


**Towards the establishment of practice standards  
for South African school social work:  
a mixed-method study with special reference  
to the Free State Province**

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# DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER

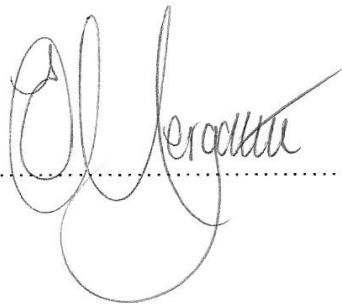
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I, Elizabeth Maria Vergottini, hereby declare that the thesis entitled "*Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a mixed-method study with special reference to the Free State Province*" is my own original work and that I have not, previously, in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a qualification.

**Signature:** .....



**Date:** 1 November 2018

# PREFACE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### *SOLI DEO GLORIA*

*All glory and recognition to my Heavenly Father for enabling me to complete this research successfully.*

A special word of appreciation to all the people who, in one way or another, contributed to the successful completion of this study.

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***I dedicate this thesis to my sons, Leo and Ferdi, my mother, Elize and, in loving memory of my late father, Pieter, who passed away during the year.***

# DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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Title of thesis:

**Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a mixed-method study with special reference to the Free State Province**

The co-author of the four articles which forms part of this dissertation, prof. M.L. (Mike) Weyers (Promoter), hereby give permission to the candidate, me. E.M. Vergottini, to include the four articles as part of her Ph.D. thesis. The contribution (advisory and supportive) of the co-author was kept within reasonable limits, thereby enabling the candidate to submit this thesis for examination purposes. The thesis, therefor, services as a fulfilment of the requirements for the doctor of philosophae in social work degree within the School for Psychosocial Health of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa.



**Prof. M.L. Weyers**

Promoter & co-author  
October 2018

# DECLARATION OF THE LANGUAGE EDITOR


## DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR

I, Lucia Antonia Whittle, declare herewith that I have edited the doctoral thesis, titled:

**Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African School Social Work: a mixed-method study with special reference to the Free State Province**

on behalf of its author, Mrs E M Vergottini, for the purpose of submission in respect of the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (Ph D) (Social Work) to the Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University.

As commissioned by the author, I have recommended certain alterations, adjustments and rephrasings to the linguistic content of the text. The implementation thereof has been left to the author's discretion.

  
.....  
L A Whittle, Ph D (Eng Lit) (UFS, Bloemfontein)

# ABSTRACT

## **Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a mixed-method study with special reference to the Free State Province**

**Key words:** *Social work; school social work; practice standards; inclusive education; social work roles, functions, expectations, responsibilities.*

### **Background:**

Although school social work has been practised in South Africa since the 1980s, employment levels have, until fairly recently, remained relatively low. A marked increase in new appointments, particularly since 2010, brought a number of questions to the fore. Foremost of these were: *What exactly do all the role-players within the educational system **expect** from the new appointees? And: What **roles and responsibilities** should school social workers in the South African education system fulfil in order to deliver an effective and appropriate service?* A review of available South African literature failed to provide adequate answers. This was mainly due to a scarcity of publications within this field in the post-1994-era and the resultant lack of an indigenous, relevant and comprehensive body of knowledge. In order to find the answers, the researcher undertook a comprehensive research project by means of which greater clarity would be sought with regard to the roles and responsibilities of local school social workers. The findings were then used in the compilation and verification of a set of practice standards for local school social work.

### **Aim:**

The primary aim of the research was to produce a **set of practice standards** applicable for use as a basis for the conceptualisation and improvement of school social work services in South Africa.

### **Method:**

The research utilised a sequential mixed-method design, coupled with elements of a case study. In order to validate the practice standards document, which was the culmination of the earlier research process steps, the Delphi technique was applied.

### **Results:**

The research produced a set of valid practice standards for use as a basis for the further conceptualisation and improvement of school social work services in South Africa in general and the Free State Province in particular. A number of recommendations were made, demonstrating ways in which practice standards and other research results could be utilised in the further development of this field of specialisation in respect of social work.

# OPSOMMING

## Ter daarstelling van praktykstandaarde vir Suid-Afrikaanse skoolmaatskaplike werk: 'n gemengde-metode studie met spesiale verwysing na die Vrystaat Provinsie

**Sleuteltermes:** *Maatskaplike werk; skoolmaatskaplike werk, praktykstandaarde, inklusiewe onderwys; maatskaplikewerk-rolle, -funksies, -verwagtinge, -verantwoordelikhede.*

### **Agtergrond:**

Alhoewel skoolmaatskaplike werk sedert die 1980's in Suid-Afrika beoefen is, het indiensnemingsvlakke tot redelik onlangs relatief laag gebly. 'n Merkbare toename in nuwe aanstellings sedert veral 2010 het 'n aantal vrae na vore gebring. Die belangrikste hiervan was: *Wat presies verwag al die rolspelers in die onderwyssisteem van die nuwe aanstellings?* en *Watter rolle en verantwoordelikhede moet skoolmaatskaplike werkers in die Suid-Afrikaanse onderwyssisteem verrig ten einde 'n effektiewe en toepaslike diens te lewer?* 'n Ontleding van beskikbare Suid-Afrikaanse literatuur het nie voldoende antwoorde verskaf nie. Dit was hoofsaaklik te wyte aan 'n gebrek aan publikasies op hierdie gebied in die post-1994-era en die gevolglike gebrek aan 'n inheemse, relevante en omvangryke kennisbasis. Om die antwoorde te vind, het die navorser 'n omvattende navorsingsprojek onderneem ten einde meer duidelikheid aangaande die rolle en verantwoordelikhede van plaaslike skoolmaatskaplike werkers te verkry. Die bevindings is toe vir die samestelling en verifikasie van 'n stel praktykstandaarde vir plaaslike skoolmaatskaplike werk gebruik.

### **Doel:**

Die hoofdoel van die navorsing was om 'n stel praktykstandaarde wat as basis vir die konseptualisering en verbetering van Suid-Afrikaanse skoolmaatskaplikewerk-dienste gebruik kan word, te skep.

### **Metode:**

In die navorsing is daar van 'n opeenvolgende gemengde-metode ontwerp, tesame met elemente van 'n gevallestudie, gebruik gemaak. Die Delphi-tegniek is toe gebruik om die praktykstandaard-dokument wat met behulp van die vorige stappe van die navorsingsproses geskep is, te valideer.

### **Resultate:**

Die navorsing het 'n stel geldige praktykstandaarde opgelewer wat as basis vir die verdere konseptualisering en verbetering van skoolmaatskaplikewerk-dienste in Suid-Afrika in die algemeen en veral in die Vrystaat Provinsie gebruik kan word. 'n Aantal aanbevelings is ook gemaak oor hoe om die praktykstandaarde en die ander resultate van die ondersoek in die verdere ontwikkeling van hierdie spesialiteitsrigting in maatskaplike werk te gebruik.

## List of abbreviations

- CBST = Circuit- Based Support Team
- DBE = Department of Basic Education
- DBST= District- Based Support Team
- DLST = District Learner Support Team
- DO = District Office
- DSD = Department of Social Development
- EMIS = Education Management Information System
- ESS = Educational Support Services
- FSDE = Free State Department of Education
- HOD = Head of Department
- IE = Inclusive Education
- LSA = Learner Support Adviser
- NCESS = National Committee for Education Support Services
- NCSNET = National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
- NDBE = National Department of Basic Education
- NDP = National Developmental Plan
- NWU = North-West University
- OSD = Occupational Specific Dispensation
- PDBE = Provincial Department of Basic Education
- SA = South Africa
- SACSSP = South African Council for Social Service Professions
- SBST = School Based Support Team
- SES = Senior Education Specialist
- SGBs = School Governing Bodies
- SLES = Specialised Learner and Educator Support
- SNE = Special needs education
- SSW = School social work
- SW = Social work
- WP 6 = White Paper 6

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# **SECTION 1: ORIENTATION AND METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW**

# 1 BACKGROUND

In 2010, the Free State Department of Education advertised new social work posts for twenty schools with the aim of deploying school social workers to special schools within the province (Free State Provincial Government, 2010). This was the first time in the history of the province that school social workers were appointed within specific special schools and not as had been done previously, only on district level, from where they serviced a number of different schools at a time (Voster, 2014). These new appointees were expected to form part of educational support services (psychosocial services) and to render services to both the learners and teachers/educators of each special school (Voster, 2014). This step increased the total number of school social workers in the province from twelve to 32.

As one of the original appointees at a special school, the researcher had first-hand experience of the diverse - and sometimes conflicting - role expectations associated with a post of this nature and the challenges inherent in functioning within a new and rapidly evolving system. A number of questions arose. Foremost of these were: *What exactly do all the role-players expect from school social workers within the educational system?* and *What roles and responsibilities should school social workers in this system perform in order to deliver an effective and appropriate service?*

In order to find some answers, an initial analysis of available sources and research data was undertaken. This indicated that there has been a paucity of publications in the field of South African school social work in the post-1994-era, with only a slight increase after 2010. The results of the analysis revealed that there was a lack of indigenous, relevant and up-to-date knowledge in this field and that steps should be taken to develop a body of knowledge that could be used as a basis for the further development of local school social work. This identified need prompted the researcher to contribute to the current body of knowledge by undertaking a study in which specific clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of local school social workers would be sought.

## 2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

South Africa is unique in terms of its socio-political history, education system and the types of challenges that its learners, their parents, its schools and society in general must face. This necessitates the development of a body of knowledge on roles and functions that would be *relevant and applicable* to local school social work, as opposed to trying blindly to replicate the types of services of other countries locally. To develop such an 'indigenous' body of knowledge requires both theoretical and chiefly empirical research which would, among others, address some of the pertinent deficiencies that are currently evident in the country's school social work system. The study was intended to contribute to the sorely needed local theoretical and especially empirical data.

South African school social work differs markedly from province to province. This state of affairs sometimes has a negative effect on service delivery, the recipients of services and the social work profession itself. Some of the differences may be illustrated as follows: In 2014, all 46 school social workers in the Western Cape Province were employed at district/circuit level (Kemp, 2014:16). At the same time in the Free State, however, the school social work system was divided into two basic categories. The first consisted of the twenty school social workers who were deployed to special schools, including the two schools of industries, viz. Jimmy Roos and Rosenhof. The social workers had been appointed in terms of the Public Service Act (103 of 1994). The second category comprised social workers who had been appointed in terms of the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998). They were based at the Department's five district offices and were not called 'school social workers', but 'senior education specialists' (Voster, 2014). Overall, district-based social workers were deployed in six provinces which did not include Limpopo, Mpumalanga or the Eastern Cape (Kemp, 2014:16). Some but not all the provinces had a social work 'coordinator' at provincial level. A fourth category of school social workers found in all provinces constituted those appointed by the school governing bodies (SGBs) of mainstream schools to non-subsidised posts. These functionaries did not fall under the direct control of any education department.

The differences between provinces was brought about by the fact that each province's Department of Education had the prerogative of deciding whether or not to appoint

school social workers and to determine what the roles and functions of the appointees should entail (Kemp, 2014:13,97).

The diversity of appointment protocols, levels and expectations amongst provinces raised a number of questions which had to be addressed by means of research. These included the question of how it was possible within one country with one set of policies and legislation to produce such diversity. In order to find the answer, it was *firstly* necessary by research to analyse the background, history and theoretical foundation of South African school social work, the policies that currently govern appointments and particularly the reasons for the differences in structures. It was likewise necessary to contextualise the findings by examining the state of international school social work and the factors placing South African learners at risk.

A second *basic problem* to emanate from the structural-functional differences between provinces was a lack of clarity regarding their *expectations* of the school social workers in their employ. In order to find an answer, the expectations of the management cadre of the Free State Department of Education initially had to be analysed in depth. The reason for this starting point was that all four categories of structures (provincial, district, school and SGB) are found in this province. The results achieved could then be used as a basis to conduct a national survey of all the country's education departments' expectations of 'their' school social workers.

A third *basic problem* identified was the lack of local, empirical data on school social workers' own perceptions of their roles, functions and tasks, as well as the unique challenges that they faced. In order to fill this gap, all available school social workers in the Free State Province had to be surveyed. Such a survey would enable the researcher to juxtapose its results with those emanating from the management cadre of the Free State Province, as well as from the national survey.

The successful addressing of the three problems stated would provide sufficient data for the formulation and verification of a set of **practice standards**, an instrument which currently is sorely lacking in South Africa. When viewed against the backdrop of practice standards used in other countries, for example America (NASW, 2012) and Australia (AASW, 2011), such a set of practice standards had to cover at least the following:

- the minimum *requirements* (including training, experience and competencies) that a

- practitioner should meet *before* being appointed to a post of school social worker,
- the *core roles and functions* that all school social workers should be able to perform within a South African setting,
  - the *additional roles and functions* that they should be able to perform within their particular practice setting (i.e. on provincial and district level, at special schools and in SGB posts),
  - the *operational systems* (e.g. multi-disciplinary teams) that *should* be in place to enable the practitioners to perform their roles and functions effectively,
  - the *management systems* (e.g. supervision structures and services) that *should* be in place to enable the practitioners to perform their roles and functions effectively.

The identified problems and needs led to the design and implementation of a research project that would chiefly answer five core questions.

### **3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The specific research questions, as well as the associated articles in which they were to be answered, may be summarised as follows.

- What are the background and theoretical foundations of particularly South African school social work and the legislation and policies that currently govern the appointment and management of the functionaries? (Article 1),
- What are the Free State Department of Education's expectations of its school social workers, and what operational and management systems are in place to enable them to meet these expectations? (Article 2),
- In which way do the managements of the different provincial departments of education perceive the need for, and role of, school social work in South Africa with specific reference to expectations and a possible increased need for such a service? (Article 2),
- What do school social workers, particularly those in the Free State, see as their core and additional roles and functions, and what challenges do they face in executing these? (Article 3),
- Which practice standards could be set that would assist in the improvement of school social work services in South Africa in general and the Free State Province in particular? (Article 4)

## 4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study was:

to provide a ***set of practice standards*** that could be used as a basis for the conceptualisation and improvement of school social work services in South Africa in general and in the Free State Province in particular.

In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives were pursued:

- to provide the background and theoretical foundations of international and particularly South African school social work and the local legislation and policies that currently dictate the appointment and management of these functionaries,
- to provide an analysis of the Free State Department of Education's expectations of its school social workers and the operational and management systems that are in place to enable them to meet these expectations,
- to provide an analysis of the nine South African provincial departments of education's views of the need for, and the role and functions of, school social work in the inclusive education system,
- to ascertain
  - what school social workers in the Free State see as their roles and functions;
  - the challenges they face in the performance of these roles and tasks,
- to formulate and verify a set of practice standards that could be used as a basis to improve school social work services in South Africa in general and in the Free State Province in particular.

## 5 DEMARCATION AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As opposed to some other countries, school social work in South Africa is not yet *officially* recognised as a separate *speciality* by the profession's regulatory body, the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). However, on 10 March 2017 the SACSSP accepted a proposal by the National Committee for School Social Work Education and Practice (NACOSSWEP) for the start of such a process. It is to culminate in the publication of regulations for a speciality in terms of the Social Service Professions Act (NACOSSWEP, 2018). At the time of writing, this process is still on-going and runs parallel to this research. As a consequence, some overlapping exists of the work done by the SACSSP/NACOSSWEP and in this research project.

The scope of the research was, secondly, restricted by the fact that currently no clarity exists on the total number or identity of practitioners who could be deemed as being

'school social workers'. This made it impossible to survey all the relevant practitioners; the ideal of such a study of this nature. The only practical alternative was to target the management cadre of inclusive education of all nine provinces and the school social workers in the Free State Province in separate surveys. At the very least, the national survey provided some indication of the state of school social work in the country, whereas the Free State survey provided more in-depth data in respect of practitioners' views. These data sets were supplemented by views from the management cadre of school social work in the Free State Province (see heading 6 for details). These three steps, to some extent, ameliorated the 'gaps' left by a lack of a national survey of all relevant practitioners.

It is generally accepted that it is the responsibility of a profession's regulatory body to establish, monitor and enforce practice standards (SANC, 2013:2; Scott, Laragy, Giles & Bland, 2004: 213-217). As the development of school social work in South Africa has not yet reached this stage, the practice standards that are the outcome of this research can only be viewed as *preliminary* in nature and primarily applicable to the Free State Province. They could, however, be used as a basis if a body such as the SACSSP were to decide to develop practice standards for South African school social work in future. The preliminary practice standards should, in the meantime, provide a sufficient basis for the further establishment and improvement of local school social work.

This study is further limited by the fact that it would be practically impossible to cover *all* the components that are usually contained in a standards statement (cf. NASW, 2012; AASW, 2011). It had rather to focus on the *core components* such as minimum requirements and core roles and functions (see Heading 2).

The research design, finally, did not lend itself to the pilot- or pre-testing of the survey instruments (see Heading 6). These instruments were, however, informed by a comprehensive literature review and the results of the first qualitative component of the research process (see Figure 1), and then developed in conjunction with the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University.

## **6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research project was approved by the COMPRES Research Unit and the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Ethics approval no.: NWU-00370-15-A1 – see Annexure 1) of the North-West University. The research design and steps followed will now be outlined briefly (see individual articles for more detail).

## 6.1 Research design

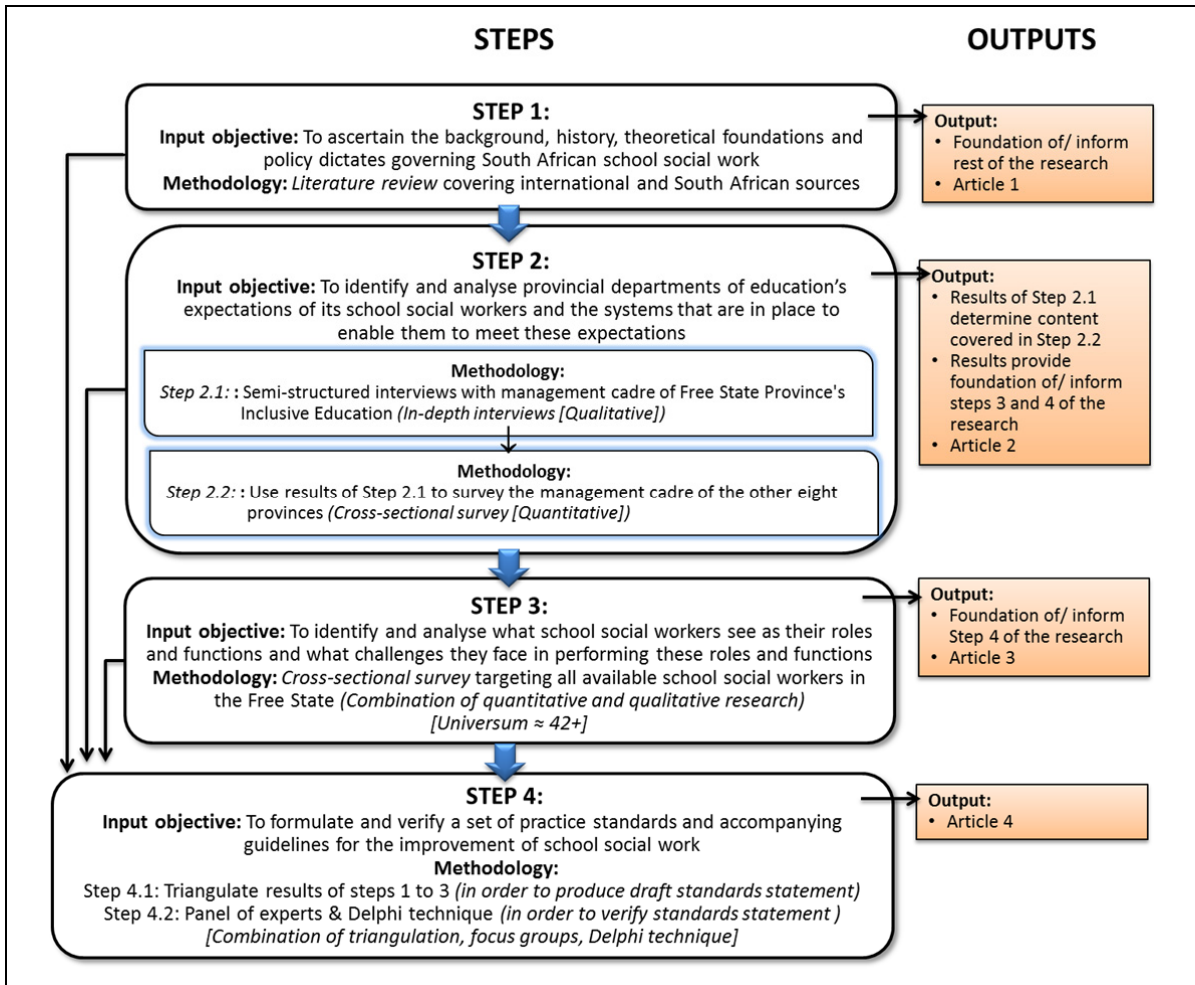
A research design is, basically, the overall plan that researchers use to accomplish the objectives of a study (Mouton, 2001:55) and is intended to guide them in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the information obtained (Fouché *et al.*, 2011:142-143). In this study a pragmatic perspective world view is used as the philosophical underpinning of the mixed-method study (Creswell, 2009:10). According to Johnson *et al.* (2007:123), mixed-method research involves "...combined elements of qualitative and quantitative research elements for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration." This study utilised a *sequential exploratory mixed-method design (QUAN/qual)* wherein the researchers would, typically, "...first collect and analyse qualitative data, and these findings inform subsequent quantitative data collection" (Fetters *et al.*, 2013:2136). This design was chosen because it is, according to Cabrera (2011:80), ideal for the systematic explorations of new or unknown phenomena and because "...neither quantitative nor qualitative methods would be sufficient, by themselves, to capture the details and trends of the situation" (Ivankova *et al.*, 2006:3). If quantitative and qualitative methods were combined in the study, they would complement each other and "...allow for a more robust analysis by taking advantage of the strengths of each" (Ivankova *et al.*, 2006:3). In this study, the basic sequential steps as outlined by Cabrera (2011:80-88) and Fetters *et al.* (2013:2145) were used as a guideline.

The research consists of a literature review (with elements of a systematic review) that was combined with a qualitative and a quantitative empirical component (cf. Bambra, 2011:15; Fouché & Delport, 2011:65-66). This somewhat complicated design can best be explained by combining its core elements with the research process that was followed.

## 6.2 The research process

The research process consists of four sequential steps, most of which culminated in one of the four articles. Each step built on the results of the previous one. The steps followed during the research process are illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The research process**



Each of the four steps will be discussed in more detail below.

### **6.2.1 Step 1: Ascertain the background, theoretical foundations and policy dictates that govern South African school social work**

The first step of the research process consists of an in-depth review of available literature and research findings pertaining to the background, history and foundations of school social work both abroad and in South Africa. It also covers the local policies and related documents (e.g. legislation) that dictate how school social work is practised and where social workers are positioned within the education system. The basic aim of this step was to contribute "...towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified" (Fouchè & Delpont, 2002:127), as well as to provide a basis for the rest of the research.

The review follows the basic steps suggested by Jesson (2011:104) and Booth *et al.* (2012:26,53-199). The steps, as they apply to this study, are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Eight steps that will be followed in the literature review process**

Steps	Procedure
<b>Step 1: Defining aim and scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To gain a broad understanding of the international field of school social work.</li> <li>• To produce a profile of international standards for school social work services.</li> <li>• To produce a profile/typology of the competencies/capabilities that school social workers in other countries should meet.</li> <li>• To gain a broad understanding of the development and current nature of school social work in South Africa.</li> <li>• To produce a profile of the legislation and macro policies that currently regulate this profession within the South African education system.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2: Plan and protocol</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate a list of key concepts</li> <li>• Utilise the assistance of the subject specialist at the library of the North-West University to identify appropriate search engines</li> <li>• Conduct a systematic search based on key concepts (will cover both South African and international publications)</li> <li>• Expand and/or adapt key concepts based on the results produced by initial literature search.</li> <li>• Repeat the process until no new concepts are produced</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3: Produce preliminary documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate publications/documents (at least abstracts if full documents are not initially available).</li> <li>• Categorize publications/documents in terms of the themes covered by the research</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4: Decide on inclusion and exclusion criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the first macro review of generated publications/documents</li> <li>• Decide on criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of the data/documents that have been generated</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5: Select and produce final set of documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select final set of publications/documents</li> <li>• Generate or acquire (full) publications/documents</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6: Do a suitability and quality appraisal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan documents in order to ascertain their relevance to the study and discard those which are not applicable.</li> <li>• Utilise the critical review checklist developed by Jesson (2011:157-8) to assess the quality of the publications/documents and discard those which are not making the grade.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 7: Data extraction and synthesis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform a meta-analysis of selected publications/documents</li> <li>• Extract relevant data/information from the publications/ documents</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check for heterogeneity (diversity) and identify possible reasons in this regard.</li> <li>• Synthesise all the selected data/information according to themes covered by the study.</li> <li>• Tabulate summary data where applicable.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 8: Report on findings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce article based on the literature review.</li> </ul>

Based on: Jesson (2011:104) and Booth *et al.* (2012:26, 53-199).

Sources consulted in the literature review include articles from scholarly and academic journals, dissertations, acts, policies, central and provincial government publications, publications produced by non-profit organisations and books. With the assistance of the subject specialist at the North-West University, these were identified via the use of search engines such as NEXUS, Social Sciences Index, Social Work Abstracts and OneSearch, as well as the catalogue of the Ferdinand Postma Library (North-West University), Google books and Google Scholar.

An initial literature search and analysis revealed a large and well-developed body of knowledge on school social work in international publications. It was, however, apparent that systems differed markedly from country to country and that none of these systems could be applied *ipso facto* to South Africa. Publications on South African school social work in the post-1994 era were very limited.

The in-depth literature review and analysis were primarily focussed on four themes. The first comprised the roots of school social work with an emphasis on the international and particularly national development of this field of practice. The second is the 'state of the art' of school social work in developed countries. It covers, among others, the standards for school social work services as required in the USA (NASW, 2012) and Australia (AASW, 2011), as well as the competency requirements that school social workers should meet (cf. Ellis & Bryant, 1976; Teasley, 2005). The third focus is on the state of school social work in South Africa and covers specifically the (few) recent research findings that were available on this topic (e.g. Kasiram, 1988; Kemp, 2005; Kemp, 2014; Van Sittert, 2016). The final focus is on the legislation and macro policies that currently regulate this profession within the South African education system.

