98, <i>Child Welfare</i> (Nov.), 81-89.
1-17.	Culbert, J. F. (1916). Supervision beyond school walls: Visiting teachers and their activities. <i>Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections</i> , Indianapolis, Indiana, May 10-17, 1916, 592-598.
1-18.	Allen, E. (1928). Beginnings of visiting teacher work. Copied from <i>The Recorder</i> , 5(4).
2-1.	National Association of School Social Workers (NASSW) Membership Newsletter, (1930), 6(1), March.
2-2.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1931), 7(1), April.
2-5.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1932), 8(1), March.
2-7.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1933), 8(4), February.
2-8.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1933), 8(5), April.
2-9.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1933), 8(6), June.
2-10.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1933), 8(6), November.
2-11.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1934), 9(3), June.
2-12.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1934), 9(4), September.
2-13.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1935), 1(1), February
2-14.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1935), 10(3), June.
2-16.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1936), 11(1), February.
2-17.	NASSW Membership Newsletter (1936), 11(2), May.

- 2-20. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1937), 12(2), February.
- 2-23. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1939), 14(1), January.
- 2-24. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1939), 14(2), April.
- 2-25. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1939), 15(1), October.
- 2-26. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1940), 16(1), December.
- 2-27. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1941), 16(3), June.
- 2-28. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1941), 17(1), December.
- 2-29. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1943), 18(2), April
- 2-30. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1946), 22(2), December
- 2-31. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1947), 22(3), March.
- 2-33. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1947), 22(4), June.
- 2-34. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1947), 23(1), September
- 2-35. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1948), 23(4), May.
- 2-36. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1949), 24(3), March.
- 2-37. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1950), 25(3), March.
- 2-38. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1950), 25(4), June.
- 2-39. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1950), 26(1), September.
- 2-40. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1950), 26(2), December
- 2-43. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1951), 27(1), September
- 2-45. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1952), 27(4), June.
- 2-46. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1952), 28(1), September.
- 2-48. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1953), 28(3), March.
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- 2-52. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1954), 29(4), June.
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- 2-54. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1955), 30(3), March.
- 2-55. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1955), 31(1), September
- 2-57. NASSW Membership Newsletter (1951), January
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  - 3-3. NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin, (1985-1986), Winter
  - 3-4. NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin, (1981), October.
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  - 3-14. NASW News, (1982), September
  - 3-15. NASW News, (1985), October.
  - 3-16. NASW News, (1982), October.
  - 3-17. NASW News, (1987), July.
  - 3-18. NASW News, unknown date
  - 3-19. NASW News, unknown date
  - 3-20. NASW News, (1987), April.
  - 3-21. NASW News, (1985), February.
  - 3-22. NASW News, (1988), June.
  - 3-23. NASW News, (1985), March.
  - 3-24. NASW News, (1981).
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  - 3-27. NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin, (1985), May.
  - 3-28. NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin, (1984), November.
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  - 3-30. NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin, (1988), Summer
  - 3-31. NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin, (1986-1987), Winter.
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- 4-23. NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin, (1992-1993), Winter
- 4-24. NASW School Social Work Information Bulletin, (1994), Spring.
- 4-25. NASW (1999)
- 4-26. School Social Work Association of America Bell (2006), November

## Appendix B

### Invitation to Participate (School Social Worker)

Dear School Social Worker,

The reason I am contacting you is to request your participation in a study to explore how societal influences affect the tasks assigned to school social workers and ultimately influence school social work identity. Your input will help gain insight from the view point of a school social worker. This study is being conducted as fulfillment toward the completion of a Doctorate in Social Work degree.

Participants will be asked to click on this link (123456) which will connect you to a short survey and the Consent to Participate in the Research. Should you agree to participate, you will electronically sign the consent and submit your survey. I will then contact you to arrange a time for us to meet via a Zoom Meeting where I would like to interview you about your experiences as a school social worker. The interview will be audio recorded and can also be video recorded, but you can decline the video if you so choose. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes and may require a follow up interview so I can check for accuracy and meaning of your statements.