The review was chiefly intended to lay the foundation for the remainder of the research. It could, consequently, provide the details required for the successful exploration and analysis of, among others, the different provinces' expectations of their school social workers (i.e. Step 2), the roles and functions of local school social workers (i.e. Step 3), and, ultimately, of the development of a set of core practice standards (i.e. Step 4). The results of this step will, primarily, be contained in article 1.

### ***6.2.2 Step 2: Identify and analyse the provincial departments of educations' expectations of their school social workers***

The second step focussed on the identification and analysis of provincial departments of education's expectations of their school social workers and the systems that are in place to enable them to meet these expectations. In line with the sequential exploratory mixed-method design used, this step was divided into two sub-steps. The first consisted of a qualitative exploration of the Free State Province's expectations and the operations and management systems in place to enable them to perform their roles and functions.

The qualitative study produced new themes that had to be addressed as well as indications of, among others, the more specific issues that needed to be covered in the quantitative, national survey of provincial education departments (see Step 2.2).

The contents of the two (sub-) steps will be covered in more detail below.

#### **6.2.2.1 Step 2.1: In-depth interviews with management cadre of Free State Department of Education**

The first step consisted of two parts. In respect of the first, all available documentation pertaining to the positioning of, and requirements posed to school social workers in the province, such as the Human Resource Management Circular 50 (Free State Provincial Government, 2010), was analysed. The results, combined with insights gained from the broad literature review, were then used as a basis for the formulation of the questions that were asked during this phase. It took the form of semi-structured interviews with important role-players within the department.

It should be noted that, at the time of the interviews, the student was an employee of one of the schools within the Free State Education Department. In view thereof and in

order to meet ethical requirements, special steps had to be taken in order to enforce neutrality. The basic procedure observed is the following.

- The senior staff within the department who chiefly manages its social work services was identified. The investigation indicated that there were at least four such managers.
- In order to meet ethical requirements, an independent third party (a social worker at a NGO without ties to the Department or the study) was used to approach the potential respondents with a request to take part in the study (see Annexure 2 for her abridged CV). Her tasks included the provision and discussion of the informed consent form that respondents were required to complete (see Annexure 3). The gatekeeper, who represented the independent third party's initial point of entry into the system, was a member of the directorate which was aware of, and supports, the student's research.
- Semi-structured interviews (see Annexure 4) were then conducted with the managers who completed the consent form. In terms of ethical requirements, an independent interviewer had to be appointed. This functionary, who was in possession of a Ph.D. degree and possessed research experience (see Annexure 5 for abridged CV), led the interviews and was accompanied by the independent third party who acted as scribe. (These two role-players had been thoroughly briefed beforehand on all the relevant facets of the research, and their roles in it.)
- With the consent of the interviewees, the interviews were taped on an audio tape recorder, transcribed and finally analysed using Tesche's suggested eight steps in the coding process (Creswell, 2014:197-201; Poggenpoel, 1998:343-344). This data was supplemented with field notes taken by the scribe (Greeff, 2002:302-305).

The Free State's Inclusive education directorate was aware of the student's research and was of the opinion that its results would be to their advantage and therefore fully supported this endeavour. These views are expressed in a ('goodwill') letter contained in Annexure 6.

The way in which Tesche's suggested eight steps in the coding process were applied in the study, is summarised in Table 2. Because relatively few, albeit comprehensive, interviews were conducted, the designated co-coder followed the same eight steps. The co-coder was the student's promoter.

**Table 2: Tesch's proposes eight steps in the coding of qualitative data**

Steps	Procedure
<b>Step 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The researcher will get a sense of the whole by reading through all of the transcriptions carefully.</li><li>• The same task will be performed regarding the field notes.</li><li>• He/she will then jot down some ideas as they come to mind.</li></ul>
<b>Step 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The researcher will select one interview (probably the most comprehensive) and go through it asking "What is this about?" and think about the underlying meaning in the information.</li><li>• He/she will write the thoughts that come up in the margin.</li></ul>
<b>Step 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When the researcher has completed Step 2 for at least two respondents, a list is made of all the topics.</li><li>• Similar topics will be clustered together and formed into columns that will be arranged into major topics, unique topics and leftovers.</li></ul>
<b>Step 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The researcher will then take the list and return to the data.</li><li>• The topics will be abbreviated as codes and the codes written next to the appropriate segments of the text.</li><li>• The researcher will then try out this preliminary organising scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerge.</li></ul>
<b>Step 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The researcher will find the most descriptive wording for the topics and turn them into categories.</li><li>• He/she will then endeavour to reduce the total list of categories by grouping together topics that relate to each other.</li><li>• Lines will be drawn between the categories to show interrelationships.</li></ul>
<b>Step 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The researcher will then make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category.</li><li>• He/she will then alphabetise the codes.</li></ul>
<b>Step 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The data material belonging to each category will be assembled in one place and a preliminary analysis performed.</li></ul>
<b>Step 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The researcher will recode existing data if necessary,</li></ul>

Table derived from: Creswell (2014:198) and Poggenpoel (1998:343-344).

The selection of the specific design and procedure may be motivated as follows:

- The reason for choosing a more qualitative approach and particularly qualitative interviewing is its inherent strength of providing respondents with the opportunity to communicate their perspectives on the nature of the phenomenon under study in a more comprehensive manner (Rubin & Babbie, 2014:471).

- This also affords the researcher the opportunity to gain a detailed picture on the participant's ideas and perceptions on a specific subject (Greeff, 2002:302).
- Other advantages encompass the naturalness and spontaneity involved, a high response rate, flexibility, and access to serendipitous information as well as to non-verbal responses (Gochros, 2011:302-305).
- The disadvantages that were considered include the time and expense involved, interview intensity, the inaccessibility of potential interviewees, the loss of anonymity, and interviewer distortion and influence (Gochros, 2011:302-5). To overcome the issue of interviewer distortion and influence, an independent person in possession of a PhD degree was appointed as the lead interviewer while an independent third party/social worker acted as scribe.

The schedule utilised during the semi-structured interviews mainly consisted of core open-ended questions, supplemented with potential probes and follow-up question (see Annexure 4). Gochros (2011:313) mentions that such follow-up questions are useful in focusing an interview.

The population of this step of the study comprised the four senior staff members of the Free State provincial office who manage its inclusive education section. They were included as a result of their position of seniority, location (Free State), knowledge and experience. All four are directly responsible for the appointment and deployment of school social workers and their functioning within the department. Because the entire population was targeted, no sampling was required (cf. Patton, 2002:230).

The results obtained through the interviews were furthermore triangulated with those obtained in the literature study and policy analyses (see Step 1) in order to test for consistency (Patton, 2002:248) and, possibly, to gain a deeper insight into the Department's expectations (De Vos, 2002:341-342). This took the form of the triangulation of data as described in Weyers *et al.* (2008:208). The results also indicated the avenues that needed to be explored further in the national survey of provincial departments of education (see Step 2.2) and in the survey of the Free State's school social workers (see Step 3). Consequently, it was only possible to finalise the questionnaires used in these surveys (see respective annexures) once Step 2.1 had been concluded.

### **6.2.2.2 Step 2.2: The national survey of provincial departments of education**

The data and insights generated by the previous steps were used as a basis in the national survey of provincial departments of education. The main reason for this broadening of the scope of the research was that, although basic education in South Africa is regulated by the same policies and laws, each province's department functions in a unique way (Kemp, 2014:13, 97).

The National Department of Basic Education, being aware of the student's research, was of the opinion that its results would be to their advantage and fully supported the endeavour (see Annexure 7). The survey targeted the *entire* management cadre (i.e. director, deputy director and senior managers) of the inclusive education directorates of all nine provinces. It was intended to ascertain how school social work services (if any) were structured in their provinces, their views on the need for such services and for the appointment of (more) school social workers, the roles and functions they expected school social workers to perform and related matters. Although the targeted population was somewhat limited in terms of numbers, they were seen as specialists within the context of the research.

The survey took the form of a questionnaire developed in conjunction with the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University (see Annexure 9). Its utilisation entailed the following:

- The National Department of Basic Education was approached to conduct the research within all nine provinces. After receiving their approval, individual approvals from the provinces were also obtained (see Annexures 10 - 18).
- Once the approvals were in place, the neutral third party approached the potential respondents with a request to take part in the survey. These respondents were the entire applicable senior management cadre of all nine provinces.
- The survey instrument was accompanied by a cover letter which provided information on the nature of, and reasons for, the study (cf. Flick, 2014:54).
- The data generated by the questionnaire was captured by the North-West University's Statistical Consultation Services, who also assisted in the coding and analysis of the data (cf. Ellis, 2015).

### **6.2.3 Step 3: A survey of the Free State's school social workers**

The third step focussed on the personal perceptions of the school social workers in the Free State of their role and functions, as well as of the challenges they face in daily practice. It targeted all practitioners, including both those appointed by school governing bodies and those in the employ of the Department of Basic Education. The entire population of school social workers in the Free State province was therefore targeted.

The school social workers in the employ of the Department of Basic Education may be divided into two sub-categories, viz. the school social workers appointed to special schools and school social workers employed in district offices. The exact number of potential respondents appointed by school governing bodies was uncertain. In every case, use was made of a specially designed, quantitative survey questionnaire to generate the required data (see Annexure 20).

In the case of the practitioners of the Department of Basic Education, organisational approval to conduct the research with the intended respondents was first sought from the Department (see Annexure 10). Once approval was gained, the independent third party (a social worker at a NGO who has no ties either to the department or the study) approached each potential respondent telephonically with a request to take part in the study. This step included the provision of information on the Department's approval of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation and the content of the informed consent form they were required to complete (see Annexure 19). The rest of the procedure was similar to that which was followed in the case of the national survey.

The social workers appointed by school governing bodies were then identified by means of the use of the snowball technique (Strydom & Delpont, 2002:336; Strydom & Venter, 2002:208). In this case, potential respondents already known to the researcher were approached by the neutral third party with a request to take part. They were requested also to provide information on any other similar appointees. These leads were followed up and the process repeated. From then the procedure was the same as that which was followed in the case of departmental employees.

On account of the relatively small number of potential respondents, it was only possible to analyse the responses by the use of descriptive statistics (Ellis, 2015). This data

was augmented by the results of the analysis of the written comments. In this regard, a procedure similar to the one suggested by Creswell (2009:181-190) was used.

The data produced by the sets of surveys was first categorised and analysed primarily by the use of descriptive statistics (Ellis, 2015) before being interpreted separately. Thirdly, the results were triangulated. In the latter regard, the purpose was to reveal similarities and incongruences (Weyers *et al.*, 2008:208) between the data sets.

#### **6.2.4 Step 4: The formulation and verification of a set of practice standards**

The previous three steps of the research process produced an enormous amount of data, all of which was triangulated in order to formulate a draft set of practice standards, basically similar in form and function to those currently in use in the USA (cf. NASW, 2012) and Australia (cf. AASW, 2011). It particularly covered:

- the minimum *requirements* that a practitioner should meet *before* being appointed to a school social worker post,
- the *core roles and functions* that all school social workers should be able to perform within a South African setting,
- the *additional roles and functions* which they could perform within particular practice settings,
- the *operational systems* that *should* be in place to enable practitioners to perform their roles and functions effectively,
- the *management systems* that *should* be in place to enable practitioners to perform their roles and functions effectively.

Use was made of the Delphi technique (Wester & Borders, 2014:449-450) to refine and verify the practice standards. The members of the panel that was mobilised for this purpose were selected on the basis of their specialised knowledge, experience and representativeness of the entire field of school social work. It consisted of the following five members:

- a member of the NACOSSWEP team who is deemed to be an authority in the field of school social work,
- a school social worker in the employ of the Free State's Department of Education at district level in order to have a representative for mid-level practitioners,

- a school social worker at a special school that had considerable experience in this somewhat specialised field,
- a senior/experienced practitioner in the employ of a school governing body in order to represent this cadre of practitioners and
- a senior researcher in social work, designated by the North-West University, to ensure that, amongst others, scientific standards were adhered to during the implementation of the technique.

The Delphi process followed the protocol as suggested by Ogbeifun *et al.* (2016:2004), Rusnani *et al.* (2016:89) and Wester and Borders (2014:449-450). It consisted of the following phases each of which was completed electronically (cf. Trevelyan & Robinson, 2015).

- In the first phase, each panellist was provided with the draft practice standards before being afforded the opportunity to contribute additional information to the document they considered to be pertinent to the issue and is lacking in the original manuscript. All the responses were then consolidated into a second draft of the standards statement.
- In the second phase, the updated draft was again provided to the panel. Their feedback was used to determine the areas or issues the panellists were in agreement with and which areas needed further development and refinement. Their evaluations and feedback in the latter regard was then utilised to improve the document.
- The second step was repeated in the third phase in order to ensure consensus on the document and to ensure that all were in agreement that the document was relevant and valid (Linstone & Turoff, 2002:5-6; Wester & Borders, 2014:449-450).
- In the final phase, an evaluative assessment of the document was requested from every panel member for consideration and evaluation (Skulmoski *et al.*, 2007:3-12).

The same provisions to ensure ethical research practices as made during the previous steps were instituted during the application of the Delphi technique. It should be noted that, in terms of the results achieved through the use of this technique, no power analysis was possible (Powell, 2003:380). The representativeness of the results was based rather on the composition and expertise of the panel than on its size (Powell, 2003:380).

The outcomes of the process comprised a set of practice standards that would be applicable at least to the Free State Province, and probably further afield also. This result will be made available to all the participants, as well as to other provinces and the broad social work fraternity, by means of its publication in a South African social work or educational journal. It could then be used either as a general guideline for the development of school social work in the other provinces and/or as the basis of a province-specific verification proses. It may even contribute to the leading of the current process to the recognition of school social work as a separate *speciality* by the profession's regulatory body. The study's recommendations could also spark and guide further research in the field of (local) school social work.

At the end of the fourth step, the final task was to capture the results of the research in the form of articles fit for publication in social work and/or educational journals. The intended contents of these articles will be covered separately.

## **7 THE DESIGN AND TESTING OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

On account of the combined qualitative and quantitative nature of the selected research design, both the trustworthiness and the validity and reliability of research instruments received attention. In this regard, Dellinger and Leech's (2007:321-325) "Validation Framework in Mixed-Methods Research" was used as a guideline. It calls for attention to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability issues in the design of semi-structured interview schedule, as well as for the face and content validity of the survey questionnaires through the use of a review process involving a panel of experts and pilot studies (Creswell, 2003:157-158; Dellinger & Leech, 2007:321-325; Elmes *et al.*, 2003:55-59; Jackson, 2003:44-45; Shenton, 2004:64-69). All these aspect, except for the use of pilot studies (see Heading 5), received attention during the research process and are covered in more detail in the respective articles.

## **8 PARTICIPANTS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The selection of participants in this study was done with position (managerial position of all nine provincial departments of education's inclusive education directorates and school governing board appointees), knowledge, experience (practising school social workers) and geography (Free State Province and all other provinces) in mind. All the qualifying candidates were approached and no unfair and unjust exclusion on the

grounds of race, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, conscience, belief or language were made. A reasonable likelihood prevailed that all participants and their employers/employees would benefit from the research and its results. The participants/respondents were all professionals and in possession of either a social work or educational qualification.

There were four sets of respondents who were targeted sequentially, namely:

- the director of inclusive education of the Free State Province and the three senior managers of the directorate (i.e. four respondents) – qualitative interviews,
- the management cadre (i.e. director, deputy director and senior managers) of the inclusive education directorates of the other eight provinces – anonymous quantitative questionnaires,
- the school social workers in the employ of the Education Department and school governing bodies in the Free State Province – anonymous quantitative questionnaires;
- a panel of experts for the verification of the set of practice standards – Delphi technique.

In all cases, only the knowledge and professional opinions of participants were canvassed. This in itself implies a low risk and minimal impact to the welfare of participants. The right to withdraw applied to all the groups of participants.

Respect for persons implies that the dignity, well-being and safety of all research participants should be of primary concern. This includes their welfare and safety interests, as well as authorship, intellectual property interests, and collegial and professional interests (Botha & Roestenburg, 2014:2). In the case of the Department of Basic Education, first level organisational consent to conduct the research in their midst was sought (see Annexure 10 to 18). In order to do so, ethical clearance for the research was gained from the North-West University's Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

At the second level, informed consent was gained from each prospective respondent (see Annexures 3, 8, 19 and 25). Its core purpose was to ensure anonymity and protect confidentiality. Where prospective respondents were in the employ of school governing bodies, each of these bodies had to grant permission for their participation.

A sound research design and methodology are vital requirements for research integrity. In this case, the decision was taken preferably to combine methodologies rather than to follow either the solely qualitative or quantitative route. It was the intention to target all the major role-players and not only focus on a single group. This produced a balanced 'picture' of the current state of affairs and also of what it ought to be in future.

If the ethical risk descriptors (see Table 3) were to be taken into account, it was concluded that all the respondents fell into the 'medium to low risk' categories. Because the research was conducted among a non-clinical population and focussed on their professional opinions, the chances of exposing them to physical, psychological or emotional risk or harm were negligible.

**Table 3: Ethical risk descriptors**

RISK LEVELS	DESCRIPTIONS
<b>High risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research with human participants involving drugs</li> <li>• Research involving more than blood and sputum human tissue samples</li> <li>• Research budget higher than R1 million per annum</li> <li>• Clinical research with children</li> </ul>
<b>Medium risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative health research, multi-centre health studies and long-term health studies exceeding one year in duration</li> <li>• Umbrella health projects involving human participants</li> <li>• Research involving face-to-face psychosocial contact with participants e.g. interviews, focus groups</li> <li>• Psychosocial intervention studies</li> <li>• Research with vulnerable communities (older persons and their care givers, patients and health-care professionals, students and teachers, persons with life-threatening diseases and their care givers, people living with HIV, wards of the state and guardians of care-givers, employees and employers, prisoners and the relevant prison authorities, members of the SA Defence force and their supervisors, children, mentally ill persons, special care with women – no clinical research with pregnant women or foetuses)</li> <li>• Umbrella bio-physical projects with humans using no drugs</li> <li>• Research budget not higher than R250,000.00 per annum</li> </ul>
<b>Low Risk</b> <i>(Minimal risk to human participants)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys by means of validated interview schedules</li> <li>• Documents analyses with identifiable human participants</li> <li>• Questionnaire or instrument development</li> <li>• Bio-physical research with no drugs involved</li> <li>• Bio-physical research not involving human tissues</li> <li>• Small research budget</li> </ul>

<b>No ethical approval needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic reviews</li> <li>• Postal surveys with validated questionnaires</li> </ul>
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(Based on: Botha & Roestenburg, 2014:2-5)

In all dealings with respondents, the informed and voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any time was emphasised. The informed consent process was discussed verbally and in writing with the participants of the Free State management cadre before interviews. An independent person was identified to obtain the consent and handled all contact making of participants, thus ensuring that the process took place without coercion, undue influence or inappropriate incentives.

All the interviews were captured on audio-tape and transcribed by registered data typists. All the tapes, transcriptions and research notes were handed over to the Social Work Subject Group of the North-West University (NWU) for safekeeping in the prescribed manner and for 7 (seven) years. No names or other particulars that might lead to the identification of individuals, respondents or schools were used in the reports. Only pseudonyms were used to explain individual responses.

## **9 CORE CONCEPTS**

The meanings of the core concepts used in the research report will next be covered briefly.

### **9.1 School social work**

For the purposes of this research, school social work has been defined as follows:

*School social work is the application of social work principles and methods within the education system to render holistic social work services to support learners, parents, educators and the school as community, with the main goal of establishing an environment where the learner can reach his or her full potential by addressing the social, emotional, socio-economic and behavioural barriers to learning.*

### **9.2 Inclusive education**

In the research, inclusive education was seen as a system of education which is responsive to the diverse needs of all learners (cf. Naicker, 1999:19). It has, more

comprehensively, been defined as a learning environment which promotes the "...total personal, academic and professional development of all learners, irrespective of race, sex, ability, religion, culture, sexual orientation, style of learning and language" (Department of Basic Education, 2001:16).

### **9.3 Practice standards**

In this research and thesis, the construct 'practice standards' will refer to an authoritative statement by which a profession, in this case social work, defines and describes the set of behaviours or range of activities for which its practitioners are accountable (Scott *et al.*, 2004: 213-217; Munson, 2011:41; SANC, 2013:2). The study will be limited to the standards that school social workers must adhere to.

### **9.4 Social work supervision**

The basic aim of social work supervision is to ensure that beneficiaries receive a quality service, while at the same time supporting and building the capacity of social workers (Department of Social Development, 1997:10). These elements are reflected in the following definition as adopted by the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the S.A. Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) and used as a basis in this study:

*"Social work supervision is an interactional and interminable process within the context of a positive, anti-discriminatory relationship, based on distinct theories, models and perspectives on supervision whereby a social work supervisor supervises a social work practitioner by performing educational, supportive and administrative functions in order to promote efficient and professional rendering of social work services" (DSD & SACSSP, 2012:10.)*

### **9.5 Participants and respondents**

The word 'participants' will refer to all those persons that participated in the study and contributed to the data (Gravetter & Forzano, 2003:462). It, therefore, includes participants in the qualitative components of the research and the application of the Delphi technique, as well as the respondents that completed questionnaires.

'Respondents' refers to those persons that participated in the research by completing questionnaires (cf. Babbie, 2001:G3).

## 9.6 Special school

Special schools basically refer to schools that have specialised skills available to assist learners with their special needs (Department of Basic Education, 2001:21).

## 10 THE PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

This manuscript is presented in an article format in accordance with Rule 5 (five) as set out in the General Academic Rules of the North-West University (2017:24-31). The content requirements of the South African journals *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* and *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*, as well as the international journal, *Social Work & Society* (see Annexures 21 and 22), were used as basis to formulate the articles. However, in order to ensure uniformity in presentation and to meet the requirements of research on a Ph.D. level, not all the technical requirements of the targeted scientific journals will be strictly adhered to in this thesis. This will particularly apply to their length requirements and prescribed reference system. These will be changed after the completion of the examination of the thesis and before the articles are submitted for possible publication in the journals.

This thesis is structured as follows:

- **Section 1: Orientation and methodological overview**

This section, among others, covers the problem statement, the aims and objectives of the study and the research design and procedure that were followed in order to attain the intended outcomes.

- **Section 2: The journal articles**

The second section contains four articles, with the following titles:

- Article 1: *“A review of the background, theoretical foundations and policy dictates governing South African school social work”*
- Article 2: *“South African provincial departments of education’s expectations of school social workers in their employ”*
- Article 3: *“The roles, tasks and challenges faced by school social workers in the Free State’s education system*
- Article 4: *“The development and verification of practice standards for South African school social work”*

- **Section 3: A summary of results, findings and recommendations**

In section 3, the main and overarching conclusions that were reached as a result of the research will be discussed, as will the recommendations emanating from the study in its entirety.

- **Section 4: Annexures**

The annexures form the concluding section and, among others, include all the supportive documentation and detailed data sets produced by the research.

In order to convert the sections and articles into functional units, each will be provided with its own bibliography. For the sake of convenience, a combined bibliography for the entire thesis will be provided at the end.

Since the start of the research process in 2015, South African school social work has undergone rapid growth and change. The data contained in this manuscript therefore represents only the state of practice as of 31 December 2017.

The specific 'names' of the provincial government departments may differ from province to province. In this script, if not specifically named, they will be referred to as 'provincial departments of education'. At national level, this script will refer to the 'National Department of Basic Education' or simply the 'national department'.

It is, finally, important to note that, in order to make each article into a functional unit, some data will have to be repeated across articles. Attempts have been made to keep such repetitions to the minimum.

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# **SECTION 2: THE JOURNAL ARTICLES**

## ARTICLE 1:

# A REVIEW OF THE BACKGROUND, THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND POLICY DICTATES GOVERNING SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

**Key words:** *School social work, inclusive education, history, roles, functions, expectations*

### **Abstract**

**Background:** Although in some countries school social work has been practised for over a hundred years, other countries have only more recently started to give more formal recognition to this specialised field of social work. South Africa falls within the latter category. There has, in recent history, been a trend to increase appointments of more school social workers and steps are also currently under way to declare this as a speciality by the South African Council for Social Service Professions. On a structural-functional level, however, the field is characterised by diverse employment structures and a multiplicity of role and task expectations. This state of affairs, coupled with a paucity of locally relevant research has necessitated a broad angle scan of the nature of school social work.

**Aim:** In this article, the scan consists of an overview of the nature of school social work in general, as well as of its background, theoretical foundations and policy dictates that specifically govern South African school social work.

**Method:** Systematic review of literature.

**Results:** The article should provide the background against which the current and future roles and functions of school social workers in South Africa should be judged. It could also provide the basis for further research in this field.

# **A REVIEW OF THE BACKGROUND, THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND POLICY DICTATES GOVERNING SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

**EM Vergottini & ML Weyers**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Although school social work (hereafter sometimes abbreviated to SSW), has been practised for over a hundred years in some countries, others have only more recently started to give more formal recognition to this field of social work. This trend was borne out by the results of a recent international survey undertaken by the International Network for School Social Work which revealed a global increase in the number of school social workers (Huxtable, 2016:1) and it prompted Huxtable (2016:1) to conclude that "...the value of school social work can no longer be ignored".

A general increase in the number of school social workers is evident also in South Africa. In this regard, the number of workers appointed by provincial education departments grew:

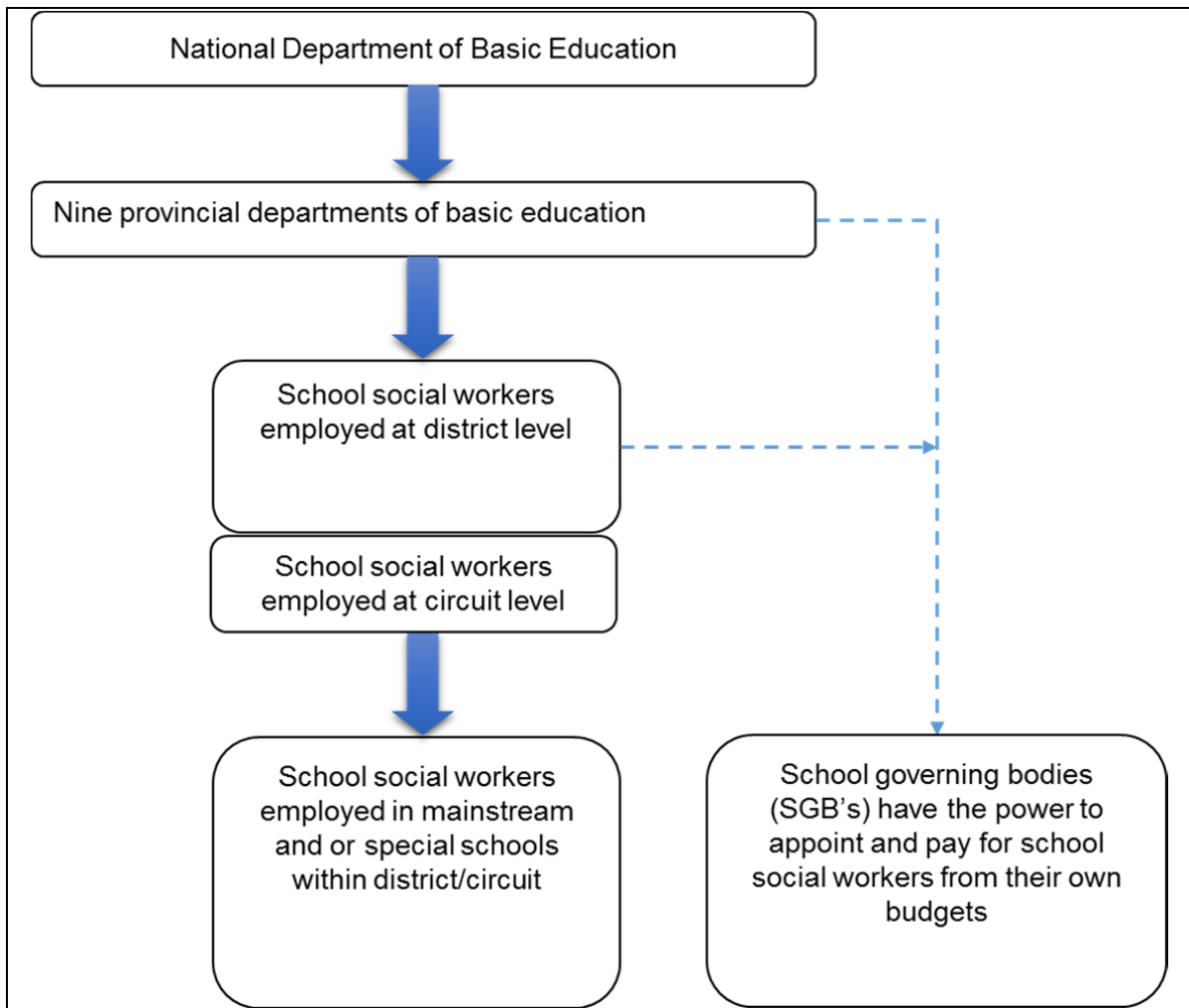
- from 4 in 1982 to 57 in 2015 in the Western Cape;
- from 4 in 2010 to 31 in 2015 in the Free State,
- from 4 in 2010 to 27 in 2015 in Gauteng,
- from 11 in 2010 to 25 in 2015 in Kwazulu-Natal, and
- from 0 in 2016 to 180 (temporary contract basis) in 2017 in Limpopo (Kemp, 2014:16; NACOSSWEP, 2015:31; SACSSP, 2017).

The increase in the number of appointees is, however, not a national trend. Some provincial departments still fail to make use of school social workers, while others employ only a few (Kemp, 2014:16-17; NACOSWEPP, 2015:31).

The current state of South African school social work is further complicated by the fact that appointees' deployment and utilisation differ markedly from one province to the next (Kemp, 2014:13, 97). Some provinces only employ social workers at provincial level, while others do so at district/circuit level and in special and/or mainstream schools. It should furthermore be noted that, although school social workers are predominantly employed by provincial education departments, individual school

governing bodies do have the power to appoint and pay for school social workers from their own budgets. This somewhat complicated structure is depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The basic structure of South African school social work**



The diverse structures in which South African school social work is practised, coupled with a multiplicity of role and task expectations (Kemp, 2014:30-36, 95-102) and a paucity in local research (Van Sittert, 2016:64), necessitated a broad angle scan (Henderson & Thomas, 2013:63) of the nature of school social work. In this article, the scan will comprise an overview of the background, theoretical foundations and policy dictates that govern South African school social work. It should provide the background against which the current and future roles and functions of school social workers in South Africa should be judged.

This overview will consist of the aim and research design used, the defining of the construct “school social work” as it would apply to South African circumstances, the

international and local development of this field, the roles, tasks and functions usually attributed to school social workers and the specific factors that place local learners at risk.

## **2 AIM AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

The aim of the research on which this article is based, was to provide a core body of knowledge against which the current state of South African school social work could be assessed. The research itself took the form of a systematic review in which the steps proposed by Jesson (2011:104) and Booth *et al.* (2012:26,53-199) were followed.

The review covered both South African and international publications on school social work. In the case of local publications, the focus rested chiefly on the post-1994 era on account of the structural-functional changes that the education and social welfare systems underwent after the country's first democratic elections.

International publications revealed a large and well-developed body of knowledge on school social work. It was, however, apparent that systems differed markedly from country to country and that none of these could be applied *ipso facto* to South Africa. This implied that the country would have to develop its own unique brand of school social work.

## **3 DEFINITION OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

There is no single, internationally accepted definition of school social work. One reason is that, in most instances, authors tend to emphasise the elements that best fit the context within which their publication is written. This context could either include their theoretical point(s) of departure or the way it is practised in specific countries. In order to reach the definition which best suits the purposes of South African school social work, it is necessary to analyse some internationally and locally recognised definitions.

The Encyclopaedia of Social Work (NASW, 2012), broadly defines school social work as "...an application of social work principles and methods to the advantage of the goals of the school." A more specific definition is found in the Practice Standards for School Social Workers of Australia (AASW, 2008:12), where the definition for school social work refers to "...social work services delivered in a school setting, the primary

goal of which is the achievement of students' learning potential, and where the methods of working include coordinating and influencing the efforts of the school, family and community to achieve this goal".

A more descriptive definition is found in the NACOSSWEP document submitted to the SACSSP by Avenant *et al.* (2015:9-10). It defines school social work as "...a practice-based profession within the school setting. School social work services address social, emotional and behavioural barriers to learning experienced by learners at an educational institution from an ecological systems theory and strengths-based perspective. These services are aimed at supporting learners, parents, educators and the school as a community. One of the core functions of the school social worker is to ensure that learning and development take place through early identification of psychosocial barriers and appropriate intervention. By preventative and developmental service delivery, care and support for teaching and learning are enhanced by providing all learners with the opportunity to access their full potential. School social work forms an integral part of the education context and contributes towards the academic performance and well-being of learners, within a healthy, safe and secure school environment. One of the unique contributions of the school social worker is to bring the family (home), the school and community perspectives to the multi-disciplinary team process to facilitate better understanding of the social context of the child which facilitates better understanding of the social context of the child."

Numerous authors, including Van Tonder (1994:14), the Social Workers' Desk Reference (2009:39) and the Terminology Committee for Social Work (1995:56), tend to describe school social work as a field of social work that focusses on the promotion of social change, problem-solving and empowerment within the education system with the ultimate aim of enabling the learner to become a responsible and accountable adult. The typical levels of intervention would be: prevention, early intervention and intervention (AASW, 2008:7; DSD, 2005: 29).

The results of the analysis of the above and other definitions/descriptions, as well as the local context, were used to formulate a unique definition that would best fit the nature of South African school social work and the purposes of this study. This definition is the following:

*School social work is the application of social work principles and methods within the education system to render holistic social work services to support*

*learners, parents, educators and the school as community, with the main goal of establishing an environment where the learner can reach his or her full potential by addressing social, emotional, socio-economic and behavioural barriers to learning.*

The definition implies that generic social work methods and principles are used in the specialised secondary setup of the education context. As the school is seen as a community, services cannot only be rendered to learners in isolation, but support and empowerment to teachers, educators and the school itself are likewise necessary. Social, emotional and behavioural barriers to learning are all aspects that can hinder the learner as well as the school in reaching their goals as well as their full potential. They should, therefore, where necessary, also be addressed by means of school social work.

It is important to see the background and current state of South African school social work within a broader, international context. This will, among others, provide a basis for the judging of the local system's strengths and weaknesses and produce indications of how the system could be improved in future.

## **4 INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK: AN OVERVIEW**

Internationally, school social work represents a broad and sometimes diverse field of practice with some countries having developed a very sophisticated service delivery system, while others (such as South Africa) are still at the beginning of the development phase (cf. Huxtable, 2016). The following overview of international school social work will, therefore, focus on only two components. The first is its development in various countries since the early 1900s and the second its current state and structure.

### **4.1 A brief history of international school social work**

According to Huxtable and Blythe (2002:8), the development of school social work correlated with the introduction of compulsory school attendance laws. This was a worldwide trend and good examples can be found where the United Kingdom implemented compulsory school attendance at the end of the nineteenth century, Canada in the 1870s and while the United States passed compulsory laws by 1918 (Huxtable, 2016:1). Even after the new laws were in place, many parents and children

failed to comply. This was often attributed to factors such as the financial difficulties experienced by parents, an under-appreciation of the benefits of education and social and physical problems. It became obvious that functionaries were needed to encourage and enforce attendance and to provide assistance to families who were unable to send their children to school (Huxtable & Blythe, 2002:8).

The introduction of 'attendance enforcement functionaries' developed differently in different countries. The **United Kingdom** was the first to establish the position of '*school attendance officer*' in the late 1800s (Huxtable & Blythe, 2002:9). These later evolved into '*education welfare officer*' and '*education social worker*'. The **United States of America** (henceforth "USA") followed with the introduction of basic school social work services in the Boston and New York areas from 1906 to 1907 (Kelly, 2008; McInerney, 2016:65). Private agencies appointed '*visiting teachers*' in other areas in order to ensure contact between the school and the home with the end goal of better school attendance in mind (Huxtable & Blythe, 2002:9). These 'visiting teachers' started to follow a 'social work approach' and by the 1930s the title of 'school social worker' had been formally adopted.

Since the 1930s, school social work showed considerable growth with numerous countries starting such services. The **Nordic countries** introduced school social work between the 1940s and 1970s. Their emphasis was on prevention and on the use of both social work and guidance/counselling as key concepts. They chose the title of '*school curator*' which means 'one who cares'. **Canada, Australia, France** and the **Netherlands** started school social work during the 1940s (Barret, 2016:5; D'Ambrosio, 2016:12, Huxtable & Blythe, 2002:9; Windstrup, 2016:19).

In **Ghana and Sweden**, social workers were assigned to schools in the 1950s (De Vrij & Malmgren, 2016:58; Huxtable & Blythe, 2002:9). During the 1960s, the Ghana Education Service started its own school welfare system in order to enforce school attendance and to ensure that the needs of the learners were being met (Cudjo *et al.*, 2016:22-23). **Finland, Argentina, Singapore** and **Germany** started to provide school social work services during the 1960s (Gråsten-Salonen, 2016:17; Ling, 2016:49; Mez & Tonon, 2016:3; Reinecke-Terner, 2016:20). **Australia, Germany, Poland, Croatia, Iceland, India** and **Hong Kong** then followed in the 1970s (Árnadóttir, 2016:29; Barrett, 2016:4; Berc, 2016:16; Leung, 2016:26; Reinecke-Terner, 2016:20). According to Leung (2016:27), Hong Kong started off in the 1970s with school social work for

secondary schools followed by its primary schools in 2002. **Korea, Spain and Greece** caught up during the 1980s and early 1990s (Berc, 2016:16; Barutell, 2016:53; Gkamoulou, 2016:24, Park, 2016:31). Canadian school social work initially focussed on truancy and the promotion of the mental hygiene movement. Political changes in the country since 1989 have put pedagogical counsellors in place (D'Ambrosio, 2016:12). **Switzerland** introduced school social work in the French speaking part of the country during the 1970s and only during the 1990s in the German speaking part (Baier, 2016:59).

For countries such as **Austria, New Zealand, Switzerland, Saudi-Arabia, Sri-Lanka, Macedonia, Russia, Latvia, Hungary, Laos, Macedonia, Malta, Mongolia, Norway and Japan**, school social work is quite a new development and concept (Dangers, 2016:35, De Mel, 2016:55; Karseth, 2016:47; Marterer, 2016:6; Máté, 2016:28; Mitev, 2016:40; Zahra, 2016:41). **Japan** piloted the service on a private level in 1986 and officially introduced it on government level in 2008 (Yamashita, 2016:30). Social work pioneers started with school social work in **Luxembourg** over thirty years ago and laid the foundation for its legal introduction in 2001 (Jacobs, 2016:37; Lengyel, 2016:49). **Mongolia** started as recently as 1996 with school social work services (Namdaldagva, Maygmarjav & Burnette, 2010:888), followed soon after by **China** in 2002, **Liechtenstein** in 2004 (Hansjörg, 2016:36; Leung, 2016:14) and **Slovakia** in 2006 (Jacobs, 2016:37; Lengyel, 2016:49).

**Taiwanese** school social work has a somewhat chequered history. In 1978, the Taiwan Fund for Children and Families began to set up school social work services. These were terminated in 1985 because of poor collaboration between schools and NGOs. In 1997, a national project was approved where a hundred 'school counsellors' (basically social workers) were appointed to secondary schools (Lin, 2016:60). This culminated in 2011 with the amendment of the Primary and Junior High School Act which paved the way for the employment of even larger numbers of social workers in Taiwanese schools (Lin, 2016:60-61).

The history of international school social work is one of gradual but steadfast growth and expansion. This culminated in the fact that today there are more than 36 countries worldwide with one or another form of formal school social work service in place (Huxtable, 2016:2).

Up until the late 1980s, international school social work lacked a conceptual framework to accommodate and justify the profession's presence within the education system. This started to change with the 1990 World Conference on "Education for All" that was held in Jomtien, Thailand and organised by the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) Inter-Agency Commission, which was composed of representatives of UNICEF and the World Bank (WCEFA, 1990:iv). The conference was focussed on learners worldwide – including those with disabilities - who did not receive adequate education. It culminated in the "World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs" (WCEFA, 1990:153-164). This declaration gave substance to the basic human right that "everyone has a right to education" (WCEFA, 1990:153-164) and the idea of inclusive education.

The idea and ideal of inclusive education were further promoted during the World Conference on Special Needs Education that was held in 1994 in Salamanca, Spain. The conference produced the "Salamanca Statement on Principles and Practice in Special Needs Education" which promoted the principle that all schools should accommodate learners, regardless of their special needs (UNESCO, 1994).

The two conferences were of assistance in entrenching the idea(l) and principle of inclusive education globally (Naicker, 1999:14; UNESCO, 1994:59). There are, however, marked differences between countries as far as the extent to which they accommodate all children with learning difficulties, disabilities or other support needs are concerned (Clark, 2007:23) as well as the structures and professionals who are in place to render such support services.

## **4.2 Present state and structure of international school social work**

Although most countries support the basic principle of inclusive education (Clark, 2007:23), the extent to which they employ social workers to deliver some of the required 'support services', and even the nature of the services itself, differs markedly from one country to the next. There are differences even in the titles used to refer to such functionaries.

Although, globally, the most common practice is to employ and deploy school social workers to state-supported or so-called 'government schools', other **employment profiles** abound. In some countries, school social workers are employed by private

schools, others function within regional teams, while still others would be employed by private agencies or NGOs (Huxtable, 2016:3-83).

Moreover, **professional titles** used to refer to school social workers also differ widely. They range from the traditional 'school social worker', to 'social worker for students', 'student guidance personnel', 'social pedagogue', 'school social welfare officer', 'school counsellor', 'social worker in schools', 'child welfare workers', 'social educators' and 'student welfare officer' (Karseth, 2016:44; Leung, 2016:27; Ling, 2016:48; Park, 2016:31; lam & Preta, 2016:39; Williams, 2016:43; Windstrup, 2016:19). For the purposes of this article, use will only be made of 'school social worker' as a unitary description.

Countries differ in the **knowledge, qualifications** and **expertise** they expect from appointees. For some, a generic social work qualification is sufficient for employment in the education system. Others require either a post-graduate degree (Barrett, 2016:5) or a MSW degree specialising in school social work or an additional education qualification (Árnadóttir, 2016:29; Berc, 2016:16; Gråston-Salonen, 2016:17; Lengyel, 2016:49; McInerney, 2016:64; Ubaidullah, 2016:75). At the other end of the spectrum are countries such as Spain that allow people with degrees in sociology, pedagogy or primary school teaching to be employed as school social workers. They do, however, require of such appointees moreover to have a pedagogical endorsement and to pass a special exam (Barutell, 2016:53).

There are especially two primary conclusions to be drawn from the history and current state of international social work. The first is that this field of practice has internationally, grown exponentially in especially the last two decades. It was secondly clear that, although the principle of inclusive education justifies the appointment of such functionaries, their structural-functional positioning within the education system is country-specific. The focus of this study will, consequently, now shift to history and current state of South African school social work.

## **5 SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK: AN OVERVIEW**

In order to explore the current structural-functional positioning of the social work profession within the South African educational system, cognisance has to be taken of the historical development of the system and of its current structure. These two

components are briefly dealt with below, followed by an overview of the present state and structure of local school social work.

## **5.1 History of school social work in South Africa**

Du Toit (1996:7-14) identifies four time frames in the development of the South African education system: the “early years”, the “colonial era”, the “apartheid era” and the “democratic era”. This demarcation will be used as a basic organising principle in the overview of the historical background of school social work.

The development of specialised education in South Africa followed the basic same trend as that of most other countries (Du Toit, 1996:7) and was similarly impacted by political and philosophical influences (Naicker, 1999:12). During the early years, various tribes in South Africa practised tribal customs that were transferred to next generations via non-formal education (Du Toit, 1996:7; Seroto, 2011:44-52). In the beginning of the colonial era (1652 – 1948) Dutch and other missionaries established the first schools with separate schools for whites and slave learners, although there are also reports of schools having been founded for European pupils where education was provided for slave and Khoikhoi children (Du Toit, 1996:8; Le Roux, 2011:58-83). Attendance was of the utmost importance. Hofmeyer (*in* Du Toit, 1996:8) indicates that a formal secular education system was introduced with the arrival of the British in 1806. By the 1830s, education was a concern since there was a movement from English schooling to private schooling. With the introduction of the Education Act 13 of 1865, some important issues were being addressed (Le Roux, 2011:105).

Initially, disabled learners were not included in formal education in South Africa. In 1863, the Roman Catholic Dominican Order founded the first school for white deaf learners. Soon after, another was established for coloured deaf learners (Du Toit, 1996:8). As the need grew, the Dutch Reformed Church established the “Doofstommen en Blinden Instituut” in 1881 at Worcester. Several other schools for the deaf and blind followed, none of which was funded by government (Du Toit, 1996:8). According to Du Toit (1996:8), the then Department of Education first became involved in specialised education in 1900. The Department began to recognise special schools and offered to pay half of the educators’ salaries. With the introduction of the Vocational Education and Special Education Act (Act 29 of 1928), the special schools became the full responsibility of the Department of Education. Since black disabled learners were not covered, the churches were forced to establish and fund new schools

for this group (Naicker, 1999:29). In 1937, the Special Schools Amendment Act was passed. This made it compulsory for all white learners with disabilities to attend existing special schools (Du Toit, 1996:9). No provision was, however, made for African disabled learners (Clark, 2007:29).

According to Naicker (1999:32), 1948 marked the beginning of the so-called Apartheid era. During the course of this era the National Party was to utilize the Population Registration Act of 1950 to classify the population into four racial groups which, in turn, included forming the basis for segregation within the educational field (Du Toit, 1996:9-10). In the 1960s, special schools for so-called 'non-white' learners were transferred from the missions to the separate education departments created for each group and the Coloured Persons Education Act (1963), the Bantu Special Education Act (1964) and the Indian Education Act (1965) were promulgated to administer education for each (Du Toit, 1996:11). Thus, a fragmented education system, based on ethnic separation, was created.

In 1948, the then Transvaal and Natal education departments began appointing so-called 'special teachers' or 'visiting teachers' to address some of the welfare needs of the school population (Kemp, 2014:11-12). By the late 1970s, the unmet need for specialised school social work in South Africa had become a source of concern. The need to incorporate social work services in the primary education system was first recognised in 1973 before the De Lange Commission (1981) encouraged the development of school social work with particular reference to 'children with special needs', guidance and parental involvement. The first school social worker was appointed in the Natal Province (currently KwaZulu-Natal) in 1983 (Kemp, 2013) and the De Lange Commission's encouragement, among others, prompted the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in 1984 to transfer all its social-pedagogic and truant officers posts to its Welfare Department in order to establish a school social work service (Kemp, 2014:14).

Although some of the other provinces soon followed (Kemp, 2013), and in spite of various recommendations and pleas, the appointment of school social workers did not gain any real momentum after 1983 (Van Tonder, 1994:26).

With the arrival of the first democratic elections in 1994, the appointment and utilisation of SSWs differed markedly between the different provinces (Kemp, 2013; Le Roux,

1987:81). This trend continued until the present with clear differences in the appointment of school social workers in provinces (Kemp, 2014:16). Currently, the Western Cape Education Department has the most SSWs in its employ (Kemp, 2014:16).

Since the dawn of the Democratic era (1994 onwards), the South African education system changed in certain fundamental ways (OECD, 2008). The Bill of Rights in South Africa's new Constitution declared that all learners, including those with disabilities, had the right to basic education and equal access to educational institutions (Constitution of South Africa, 1996). In 1996, the president and the minister of education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education. Various international and national policy and other documents influenced NCSNET's and NCESS's investigations. These included the Salamanca Statement (1994), the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) and the South African Schools Act (1996). The Salamanca Statement on Principles and Practice in Special Needs Education was one of the outcomes of the World Congress held in Salamanca, Spain, in July 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). It resulted from discussions on the inclusion of all learners, irrespective of their unique, special needs, in mainstream schools. This congress marked the beginning of the movement towards inclusive education globally and nationally.

The NCSNET (1997) and NCESS (1997) reports were published during the course of 1997, promoting the development of inclusive education and support centres that would enable all learners to participate in the mainstream education process. In these reports, inclusive education was seen as a system of education which is responsive to the diverse needs of all learners (Naicker, 1999:19). It has also been defined as a learning environment which promotes the "total personal, academic and professional development of all learners, irrespective of race, sex, ability, religion, culture, sexual orientation, style of learning and language" (Department of Basic Education, 2001:16).

One of the most influential policy documents to follow was the Education White Paper 6 which was focussed on the special needs of learners (Department of Basic Education 2001). According to White Paper 6, a broad range of learning needs exists among

learners. The different learning needs arise from a range of factors which include physical, mental, sensory, neurological, developmental impairments, psychosocial disturbances, differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences and socio-economic deprivation (Department of Basic Education, 2001:7). Educational support services refer to all human and other resources which stimulate the progress and support of the educational system and react to the needs of learners. These support services include professional psychosocial support from educational psychologists, other psychologists, social workers and therapists (Department of Basic Education, 2018:19, 25; Department of Basic Education, 2014:21, 31).

One of the main new developments within education was the aim of keeping learners with special needs within mainstream schools for as long as possible. However, special schools still have an important role to play. These would be utilised as *resource centres* which would provide support to other schools. Linked to the resource centre idea, the new development was aimed at identifying certain mainstream schools which would function as *full service schools* (OECD, 2008:68). These schools were ones which were capable of accommodating learners with special needs, but required extra staff, resources, etc. in order to do so. Social workers could, in principle, form part of both full service schools and special schools.

Interest in the field of school social work has generally grown along with the increase in the number of new appointees in the Western Cape, Free State, KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng (Kemp, 2014:16; Van Sittert, 2016:26-27). In July 2010, an Indaba (Zulu term for a conference) on specialisation in school social work found that there was a need for such a speciality and recommended that the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) should prioritise the process (Kemp, 2017:1). This led to the establishment of the National Committee for School Social Work Education and Practice (Kemp, 2017:1; NACOSSWEP, 2015:9) which was tasked with the drawing up of a full proposal. During 2017, the SACSSP accepted the National Committee's proposal after the working committee of the NACOSSEP team was requested by the SACSSP to formally present the application (NACOSSWEP, 2017). This set a process into motion that would ultimately culminate in the establishment and drafting of regulations in terms of the Social Service Professions Act (NACOSSWEP, 2017). At the time of writing, this process was still ongoing, but some important milestones have already been met in the meantime. The SACSSP accepted NACOSSWEP's proposal

for SSW to be a field of speciality and the committee was in the process of writing regulations to be submitted for approval.