I hope you will give this serious consideration, as I believe your perceptions about school social work will provide insight and improve the perceptions about school social workers. I am happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding this study or your potential participation. You may contact me at [dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu) or 717-350-0926.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Dee Stalnecker, LSW, BCBA  
Doctoral Candidate, Millersville University  
[dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu)  
717-350-0926.

## Appendix C

### Invitation to Participate (Administrators)

Dear Administrator,

The reason I am contacting you is to request your participation in a study to explore how societal influences affect the tasks assigned to school social workers and ultimately influence school social work identity. Your input will help gain insight from the view point of an administrator about school social work. This study is being conducted as fulfillment toward the completion of a Doctorate in Social Work degree.

Participants will be asked to click on this link (123456) which will connect you to a short survey and the Consent to Participate in the Research. Should you agree to participate, you will electronically sign the consent and submit your survey. I will then contact you to arrange a time for us to meet via a Zoom Meeting where I would like to interview you about your experiences as a school social worker. The interview will be audio recorded and can also be video recorded, but you can decline the video if you so choose. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes and may require a follow up interview so I can check for accuracy and meaning of your statements.

I hope you will give this serious consideration, as I believe your perceptions about school social work will provide insight and improve the perceptions about school social workers. I am happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding this study or your potential participation. You may contact me at [dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu) or 717-350-0926.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Dee Stalnecker, LSW, BCBA  
Doctoral Candidate, Millersville University  
[dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu)  
717-350-0926.

## Appendix D

### Invitation to Participate (School Psychologists)

Dear School Psychologist,

The reason I am contacting you is to request your participation in a study to explore how societal influences affect the tasks assigned to school social workers and ultimately influence school social work identity. Your input will help gain insight from the view point of a school psychologist. This study is being conducted as fulfillment toward the completion of a Doctorate in Social Work degree.

Participants will be asked to click on this link (123456) which will connect you to a short survey and the Consent to Participate in the Research. Should you agree to participate, you will electronically sign the consent and submit your survey. I will then contact you to arrange a time for us to meet via a Zoom Meeting where I would like to interview you about your experiences as a school social worker. The interview will be audio recorded and can also be video recorded, but you can decline the video if you so choose. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes and may require a follow up interview so I can check for accuracy and meaning of your statements.

I hope you will give this serious consideration, as I believe your perceptions about school social work will provide insight and improve the perceptions about school social workers. I am happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding this study or your potential participation. You may contact me at [dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu) or 717-350-0926.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Dee Stalnecker, LSW, BCBA  
Doctoral Candidate, Millersville University  
[dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu)  
717-350-0926.

## Appendix E

### Invitation to Participate (School Counselors)

Dear School Counselor,

The reason I am contacting you is to request your participation in a study to explore how societal influences affect the tasks assigned to school social workers and ultimately influence school social work identity. Your input will help gain insight from the view point of a school counselor. This study is being conducted as fulfillment toward the completion of a Doctorate in Social Work degree.

Participants will be asked to click on this link (123456) which will connect you to a short survey and the Consent to Participate in the Research. Should you agree to participate, you will electronically sign the consent and submit your survey. I will then contact you to arrange a time for us to meet via a Zoom Meeting where I would like to interview you about your experiences as a school social worker. The interview will be audio recorded and can also be video recorded, but you can decline the video if you so choose. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes and may require a follow up interview so I can check for accuracy and meaning of your statements.

I hope you will give this serious consideration, as I believe your perceptions about school social work will provide insight and improve the perceptions about school social workers. I am happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding this study or your potential participation. You may contact me at [dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu) or 717-350-0926.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Dee Stalnecker, LSW, BCBA  
Doctoral Candidate, Millersville University  
[dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu)  
717-350-0926.