## **5.2 Present state and structure of South African school social work**

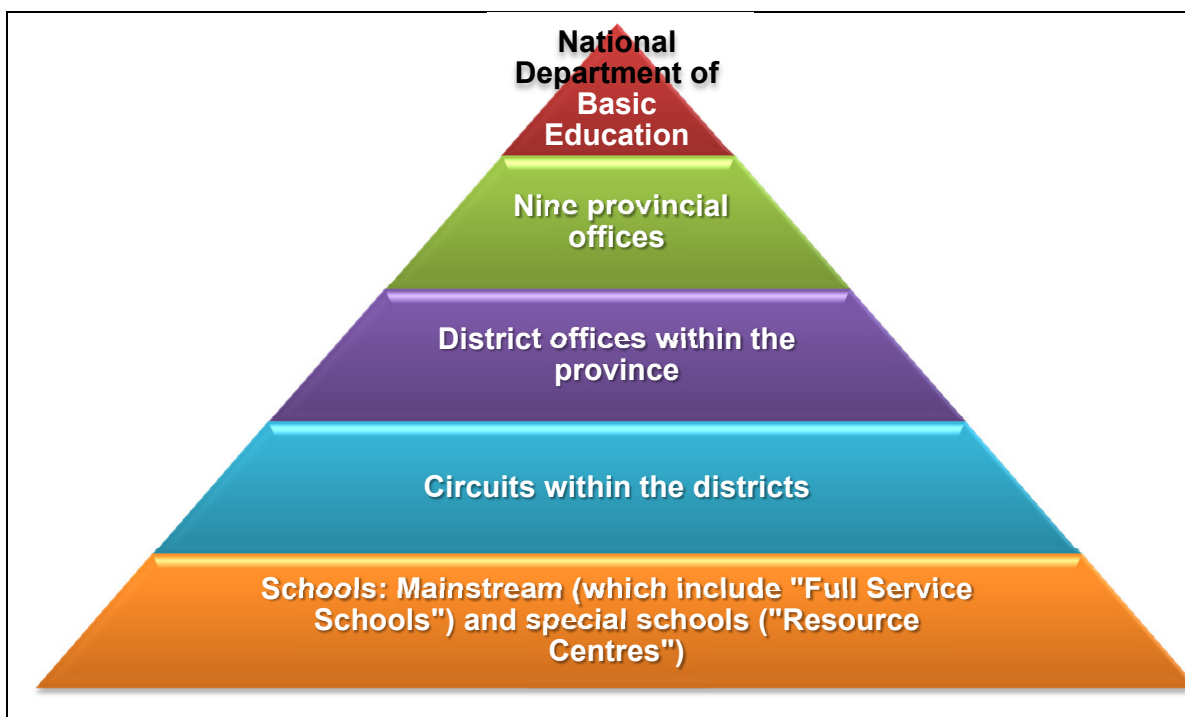
Currently, South African school social work differs markedly from province to province (Kemp, 2014:118). In the case of the Western Cape, for example, most school social workers are employed at district and/or circuit level (Kemp, 2014:20). In the Free State, however, the school social work system may be divided into three basic categories. The first of these consists of the school social workers who have been deployed to special schools, including the two schools of industry, and who have all been appointed in terms of the Public Service Act (103 of 1994). The second category encompasses those social workers who have been appointed in terms of the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998). They are based at the department's five district offices. They are not called 'school social workers' but rather referred to as 'senior education specialists' or 'socio-pedagogues' (Voster, 2014). The third category, found in both the Western Cape and Free State as well as in other provinces, is formed by the school social workers who have been appointed to non-subsidised posts by the school governing bodies (SGBs) of mainstream schools and special schools. They are appointed privately and should be employed under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997:75). As stated, some provinces have only a few school social workers in the employ of their education departments (Kemp, 2014:16).

The positioning of social work within the South African education system should be seen against the backdrop of the structure of this system. The National Department of Basic Education functions as the umbrella body responsible for, among others, the development of policies, strategies and white papers, the promulgation of acts and enforcement of policies and practices (Department of Basic Education, 2014). The National Department of Basic Education is furthermore responsible for the development of systems and structures for mainstreaming school social work and delegates the function of appointing school social workers to the Provincial Departments of Education. These provincial departments will appoint social workers at district level at their different offices or schools (Morgan, 2017). District offices are further divided into

circuits that render direct services to schools. Moreover, deployment, operation, supervision and management of school social workers within the various provinces are functions of the setting and context with their respective needs and therefore differ from province to province (Kemp, 2014:97; Morgan, 2017).

The following diagram (Figure 2) is an illustration of the way the levels in South Africa are structured.

**Figure 2: Levels within the Department of Basic Education**



In South Africa, school social work services within the Department of Basic Education are rendered at national level, at provincial level, within district offices, which include circuits and within mainstream and special schools (NACOSSWEP, 2015:12-19). The school governing bodies of some public and private schools employ and pay for social workers from their own budgets (Kemp, 2014:16). Local school social work service delivery follows international trends by ascribing to the inclusive education principle and framework (NACOSSWEP, 2015:11; Kemp, 2014:15-16; Van Sittert, 2016:3).

The structures within which school social workers are employed have a direct influence on the specific roles, tasks and functions they are expected to perform. These will be explored in more depth next.

## **6 ROLE, TASK AND FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER**

Functioning within the education system places special demands on school social workers. Not only do they have to function effectively within so-called 'host settings' (i.e. "...arenas in which social workers practise that are defined and dominated by people who are not social workers") (Dane & Simon, 1991:208), but also predominantly to deal with children who are viewed as belonging to a 'vulnerable group' (Statistics South Africa, 2013:ii-iii). This context and specialisation have a direct influence on the specific roles, tasks and functions they would have to perform. The way these play out in international and local practice will now be examined.

### **6.1 Roles, tasks and functions of the school social worker within the international context**

In the USA, school social work is basically seen as a specialised field of social work which is focussed on working with students, teachers, parents and the school system in order to create an environment conducive to teaching and learning and to address and treat the problems that interfere with this process (Skidmore & Thackery, 1982:182; SSWA, 2009). In this context, they function chiefly as a link between the home, community and school (Social Workers' Desk Reference, 2009: 39).

Kemp, (2014:10) indicates that school social workers in the USA's educational system originally served only as liaisons between the home, school and community. Later they, in addition, started to collaborate more closely with teachers and other school personnel in order to advance the purpose of education. According to Peckover, Vasquez, Van Housen, Saunders & Allen (2013:16) school social workers are working to "create and implement multilevel systems of intervention". This culminated in what are currently described as the 'traditional' and 'new' roles of SSWs (Zastrow, 2010:353).

According to Zastrow (2010: 353) the 'traditional' roles of school social workers include the following:

- The most common role is that of a *caseworker* or counsellor, which basically entails the use of therapeutic processes to address the social problems and enhance the social functioning of learners.

- The second most common role is that of a *group worker*. Traditionally this is therapeutic by nature, but apart from therapeutic group work, it also includes more empowerment-focussed groups with personnel and learners.
- In some instances, SSWs function as *truant officers*. The rationale behind this role is that truancy always tends to have a reason, e.g. neglect by the parents, emotional issues such as anxiety or behavioural problems on the part of the learner.
- A fourth traditional role is that of a *parent liaison*. In this role, the school social worker will function as a direct link between the school and the parent.

All of these roles are basically similar to those in other countries such as Australia and Ireland (AASW, 2008; Northern Ireland Social Care Council, 2015). Tasks generally associated with the traditional roles include prevention programmes, home visits, assessment and counselling, as well as consultations with teachers. These tasks are found in most school social work settings across the globe (Huxtable, 2016:1- 83). The challenges on which such social workers generally focus entail attendance problems, emotional problems, behavioural problems, material needs, lack of motivation as well as on special education for children with disabilities (Huxtable, 2016: 1 – 83).

In the USA during the past two decades, a number of newer roles have emerged. According to Zastrow (2010:350) and others (e.g. Costin, 1969: 274-285; Dibble, 2009: 2-6; Kelly, 2008: 3-5; NASW, 2012: 11-14), these include the following:

- The role of *advocate* in which the social worker would side with the learners and their families in their dealings with different systems.
- School social workers are often expected to be *behavioural specialists* who would be able to apply behaviour modification interventions within the educational system.
- A third new role is that of a *mental health consultant and expert*. As such they would be consulted on the mental health and human relation aspects of the curriculum and teaching styles, as well as assess children who might have emotional or psychiatric difficulties such as ADHD.
- Alcohol and drug abuse is a major problem in their society and the American school system, and social workers are therefore often expected to be *alcohol and other drug abuse specialists*. It is also expected that they would develop and utilise different intervention programmes to address these conditions.

- A fifth new role is that of *violence prevention specialist*. This role has emerged in response to an increase in juvenile offences, school gangs and violence against teachers, as well as a lack of specialists to deal with these issues.
- Finally, it is expected that they should be specialists in *policy development, systems change* and *service management*.

Although some of the so-called 'new' roles have also emerged in other countries, the latest trend is to conceptualise roles and function within an inclusive education context.

Within this context, Clark (2007:133-144) have demarcated the:

- direct service provider,
- system linkage,
- system maintenance,
- system development, and
- researcher roles.

From analysis of international literature it has emerged that currently no single, generally accepted list of school social worker roles, tasks and functions exists. Although overlapping between different countries' expectations does occur, some expectations are country-specific. The way this is manifested in South Africa will now be examined.

## **6.2 Roles, tasks and functions of the school social worker within the South African context**

An analysis of locally produced literature indicates that the roles, tasks and functions of South African school social workers are largely determined by where they are employed within the education system, be it at national, provincial or district levels, in mainstream or special schools, or in schools of industry. Their functioning would be determined by the institutional context within which they operate and the level of authority associated with their posts (Kemp, 2014:95, NACOSSWEP, 2015:12-21).

Social workers employed at national level have more administrative roles and tasks, such as development of strategies, policies, norms, standards, systems and structures, as well as monitoring and evaluation (NACOSSWEP, 2015:12 -13). At provincial level, the administration roles are broadened and coupled with other tasks. These include:

management; facilitation, support of district social workers; the organising of seminars; the coordination of school social work services; networking; mediation; screening of programmes; training and functioning as a liaison between systems (Morgan, 2017; NACOSSWEP, 2015:13-16). At district level, support is provided to learners, educators, parents, care-givers, school management teams, school governing bodies as well as school-based support teams. At this level, a functionary's tasks could also include: screening; the development and implementation of projects; the development of supporting infrastructure within schools; networking; keeping abreast with policies and functioning as a member of multi-disciplinary teams (NACOSSWEP, 2015:16-19).

According to Kemp, (2014:30) and the Free State Department of Education (2017:6-7), the following roles and tasks are key components of the everyday functioning of social workers in a school setting:

- screening, identification and assessment of learners who are in need of social work services within the multi-disciplinary environment;
- the assessment and interpretation of identified needs as well as indicated problems experienced;
- undertaking direct and indirect services, which includes support, research and feedback to relevant parties;
- consultation with educators, support staff, parents, and other professionals;
- collaboration as well as coordination of services and ensuring that a holistic service is offered;
- promotion of firstly, parental involvement and secondly, community involvement;
- liaison with resourceful persons within other departments and organisations;
- the development of successful inter-professional teams, for example case conferences,
- written reports on request;
- the development of a workable, effective administrative system,
- the training of social work students.

The roles and responsibilities are subsequently integrated into the **methods** of social work, being: *community work; group work; crisis intervention and case work; research*

and *training* (Kemp, 2014:30-31). An analysis of other South African sources, including those of Van Sittert (2016:24), Free State Department of Education (2017:8-12) and NACOSSWEP (2015:19-25), indicates that the school social worker forms part of the *multi-disciplinary team* of the school and will render services which are focussed on the *individual socio-emotional* needs of the learners and family. *Group work* and *community work* are complementary to individual service delivery, but both are seen as relevant to the function and role of the school social worker.

Van Sittert (2016 24-25) indicates that the current functions of school social workers in South Africa include the rendering of *crisis intervention*, *counselling* and *support* services to learners and their families, the *identification* and *establishment* of *support groups*, the provision of *training* in respect of social concerns, the *sharing* of information with role-players, and the *development of programmes* that would assist the Department of Basic Education in achieving its strategic goals. Other tasks include home visits and the referral of persons to outside service providers. The Department of Basic Education (2014:9) also maintains that school social workers have the responsibility to *facilitate* the process of *reporting* cases where physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect are being suspected. According to Pretorius (2015:322-323), the roles of school social workers in South Africa are those of facilitator, educator, advocate, broker, community intervention collaborator and policy initiator and developer.

Two trends emerged from the analysis of South African school social workers' roles, tasks and functions. The first is that they are context-specific and primarily determined by the setting within which a practitioner operates. The second is that they tend to be extremely wide-ranging, covering the spectrum from individual therapeutic interventions on the one hand, to research, training and management on the other. This would indicate that currently a need exists in South Africa for a mechanism that could be used to systemise the different roles, tasks and functions into a framework that is also context-relevant. This need was addressed in another component of the research project which dealt with the design and verification of practice standards for local practitioners.

The two trends gave rise in the question why such a diversity of expectations currently exists. Part of the answer lies in the factors that place South African learners at risk and that school social workers would, ultimately, have to address.

## **7 FACTORS PLACING SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS AT RISK**

There is a general view that schools are a microcosm of the society in which they operate and that the changes and ills that beset these environments also spill over to or are manifested in the school system (Savage & Schanding, 2013:1-2). This implies that South African learners face the same challenges and experience the same social problems as those that are generally prevalent in the country. We now focus on those factors that place learners especially at risk and call for a social work response.

### **7.1 Challenges that impact on learners' performance**

Van Wyk (1989: 54-62) found that learners' functioning and progress is negatively affected by the bio-psychosocial and financial problems which they experience at home or have to face in the community. Only some of the problems typically found in South African communities are highlighted next.

Every child has the right to education and the South African Government has the responsibility to ensure quality education for all learners (Madonsela, 2017:7). The former public protector, however, goes on to say that this is not the case in many South African schools where learners attend schools without running water, electricity or basic infrastructure (Madonsela, 2017:7).

Statistics indicate that more than 30.4 million people in South Africa live in poverty. This represents more than half of the estimated 55 million total population (Madonsela, 2017). Learners compose the majority of this group. Apart from being beset by poverty, many also have an 'orphan' status and are functioning within child-headed households (Department of Basic Education, 2016:14; Free State Department of Education, 2017:2). Learners' functioning and progress may also be affected by other social problems such as alcoholism, drug use, different types of abuse and rejection, as well as phenomena such as teenage pregnancy and living with step-parents, single parents or foster-parents (Van Wyk, 1989:54-62).

A study on violence in schools run by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention indicated that the impact on violence in schools on learners have a profound influence on their everyday functioning (Burton & Leoschut, 2013:101). In the same study it was found that there is a direct link between the violence that the learners experience in school and the violence that the learners experience in their homes and communities. The National Policy on Management of Drug Use by Learners (SA, 2002:2) indicates that the use of drugs in South Africa is increasing in all communities and therefore that it is a challenge which needs to be addressed.

The emotional and behavioural problems experienced by South African children in general and learners in particular are, according to Swanepoel (2007:15), emphasised in various studies. A report from the National Department of Basic Education indicates in the Strategic Plan that one out of every hundred primary school learners reported for emotional support in 2005 (Department of Basic Education, 2006:14). The Department of Basic Education also found in the 'Psychosocial Strategy' of the DBE that individual and family problems can be manifested at school and impedes learning (Department of Basic Education, 2016:14). Specialists are concerned lest the thousands of learners infected or affected by HIV and Aids may develop psychosocial or behavioural disorders unless prevention or intervention programmes are in place (Sharp, 2014:4).

According to Robinson (1978:134), one of the most common challenges facing schools is absenteeism and that such a phenomenon may be viewed as proof that there are problems in the learner's immediate environment.

Another common occurrence is learners dropping out of school before completing their education. Küsel (2018:10) reported that, of the 1,186,011 learners who started Grade 1 in 2006, only 401,435 successfully completed Grade 12 in 2017. In a study on street children, it was found that factors contributing to children leaving school, leaving their homes and ending up living on the street are poverty, family conflict, child-headed households, abuse, anxiety, anger or insecurity on their own ability (Hajane, 2006: 3-7).

This brief overview indicates that most of the challenges faced by learners have their roots in their families or communities and that this has a direct impact on their ability to progress in school. The next question to answer is, therefore, which structures are currently in place particularly within the education system to address these challenges.

## 7.2 The response to the challenges

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 21st century, the social-cultural structure of South Africa underwent some critical changes. Some of these changes developed into barriers to learning (Kemp, 2014:23). The Department of Basic Education (2016) recognised these barriers, identified a need for the psychosocial support of learners and, accordingly, developed a strategy entitled “Psychosocial Support Strategy for Learners in the Educational System of South Africa 2015 – 2020”. The main purpose of the strategy was to define the scope of psychosocial support in the education sector, to assist in the identification of learners’ psychosocial needs and to indicate how existing resources and structures could be utilised to help these learners effectively to access the support they need (Department of Basic Education, 2016:7). This strategy still guides current school social work services.

The Department of Basic Education (2016:16) recognises the fact that adversities negatively affect children and youths on a cognitive, emotional and behavioural level and that this also affects learning. It has adopted the ecological system theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner and utilises this theory as a conceptual framework in the targeting of barriers to learning (Department of Basic Education, 2016:17).

Several educational policies which incorporate elements of the systems approach, have been developed in South Africa to assist in dealing with learning barriers. These include White Paper 6 (2001); Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Conceptual Framework: (2010) and ‘Psychosocial Strategy of the Department of Basic Education’: (2016). These documents subscribe to the view that there are three types of barriers which negatively affect learning. These are *intrinsic barriers*, *systemic barriers* and *societal barriers* (Department of Basic Education, 2016: 17). Nel *et al.* (in Van Sittert, 2016:29) identified another two barriers, viz.: *pedagogical barriers* and *extrinsic barriers*. School social work has an important role to play in addressing each of these types of barriers.

The Department of Basic Education is furthermore aimed at improving learner wellbeing and academic achievement in other ways (Free State Department of Education, 2017:2). This aim is epitomised, among others, in the policy entitled “Policy on Screening, identification, assessment and support” (SIAS) which indicates how

schools could and should be used as media by means of which learners may gain access to a variety of public services such as health, poverty alleviation and psychosocial support (Department of Basic Education, 2014:7). This planning falls within the framework of inclusive education (Free State Department of Education, 2017:2).

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) stipulates that school attendance is compulsory for learners from the first day of the year in which they turn seven years up until the last school day in the year in which they turn fifteen years or complete grade nine, depending on whichever happens first. The high school dropout and absenteeism rates in South Africa are indicative of the fact that this dictate often fails to be met (Küsel, 2018:10). The Department of Basic Education has responded by publishing the policy on learner attendance in order to regulate and address the problem (Department of Basic Education, 2010). The policy, among others, addresses factors contributing to the absenteeism of learners, as well as ways in which these may be prevented and controlled.

Particularly since the early 2010s, school social work has begun to play an increasingly larger role in the South African education system's response to the challenges facing its learners. Until now, however, their deployment and utilisation has not been the same in all nine provinces with some having a relatively comprehensive service while others have almost none at all. This somewhat patchy response to the myriad of challenges that South African learners face may be viewed as an indicator of a need for the expansion of local school social work service.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

In this article the background, development and current state of global and South African school social work were explored in addition to the typical roles, tasks and functions of school social workers in both these contexts. The focus subsequently shifted to the specific factors that place South African learners at risk and the core ways in which these have thus far been addressed. The review brought a number of trends to the fore of which the local school social work fraternity in particular should take cognisance.

Little uniformity exists in the way in which school social work developed globally. For some countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America (USA), it evolved from the introduction of compulsory school attendance laws and the subsequent appointment of functionaries to enforce these laws. Present-day American school social work may, as a result, trace its roots back to the 'truancy officers' and 'visiting teachers' of more than a century ago. In the case of other countries, such as China, Liechtenstein and Slovakia, school social work is a little more than a decade old and still has not risen above the early developmental phase. South Africa joined the school social work fraternity in the early 1980s.

From the historical overview it may first be concluded that, although the roots of this specialised field of social work may differ from country to country, its core focus has always been the same. This is to address the bio-psychosocial, behavioural and economic barriers to learning that prevent learners from reaching their full potential. The second conclusion is that in recent years school social work has grown exponentially with more and more countries introducing such services before going on to appoint increasing numbers of practitioners.

From the above trends, coupled to a burgeoning body of knowledge generated by research, it may be concluded that sufficient grounds ought to exist formally to view school social work as a unique speciality within the profession. There are, however, factors, particularly in some countries, that militate against such a step. One of these concerns the different professional titles allocated to functionaries who perform essentially social work roles and tasks. These, among many others, range from the traditional 'school social worker', to 'student guidance personnel', 'social pedagogue', 'school counsellor', 'social educator' and 'student welfare officer'. Another factor comprises the vastly different requirements for entry into this field. Some countries require appointees to possess at least an MSW level qualification with specialisation in school social work plus additional experience, while a three year level degree is considered sufficient by others. The general trend seems to be that, the more recognised the field becomes in a country, the higher the entry requirements tend to be.

In South Africa, the first school social worker was only appointed in 1983. In spite of various recommendations from a variety of bodies, this process has not really gained any momentum since. The trend only started to change around 2010 with the appointment of more and more school social workers by a select few provincial education departments. Even up to the present, these services are unevenly spread across the country.

A second local trend is a diversity of appointment requirements (e.g. in terms of qualifications and expertise) and expectations between provinces. This is somewhat perplexing because of the fact that it is one country with one set of policies and legislation. This can only be attributed to the fact that provinces enjoy a fairly large amount of autonomy in respect of the way in which they run their education services.

A third trend is that no single core professional title, for example 'school social worker', is used locally and that titles such as 'senior education specialists' or 'socio-pedagogues' are sometimes given to such functionaries. This trend undermines the establishment of a single, strong profile for social work in the education system.

Although the development and utilisation of school social work in the more than 36 countries covered by the review are different, they do share the same foundation and rationale for their existence. This is the principle of *inclusive education* which emerged from the World Conference on 'Education for All' in 1990 and the World Conference on Special Needs Education of 1994. This principle is currently supported by most countries, although that not all have given practical substance to its implementation.

From the review of the factors that place South African learners at risk it has become evident that they need the services that can only be provided by school social workers, and also that the local response to this need has been insufficient his far. The significant proportion of the school population which has been negatively affected by the bio-psychosocial and financial problems its members are experiencing at home, or have to face in the community simply cannot be sufficiently serviced by the number of the practitioners who have been appointed to date. It emerged from the study that the basic policies that would justify the expansion of such a service are already in place, but that substance still needs to be given to implementation of these policies.

The social work profession in South Africa, however, cannot simply wait for 'others', including government, to define and expand its role in the education system. Pro-active steps are required. One of these is to increase research into school social work as it could and should be implemented to meet local indigenous needs and circumstances. Another requires the authorities to work towards the formal establishment of school social work as a speciality within the profession. The latter will enhance the standing of the profession within the education system.

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## ARTICLE 2:

# SOUTH AFRICAN PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION'S EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN THEIR EMPLOY

**Key words:** *School social work, inclusive education, roles, functions, expectations, responsibilities*

### Abstract

**Background:** In spite of a marked increase in the number of school social workers employed by South Africa's provincial education departments since 2010, very little is currently known of exactly what they expect from these practitioners. This gap in existing knowledge was addressed via a study that first focussed on the expectations of the Free State Province's Department. The results were used to inform a national survey of all the provinces. The ultimate aim of the research project of which this study forms a part, was to produce a set of practice standards that could be applied to all of South Africa's school social workers.

**Aim:** The aim of this study was twofold. The first was to produce a profile of the Free State Department of Education's expectations of its school social workers and the operational and management systems which are in place to enable them to meet these expectations. The second was to analyse all nine provincial departments of education's views of the need for, and the role and functions of, these practitioners. The results achieved could later be used as part of the basis on which a set of practice standards could be built.

**Method:** In the study a sequential exploratory mixed-method design was utilised, which consisted of two sub-steps. The first was a qualitative exploration of the Free State Province's expectations and systems. The results provided indications of, among others, the more specific themes and issues that needed to be pursued in the quantitative, national survey.

**Results:** The study revealed that a significant and growing need for school social workers exists in the South African education system. However, the extent to which this need is being met in the different provinces differs markedly. There are likewise significant differences in their appointment, management, designation, expectations and utilisation of these professionals. It became evident that currently a dire need exists for the 'standardisation' of South African school social work.

# **SOUTH AFRICAN PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION'S EXPECTATIONS OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN THEIR EMPLOY**

**EM Vergottini & ML Weyers**

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In spite of a marked recent increase in the number of school social workers (Kemp, 2014:16) and steps taken by the National Association for Social Work South Africa (NASWSA) and the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) to declare the field of school social work a speciality (NACOSSWEP, 2015; Kemp, 2017), little is yet known of what, exactly, provincial education departments expect from the practitioners in their employ (Van Sittert, 2016:26-27). The situation prompted this study in which these departments' expectations in general and those of the Free State in particular, were ascertained and analysed. The primary results of the study will be covered in the article.

## **2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND, DESIGN AND PROCEDURE**

School social work (hereafter sometimes abbreviated to "SSW") was practised to a limited extent in pre-1994 South Africa and during the early years of the democratic era. However, from 2010 onwards, the number of appointees grew markedly (NACOSSWEP, 2015:31). The vast majority of these appointments were made in provincial departments of education, particularly those of the Free State, Western Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, Gauteng and, more recently, Limpopo (SACSSP, 2017; NACOSSWEP, 2015:31).

The basic structure of the education system may be divided into five basic levels. These are the National Department of Basic Education, provincial education departments, district offices within the provinces, circuits within the districts and, finally, special and mainstream schools (Department of Basic Education, 2018: 19 – 25). Social workers are employed at all of these levels. Although being the largest employer of school social workers (SSW's) in the country, the department's expectations of these employees have been under-researched. This, among others,

was a driving force behind the comprehensive research project aimed at the provision of an empirical base for the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work.

The project utilised a sequential mixed-method design where qualitative data was collected and analysed and used for subsequent quantitative data collection. This design was chosen because it is, according to Cabrera (2011:80), ideal for the systematic explorations of new or unknown phenomena and because "...neither quantitative nor qualitative methods would be sufficient, by themselves, to capture the details and trends of the situation" (Ivankova *et al.*, 2006:3). Because of this combined nature, both the trustworthiness of the interpretation of the qualitative data and the validity and reliability of results produced by the quantitative research instruments were addressed during the research process. These are covered in more detail in the rest of this article

The study into provincial departments' expectations formed the second of four sequential steps. It was preceded by a comprehensive review of the background, theoretical foundations and policy dictates that govern South African school social work (Vergottini, 2018:31-65) and was followed by school social workers' *own* perceptions of their roles, tasks and challenges. The process culminated in the formulation of a proposed set of practice standards for South African school social work.

This step itself consisted of two sub-steps. The first was a qualitative exploration of the Free State Province's expectations of its school social workers. The results were then used to inform the second sub-step. This consisted of a national, predominantly quantitative survey of all provincial education departments. The overall aim of the step was to ascertain the various provinces' departments of education's expectations of their school social workers, chiefly as far as roles, tasks and functions are concerned.

### **3 THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN ITS EMPLOY**

#### **3.1 Research process**

The population of the first sub-step comprised four senior staff members of the Free State Provincial Office who manage its Inclusive Education Section. They were the

Director of Inclusive Education and three other senior managers of the directorate. They are directly responsible for the appointment, deployment and functioning of the SSW component within the department. Of these four participants, only one had a social work qualification, whilst the others had education qualifications. Their background and experience with social workers within the education system, as well as own qualification and current position, played a vital role in being selected to be part of the targeted population. Because the entire population was targeted, no sampling was required (cf. Patton, 2002:230). All four members of the targeted population participated.

The schedule utilised during the semi-structured interviews mainly consisted of open-ended questions and additional probes or follow-up questions. All four interviewees completed the required consent forms. In order to prevent data contamination, an independent interviewer in possession of a Ph.D. degree and with experience in research, led the interviews with an independent third party (a social worker) as scribe. It was recommended by the University's Ethics Committee that the main interviewer should not be a social worker in order not to "contaminate" the interview process with preconceived ideas. These two role-players were thoroughly briefed beforehand on all the relevant facets of the research, and the roles each would play in it.

With the consent of the interviewees, the interviews were audio-taped, transcribed and analysed. Tesch's suggested eight steps were used in the coding process (Creswell, 2014:197-201; Poggenpoel, 1998:343-344). This data was supplemented with field notes taken by the scribe (Greeff, 2002:302-305). Because relatively few, albeit comprehensive, interviews were conducted, a co-coder followed the same eight steps. The interviews and data capturing, interpretation and storage were conducted with strict adherence to the ethical requirements as set out by the North-West University's Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC, 2017) (See Annexure 1).

## **3.2 Main findings**

The presentation of the main findings is structured in accordance with the nine main themes covered in the interviews. These themes ranged from the respondents' core functions and the way these relate to SSW, to their recommendations for the improvement of SSW services in the country.

### **3.2.1 Theme 1: Participants' core functions and how these relate to SSW services**

It was apparent from the interviews that the participants, as a group were, directly responsible for the appointment, deployment and functioning of SSW within the province's Department of Education. Their core functions, and the way they relate to SSW services, naturally differed from one functionary to the next, e.g. one was in a senior position in respect of which the overall functioning of the Inclusive Education Directorate was managed. Another was directly responsible for the management of "...social workers in the districts and social workers in the schools, including the special schools". A third was less directly involved inasmuch as the individual did not manage social work directly, but was responsible for the implementation of life skills programmes in schools. However, the participant indicated that learners are affected by their environment and that the department also has the duty to concentrate on emotional-, psychological-, and social support, thus the need for social work services. The 4<sup>th</sup> participant was responsible for the efficient development and support to all directorates within Inclusive Education.

From the above it may be concluded that each participant was in a good position to express informed opinions on a wide range of issues pertaining to SSW, even though all of them were not social workers themselves.

### **3.2.2 Theme 2: The need for school social workers in the province**

All participants were of the opinion that there is a definite need for SSWs in the province. The core themes to emerge from their responses were the following:

- Social challenges exclude and isolate learners from education. In the words of participant A: "...social challenges are more than scholastic challenges...".
- Each of the four participants held the view that it would be ideal for every school to have a school social worker to address these challenges. Aspects such as abuse, the loss of parents on account of HIV and Aids and other illnesses, as well as high rates of poverty can be seen as psychosocial issues affecting learners' abilities to perform academically. Participants A and B expressed the opinion that teachers are not trained to manage the behaviour of learners which is the result of psychosocial

dynamics. This is in line with Koprowska's (2010:76) view that the school social worker has a supportive and empowerment responsibility in respect of educators.

- Participant C expressed the view that the current situation, where a district would only have a few school social workers (e.g. three social workers for 120 schools), *"...doesn't serve the purpose for what they were appointed for. The impact is currently mainly on crisis intervention and not on therapeutical inputs at all"*.
- Participant D, to a large extent, summarised the views of the other three as well as his/her own when stating that the *"...school is a place where you have multiple challenges that affects or impacts on the learners and part of this challenges are related to their social ones. And those social challenges have a direct bearing on the overall conduct and performance of the learner in the classroom"*.

In summary, it became clear that all four the respondents were unanimous in their view regarding the need for more school social workers.

### **3.2.3 Theme 3: The core roles and tasks of school social workers at different levels**

It should be noted that in the Free State, social workers can be appointed at three levels, viz.: provincial, district and in schools. The participants' views of the core roles of practitioners within these different levels were sought in order to provide some understanding of ways in which these responsibilities may correspond or differ.

#### **3.2.3.1 Core roles and tasks at provincial level**

The following eight core roles of social workers at provincial level were identified from analysis of the data produced by the interviews.

- To coordinate the activities of social workers at district level and school level.
- To ensure acknowledgement and recognition of the social work profession and its ethics within the Department of Basic Education.
- To ensure that the social workers employed by the department are doing what they are employed to do. Participant C motivation for this view was the following: *"... in other schools you'll find that because they don't understand the role of the social worker, social workers become sometimes the teacher's assistant. Sometimes they are used as admin personnel because their core function is not clearly defined"*

*within the school or within the district. So the provincial coordinator would make sure at the school level and the district level social workers are doing what they are employed to do, which is to render social work services.”*

- To ensure that the district-based support teams are driven and supported by the provincial office.
- To ensure the integration of services at schools.
- To ensure a close working relationship with the districts, the support of the functionality of the district based support teams (DBST), and the support of the social workers in the districts.
- To network with different forums and departments. Participant D added: *“...we also work with Department of Social Development, Department of Justice, on matters relating to referrals. Working closely with the districts as part of those forums...for children in conflict with the law for instance who have to be placed.”*
- To identify social issues and develop strategies (e.g. prevention programmes) on different issues impacting on learners and their performance. When explaining this core function, participant D said: *“...that is where I think social workers play a key role in that their role will then be to provide, for instance, analysis of the social conditions that affect (the) performance of schools...”, “The challenges are different and the social worker is expected to go outside, you know, the normal way of things.” “I think it is incumbent upon the social worker to come up with strategies that will assist the school to make sure that those learners are also not left behind“.*

It could be concluded from the interviews that the social worker appointed in the provincial office would primarily have a **managerial role** to play. This would include networking and administration responsibilities. This functionary should also have a **developmental** responsibility in terms of the establishment of school social work in the educational setting. This includes information sessions on the role of SSWs, providing recognition to this service, and to motivate and budget for posts. A last important role, would be that of **supervisor**. This would include the coordination of services, strategic planning, as well as quality control. This is in line with the requirement set by the SACSSP (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

### 3.2.3.2 Core roles and tasks at district level

The interviews produced six core expectations of social workers at district level. These may be summarised as follows.

- The provision of support. Social workers at district level should, among others, support all special schools, mainstream schools and school-based school social workers, and have a close working relationship with school-based support teams (SBST). In this regard, participant B mentioned that “ *they give support to the school based social workers*” and participant D included support to the SBST with the notion “ *...also to work closely with School Based Support Teams*”.
- They should provide training, empowerment and advocacy services to social workers and, where applicable, to educators. This implies that SSWs be kept abreast of policy developments and changes. Participant B elaborated by saying that “ *...they need to ensure that school social workers are kept abreast with all the latest policy developments and also sort of have professional learning communities or teams, where they empower their school social workers.*”
- Networking with other stakeholders, e.g. the Department of Social Development, Department of Health and some non-governmental organisations. Participant D remarked “ *...they must work together, closely with the sister departments you know like Department of Social Development, Department of Health, and the non-governmental organisations.*” This will assist with the profiling of communities and schools.
- The assessment and support of, and attending to, learners whose home circumstances exercise a negative effect on them and the addressing of the emotional barriers that affect the performance of these learners.
- The coordination and further establishment of social work services, including budgeting for resources. This was explained best by participant B who stated: “ *So, at the district office I think there’s also that level then of management and that level of ensuring that you budget and plan for interventions.*”
- The opinion was expressed that over-large caseloads tend to diminish the possibility of rendering therapeutic services. Practitioners must, consequently, be able to do crisis intervention and apply the skill of prioritising. Prevention programmes as a mechanism to prevent large caseloads, were not mentioned by the participants.

A macro-analysis of the participants' views of the roles of social workers at district level indicated that the latter are primarily expected to be service managers. This would include performing support, training, advocacy and networking tasks. They should also be able to do crisis intervention and have the ability to prioritise in terms of which learners out of their large caseloads they should attend to first. The views expressed by the respondents are an indication that, at district level, the social worker's potential role of therapist is not seen as a priority.

### **3.2.3.3 Core roles and tasks in schools**

An analysis of the participants' responses indicated that social workers in schools should chiefly be able to perform the following six core tasks:

- **Attend to and support specific types of learners.** This includes those who are experiencing psychosocial, emotional and behavioural challenges which affect or may affect their scholastic performance, as well as those with learning disabilities. Participant D added that they: *"...should also provide a conducive environment and assist to facilitate a constructive learning process for those learners"*. This view, amongst others, implies that school safe and supportive in nature.
- **Support teachers.** This task was illustrated in different ways by the participants. Participant D said that the social worker should support a teacher when *"...the teacher picks up that there are challenges that the learner is actually faced with, especially, psychosocial or social challenges. Then it is upon the social worker to follow-up"*. Participant B added that they should *"...engage in the scholastic performance of the learner"*, explaining this role by indicating that *"...a failing child cannot be left only to a teacher. We need then the social workers to play the part of therapist, as well as to create strategies to ensure that all the psychosocial barriers to learning are eliminated and they are dealt with."*
- **Liaise with and train teachers.** Teachers are the number one contact with learners and the respondents emphasised that they need to be equipped to identify certain barriers. Participant B stated that teachers need guidelines on interventions in the classroom. *"...because there's a lot of things that teachers can say that can trigger, you know, an issue like trauma. The child was traumatised; the social worker assisted this child through the trauma, but a trigger can happen anytime. And if a teacher is not aware of triggers, what will trigger now this situation? So they*

*need also to work closely with the teachers on the programmes to support the child.”*

- **Advocate** children’s rights and ensure that these rights are protected.
- Deliver **prevention programs**, according to the specific needs identified.
- Deliver **therapeutic services** to individual learners, and groups of learners.

From the analysis, it was concluded that social workers at school level have a three-pronged role to play. They should first target learners with preventative, therapeutic and supportive services. Secondly, they should target teachers and empower them. Thirdly, they should focus on the establishment of a conducive environment for learning by identifying and addressing the different barriers to learning in order to create a milieu in which learners can reach their full potential. This includes the learner’s direct home environment involving parents, caregivers and/or guardians.

#### **3.2.4 Theme 4: The management of school social workers**

The interviewees indicated that, at most schools, social workers have to report to their respective principals as administrative supervisors. At some, the report line will be to the head of department (HOD) and from the HOD to the principal. In the case of the school social worker being employed by the school governing body (SGB), the principal will provide feedback to the SGB on the work the worker has been doing. All reporting, as stated before, is administrative in nature and does not constitute a breach of confidentiality. Social workers employed in schools do not currently have a social work supervisor/consultant that would perform the educational or formative function, and the supportive or restorative functions of this method (cf. Engelbrecht, 2014:129). This situation is somewhat problematic as it is not in line with the requirements set by the SACSSP.

At the district level, the school social worker will administratively report to the deputy chief education specialist (DCES) for inclusive education. The DCES is an educator by profession. The psychosocial services coordinator at provincial level partly performs the role of professional supervisor for district social workers. He/she also has an administrative managerial role to play “*...in terms of developing the work plans for the social workers and monitoring and evaluating*” (participant C).

Social workers employed in schools do not have professional supervisors/consultants. However, they make use of so-called 'interest group meetings' or professional learning communities (PLC) as a replacement for group supervision. The committee meetings, which are usually attended by the provincial social work coordinator, are used to evaluate the practitioners' work plans, share best practise and highlight (new) challenges.

### **3.2.5 Theme 5: The professional title or designation of social workers**

Research has indicated that social workers in the Free State Department of Education's employ are referred to by different titles (Vergottini, 2018:88-89). During the interviews, it emerged that the social worker at **provincial level** is administratively referred to as the 'psychosocial services coordinator'. He/she is employed as a 'senior education specialist' and appointed under the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998).

Social workers in the **district offices** in the Free State are commonly referred to as 'socio-pedagogues'. They are, however, officially appointed as 'senior education specialists' under the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998) with the professional title of 'social worker'.

All social workers in **special schools** are referred to as 'school social workers' and appointed under the Public Service Act (103 of 1994). In most cases, the same title applies to social workers in **mainstream schools** who are appointed by school governing bodies.

### **3.2.6 Theme 6: Specialised training or tuition required before being appointed**

Two of the interviewees were of the opinion that the social worker should have a master's degree in social work while the other two believed that a teacher's diploma should be required. Participant A proposed a master's degree motivated this as follows:

*"... people can just get a degree or whatever then they start working with the children and then they make a mess...They are actually damaging learners*

*sometimes more than assisting. Therefore I think, if the standard says: 'master's degree', then that would be lovely."*

The two participants (B and D) advocating a teacher's diploma indicated that it would assist the SSW to understand the environment better. It will, in their opinion, also provide the practitioners with a career in education as no school social worker could progress or advance beyond senior education specialist level without a teaching qualification. Participant B articulated this view in the following way:

*"...firstly, for their own... understanding of the education system. Because to work within a system that you really don't understand fully. It will only limit yourself. Then, secondly, it's also for their own upward mobility, because in education, you can never move beyond that SES (senior education specialist) post (without it)."*

Currently, neither of the two qualifications are entry requirements to the field of school social work. However, it became apparent from the interviews that possessing one or both of these qualifications would not only advance an applicant's chances of being appointed, but also improve his/her understanding of the education environment.

### ***3.2.7 Theme 7: Number of years of practical experience required before being appointed***

One of the questions posed during the interviews dealt with the interviewees' views regarding the number of years of practical experience a social worker should serve before being appointed as a school social worker. Three of the four respondents, interestingly, indicated that no prior (generic) experience would be needed. All three participants are educators by profession. The fourth participant, who is a qualified social worker, indicated that an applicant should have at least five years of experience before being appointed. He/she motivated this view as follows: *"...a school social worker should at least have experience working in an NGO or Social Development where you have at least done generic social work. So that when you come and specialise - in school social work, you are specialising - then at least you have background...you (can) then collaborate with different stakeholders in terms of making sure that you support the learner at hand"*.

### **3.2.8 Theme 8: Policies and legislation which allow for the appointment of school social workers**

During the exploration of the designation of social workers (see Theme 5) it was found that they were appointed in terms of one of two acts, viz. the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998) and the Public Service Act (103 of 1994). When asked, most of the participants were unsure of the *exact* policies and legislation that allow for such appointments. However, they indicated that the following do play an important role.

- The Policy on Screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS).
- White Paper 6.
- Different recruitment policies, including those that stipulate that school social workers should be registered with the South African Council of Social Service Professions.
- The Public Service Act, Act 103 of 1994.
- The Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998.

According to one of the participants who indicated that the last two acts, the situation in which both are used to employ social workers within the education system, creates problems. In this regard, participant C stated the following:

*“Those that are employed under Educators Act, are earning a higher salary than those who are employed under the Public Service Act. ...previously we had social workers now being placed on OSD scales. So those social workers, under the Educators Act, could not benefit from those changes, because they are educators not social workers. So it placed them at a disadvantaged position. Whereas with social workers that are employed under Public Service Act, the starting scale is very low and you look at the scope of work they are doing. Hence I’m saying their experience; their qualification should also be adjusted so that they can at least be started at (a) more senior level in terms of employment”.*

From the responses it is evident that clarity is required with regard to the pathways for social workers to follow to enter the education system and the current confusion on appointment levels, salaries, OSD (Occupational Specific Dispensation) and associated aspects should be clarified.

### **3.2.9 Theme 9: Recommendations with regard to school social work services in South Africa**

The final theme of the interviews required respondents to provide their recommendations with regard to the utilisation of school social work in other provinces and the improvement of school social work services in South Africa, in general. All four respondents recommended that other provinces should, in cases where it is not done already, start to make use of the services of school social workers or expand their employment of school social workers where only basic services are currently provided.

The following four core ideas emerged from the analysis of the respondents' recommendations for the improvement of school social work services in the country in general:

- Social work should be an integral part of the vision of education delivery in the country. For this to become a reality, social workers will have to position themselves in such a way that educators appreciate them as indispensable role-players in the schooling system. As participant D stated: *"...make sure your role is integrated in the school plans, like the timetable. ...the social worker is not only there when there are problems to come at home ...or to follow up on the issues that have a social effect on the classroom."*
- School social workers should have a solid academic base and applicable experience. Participant C explained: *"...Social workers must specialise in school social work... (and have) the relevant experience. I've seen in practice how when you employ a social worker, for example, who has worked in SANDF with adults, and you bring that social worker to come and work with children, they sort of feel like a mismatch or misfit because of the irrelevant experience that they have. So, we should also consider their experience, background, work experience and, also their in-service training. When we talk about the policies that are within the Department to see how social workers can fit in within the Department and how they can support this learners. Also taking into consideration the policies of the Department of Education, as we... are using now Inclusive Education White Paper 6 Policy as our bible.... A social worker should be able to see how they take the Children's Act and other relevant acts into consideration when they implementing that policy as our guiding tool."*
- Clear and realistic national norms and standards should be in place for school social work. Participant B illustrated deficiencies in this regard as follows: *"...if we had*

*norms and standards they will say: one social worker can deal with 500 learners. Then you know it is manageable. But now, I mean, Motheo (District) is so big and they only have three social workers.”*

- The structuring of school social work services should be conducted in such a way that nationally, school social workers should be available at school level instead of only at district level. Participant A's motivation for this view was the following: “... *it's a waste of time travelling to school A and go to another school B. But if we are in one town or school the learners just come to you. You'll be able to see them as soon as possible... My recommendation would be that we need social workers at ground level, at school level.*”

### **3.3 Conclusions and implications for the national survey**

The semi-structured interviews with the management cadre of the Free State Province's Department of Education produced a large number of findings, ideas and recommendations, as well as some uncertainties. The main conclusion to be reached from the analysis of the responses was that school social work is not, as yet, a fully integrated, structured and recognised service within this setting. There were, however, a number of trends that boded well for the further development and entrenchment of such a service. Paramount among these was the management cadre's positive attitude in terms of school social work and their view that such a service should be expanded in the province and the country as a whole, especially when taking into account that 66% of them were not social workers themselves.

The findings, ideas, recommendations and uncertainties produced by the interviews, together with the results of the literature study, were used as a basis in the design of the questionnaire in respect of the national survey.

## **4 SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN THEIR EMPLOY**

The results of the qualitative study formed the prelude and basis for a national survey of provincial departments of education's expectations of the school social workers in their employ. This survey focussed chiefly on managers' views of what should be expected from social workers at all different levels within the education system.

## 4.1 Research process and instruments

The survey took the form of a questionnaire which was e-mailed to representatives of the education departments of all nine provinces. These representatives encompassed the top and senior management within every province who were responsible for the running of the psychosocial component of education. This management cadre was identified with the help of the National Department of Basic Education. Because the entire population was targeted, no sampling was involved (cf. Strydom & Venter, 2002:198-9).

The researcher obtained written permission to conduct the research from the National Department of Basic Education, and from all nine provincial departments of education. Ethical clearance was received from the North-West University's Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (no. NWU-00370-15-A1).

The survey questionnaire was, in order to ensure validity and reliability (Delpont, 2002:166-169), developed in conjunction with the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University. Its accompanying cover letter provided information on the nature of, and reasons for, the study (cf. Delpont, 2002:176; Flick, 2014:54), as well as an undertaking to ensure the respondents' anonymity and confidentiality. It was required of participants to complete and submit an informed consent form.

Due to the differences in research approval protocols and structures, and on account of hesitancy among certain of the senior managers to allow participation, obtaining permission and approval from the various different provinces proved to be extremely difficult and time-consuming. It emerged that the hesitancy could be ascribed to the fact that the concept of 'school social work' was somewhat new in some provinces and that managers were careful to express opinions on 'something' they were not fully acquainted with. In spite of this hesitancy, at least one completed questionnaire was received from each province.

Before the start of the survey, an ideal was set of obtaining three to five responses from each province and at least 27 responses in total (i.e. average of three per province). These targets were established in order to ensure a balanced provincial representation

in the results and to attain a minimum level of data saturation. The provincial breakdown of the responses is as follows:

- Eastern Cape: 2
- Free State: 3
- Gauteng: 5
- Kwazulu-Natal: 3
- Limpopo: 1
- Mpumalanga: 2
- North West: 3
- Northern Cape: 3
- Western Cape: 5

Although it was found to be possible to obtain the minimum number of responses (i.e. 27), three provinces (Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga) were under-represented in the survey. In these provinces, school social work services are either not yet fully in place or such professionals have only recently been appointed (Kemp, 2017). Other provinces, such as Gauteng and the Western Cape, where school social work is fully entrenched, completed the maximum number of questionnaires. The potential bias against certain provinces was taken into account during Statistical Consultation Services' compilation of the data sets and in the subsequent interpretation of the statistics produced.

All the data produced by the questionnaires was captured by the NWU's Statistical Consultation Services, who also assisted in the coding and analysis of the data with the aid of the IBM SPSS Version 24 programme (Ellis, 2017).

The questionnaire consisted of five main sections and thirteen separate scales which consisted of six-point Likert type options that ranged from "not important" (1) to "critically important (6)". The questionnaire contained a final section into which respondents could add additional core roles and responsibilities not covered in the survey.

The composition of the questionnaire, plus the Cronbach alpha coefficients ( $\alpha$ ), mean and average standard deviation produced by each scale, is summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Composition and data produced by the national survey questionnaire**

<b>Sections and aspects covered</b>	<b>Scales</b>	<b>Cronbach alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
<b>Section 1: Demographic and related information</b>	-			
<b>Section 2: The SSWs responsibilities at national level</b>	Scale 1: Responsibilities at national level	<b>0.919</b>	<b>5.45</b>	<b>0.63</b>
<b>Section 3: The SSWs responsibilities at provincial level</b>	Scale 2: Responsibilities at provincial level	<b>0.948</b>	<b>5.26</b>	<b>0.59</b>
<b>Section 4: The SSWs responsibilities at district level</b>	Scale 3.1: Responsibilities towards learners	<b>0.792</b>	<b>5.66</b>	<b>0.43</b>
	Scale 3.2: Responsibilities towards educators	<b>0.655</b>	<b>5.24</b>	<b>0.56</b>
	Scale 3.3: Responsibilities towards screening, development and implementation of programmes and projects	<b>0.904</b>	<b>4.91</b>	<b>0.84</b>
	Scale 3.4: Responsibilities towards social work and education policy changes and new trends	<b>0.846</b>	<b>5.21</b>	<b>0.55</b>
	Scale 3.5 Responsibilities in terms of their role towards multi-disciplinary teams	<b>0.76</b>		<b>0.78</b>
	Scale 3.6: Responsibilities in terms of the implementation of Inclusive Education	<b>0.921</b>	<b>4.73</b>	<b>0.76</b>
<b>Section 5: The SSWs responsibilities at schools (mainstream and special)</b>	Scale 4.1: Responsibilities towards learners	<b>0.739</b>	<b>5.15</b>	<b>0.64</b>
	Scale 4.2: Responsibilities towards educators	<b>0.868</b>	<b>5.06</b>	<b>0.57</b>
	Scale 4.3: Responsibilities towards social work and education policy changes and new trends	<b>0.887</b>	<b>5.37</b>	<b>0.61</b>
	Scale 4.4: Responsibilities in terms of role as member of multi-disciplinary teams	<b>0.764</b>	<b>4.71</b>	<b>0.80</b>
	Scale 4.5: General responsibilities	<b>0.868</b>	<b>4.99</b>	<b>0.59</b>

The Cronbach alpha coefficient (sometimes abbreviated to 'Cronbach alpha' or ' $\alpha$ ') for each construct was calculated to determine their reliability in terms of the Likert scale components of the questionnaire (Field, 2009:675). Kline (*in* Field, 2009:675) explains that "...although the generally accepted value of 0.8 is appropriate for cognitive tests such as intelligence tests, for ability tests the cut-off point of 0.7 is more suitable." A score of 0.7 and higher was therefore accepted as an appropriate reliability coefficient. All the scales, except scale 3.2 (see Table 9,) met the minimum requirement. This deficiency was taken into consideration when the results produced by this scale were interpreted.

Apart from the Cronbach alphas, descriptive statistics such as totals, percentages, averages and standard deviations were also used in the interpretation of certain scales and questions.

## **4.2 Main findings**

The presentation of the main findings will be structured according to the five themes covered in the questionnaire. These sections range from demographic information to the respondents' views of the responsibilities of social workers in the different levels of the education system.

### ***4.2.1 Section 1: Demographic and related information***

Section 1 covered the respondents' basic demographic information. It was included in order to establish a profile of the respondents in terms of their position, geographical location and the nature of the specific provincial structures to which they belong.

An analysis of the profile indicated that the questionnaires were completed by functionaries who had a medium to high level of knowledge of school social work.

As stated earlier, school social workers are employed in different structures across the country. Respondents were consequently requested to indicate in which structures employment opportunities existed in their provinces. In total, 22 respondents (66%) indicated the Department of Basic Education, nine (26%) school governing bodies and four (11%) the Department of Social Development.

A breakdown of respondents' feedback in this regard is contained in Table 2.

**Table 2: Employment structures for School Social Workers in South African Provinces**

Province	Department of Basic Education	Department of Social Development	School Governing Bodies (SGB's)
Free State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Western Cape	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Northern Cape	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Eastern Cape	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Limpopo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>(One year contract)</i>	
North West	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kwazulu-Natal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mpumalanga	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Gauteng	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Due to the fact that school social workers are employed by different entities and at different levels in the education system, it was important to ascertain the way in which, and at which, levels they are currently distributed throughout the country. The profile produced by the survey is contained in Table 3.

**Table 3: Distribution of school social workers per province**

Province	Provincial Office	District Office	Special Schools	Schools of Industry / Reform Schools	School Governing Bodies (SGB's)
Free State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Western Cape	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Northern Cape		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Eastern Cape		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Limpopo			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
North West	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kwazulu-Natal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Vacant)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mpumalanga		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Gauteng	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The table indicates that social workers are employed in all sectors of the education system. The most common placements however, occur in district offices (35%) and special schools (21%). Taken as a whole, the 'employment gap' appears to be in provincial offices and mainstream schools. It remains an open question whether school governing bodies, which currently represent 18% of the placement options, can be expected to employ and pay for school social workers from their own budgets.

The distribution profile only indicates where, and at which level, posts were available. This made it necessary to ascertain how many were in actual fact employed in these posts. Consequently, the respondents were requested to provide details on the number of school social workers employed in their respective provinces. The data produced from the responses are contained in Table 4.