## Appendix F

### Invitation to Participate (School Teachers)

Dear School Teacher,

The reason I am contacting you is to request your participation in a study to explore how societal influences affect the tasks assigned to school social workers and ultimately influence school social work identity. Your input will help gain insight from the view point of a classroom teacher. This study is being conducted as fulfillment toward the completion of a Doctorate in Social Work degree.

Participants will be asked to click on this link (123456) which will connect you to a short survey and the Consent to Participate in the Research. Should you agree to participate, you will electronically sign the consent and submit your survey. I will then contact you to arrange a time for us to meet via a Zoom Meeting where I would like to interview you about your experiences as a school social worker. The interview will be audio recorded and can also be video recorded, but you can decline the video if you so choose. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes and may require a follow up interview so I can check for accuracy and meaning of your statements.

I hope you will give this serious consideration, as I believe your perceptions about school social work will provide insight and improve the perceptions about school social workers. I am happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding this study or your potential participation. You may contact me at [dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu) or 717-350-0926.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Dee Stalnecker, LSW, BCBA  
Doctoral Candidate, Millersville University  
[dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu)  
717-350-0926.

## Appendix G

### Administrator, School Psychologist, Teacher, School Counselor Survey

Thank you for responding to the invitation to participate in my research. Below you will find six short questions so I can gather some preliminary data and contact information. Below the survey is the Informed Consent. Please read the informed consent and if you agree to participate further in this study, please provide an electronic signature and click submit. I will contact you to set up a time convenient to you for our interview. Thank you again.

1. Name you would like the researcher to refer to you by (you can choose an alias to further protect your anonymity)
2. Email address the researcher should contact you:
3. Phone number as a backup contact:
4. What specific years did you work as an administrator, counselor, or psychologist (example, 1979-1995)
5. What type of school(s) or school district(s) did you work as an administrator, counselor, or psychologist: (public, private, charter) List all that apply.
6. What specific years did you work with a school social worker? (Example 1995-2017)

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Study Title:** Revisiting the Visiting Teacher: A Historical Analysis of School Social Work Identity

**Researcher:** Dee Stalnecker, LSW, BCBA, and Doctoral Candidate, Millersville University

#### **Introduction:**

You are being invited to participate in this research study because you are, or have been, a school administrator, school psychologist, or school counselor who has worked with a school social worker during your professional employment or you are, or have been, a school social worker. Please read this form carefully which will outline what you can expect if you decide to participate. You may contact the researcher and ask any questions you may have prior to deciding whether or not to part. If you decide to participate you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy.

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study aims at investigating the development of school social work identity by pinpointing critical societal influences and how they were interpreted by school personnel who directed tasks to school social workers and how those factors resulted in an ever evolving school social work identity. Findings of this study are anticipated to be useful within the profession to address how a lack of a clear and consistent identity creates barriers to full inclusions of school social workers within all schools.

### **Procedures:**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to discontinue participating in this study at any time. If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to be involved in the following:

- Completion of a short survey attached with this consent.
- An interview which is anticipated to take approximately 2 hours or shorter depending upon the discussion. The researcher will provide you a copy of the transcript at a later date and verify with you that it is accurate and check for meaning of statements during a follow-up interview.
- The interview is meant to take place via Zoom Meetings which allows for video and audio recording. Video recording can increase a natural flow of discussion but you can choose to not be video recorded by notifying the researcher. Audio recording is necessary for the researchers to accurately transcribe the interview.

### **Risks/Benefits:**

There are no anticipated risks, stress, or discomfort by participating in this study. School social workers may indirectly benefit from this study should the information be used to make professional gains. Otherwise, there are no other foreseen benefits for participation. If you would like to speak to someone independent of the researcher or supervisor, you may contact the Millersville IRB office at [MU-irb@millersville.edu](mailto:MU-irb@millersville.edu).

### **Confidentiality:**

All information collected will be used for research purposed only. All names will be known only to the researcher and will be assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. Anecdotal information that may be included in the written study will be identified by the pseudonym.