**Table 4: Number of school social workers per province**

Province	Number of school social workers	Location
Eastern Cape	46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District offices (46)</li> </ul>
Free State	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provincial office (1)</li> <li>District Offices (7)</li> <li>Special Schools (15)</li> <li>Schools of Industry (4)</li> <li>SGB positions (5)</li> </ul>
Gauteng	Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Offices, Special schools, SGB positions</li> </ul>
Kwazulu-Natal	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provincial Offices (1)</li> <li>District Offices (12)</li> <li>School of Industry (1)</li> </ul>
Limpopo	Unsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainstream schools and special schools</li> </ul>
Mpumalanga	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Offices (4)</li> </ul>
Northern Cape	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District office (4)</li> </ul>
North West	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provincial office (1)</li> <li>SGB position (1)</li> </ul>
Western Cape	166	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provincial Office (1)</li> <li>District Offices (79)</li> <li>Special schools (65)</li> <li>SGB positions (21)</li> </ul>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>≈ 268</b>	

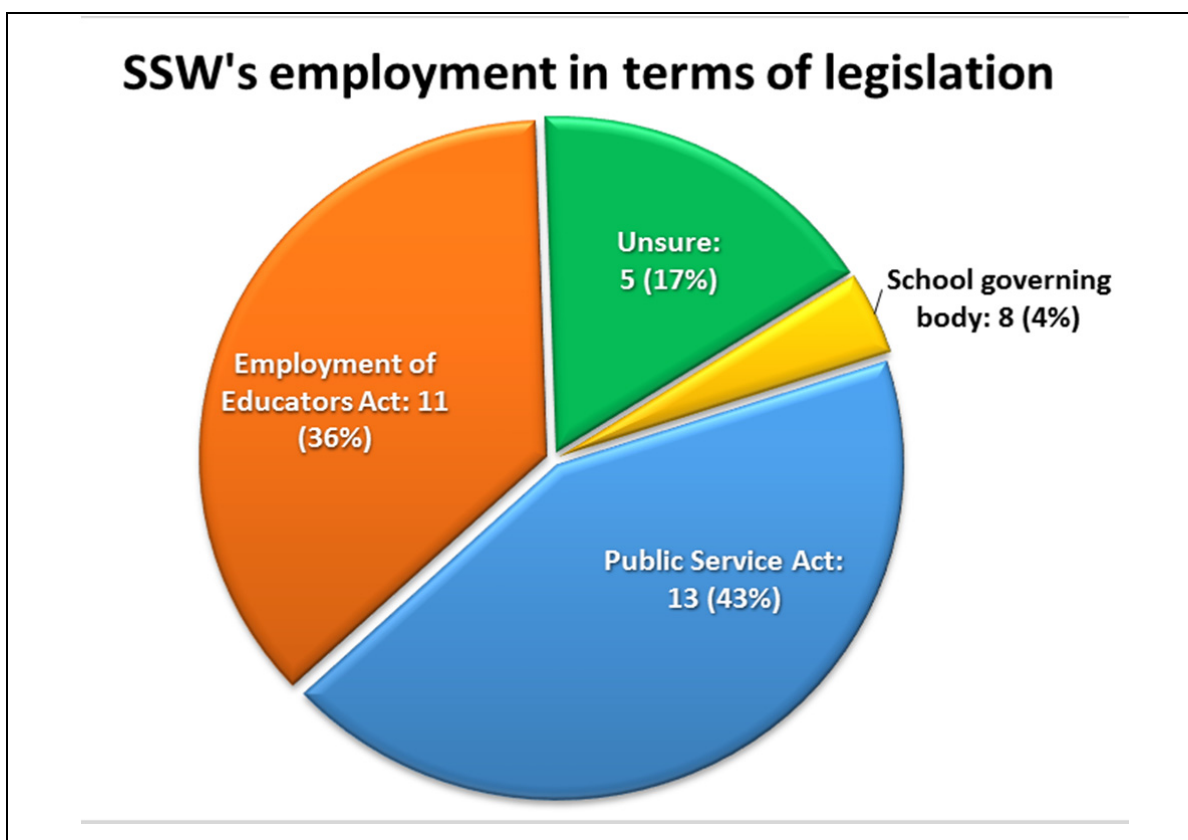
As is evident from the table, the results of the question were inconclusive since neither the respondents from Gauteng nor those from Limpopo were able to provide exact numbers. However, in Limpopo 180 graduates were appointed on a one-year contract in 2017 as 'Learner Support Agents' (now called 'Learner Support Advisors') in this province's mainstream schools (SACSSP, 2017; Limpopo Online, 2017). It is known moreover, that the province has social workers at special schools who are permanently employed. The Western Cape has the highest count of SSWs, which might be due to the fact that SSW has a functional structure in place.

Whatever its results, Table 4 provides some insight into the current employment numbers of school social workers in the country. Firstly, it indicates that a substantial number of SSWs are formally employed (a minimum of 268), although this number would probably be substantially larger if the data of the 'unsure' provinces were available. Secondly, the data shows major discrepancies in the employment figures of provinces. The number of SSWs employed in Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and the North West, even with the assistance of 'external' social workers, will not be able to address the needs of learners due to the high level of socio-economic challenges and numbers of learners in schools.

All the respondents indicated that a need exists for school social workers (92,6% 'To a large extent' and 7,4% 'To a moderate extent'). These responses confirm the replies of those respondents who had been interviewed earlier. The survey results, therefore, show that a dire need exists for the expansion of current school social work services.

It emerged from the qualitative study that differences exist with regard to the legislation in terms of which school social workers are appointed. The extent to which this applies also to the country as a whole was covered in one of the survey questions. The results achieved are summarised in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Legislation in accordance with which school social workers are appointed**

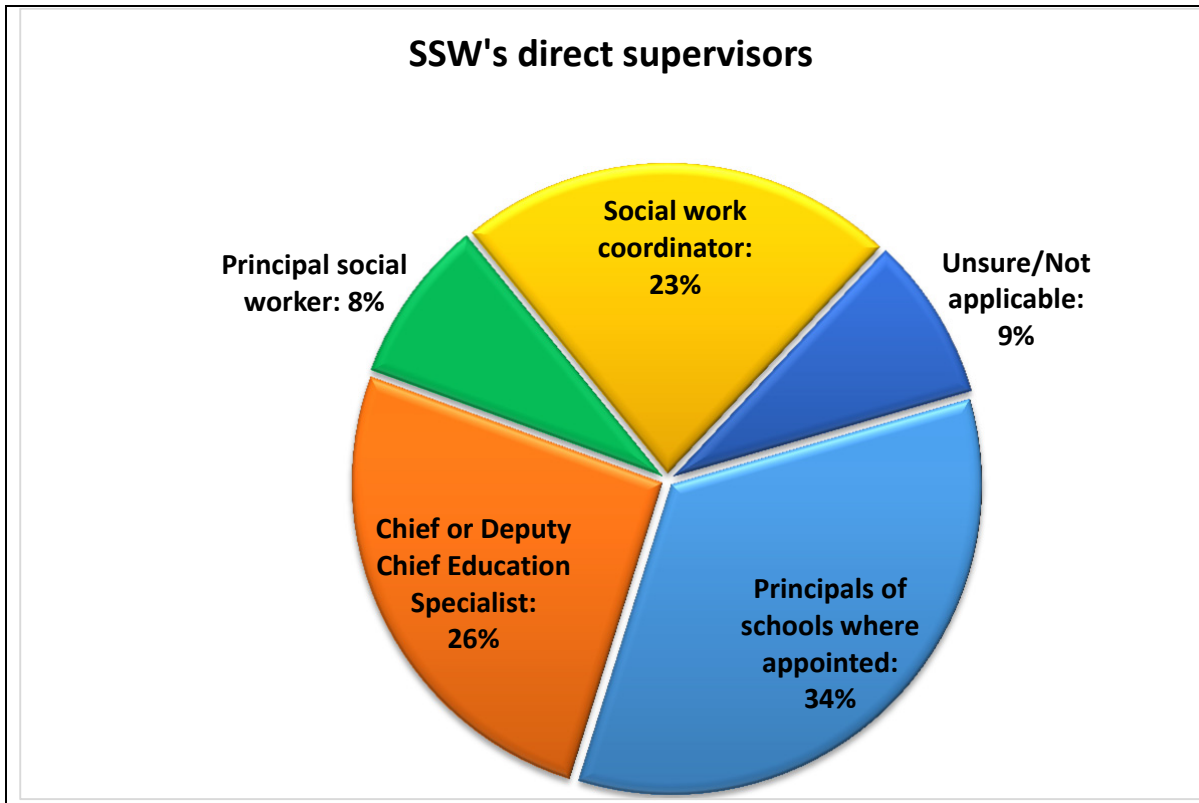


The graph shows that school social workers are mainly employed in terms of the Public Service Act (103 of 1994) and the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998). This information is significant because of its implications for the salary levels of school social workers. Employment of Educators Act appointees normally earn a higher salary than those appointed in terms of the Public Service Act (Morgan, 2017).

A second important implication stems from the eight respondents who indicated school governing body appointments. Such appointments imply the existence of a private contract between the school and the social worker which will not only specify the type of service he or she should render, but will also limit the incumbent's reporting responsibility to those of the school principal and the school governing body. Moreover, it could have an impact on the salaries such social workers will earn.

During the qualitative study, discrepancies were found with regard to the supervision of school social workers. Figure 2 shows the positions held by supervisors of school social workers, according to the results of the survey.

**Figure 2: Direct supervisors of school social workers**



The survey confirmed those of the qualitative study inasmuch as that most school social workers have administrative/educationalist managers (e.g. principals or deputy chief education specialists), while very few have a social worker as manager/supervisor. The educationalist will not be in a position (or permitted) to provide professional supervision and consultation services to school social workers. This would imply that school social workers are generally left more or less on their own when faced with professional challenges.

Eight of the respondents did, however, indicate that there are social work coordinators employed as supervisors in their provinces. The extent to which such services are available to all school social workers in any given province, remains unclear.

The results produced by the survey question dealing with professional titles/designations employed to refer to school social workers, mirrored those of the qualitative study in the Free State's Department of Education. The spread of different titles across provinces is contained in Table 5.

**Table 5 Professional title / designation of school social workers**

Title/Designation	Number	Percentage (%)
Social worker	13	34.2
School social worker	12	31.6
Socio-pedagogue	3	7.9
Educational therapist	1	2.6
Senior Education Specialist	5	13.2
Other	4	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In addition to titles such as ‘socio-pedagogue’ and ‘educational therapist’, respondents included under ‘Other’ the titles of ‘learner support agent’, ‘social worker intern’, ‘deputy chief education specialist: social work’ and ‘education social workers’.

It is clear that the concept and title of ‘school social worker’ are not as yet entrenched in the South African education system. The diverse range of titles may lead to confusion regarding the type of service that could and should be expected from such a functionary. The entrenchment of a single, descriptive title should receive attention during the further development of this specialised field of social work in South Africa. It should be noted in this regard that a respondent indicated in the ‘comment’ section of the questionnaire that in the Western Cape, the social worker at provincial level is referred to as ‘social work manager’ whereas other supervisors based in districts are referred to as ‘social work supervisors’. Social workers employed in circuits are referred to as ‘school social workers’. These titles are in line with the OSD of social workers and probably represent the best choice for South Africa.

#### **4.2.2 Section 2: The school social worker’s responsibilities at national level**

The first scale used in the survey dealt with the responsibilities of school social workers at national level. The data obtained from this scale (Scale 1) is summarised in Table 6.

**Table 6: Scale 1- SSW's responsibilities at national level**

Key Responsibility	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Develop school social work strategies and policies in line with DBE	5.56	0.751
2. Develop norms and standards for school social workers	5.52	0.700
3. Develop systems and structures for mainstreaming school social work services in education	5.56	0.801
4. Monitor and evaluate the translation and implementation of strategies, policies and programmes in school social work at provincial level	5.48	0.700
5. Strengthen the capacity of provinces, districts and schools to mainstream school social work services	5.44	0.801
6. Strengthen relationships between important stakeholders (e.g. the DBE on national and provincial levels, national and provincial government departments, universities, NGOs, research entities, and civil organisations).	5.41	0.694
7. Coordinate school social work services between national and provincial levels and among the various provinces	5.33	0.920
8. Keep abreast of global, regional and national trends in social work, especially school social work	5.33	0.877

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.792 (See Annexure 23 Table 8 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The scale's overall mean was 5.45. This represents a point between 'very important' and 'critically important'. The responses to individual items ranged between 5.33 and 5.56. As a result, it must be concluded that the respondents viewed all the stated responsibilities as relevant and highly important.

The three functions which were viewed as being of critical importance were to develop: school social work strategies and policies; systems and structures for mainstreaming school social work services; and norms and standards for school social workers (see Table 6). The functions which received the lowest ratings were those that focussed on coordination (Table 6: Item 7) and keeping abreast of developments (Table 6: Item 8). From the result it may be deduced that the respondents considered the bringing about of structural-functional improvements to the overall school social work system a priority, whereas the more administrative and management functions (e.g. coordination, monitoring and liaising) were viewed as less important. This can be viewed as indicative of a service which is still in a development phase.

In addition to the options provided, respondents could also add responsibilities that were not contained in the questionnaire. The following three suggestions were received:

- “*Motivation for more social work posts in collaboration with the different provinces*”;
- “*Quality assurance and compliance to norms and standards*”;
- “*Ensuring professional development, supervision and support of social workers in the Department of Education*”.

Although the added responsibilities already fall within the ambit of those provided, it does indicate two further specific needs that should receive attention. These are for more school social workers and for the development of systems that would ensure a high quality of service delivery.

#### **4.2.3 Section 3: The school social worker’s responsibilities at provincial level**

The structure of the South African basic education system provides for a high level of autonomy for provincial education departments (Department of Basic Education Yearbook, 2015:138; Morgan, 2017). It was, consequently, important to ascertain the respondents’ views of the responsibilities of the highest social work functionary within a province and then to compare the results with those from functionaries at national level.

The questionnaire used in the survey included the 25 potential responsibilities which the social worker employed at provincial level could fulfil. These were derived from the literature review and qualitative study. Respondents were invited to add to these responsibilities. The data produced by Scale 2 is summarised in Table 7.

**Table 7: Scale 2 - SSWs responsibilities at provincial level**

<b>Key responsibility</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1. Facilitate and develop school social work service in line with the Framework of Inclusive Education as in WP 6 and the Provincial Inclusive Education Strategy Plan</b>	5.52	0.802
<b>2. Develop a school social work policy for the province that will include a relevant measurement tool</b>	5.41	0.888
<b>3. Develop a provincial plan of action for school social work service delivery</b>	5.59	0.747
<b>4. Ensure that school social work services are being rendered in all districts</b>	5.70	0.542

<b>5. Develop and promote guidelines/ programmes for micro-, mezzo- and macro-intervention based on an eco-systemic approach and crisis intervention with learners, parents and educators</b>	5.19	0.834
<b>6. Organise and present seminars on aspects of school social work services for office-based personnel and educators</b>	5.04	0.940
<b>7. Provide comprehensive support to district-based school social workers (for example in the form of in-service training, professional development, supervision and consultation services as well as the monitoring of service delivery)</b>	5.33	0.832
<b>8. Provide support to district- and school-based support teams with regard to social issues/problems</b>	4.93	1.035
<b>9. Keep abreast of policy and trends which guide the social work profession within the DBE</b>	5.33	0.784
<b>10. Communicate changes and trends to relevant management, staff and service providers</b>	5.22	0.847
<b>11. Coordinate school social work services by acting as a link between National Department of Basic Education and the Provincial DBE</b>	5.26	0.859
<b>12. Coordinate school social work by acting as link between school social workers at district level and relevant section at provincial level</b>	5.37	0.742
<b>13. Coordinate and assist universities with service learning placements for school social work students</b>	4.96	1.018
<b>14. Facilitate regular subcommittee meetings for school social workers at district level</b>	4.70	1.265
<b>15. Coordinate and manage programmes on social issues/problems that impact on the school setting(e.g. child and substance abuse)</b>	5.07	1.269
<b>16. Organise opportunities for professional development of school social workers and other social workers within the DBE</b>	5.19	0.786
<b>17. Promote inter-sectoral collaboration and partnerships by the establishment and maintaining of forums that contribute to effective school social work service delivery</b>	5.19	1.039
<b>18. Disseminating departmental policy to stakeholders/partners</b>	5.04	0.898
<b>19. Screen and evaluate the social programmes and projects delivered by external service providers in order to ensure that they are in line with departmental policy</b>	4.93	0.874
<b>20. In conjunction with district school social workers, monitor and evaluate the programme and projects that are implemented at sites of learning by service providers</b>	5.15	0.770
<b>21. Provide guidance on school social work to social workers seconded to the DBE by other government departments and partners</b>	5.15	0.818

<b>22. Ensure and promote inter-disciplinary collaboration by active participation in forums of psychosocial and other sections within the department</b>	5.22	0.801
<b>23. Act as link between the department and other province-based agencies with regard to social issues/problems (e.g. violence)</b>	5.04	0.898
<b>24. Develop a database of all school social work programmes in the province in order to prevent duplication</b>	5.41	0.844
<b>25. Ensure and sustain open channels of communication with all stakeholders</b>	5.48	0.753

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.792 (See Annexure 23 Table 9 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The research on which the questionnaire was based, indicates that school social work at provincial level would primarily have a management function to fulfil. This expectation was confirmed by the data produced by Scale 2. The following functions were those that were most emphasised by the respondents:

- Ensuring that school social work services are being rendered in all districts was considered to be of most importance. The option that received the third-highest rating, viz. the facilitation and development of school social work service in line with the Framework of Inclusive Education, deals with the expansion of services. It may, therefore, be concluded that respondents viewed rendering of social work services as well as the further development of social work services within a province as the incumbent's most important responsibility. This corresponds with the importance placed on the expansion of school social work services expected from the social work functionary at national level (see Table 6).
- The next cluster of highly rated responsibilities was centred on the managerial responsibilities of the provincial representative. It dealt with the development of policy, a provincial plan of action, database of all school social work programmes and the establishment of an open channel of communication with all stakeholders.
- Different forms of liaison with external stakeholders such as universities and external service providers, as well as the facilitation and support of internal teams and sub-committees, were likewise considered to be of importance.

Two additional responsibilities were added by respondents in the open section of the questionnaire. These comprised the provincial manager's involvement in the development of new job descriptions for school social workers and in the recruitment and selection process. This indicates a need for the standardisation of the duties of school social workers and the criteria used for recruitment.

#### 4.2.4 Section 4: The school social worker's responsibilities at district level

The potential functions/responsibilities of district level SSWs were divided into six categories. These were in respect of:

- learners,
- educators/teachers,
- the screening, development and implementation of programmes and projects,
- social work and education policy changes and new trends,
- their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams, and
- the implementation of inclusive education (cf. Jarolmen, 2014; School Social Work Association of Sweden, 2013; AASW, 2008; NASW, 2012).

In the questionnaire, each category was given its own list of potential responsibilities and the respondents were afforded the opportunity to rate these individually. Only the primary findings will be covered below.

##### 4.2.4.1 Potential responsibilities towards learners

In the survey, the responsibilities which district level school social workers might have in respect of the learners in their area were divided into five key functions. The data produced by this scale is summarised in Table 8.

**Table 8: Scale 3.1 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level towards learners**

Key responsibility / function *	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Address social problems experienced by individuals and groups of learners (e.g. bullying, teenage pregnancy)	5.74	0.447
2. Provide crisis intervention services (e.g. death of parent)	5.52	0.753
3. Referral to external service providers for follow-up or statutory intervention (e.g. child abuse)	5.70	0.669
4. Develop and implement programmes to prevent social problems/issues among learners (e.g. bullying, child abuse, teenage pregnancy)	5.78	0.424
5. Implement parental guidance programmes	5.59	0.572

\* Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.792 (See Annexure 23 Table 10 for full details of data produced by this scale)

The mean of the responses to the responsibilities stated ranged between 5.52 and 5.78, with an overall mean of 5.67. This would indicate that each item was considered as either 'very important' or 'critically important'.

Table 8 indicates that working with learners via direct service delivery and the use of preventative programmes received the highest rating. The first finding correlates with those of Openshaw (2008:1) and Jarolmen (2014:28) who found that direct service delivery, such as individual counselling, represents one of the basic tasks of school social workers and that the major part of their time is spent on this type of service. In the case of preventative programmes, Segal *et al.* (2007:301) concluded that such programmes can, in the long term, "save lives". Although 'provision of crisis intervention services' received the lowest rating, it still fell in the 'critically important' category. It should be noted that crisis intervention is a form of direct service to learners (Sherman, 2016:147).

The involvement of other role-players, such as parents and external service providers, were considered as 'very important', albeit with a slightly lower rating. This confirms that respondents saw the learner as the school social worker's primary client system.

#### **4.2.4.2 Potential responsibilities towards educators**

In addition to their responsibilities towards learners, educators may also be seen as a vital part of the school social worker's consumer system (Sherman, 2016:148). Consequently, the supportive and empowerment responsibility of the school social worker in respect of educators (cf. Koprowska, 2010:76) was likewise explored in the survey.

The scale used consisted of five items. The responses to these items are summarised in Table 9.

**Table 9: Scale 3.2 - Potential functions/responsibilities of district SSWs towards educators**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Assist educators with the early identification of learner’s needs/problems	5.56	0.577
2. Assist educators with reporting learners with social barriers of learning	5.22	0.801
3. Assist educators with supporting learners with social barriers of learning	5.31	0.970
4. Empower educators with regard to knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters, and community changes	5.26	0.859
5. Empower educators with regard to the management of learners in the classroom	4.89	1.086

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.655 (See Annexure 23 Table 11 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

Scale 3.2 was the only one whose Cronbach alpha = 0.655 failed to meet the set reliability requirement (i.e. 0.7). Its inter-item correlation of 0.27 and overall mean of 4.25, however, indicated that its results could be taken into consideration, albeit with caution.

The results indicated that the social worker’s key responsibilities towards educators/teachers would be to assist them on learner issues (see Table 9, items 1, 2 & 3). All three the relevant items were rated between ‘very important’ and ‘critically important’.

The responses to Item 4: ‘Empower educators with knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters, and community changes’ produced a rather unexpectedly high mean of 5.26 (i.e. ‘critically important’), whereas the empowerment of educators with regard to the management of learners in the classroom was the lowest at 4.89. It may be deduced from these and other results that the respondents were of the opinion that (most) educators should be able to manage learners, but that they required empowerment in respect of changes which occur outside the narrow confines of the classroom.

#### 4.2.4.3 Potential responsibilities regarding programmes and projects

Because of their relatively senior positions, social workers at district level are expected to be involved in screening and the development and implementation of programmes and projects. The extent to which respondents viewed these responsibilities as a priority was tested via the use of scale 3.3. The scale's Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha = 0.904$ ) indicated that it was highly reliable.

The overall mean of the scale was 4.25 with the constituent means ranging from 4.00 as the lowest and 5.41 as the highest mean (see Table 10). This large spread, coupled to an inter-item correlation of 0.60, indicated that there were clear differences in the priority rating attributed to each of the seven responsibilities covered by the scale.

**Table 10: Scale 3.3 - Potential functions/responsibilities of district SSWs regarding screening, and the development and implementation of programmes and projects**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Evaluate and monitor programmes and projects	4.93	1.035
2. Assist with the management of programmes and projects	4.81	1.001
3. Develop tools to evaluate the success of projects and programmes	4.70	1.265
4. Compile business plans where required	4.00	1.414
5. Implement and monitor the progress of psychosocial programmes	5.19	0.736
6. Network and liaise with external resources	5.41	0,844
7. Develop and support infrastructure at schools such the school-based support teams (SBST)	5.33	0.877

*(Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.904 (See Annexure 23, Table 12 for full details of data produced by this scale)*

In the responses, 'Network and liaise with external resources' achieved the highest mean, followed by 'Development and support of infrastructure at schools'. Both of these were regarded as 'critically important'. These responsibilities are interactional in nature and require advanced communication skills. This implies that DuBois & Miley's (2010:53) view of communication as an essential skill in social work, would also be applicable to their functioning within the education system.

All the responsibilities related to ‘programmes and projects’ - whether in the development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation or management thereof – were rated as ‘very’ or ‘critically important’. The item: ‘Compile business plans where required’ produced the lowest mean. This implies that, even though it is still seen as ‘very important’, the compilation of business plans is not regarded as a priority for social workers at this level.

#### 4.2.4.4 Potential responsibilities towards policy changes and new trends

The explorative study indicated that district school social workers may have an important linking function. The extent of this responsibility was explored by means of Scale 3.4 of the national survey.

The scale was focussed on two elements, namely the mastery of new knowledge and insights and the dissemination of these to others. The responses produced by this reliable scale ( $\alpha = 0.846$ ) is summarised in Table 11.

**Table 11: Scale 3.4 - Potential functions/responsibilities of district SSWs in respect of social work and education policy changes and new trends**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Master and disseminate knowledge of relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	5.22	0.641
2. Communicate changes and trends to district management teams	5.15	0.662
3. Attend, participate and provide feedback on conferences and workshops	5.19	0.681
4. Attend and participate in school social work sub-committee	4.96	0.898

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.846 (See Annexure 23 Table 13 for full details of the data produced by the scale)*

Table 11 indicates that the responsibilities of keeping up to date with policies and new trends and participating in workshops were regarded as being of a high priority. With a mean of 5.15, communicating the results to district management teams was likewise regarded as being a priority. These results indicate that social workers at this level should be adept at performing the roles of policy analyst, conferee and social work educator (cf. DuBois & Miley, 2010:54; Weyers, 2011:131-2).

The relatively lower rating given to participation in school social work sub-committees is probably due to the fact that such systems have not been introduced into all the provinces. In most provinces, however, school social workers at this level do participate in multi-disciplinary teams (Kemp, 2017; Morgan, 2017).

#### **4.2.4.5 Potential responsibilities in terms of multi-disciplinary teams**

The scale covering the responsibilities of district school social workers in terms of multi-disciplinary teams contained only two questions. These covered the importance of attending provincial and regional meetings along with other professions, and of supporting and guiding 'learner support counsellors' at circuit level. In this context, a learner support counsellor must have an Honours degree in Psychology and provide, among other things, emotional support to learners. They form part of the multi-disciplinary team.

The scale produced a Cronbach alpha of 0.76.

The attendance at multi-disciplinary meetings was regarded as 'critically important' by respondents. This finding is in line with the view of Frost *et al.* (2004:187-196) that social workers have an important role to play in such teams, particularly in cases where they function within host settings.

The second question produced the lower mean of 4.78. The rating can probably be ascribed to the fact that not all provinces have learner support counsellors.

#### **4.2.4.6 Potential responsibilities regarding the implementation of inclusive education**

The South African education system has adopted the inclusive education principles and framework (Department of Basic Education, 2001). It forms part of school district social workers' responsibilities to implement this framework. A separate scale was, consequently, developed to cover the views of the respondents regarding the importance of the thirteen responsibilities that fall within this category. The data produced by this scale is summarised in Table 12.

**Table 12: Scale 3.5 - Potential functions/responsibilities of district SSWs in terms of the implementation of inclusive education**

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1. Participate in the development of national and provincial guidelines for inclusive teaching, learning and assessment</b>	4.56	1.086
<b>2. Participate in the professional development of provincial, district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development</b>	4.93	0,874
<b>3. Participate in the development of training manuals in social issues that include theories, models, practices and tools</b>	5.11	0.934
<b>4. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition of necessary assistive devices</b>	4.48	1.221
<b>5. Participate in the development of a framework for upgrading physical and material resources that will ensure the conversion of schools into full service schools</b>	4.44	1.188
<b>6. Contribute in the development and updating of norms and standards for specialist support</b>	4.63	0.967
<b>7. Participate in the development of a database of community support services, agencies, NGOs, government departments, and other relevant organisations</b>	5.00	1.000
<b>8. Promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders</b>	4.89	0.934
<b>9. Assist in the establishment, development and management of district-based support team (DBST)</b>	4.85	1.027
<b>10. Participate in the transformation process of schools into full service schools and special schools into resource centres</b>	4.48	1.156
<b>11. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition, upgrading and maintenance of physical resources to support the transformation process of schools into Inclusive Education sites</b>	4.19	1.272
<b>12. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive system with special focus on social issues to departmental officials</b>	5.04	0.980
<b>13. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive education system with special focus on social issues to other government departments, NGOs, CBOs and parents</b>	4.96	1.126

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.921 (See Annexure 23, Table 15 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

Scale 3.5 produced an extremely high reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.921$ , an overall mean of 4.73 and a standard deviation of 0.76. The lower mean indicates that the thirteen responsibilities associated with inclusive education tended to receive lower priority ratings than those contained in other scales. There were significant differences among the perceived importance of these items/responsibilities, hence the standard

deviation of 0.76. The most important trends to have emerged in this regard may be summarised as follows:

- The responsibilities of: 'participate in the development of manuals for training in social issues that include theories, models, practices and tools' and 'advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive system with special focus on social issues to departmental officials' were regarded as the most important. This places a strong emphasis on the social worker's role of trainer, as well as advocate, on social issues within the educational setting. The importance ascribed to the trainer role is in line with the view of DuBois & Miley (2010:243) that it is typically a mid-level role.
- The other responsibilities, all of which are focussed on the developmental role of different aspects in the inclusive education setting, were all regarded as very important.
- The involvement of district level SSWs in the actual acquisition, upgrading and maintenance of physical and material resources and the transformation of schools into inclusive education sites were not regarded as priorities.

The relatively low rating given to the role of school social workers within inclusive education to some extent contradicts the national and international trends. The importance of school social workers' involvement is probably best illustrated by a statement which one respondent added in the open section of the questionnaire. He/she wrote: *"School social work is all about inclusive education. The principles of Inclusive Education (White Paper 6: 2001) forms the foundation of the services rendered by school social workers."* The school social worker's (potential) role in inclusive education represents an issue that should be clarified in the further development of this field of specialisation.

#### **4.2.4.7 Additional responsibilities**

Respondents utilised the open section of the questionnaire to add responsibilities that were not covered in the survey. Their inputs may be summarised as follows:

- Some respondents indicated that practitioners should provide direct social work services to teachers. These should include debriefing when necessary, the giving of motivational talks as well as assistance with issues that might have an influence on their work performance.

- These views should be seen against the backdrop of some provinces' having appointed occupational social workers to deal with staff issues and to render employee assistance and wellness services (Morgan, 2017).
- Expecting the same type of services from school social workers as from occupational social workers could lead to role conflict (Morgan, 2017).
- A respondent indicated that practitioners should take the 'Health Calendar' (e.g. Child Protection Week) into consideration when planning programmes and projects. This may be viewed as a positive and practical idea.
- One respondent elaborated on the networking responsibility by stating the following: *"Collaborate with other sections within the SNE (Special Needs Education) component such as Special Education, HIV and Life Skills to identify common issues and to offer support for identified issues."*
- Another respondent brought up an important aspect which does not form part of responsibilities *per se*, but has an influence on service delivery. He/she saw the current line (or reporting) functions as problematic and stated the following: *"In KZN, school social workers in districts are found in the psychosocial component with the psychologists. All inclusive-related matters relating to special schools, full service schools are dealt with by special education at district level. Inclusive education is a separate directorate at provincial level – special education reports to inclusive education and psychosocial reports to CES (Chief Education Specialist): psychosocial at provincial office."* This is another example of how school social work has not yet positioned itself in the education system. Having a national framework in place where school social work is strongly embedded, could address these types of issues.

#### **4.2.5 Section 5: The school social worker's functions / responsibilities in schools**

The functions/responsibilities of school social worker in schools differ from those at the other levels of the education system. Literature has indicated that these may be divided into those:

- towards learners,
- towards educators/teachers,
- regarding social work and educational policy changes and new trends,

- regarding their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams, and
- general functions/ responsibilities (Jarolmen, 2014; School Social Work Association of Sweden, 2013; AASW, 2008; NASW, 2012).

The national survey utilised these five categories and provided respondents with the opportunity to rate the level of importance of each individual function/responsibility that make up a component.

#### 4.2.5.1 Potential responsibilities in respect of learners

Learners constitute the priority in education and should, consequently, be the primary focus in school social work services (Rosenberg, 2009:193). The survey covered four of the core responsibilities (NACOSSWEP, 2015) that local school social workers have in this regard. These responsibilities and the results obtained from the survey are summarised in Table 13.

**Table 13: Scale 4.1 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSW's in schools towards learners**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Develop and implement an individual support plan (ISP) for each learner	4.96	1.018
2. Participate in multi-disciplinary meetings with regards to learners	5.44	0.641
3. Offer crisis intervention programmes when relevant	5.48	0.700
4. Assist and support in learner disciplinary hearings	4.70	0.993

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.739 (See Annexure 23, Table 16 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The scale produced an inter-item correlation of 0.44 and an overall mean of 5.15. The offering of crisis intervention programmes and participation in multi-disciplinary meetings was regarded as 'critically important' while the development and implementation of individual support plans and assistance and support of learners in disciplinary hearings were regarded as 'very important'. The results in this scale correlates with Openshaw's (2008:2) views of the school social worker's basic tasks. Although these are basic tasks, there are other roles and tasks equally important (cf. Pretorius, 2015:321-323).

#### 4.2.5.2 Potential responsibility towards educators/teachers

Educators are part of the education system's community and social workers work in teams along with them (Rosenberg, 2009:193). According to DuBois & Miley (2010:83), schools should be seen as host settings where social work services are offered in support of the primary mission of the setting, which in this case would be teaching and learning. Teachers are responsible for the education of learners and SSWs have several responsibilities towards educators in order to enable them to fulfil their task successfully (Openshaw, 2008:3 & 5).

The results of the literature review and the interviews of the management cadre of the Free State Province's Department of Education produced nine possible responsibilities school social workers might have in respect of educators within the South African context. These were covered in a separate scale within the survey. The data generated is summarised in Table 14.

**Table 14: Scale 4.2 - Potential functions/ responsibilities towards educators**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Assist with the early identification of learner's needs	5.33	0.679
2. Assist with reporting and supporting learners with social barriers to learning	5.26	0.813
3. Assist in teacher-support meetings	4.89	0.801
4. Empower educators with regard to policies, legislation, and statutory matters	5.07	0.675
5. Empower educators with regard to classroom management	4.48	1.189
6. Empower educators with regard to social issues relating to the curriculum (e.g. bullying, violence)	5.22	0.751
7. Liaise between learners and staff with regard to social work issues	5.33	0.734
8. Support educators during parent consultations	4.85	0,662
9. Participate in the professional development of educators in order to identify and manage social barriers to learning and development in terms of the SIAS policy	5.15	0.864

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.868 (See Annexure 23, Table 17 for full details of data produced by the scale)*

The following four trends in particular emerged from an analysis of the data produced by Scale 4.2.

- Learner support items received the highest ratings from the respondents, with all of them rated as ‘critically important’. These are ‘assist with the early identification of learner’s needs’, and ‘liaise between learners and staff with regard to social work issues’ and ‘assist with reporting and supporting learners with social barriers to learning’.
- The next group of items to be rated as critically important was focussed on assistance and empowerment with regard to curriculum, statutory knowledge and professional development. These were: ‘empower educators with regard to social issues relating to the curriculum’ (life orientation area), ‘participate in the professional development of educators in order to identify and manage social barriers to learning and development in terms of the SIAS policy’ and ‘empower educators with regard to policies, legislation, and statutory matters’.
- The items that were focussed on assistance and support with teacher-support meetings and parent meetings were seen as ‘very important’.
- The lowest-rated responsibility of ‘empower educators with regard to classroom management’ was nevertheless rated as ‘very important’.

The fact that all the items were classified as either ‘very important’ or ‘critically important’ is in line with Openshaw’s (2008:3, 5 & 16) stance on the role that SSWs play in terms of training, resource building and staff development with educators. However, the trend that different forms of *learner support* still received the highest rating re-emphasised the view that learners themselves should represent the school social worker’s primary focus.

#### **4.2.5.3 Potential responsibilities regarding policies and trends**

Because school social work services are delivered within a non-social work setting, practitioners should take cognisance of the policies and other factors that influence these settings and their work (Rosenberg, 2009:194). These factors, and the way in which practitioners could stay up to date with developments, were covered in Scale 4.3 (see Table 15) of the survey.

**Table 15: Scale 4.3 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs in schools in respect of social work and educational policy changes and new trends**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Be knowledgeable about relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	5.52	0.643
2. Attend and participate in continuous professional development (CPD) activities	5.52	0.643
3. Attend and provide feedback on workshops and conferences to principal of the school	5.30	0.724
4. Attend and participate in social work district sub-committee	5.15	0.818

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.887 (See Annexure 23, Table 19 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

All the responses fell in either the ‘very’ or ‘critically important’ categories. The following two trends in particular emerged from the analysis of the data produced by Scale 4.3.

- The items that received the highest means were focussed on continuous professional development (CPD), and on keeping abreast of relevant policies and new trends. The stated importance of CPD is in line with one of the key standards of conduct listed in Northern Ireland’s practice standards (Northern Ireland Social Care Council, 2015:5).
- This was followed by the attendance and feedback from workshops and conferences and, lastly, participation in social work district sub-committees. The relatively low rating of the latter is probably due to the fact that such committees have probably not been introduced into all provinces.

#### **4.2.5.4 Potential responsibilities in terms of multi-disciplinary teams**

The school social worker has a potentially important role to play in the multi-disciplinary team found within the education setting. These teams are usually made up of professionals such as psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and educators (Morgan, 2017). This component of their involvement within the education system, as well as some other related functions, was measured via the use of Scale 4.4 of the survey questionnaire. The results are summarised in Table 16.

**Table 16: Scale 4.4 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs in schools in terms of their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Participate as member of school-based support team (SBST), circuit-based support team (CBCT) or, if required, district-based support team (DBST)	5.22	0.847
2. Participate in the screening and assessment of new admissions	4.59	1.217
3. Participate in the development of life skills programmes, material and information to support the life orientation learning area	4.67	0.961
4. Assist with the development of the school's code of conduct	4.44	1.050

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.764 (See Annexure 23, Table 19 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The ratings on the identified responsibilities varied widely. Only one item, viz. the participation in various types of multi-disciplinary teams (Table 16: Item 1), was considered as critically important. The other four received a markedly lower rating which would imply that they are generally seen as being of an *ad hoc* nature.

#### 4.2.5.5 The rating of some general responsibilities of SSWs

Some of the identified responsibilities or functions performed by school social workers could not be accommodated in the available categories. They were, consequently, included in the 'general' category of the questionnaire. The data produced in terms of this section is summarised in Table 17.

**Table 17: Scale 4.5 - The importance of the general functions/ responsibilities that SSWs in schools might have**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Develop programmes to address specific barriers to learning and development (e.g. anxiety)	5.00	0.961
2. Develop a strategic plan for service delivery	4.74	0.984
3. Develop an annual plan to guide the functions and operations of social work	4.93	1.072
4. Present workshops on social issues to learners, staff, parents and/or other groups (e.g. on the dangers of social media)	5.41	0.572
5. Liaise with external social workers and other professionals where relevant	5.41	0.572

<b>6. Record-keeping</b>	5.74	0.594
<b>7. Assist with the management of trauma and disaster situations within the school and direct community</b>	5.52	0.643
<b>8. Consult with the provincial or district office social workers with regard to social work-related matters</b>	5.22	0.751
<b>9. Facilitate parent evenings on e.g. social media, bullying, parental guidance</b>	5.19	0.681
<b>10. Be a behaviour specialist and apply behaviour modification interventions</b>	4.78	1.050
<b>11. Be a mental health expert and provide consultation services on related issues (e.g. on ADHD and anxiety)</b>	4.22	1.340
<b>12. Be an alcohol and drug abuse specialist and provide related services (e.g. by creating and implementing relevant programmes)</b>	4.41	1.27
<b>13. Be a violence-prevention specialists and provide related services (e.g. by addressing gangs, juvenile offences and violence against teachers)</b>	4.22	1.281

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.868 (See Annexure 23, Table 20 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

Table 17 indicates that six functions/responsibilities fell into the ‘critically important’ category. These were ‘record-keeping’ (Item 6 - 5.74); ‘assisting with the management of trauma and disaster situations’ (Item 7 - 5.52); ‘liaising with external social workers and other professionals’ (Item 5 - 5.41); ‘presenting workshops on social issues to relevant parties’ (Item 4 - 5.41); ‘consulting with the provincial or district office social workers with regard to social work-related matters’ (Item 8 - 5.22); and ‘facilitating parent evenings’ (Item 9 - 5.19). Of these, items 5, 6 and 8 were of a more professional-administrative nature, whereas the other three dealt more specifically with various types of service delivery.

The seven remaining responsibilities fell into the ‘very important’ category. A somewhat unexpected trend showed up in the potential expectation that school social workers should be experts in specific psychosocial fields received a relatively lower rating. The specified fields comprised behaviour modification, drug and alcohol abuse/dependency, violence prevention and mental health. This, in some measure, contradicts Openshaw’s (2008:13-17) view that school social workers should have specialised knowledge on certain key areas. The contradiction is possibly due to the

fact that not all the respondents were social workers. The question of specialised field of knowledge warrants further research.

#### **4.2.5.6 Additional comments and recommendations**

The survey questionnaire allowed provision for respondents to add comments and recommendations in respect of additional responsibilities that school social workers should perform. The feedback received in this regard was the following:

- *“The social worker located at schools should not be used as substitute teachers, facilitators or invigilators during exams.”*
- *“They should seek professional supervision and guidance on interventions and have regular case discussions.”*
- *“A school social worker should be responsible for conducting investigations where teacher-learner abuse is suspected/reported.”*
- *“Also be involved in initial intake interviews when abuse (not teacher-learner abuse) is reported by a learner or teacher.”*
- *“The social worker at school, district level and provincial level are part of a multi-disciplinary team where each profession has its own scope of practice. It is also important to realise that duties of a social worker in the education environment will differ from those of a social worker who is working for example at the Department of Social Development. ”*
- *“The social worker in the education environment will attend workshops in the curriculum field to help and develop them to understand the education system better so that they may be able to support educators, parents and stakeholders.”*
- *“They must be able to engage in statutory processes and not refer those cases that need this type of intervention e.g. sexual abuse cases.”* Currently, school social workers do not have statutory powers and the status quo might not change in the near future.
- *“Provide training and support to LSAs (learner support advisors)...as they are the ones who work hand in hand with school social workers.”*
- *“A huge need exist for school social workers to be placed in mainstream schools and special schools and for supervisors, because there are two interns in one district working with 49 schools with no supervisor which results in interventions that are not effective.” (Eastern Cape)*
- *“Home visits, if needed, should be part of the tasks.”*

Most of the comments/recommendations represent expansions on themes already covered in the questionnaire, or are location-specific. They will, however, where possible, be taken into consideration in the formulation of practice standards for school social workers.

## **5 PRIMARY FINDINGS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS**

The primary findings from the two components of the study will be dealt with separately.

### **5.1 The Free State Department of Education's expectations of school social workers**

The primary finding of the qualitative study was that all four participants were of the opinion that a definite need exists for school social work services and more school social workers in the Free State Province. It also emerged from the interviews that the department expected that social workers at different levels within the education system (i.e. provincial, district and school level) should perform specific roles. These may be summarised as follows:

- Social workers in the provincial office would primarily have a managerial role to play. They should also have a developmental responsibility in terms of the establishment of school social work in the educational setting. An additional role would be that of supervisor to social workers in district offices.
- Social workers at district level need to be able to prioritise in terms of attending to learners. They have a managerial responsibility, with support, training, advocacy and networking as key roles as well as a crisis intervention role, rather than a therapeutic role.
- Social workers at school level should first attend to learners by means of preventative, therapeutic and supportive services. Secondly, they should attend to teachers and this would primarily take the form of empowerment and assistance. Thirdly, these social workers would be focussing their attention on the establishment of a conducive environment for learning by identifying and addressing the various barriers to learning with the aim of establishing an environment in which the learners are able to reach their full potential.

It emerged from the interviews that the management, reporting and supervision structures at these levels vary. At district level, the school social worker will administratively report to managers who are educators by profession. The psychosocial services coordinator partly performs the role of professional supervisor for district social workers. There is no standard reporting structure at schools, with some reporting to the school principals, others to heads of department and others to the SGB via the principal. This reporting is administrative in nature, with very little professional supervising structure in place for school-based social workers. These social workers utilise 'interest group meetings' or 'professional learning communities' (PLC), as a form of group supervision, for professional purposes.

It became apparent that confusion exists with regard to the job titles of workers at different levels. These functionaries have not all been appointed in terms of the same legislation and this contributed to somewhat unfair practice in terms of salaries and other terms of appointment.

A lack of standardised requirements for appointments was clear from the differences in opinions with regard to the qualifications required for school social workers or with the requirements with regard to experience. From the results it can, however, be deduced that a BSW would be the basic requirement with a further qualification in education sciences or a MSW as a recommended additional qualification. (If a specialised MSW in school social work is instituted at a later stage, it would probably become the qualification of choice.)

All the respondents indicated that school social workers should be utilised in all provinces and that there should be clear and realistic national norms and standards established in this regard.

The findings of the interviews were used as one of the bases for the development of the questionnaire used in the national survey.

## **5.2 Provincial departments' expectations of their school social workers**

The national survey first and foremost indicated that there are marked differences in the appointment, management, designation and overall utilisation of school social

workers in South Africa. The confusion with regard to the structure for school social work, as observed in the Free State, was also evident in other provinces.

The survey covered the entire spectrum of social work involvement in the education system, ranging from national to school level. It became apparent that the functionary within the National Department of Basic Education should be tasked specifically with the bringing about of structural-functional improvements to the overall school social work system of the country. The heads of social work services at provincial level were, on their part, expected to perform two core functions. These were to administer and further develop social work services within their provinces.

The survey dealt in some depth with the functions and responsibilities that school social workers at district and school levels could perform. Most of these received either a 'very important' or 'critically important' rating. Two basic trends emerged from a macro-analysis of these ratings. The first was that differences in ratings between the levels were primarily due to differences in the structures within which the social workers operated. Social work in school were directly involved in more dimensions of a learner and a school's functioning, whereas functionaries at district level had to be more circumspect in the types of services they could offer. A second trend was that there was generally a lack of a clear distinction between core and peripheral functions/responsibilities. This may be ascribed to the fact that school social work in South Africa is still, in many respects, in its early development phase and still in the process of defining its role within the education system.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The research results indicated that there are four particular core needs that should be addressed with some urgency. These needs, and the recommendations flowing from them, will be covered briefly.

The research firstly indicated that there is a dire need for more school social workers in South Africa. This will, ultimately, involve a political decision and a change in policy. It is recommended that the organised social work profession should become more directly involved in promoting this idea(l).

It, secondly, became apparent that there is a need for a uniform, national framework for the appointment, utilisation and deployment of school social workers and the structuring of services. Such a framework should provide uniformity and equity in the delivery of school social work services throughout the country.

Finally, it became clear that the views of school social workers in district offices and in schools have not, as yet, been sufficiently canvassed. They function at the proverbial 'coal face' level and are probably in the best position to articulate what could and should be expected of them.

## **7 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The mixed-method study on which this article is based could, in many respects, be viewed as only one of the first steps towards the ultimate goal of establishing an effective and efficient school social work service in the country. Nevertheless, it provided strong indicators of what such a service should comprise.

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## ARTICLE 3:

# THE ROLES, TASKS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE FREE STATE'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

**Key words:** School social work; Free State Department of Education; inclusive education; social work roles, functions, expectations, responsibilities

### **Abstract**

**Background:** The results contained in this article comprise of the outcomes of a multi-phased research project aimed at the formation of draft practice standards for South African school social work. The study at hand was, among others, preceded by a survey of South African provincial departments of education's expectations of school social workers in their employ. In this follow-up study, the focus shifts to the way school social workers view their own roles, tasks and challenges. For this purpose the practitioners of the Free State Province have been selected as respondents.

**Aim:** The aim of the specific study is to ascertain what school social workers in the Free State see as their roles and functions and the challenges they face in performing these roles and tasks. This covers the views of both practitioners in the employ of the province's Department of Education and those employed by school governing bodies.

**Method:** Specially designed, quantitative survey questionnaires were used to generate the required data.

**Results:** The study produced a large number and variety of results. These included a prioritised list of requirements to be met by appointees, the functions and responsibilities they should perform and the challenges which practitioners and the education system as a whole should meet. These should be taken into account in the drafting of practice standards for school social work.

# THE ROLES, TASKS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE FREE STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM

EM Vergottini and ML Weyers

## 1 INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive survey of South Africa's nine provincial departments of education's expectations of the school social workers (hereafter sometimes abbreviated to "SSW") in their employ was completed in 2017 (Vergottini, 2018:67-114). This survey, among others, produced a comprehensive list of priority roles, tasks and responsibilities that these functionaries should, from management viewpoint, be able to perform at the various levels of the education system within which they are deployed. The respondents in this survey were, however, limited to representatives of the higher management echelons in these departments. Consequently, the need arose to ascertain how service delivery level school social workers perceive their own actual and potential contribution to the education system.

## 2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Any research into a group's perceptions should, ideally, involve a representative sample of such a group's members (Strydom & Venter, 2002:198). In the case of South Africa's school social workers this was, due to logistical and practical reasons, not possible. One of the barriers was the fact that school social work is not yet a registered speciality and that, as a result, a list of practitioners do not yet exist. Another was the 'uneven spread' of school social workers throughout the country with some provinces employing only a handful of practitioners, while others already had an established and well-developed SSW system (Kemp, 2014:16). Any national survey involving a randomly selected sample would, as a result, produce distorted results. It was, consequently, decided to follow the case study route (Cait *et al.*, 2017:615-616; Fouché, 2002:275-276) in the research. The 'case' selected for the study was the Free State Province.

The first reason for the selection of the Free State was the fact that it currently has one of the four best developed SSW systems in the country, with social workers being employed at provincial-, district- and school levels, as well as by the school governing bodies (SGBs) of mainstream schools (Morgan, 2017). This would allow for views of

school social workers at different levels of provincial education system, whereas only views of SSWs at certain levels would be obtainable in other provinces.

The second reason was that the views of the province's managers of inclusive education, the section which also manages its SSW services, had been canvassed during a previous study. The results produced by this study could then be triangulated with those of the current study in order to produce content-rich data (Weyers *et al.*, 2008:342; De Vos, 2002: 341-342).

### **3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE**

The study formed part of a comprehensive research project. Its basic aim was to generate sufficient empirical data on which practice standards for South African SSW could be based. The overarching project utilised a sequential mixed-method design because a somewhat new and unknown field had to be explored for which the sole use of either qualitative or quantitative methods would not be sufficient (Cabrera, 2011:80; Fetters *et al.*, 2013:2136; Ivankova *et al.*, 2006:3). The current study into practising school social workers' views represents the third of four sequential steps. It was preceded by a review of the background, theoretical foundations and policies governing South African SSWs and a survey of all nine provincial education departments' views of the roles, functions and tasks that school social workers should perform. The process culminated in the formulation of a proposed set of practice standards for South African SSWs.

#### **3.1 Aim of the study**

The primary aim of the study was to ascertain the views of school social workers in the Free State Province regarding the relative importance of each of the potential roles and responsibilities they perform in the education system, as well as the challenges they might face in the execution thereof. This would provide a 'practitioners' eye view (Turnbull, 2016:1009) of South African SSWs not often found in local research.

#### **3.2 Research design and procedure**

Although the case study design is usually associated with qualitative research (Alfandari, 2017:1065-1066), it can take on a more quantitative form if used as part of a sequential mixed-method design (Cait *et al.*, 2017:615). In this instance, the Free State school social workers were seen as a group whose views and experiences could, to some extent, reflect (but not fully represent) those of the demarcated population (Cait

*et al.*, 2017: 615-616). Their views were ascertained via the use of a specially designed, quantitative survey questionnaire (see Annexure 20).

The questionnaire used in this study was similar to the one employed in the national survey of provincial education departments. Some changes had to be made to the original instrument in order to accommodate the practice settings of both departmental school social workers and those in the employ of school governing bodies (SGBs). The adapted questionnaire also had to make provision for the challenges faced by these practitioners at service delivery level.

In the case of the practitioners of the Department of Basic Education, organisational approval to conduct the research with the intended respondents was first sought from the department. Once approved, an independent third party approached each potential respondent with a request to participate in the study. The voluntary nature of their participation and the content of the informed consent form which they were required to complete were also covered during this step.

Social workers appointed by school governing bodies were identified through the use of the snowball technique (Strydom & Delport, 2002:336; Strydom & Venter, 2002:208). Once identified, the independent third party sought permission to conduct the research from their employers and principals and contacted the willing respondents to complete the consent forms.