### **Data Storage**

Confidentiality will be strictly observed. The tapes and transcriptions will be stored on the researcher's computer which requires a password to access. The researcher will also back up the data on a flash drive which will be secured in a lock box for three years in accordance with federal regulations.

Once the study is completed, the tapes and transcriptions will be destroyed after three years according to federal regulations.

### **Participant Rights:**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time without any consequence to you. The Institutional Review Board at Millersville University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable for human subject research.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Dee Stalnecker at [dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu) or research supervisor, Dr. Leonora Foels at [Leonora.Foels@millersville.edu](mailto:Leonora.Foels@millersville.edu). You may also contact Rene Munoz, Millersville Internal Review Board at [MU-irb@millersville.edu](mailto:MU-irb@millersville.edu).

**Statement of Consent:**

By checking the box, I indicate that I have read and understood the information outlined above, that I will be audio taped, have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's Name & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

## Appendix H

### School Social Worker Survey

1. Name you would like the researcher to refer to you by (you can choose an alias to further protect your anonymity)
2. Email address the researcher should contact you:
3. Phone number as a backup contact:
4. What specific years did you work as a school social worker (example, 1979-1995)
5. What type of school(s) or school district(s) did you work as a school social worker: (public, private, charter) List all that apply.

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Study Title:** Revisiting the Visiting Teacher: A Historical Analysis of School Social Work Identity

**Researcher:** Dee Stalnecker, LSW, BCBA, and Doctoral Candidate, Millersville University

#### **Introduction:**

You are being invited to participate in this research study because you are, or have been, a school administrator, school psychologist, or school counselor who has worked with a school social worker during your professional employment or you are, or have been, a school social worker. Please read this form carefully which will outline what you can expect if you decide to participate. You may contact the researcher and ask any questions you may have prior to deciding whether or not to part. If you decide to participate you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy.

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study aims at investigating the development of school social work identity by pinpointing critical societal influences and how they were interpreted by school personnel who directed tasks to school social workers and how those factors resulted in an ever evolving school social work identity. Findings of this study are anticipated to be useful within the profession to address how a lack of a clear and consistent identity creates barriers to full inclusions of school social workers within all schools.

#### **Procedures:**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to discontinue participating in this study at any time. If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to be involved in the following:

- Completion of a short survey attached with this consent.
- An interview which is anticipated to take approximately 2 hours or shorter depending upon the discussion. The researcher will provide you a copy of the transcript at a later date and verify with you that it is accurate and check for meaning of statements during a follow-up interview.
- The interview is meant to take place via Zoom Meetings which allows for video and audio recording. Video recording can increase a natural flow of discussion but you can choose to not be video recorded by notifying the researcher. Audio recording is necessary for the researchers to accurately transcribe the interview.

### **Risks/Benefits:**

There are no anticipated risks, stress, or discomfort by participating in this study. School social workers may indirectly benefit from this study should the information be used to make professional gains. Otherwise, there are no other foreseen benefits for participation. If you would like to speak to someone independent of the researcher or supervisor, you may contact the Millersville IRB office at [MU-irb@millersville.edu](mailto:MU-irb@millersville.edu).

### **Confidentiality:**

All information collected will be used for research purposed only. All names will be known only to the researcher and will be assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. Anecdotal information that may be included in the written study will be identified by the pseudonym.

### **Data Storage**

Confidentiality will be strictly observed. The tapes and transcriptions will be stored on the researcher's computer which requires a password to access. The researcher will also back up the data on a flash drive which will be secured in a lock box for three years in accordance with federal regulations.

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### **Participant Rights:**

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### **Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Dee Stalnecker at [dlstalne@millersville.edu](mailto:dlstalne@millersville.edu) or research supervisor, Dr. Leonora Foels at

[Leonora.Foels@millersville.edu](mailto:Leonora.Foels@millersville.edu). You may also contact Rene Munoz, Millersville Internal Review Board at [MU-irb@millersville.edu](mailto:MU-irb@millersville.edu).

**Statement of Consent:**

By checking the box, I indicate that I have read and understood the information outlined above, that I will be audio taped, have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's Name & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY  
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## Appendix I

### Semi-Structured Interview

#### Administrator Interview

1. What were some of the major educational trends or influences during your tenure as an administrator?
  - a. How did these trends impact supports to students?
2. What was your role in working with the school social worker?
  - a. What were the tasks of the school social worker?
  - b. Who determined the tasks of the school social worker?
  - c. How were those tasks identified?
  - d. At any time during your tenure did you or your school change the tasks of the social worker and why?
  - e. How do you view the role of the school social worker?
3. How are the tasks of the school psychologist and school counselor determined?
  - a. How do you view the tasks of the school social worker as different from the school psychologist and school counselor?
  - b. How are they similar?
  - c. What tasks do you think should be the responsibility of the school social worker?
4. Regarding mental health services, ideally, how do you see those students being served in your school and by whom?

#### School Psychologist

1. What were some of the major educational trends or influences during your tenure as a school psychologist?
  - a. How did these trends impact your role with students?
2. What was your role in working with the school social worker?
  - a. What were the tasks of the school social worker?
  - b. Who determined the tasks of the school social worker?
  - c. How were those tasks identified?
  - d. At any time during your tenure did you or your school change the tasks of the social worker and why?
  - e. How do you view the tasks of the school social worker as different from the school psychologist and school counselor?
    - i. How are they similar?
    - ii. Is there any role overlap, ambiguity, or confusion among the roles?
  - f. What tasks do you think should be the responsibility of the school social worker?
3. Regarding mental health services, ideally, how do you see those students being served in your school and by whom?

#### School Counselor



1. What were some of the major educational trends or influences during your tenure as a school counselor?
  - a. How did these trends impact your role with students?
2. What was your role in working with the school social worker?
  - a. What were the tasks of the school social worker?
  - b. Who determined the tasks of the school social worker?
  - c. How were those tasks identified?
  - d. At any time during your tenure did you or your school change the tasks of the social worker and why?
  - e. How do you view the tasks of the school social worker as different from the school psychologist and school counselor?
    - i. How are they similar?
    - ii. Is there any role overlap, ambiguity, or confusion among the roles?
  - f. What tasks do you think should be the responsibility of the school social worker?
3. Regarding mental health services, ideally, how do you see those students being served in your school and by whom?

### **Teacher**

1. What were some of the major educational trends or influences during your tenure as a classroom teacher?
  - a. How did these trends impact your role with students?
2. What was your role in working with the school social worker?
  - a. What were the tasks of the school social worker?
  - b. Who determined the tasks of the school social worker?
  - c. How were those tasks identified?
  - d. At any time during your tenure did you or your school change the tasks of the social worker and why?
  - e. How do you view the tasks of the school social worker as different from the school psychologist and school counselor?
    - i. How are they similar?
    - ii. Is there any role overlap, ambiguity, or confusion among the roles?
  - f. What tasks do you think should be the responsibility of the school social worker?
3. Regarding mental health services, ideally, how do you see those students being served in your school and by whom?

### **School Social Worker**

1. What were some of the major educational trends or influences during your tenure as a school social worker?
  - a. How did these trends impact your role with students?
2. What were your tasks as the school social worker?
  - a. Who determined your tasks?

- b. How were those tasks identified?
  - c. At any time during your tenure did you or your school change your tasks and why?
  - d. How do you view the tasks of the school social worker as different from the school psychologist and school counselor?
    - i. How are they similar?
    - ii. Is there any role overlap, ambiguity, or confusion among the roles?
  - e. What tasks do you think should be the responsibility of the school social worker?
3. Regarding mental health services, ideally, how do you see those students being served in your school and by whom?

## Appendix J

### Summarized Results of NAVT 1924 Survey

State	Cities reported on	Year established	Title	Societal/State Trends	Tasks
AL	2	1922, 1924	Visiting Teacher	Compulsory School Attendance. Students working in factories	homevisits (725 in 4 months), compulsory school attendance, home neglect
AZ	1	1924	Visiting Teacher	Immigration from Mexico	immigration adjustment, grades
CA	2	1923	Visiting Teacher	Migration, tourists, military children	recreation, groups and individual work with parents
CT	3	1920	Visiting Teacher		truancy, employment, behavior, poor scholarship, adverse home conditions, physical or mental defects
DE	4	1921	Visiting Teacher		attendance, scholarship, home conditions, behavior
DC	1	1923	Visiting Teacher		poor scholarship, behavior, truancy, employment, health,
FL	2	1923, 1924	Visiting Teacher	population increase during winter months	scholarship, home and school relations, behavior,
GA	2	1921, 1923	Visiting Teacher		scholarship, behavior, mental testing, delinquency, recreation, health, agency referral,
ID	1	1924	Visiting Teacher	Immigration	attendance, health vocation, home conditions, scholarship, behavior,
IL	1	1916			
IO	1	1922	Visiting Teacher	transient families, city over crowding	problems of 'transient family, broken homes, and over-crowding
KS	3	1922, 1924	Visiting Teacher	transient families	behavior, truancy, behavior, scholarship, and drop out prevention
KY	1	1912	Visiting Teacher		liaison, scholarships to stay in school
MA	4	1906, 1910, 1913			home conditions, mental testing, special classes, behavior, social histories
MI	3	1921, 1922, 1923	Visiting Teacher	immigration	behavior, interpreting to foreign families, recreation, health
MN	3	1916, 1920, 1923	Visiting Teacher	immigration	, drop out prevention, behavior, truancy, vocation, mental health
MO	3	1921, 1924	Visiting Teacher	mining town	special education, delinquency, family issues, interpreting between home and school.
MT	1	1924		mining town	recreation
NE	2	1922, 1923	Visiting Teacher		attendance, vocation, poverty, health, neglect, interpretation,
NJ	4	1915, 1922	Welfare workers		community work, not school work. Link between home and school, attendance - Child Guidance Clinic
NY	8	1913, 1922, 1923	Visiting Teacher	immigration, city life	mental testing, home conditions, vocation, behavior, scholarship, attendance, agency referrals, recreation,
NC	2	1922, 1923	Visiting Teacher	industrial life	problems, some from cotton mill families, some from mercantile classes, and some from other types of homes." p.16
OH	2	1922	Visiting Teacher		health, mental health, physical defects, vocation
OK	2	1924	Visiting Teacher		drop out prevention, truancy, vocation
OR	1	1924	Visiting Teacher		lectures at the university, works in elementary
PA	4	1917, 1922, 1923, 1924	Visiting teacher, school counselors (Philadelphia & Pittsburgh), home and school visitors		recreation, behavior, health, truancy, family problems, vocation, grades,
SD	1	1922	Visiting Teacher	rapid growth, transient	natural result of rapid growth
TX	1	1922	Visiting Teacher	immigration	works in a school whose population is wholly Mexican
VT	1	1922	Visiting Teacher		testing, regrading, home visiting, outside adjustments (resources). Education and training at the university
VA	1	1922	Visiting Teacher		education and training at the university
WA	1	1923	Visiting Teacher		delinquency, home conditions, truancy
WV	1	1922	Visiting Teacher	railway and mining	recreation, teacher education, scholarship funds
WI	1	1923	Visiting Teacher		recreation, scholarship funds, special classes for mentally defective students
WY	1	1924	Visiting Teacher	mining and agriculture	recreation and poverty

*Note.* Adapted from The Present Situation in Visiting Teacher Work. (1924) *NAVT Bulletin*, 1(1), 1-28.