### **3.3 Research population and respondents**

The intended respondents/respondents were all professionals with a social work qualification working within the Free State Province's education system. They were divided into three groups:

- The first consists of the school social workers who were deployed to special schools, including the province's two schools of industry.
- The second were the social workers appointed to the department's five district offices. It should be noted that these functionaries are not known as 'school social workers', but rather referred to as 'senior education specialists' or 'socio-pedagogues' (Voster, 2014).
- The third group comprised the school social workers who have been appointed by the school governing bodies (SGBs) of mainstream schools to non-subsidised posts.

The only SSW who had been excluded, was the coordinator at provincial level who had been canvassed during a previous study (Vergottini, 2018:68).

Because the entire population was targeted, no sampling was required (cf. Patton, 2002:230). The selection of respondents was done with position and qualification in mind. All the qualifying candidates were approached and no unfair and unjust exclusion was made on the grounds of race, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, conscience, belief or language. A total of 31 school social workers met the selection criteria and of these, 28 were prepared to take part in the study.

### **3.4 Data collection and analysis**

The survey utilised a questionnaire that was developed in conjunction with the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University. Apart from its quantitative components, the questionnaire made provision for respondents to provide written comments on selected issues. Due to the relatively small number of potential respondents, it was only possible to analyse the quantitative responses through the use of descriptive statistics (Ellis, 2015). This data was augmented by an analysis of the written comments. In this regard, a procedure similar to that which is suggested by Creswell (2009:181-190), was used.

All the data produced were captured and coded by the NWU's Statistical Consultation Services through the use of IBM SPSS Version 24 (Ellis, 2017). The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (sometimes abbreviated to 'Cronbach alpha' or " $\alpha$ ") of identified constructs covered by the Likert scale components of the questionnaire were calculated to determine reliability (Field, 2009:675). Regarding acceptable levels of reliability, Kline (*in* Field, 2009:675) notes that "...although the generally accepted value of 0.8 is appropriate for cognitive tests such as intelligence tests, for ability tests the cut-off point of 0.7 is more suitable". He goes on to say that when dealing with psychological constructs, values even below 0.7 can, realistically, be expected because of the diversity of constructs being measured. It was, consequently, accepted for the purposes of the study at hand that a  $\alpha \geq 0.7$  would represent a satisfactory reliability coefficient.

Of the 11 scales used, three did not meet the set minimum requirements. These were Scale 1.1 (see Table 7), Scale 2.1 (see Table 12) and Scale 2.5 (see Table 15). In these cases, the scale as a whole could not be interpreted. The interpretation will, consequently, only be limited to the responses to individual questions.

### **3.5 Ethics**

The researcher obtained written permission to conduct research from the National Department of Basic Education as well as the Free State Province's research section. Ethical clearance was received from the North-West University's Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Informed consent was gained from each prospective respondent. The core purpose was to ensure anonymity and protect confidentiality.

### **3.6 Problems encountered in the research**

Gaining permission and approval from the Free State Province was time-consuming, albeit essential, for the research.

Some of the school social workers had resigned or retired and consequently the population was smaller than originally expected. On the departmental side, two of the five district offices had no SSWs in their employ due to vacancies. During the research, these posts were in the process of being advertised and interviews conducted.

The school social workers in SGB positions were also fewer than originally anticipated. This was, among other matters, due to the fact that some schools have appointed psychologists and other professions as 'counsellors'. Only three of the school social workers approached chose not to participate in the study. The SGB's gave their SSWs permission to take part in the study.

## **4 THE SURVEY FINDINGS**

The same questionnaire was used to ascertain both departmental and SGB social workers' views of their roles, responsibilities and challenges. It consisted of five main sections. The nature of these sections, as well as their constituent questions and scales are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Composition of the Free State SSWs' survey questionnaire**

Section	Aspects covered	Questions
<b>Section 1</b>	Socio-demographic information	
<b>Section 2</b>	General requirements that should be met	2.1 Minimum years of practical experience 2.2 Minimum qualification 2.3 Direct supervisor 2.4 Knowledge and understanding
<b>Section 3</b>	The school social worker's responsibilities at district level	3.1 Scale 1.1 Responsibilities towards learners 3.2 Scale 1.2 Responsibilities towards educators 3.3 Scale 1.3 Responsibilities towards screening, development and implementation of programmes and projects 3.4 Scale 1.4 Responsibilities towards social work and education policy changes and new trends 3.5 Scale 1.5 Responsibilities in terms of their role towards multi-disciplinary teams 3.6 Scale 1.6 Responsibilities in terms of the implementation of Inclusive Education 3.7 Space for comments
<b>Section 4</b>	The school social worker's responsibilities in schools (mainstream and special)	4.1 Scale 2.1 Responsibilities towards learners 4.2 Scale 2.2 Responsibilities towards educators 4.3 Scale 2.3 Responsibilities towards social work and education policy changes and new trends 4.4 Scale 2.4 Responsibilities in terms of role as member of multi-disciplinary teams 4.5 Scale 2.5 General responsibilities 4.6 Space for comments
<b>Section 5</b>	Some general matters that may have an influence on the way in which school social work is done	5.1 Basic infrastructure needed 5.2 Growing need for school social work 5.3 Challenges

The data produced by the questionnaire, as well as the conclusions that may be drawn from it, will be covered next.

## **4.1 Section 1: Socio-demographic information**

The first section was focussed on the respondents' demographic characteristics. This section was included in order to ascertain to what extent the respondents could be viewed as being representative of SSW service delivery within the province.

### ***4.1.1 District in which respondents are employed***

At the time of the study, the province's department of basic education had a total of 26 school social workers in its employ. Of these, 23 participated in the study. There were also five school social workers employed by SGBs. All of these participated in the study.

The Free State Province is divided into five districts. The number of respondents who came from each of these districts were as follows:

- Motheo = 16
- Fezile Dabi = 4
- Lejweleputswa = 7
- Thabo Mofutsanyana = 1
- Xhariep = 0

The Motheo District, which includes Bloemfontein, had the highest number of respondents, viz. sixteen. This may be attributed to the fact that some of the bigger schools in the province, as well as more special schools, are situated in this district.

At the time the study took place, the single post for a school social worker in the Xhariep district was vacant. The Thabo Mofutsanyana district office had a vacant position, although one social worker was being employed at the special school situated in the district.

### ***4.1.2 Employment profile of respondents***

The distribution of respondents in terms of place of work is depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Employment profile of respondents (N=28)**

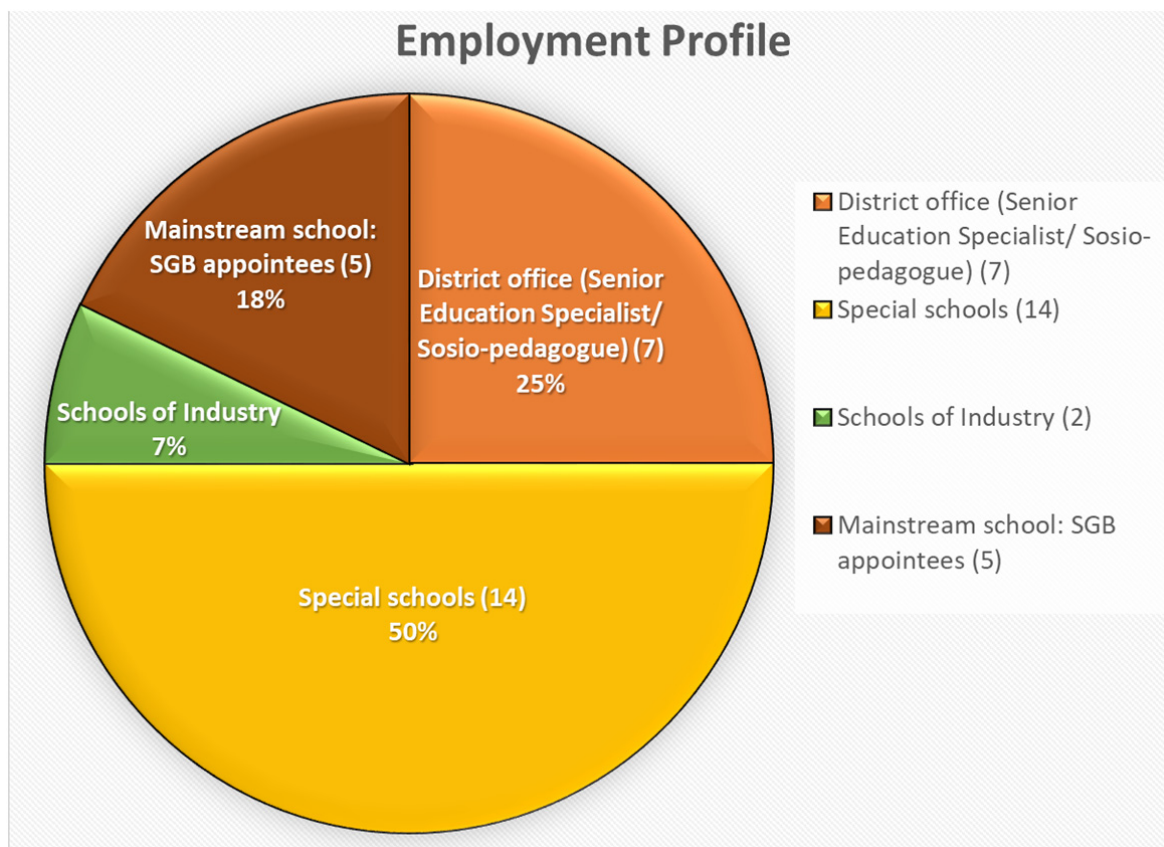


Figure 1 indicates that half (fourteen) of the respondents were employed at special schools, two at schools of industry and five in SGB positions at mainstream schools, whereas seven were employed at district level at the Department of Basic Education. The relatively high response rate from special schools is congruent with the Free State Department's 2010 decision to employ social workers at this type of institution (Free State Provincial Government, 2010). It should be noted that 75% of the respondents were school-based (i.e. worked in mainstream, special and schools of industries). This had to be taken into account in the interpretation of the data.

#### **4.1.3 Experience levels**

In the questionnaire, respondents were requested to indicate their level of experience both as social workers and as school social workers. Their responses are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2: Respondents' years of experience**

Type	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	10 – 15 years	15 - 20 years	20- 25 years	25 – 30 years	More than 30 years
<b>As social worker</b>	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)	5 (17.9%)	3 (10.7%)	6 (21.4%)	7 (25.0%)	3 (10.7%)	2 (7.1%)
<b>As school social worker</b>	1 (3.6%)	3 (10.7%)	1 (3.6%)	13 (46.4%)	6 (21.4%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.1%)

Table 2 indicates that 22 (79%) of the 28 respondents had more than ten years' experience as social workers and 23 (82%) more than five years as school social workers. With school social work in the Free State Province being a relatively 'young' development, it is firstly clear from the profile that most of the social workers who had been employed since 2010, had more than five years' experience prior to their appointment. Secondly, it became apparent that the majority of the respondents were highly experienced. This would indicate that their views on the roles, task and challenges at the 'coalface' of school social work should not be taken lightly.

## **4.2 Section 2: General requirements that should be met**

The vexing question of the specific requirements that a social worker should meet before being appointed in the education system, not only applies to South Africa, but also appears on the international agenda (Huxtable, 2016). In the latter regard, there appears to be no uniform answer (DuBois & Miley, 2010:83; Rosenberg, 2009:194). It was, consequently, necessary to canvass current practitioners' own views on the subject. In this regard, the questionnaire covered two types of requirements. These were the minimum number of years' experience and minimum qualifications.

A second set of requirements pertain to the supervision services that appointees should receive. In the survey, the focus fell on the direct supervisor of the school social worker and the knowledge and understanding which such a person should possess.

#### 4.2.1 Minimum years of experience

Respondents were requested to provide their opinion on the minimum number of years of practical experience that a candidate must have prior to being appointed as a school social worker. Their views are summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3: Minimum years of practical experience that a candidate must have before being appointed as a school social worker**

Can start immediately after qualifying	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	10 – 15 years	15 - 20 years
1 (3.6%)	3 (10.7%)	9 (32.1%)	9 (32.1%)	6 (21.4%)	0

Table 3 indicates that most respondents felt that a candidate should have practical social work experience before being appointed to the education system. More than half (15/53.5%) felt that this should be five or more years and another nine (32.1%) suggested the time span should be between three and four years. This trend is in line with the views of authors such as Openshaw (2008:5,14) and Rosenberg (2009:194-195) who state that SSWs mostly work in isolation and need prior experience and practice-based skills in order to successfully render a service from the outset.

#### 4.2.2 Minimum qualification

In some countries, the minimum entry level requirement for school social work is a master of social work (MSW) or equivalent post-graduate qualification (Segal *et al.*, 2007:288). In the case of South Africa, the current minimum requirement is a bachelor of social work (BSW) degree plus registration with the South African Council for Social Service Professions as a social worker. The respondents were asked whether they felt that this was sufficient and, if not, what additional qualifications should be required. Their views are summarised in Table 4.

**Table 4: Minimum qualification needed by the candidate before being appointed as a school social worker**

Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW)	Master's level degree in Social Work (MSW)	Teaching degree or diploma	Other
18 (64.3%)	7 (25%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)

Eighteen of the respondents, (64.3%) indicated that a BSW degree is sufficient. However, seven (25%) others were of the opinion that the minimum should be an MSW level qualification, whilst two (7.2%) felt that other types of qualifications should be required. One thought these should comprise a teaching degree or diploma and the other believed it should entail 'Additional training in play therapy, child psychology and the Children's Act'. The latter to some extent echoes Blom's (2006:15) view that working with children in itself requires specialised knowledge and skills.

The difference between the respondents' views and the international trend of requiring a MSW entry requirement could be attributed to the fact that no South African university currently provides MSW level training in school social work (NACOSSWEP, 2018:2). There are, however, some institutions that have started running short courses in this field. The University of the Witwatersrand has a six months' training programme in school social work and the Western Cape Department of Education has online training on inclusive education (NACOSSWEP, 2018:2). The dominant views of practitioners may change in future if more of these types of training are introduced.

#### **4.2.3 Direct supervisor of the school social worker**

Requirements do not pertain only to school social workers themselves, but also to the immediate environment within which they operate. One core requirement of this environment is that it should provide supervision services particularly to new appointees (SACSSP, 2007; Social Service Professions Act, 1978:110).

The reason for the inclusion of questions on supervision was not only limited to statutory requirements. It was also prompted by the results of a previous national survey of education departments which indicated that the supervision and management of school social workers were somewhat problematical (Vergottini, 2018:109). The

current survey focussed on two facets, viz. who the current direct supervisors of the respondents were and what was the extent of these supervisors' knowledge and understanding of school social work. The data produced by these questions are summarised in tables 5 and 6.

**Table 5: Direct supervisor of the school social worker**

I do not have a supervisor	Principal of school where appointed	Chief Education Specialist	Principal Social worker	Unsure	Other
3 (10.7%)	14 (50%)	2 (7.1%)	0	1 (3.6%)	8 (28.6%)

In the analysis of the data produced by the questionnaires, it was taken into account that there are three types of supervision, viz. administrative supervision, educational supervision and supportive supervision (Silence, 2017:95-99). None of the respondents was supervised by a qualified social worker and all received only administrative supervision. The analysis further showed that six of the eight respondents who marked 'other' were working on district level and supervised by its deputy chief education specialist (a non-social worker), whereas the other two were supervised by occupational therapists at the special schools where they are employed. In total, fourteen (50%) of the respondents' supervisors were the principals of their schools. One respondent was unsure who his/her supervisor was.

This lack of direct and formalised supportive and educational supervision within the Province's education system is a cause for concern and should be addressed. This is especially due to the fact that school social work is generally seen as being very demanding of its practitioners (Openshaw, 2008:5; Rosenberg, 2009:194-195).

#### **4.2.4 Knowledge and understanding of the SSW's direct supervisor**

The next question in the questionnaire focussed on supervisors' knowledge and understanding of the school social worker's work. The respondents' views in this regard are summarised in Table 6.

**Table 6: The direct supervisor’s knowledge and understanding of the school social worker’s work**

I don't have a direct supervisor	Poor	Fair	Neutral	Good	Excellent
5 (17.9%)	9 (32.1%)	6 (21.4%)	3 (10.7%)	3 (10.7%)	2 (7.1%)

A total of 5 (17.9%) respondents indicated that they did not have a direct supervisor. This response is probably due to the fact that they did not regard the persons that they reported to as being (true) supervisors since the latter failed to provide supportive or educational supervision. Of the other respondents, only eleven (39.3%) gave their supervisors a fair to excellent rating, whereas fifteen (53.5%) of the ratings fell in the poor to fair categories.

The profile generated by the question is a cause for concern, particularly since five (18%) of the respondents had less than five years of experience as school social workers (see Table 2). The general lack of professional supervision represents an issue which should receive urgent attention.

### **4.3 Section 3: The school social worker’s (SSW’s) responsibilities at district level.**

The literature review and national survey indicated that, in spite of some overlapping, a distinction should be drawn between the responsibilities of school social workers at district level and those in schools. The responsibilities of SSW’s at district level were:

- towards learners;
- towards educators/teachers;
- regarding screening, and the development and implementation of programmes and projects;
- towards social work and education policy changes and new trends;
- regarding their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams;
- regarding the implementation of Inclusive education.

Each category of responsibilities was covered by a separate scale in the survey questionnaire. These scales were based on the results of the literature review. Each

consisted of a list of potential responsibilities and the respondents were given the opportunity to rate these individually. The results produced by the scale which were completed by school social workers employed at district level, will be examined next.

### **4.3.1 SSWs’ potential responsibilities towards learners**

Literature indicates that district level school social workers’ potential responsibilities towards learners could be divided into five key functions and responsibilities. The respondents’ views regarding each of these are summarised in Table 7.

**Table 7: Scale 1.1 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level towards learners**

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1. Address social problems experienced by individuals and groups of learners (e.g. bullying, teenage pregnancy)</b>	5.86	0.378
<b>2. Provide crisis intervention services (e.g. death of parent)</b>	5.14	1.215
<b>3. Referral to external service providers for follow-up or statutory intervention (e.g. child abuse)</b>	5.43	0.787
<b>4. Develop and implement programmes to prevent social problems/issues among learners (e.g. bullying, child abuse, teenage pregnancy)</b>	5.86	0.378
<b>5. Implement parental guidance programmes</b>	5.29	0.756

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = -2.625 (See Annexure 24, Table 8 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The Cronbach alpha for this table has a negative value of -2.625 due to a negative average co-variance among items. The responsibilities can, therefore, only be discussed individually.

The response to all five responsibilities fell in the ‘critical importance’ category. According to their means, working with learners via direct service delivery (mean = 5.86) and the use of preventative programmes (mean = 5.86) received the highest rating. The results correspond with the findings of Openshaw (2008:2) who identified ‘direct service delivery’ as one of the basic tasks of a SSW, Segal *et al.* (2007:285 & 301) who identified successful preventative programmes as an important responsibility

of a SSW, and prevention as a core construct within the developmental approach (Pretorius, 2015:320).

Providing crisis intervention services (5.14) and implementing parental guidance programmes (5.29) had the lowest means, but still fell into the ‘critically important’ category. These relatively lower ratings could be an indication that crisis intervention did not form a normal part of a school social workers’ daily activities and that respondents saw learners, and not their parents, as their primary client system.

These results were compared with the study undertaken at national level and interestingly enough, provided the same basic results in terms of importance of the different responsibilities.

#### **4.3.2 SSW’s potential responsibilities towards educators/teachers**

Internationally, teachers together with learners and their parents/caregivers, are often seen as the three core client systems of the school social worker (AASW, 2008:7). The extent to which this is true for South Africa, and the rating of the five functions/responsibilities that could constitute this task, were covered with a separate scale in the questionnaire. The data produced by this scale is summarised in Table 8.

**Table 8: Scale 1.2 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level towards educators/teachers**

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1. Assist educators with the early identification of learner’s needs/problems</b>	5.00	1.528
<b>2. Assist educators with reporting learners with social barriers to learning</b>	5.00	1.155
<b>3. Assist educators with supporting learners with social barriers to learning</b>	5.14	1.069
<b>4. Empower educators with knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters, and community changes</b>	5.57	0.787
<b>5. Empower educators with regard to the management of learners in the classroom</b>	5.00	1.414

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.932 (See Annexure 24, Table 9 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The Cronbach alpha for this table has a value of 0.932 and can therefore be seen as highly reliable. It produced an overall mean 5.14 which indicates that as a whole, its constituent components fell into the 'critically important' category. This would indicate that teachers/educators were indeed seen by the respondents as an important client system.

A breakdown of the individual items indicated that 'empower educators with knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters, and community changes' received the highest rating (5.57). This relates directly to Segal *et al.* (2007:281) who argues that school social workers should act as 'consultants' on policy matters.

All the other items were focussed on learners and their needs/social barriers to learning as well as the management of their behaviour. These all form part of direct practice according to Openshaw (2008:7).

In the national study 'assist educators with early identification of learner's needs/problems' received the highest mean (5.56) and both studies placed 'assist educators with supporting learners with social barriers of learning' as the second most important (5.31 & 5.14). This is an indication that assistance with learner's needs/problems and barriers are identified as important by both sets of respondents. Social workers, however, perceive knowledge of policies and related aspects as most important.

### ***4.3.3 The rating of SSWs' potential responsibilities towards programmes and projects***

School social workers in districts have definite roles to play in programme and project development and implementation (Segal *et al.*, 2007:285-186), as well as screening. This core responsibility was divided into smaller key concepts and the respondents were requested to rate them according to importance (see Table 9).

**Table 9: Scale 1.3 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level regarding screening, and the development and implementation of programmes and projects**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Evaluate and monitor programmes and projects	5.14	1.069
2. Assist with the management of programmes and projects	4.86	1.215
3. Develop tools to evaluate the success of projects and programmes	4.68	1.033
4. Compile business plans where required	3.43	1.134
5. Implement and monitor the progress of psychosocial programmes	5.57	0.535
6. Network and liaise with external resources	5.71	0.488
7. Develop and support infrastructure at schools such as the school based support teams(SBST)	4.86	0.900

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.903 (See Annexure 24, Table 10 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

An analysis of the data on which Table 9 is based, indicated the following.

- “Network and liaise with external resources” received the highest rating which fell into the ‘critically important’ category.
- Items 1 & 5 which are both responsibilities related to ‘programmes and projects’, whether it is the implementation, monitoring or evaluation thereof, were also rated as ‘critically important’ (5.14 and 5.57).
- ‘Assist with the management of programmes and projects’, ‘develop tools to evaluate the success of projects and programmes’ and ‘develop and support infrastructure at schools such as the school based support teams (SBST)’ achieved lower ratings (4.86, 4.68 and 4.86), but were nevertheless considered as ‘very important’.
- ‘Compiling business plans where required’ received the lowest mean of 3.43.

All of the above items are included in the basic skills and tenets for the social work profession and correlate directly with the importance of practising these in the evolving profession (DuBois & Miley, 2010:53–57). The respondents were, however, clearly of the opinion that the development of business plans should not be seen as a core responsibility.

Both this study and the national study placed ‘network and liaise with external resources’ as most important and ‘compile business plans where required’ as the least important responsibility. All other responsibilities were basically in line with one another, which is an indication that top management as well as ground level school social workers agree on this.

#### **4.3.4 SSWs potential responsibilities regarding policy issues**

The social worker has a professional responsibility towards continuous professional development. Being in the educational system, the social worker focuses on educational policies and trends which exercise an influence on the work environment. This broad responsibility was divided into smaller key responsibilities which the respondents could then rate. The results are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Scale 1.4 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level towards social work and education policy changes and new trends**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Master and disseminate knowledge of relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	5.29	0.951
2. Communicate changes and trends to district management teams	5.00	0.816
3. Attend, participate and provide feedback on conferences and workshops	5.43	0.787
4. Attend and participate in school social work sub-committee	5.00	1.155

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.785 (See Annexure 24, Table 11 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The data generated by Scale 1.4 may be interpreted as follows.

- Items 1 and 3 received the highest ratings (‘critically important’). These are focussed on keeping up to date with relevant policies and new trends. The

respondents' views are in line with the findings of DuBois and Miley (2010: 391). The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (2015:23 & 35) includes these responsibilities in its "Standards for Conduct and Practice" document.

- The item: 'communicate changes and trends to district management teams' also fell into the 'critically important' category. This would imply that district school social workers should not only 'keep their knowledge and insights to themselves', but should also have the responsibility to inform other role-players accordingly.
- The attendance and participation in social work district sub-committee (Table 10: Item 3) should be seen as an important mechanism through which the other functions could be performed.

#### **4.3.5 SSW's potential responsibilities in terms of multi-disciplinary teams**

The school social worker functions in the education setting where he/she is part of a multi-disciplinary team (Rosenberg, 2009:193) and must perform specific functions (Northern Ireland Social Care Council, 2015:37). Because most of these functions were covered by other scales in the questionnaire, only two were examined separately. These were: 'attend relevant provincial and regional meetings with other professions' and 'support and guide learner support counsellors at circuit level'. Their means came to 5.29 and 5.14 which indicate that they were viewed as 'critically important'. This result is in line with views of Frost *et al.* (2005: 187) who argue that social workers in multi-disciplinary teams must be "committed to making them work".

#### **4.3.6 SSWs' potential responsibilities regarding the implementation of inclusive education**

Inclusive education principles have a direct impact on social work in the education system (Kemp, 2005) and it is expected of workers, particularly those at district level, to fulfil certain responsibilities in this regard. For the purposes of the research, thirteen such responsibilities were identified (see Table 11) and tested with the help of Scale 1.5.

**Table 11: Scale 1.5 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level in terms of the implementation of inclusive education**

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1. Participate in the development of national and provincial guidelines for inclusive teaching, learning and assessment	5.00	1.000
2. Participate in the professional development of provincial, district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development	5.71	0.488
3. Participate in the development of manuals for training in social issues that include theories, models, practices and tools	5.14	1.215
4. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition of necessary assistive devices	4,71	1.113
5. Participate in the development of a framework for upgrading physical and material resources that will ensure the conversion of schools into full service schools	4.43	0.976
6. Contribute to the development and updating of norms and standards for specialist support	4.86	1.215
7. Participate in the development of a database of community support services, agencies, NGOs, government departments, and other relevant organisations	5.14	1.215
8. Promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders	5.71	0.488
9. Assist in the establishment, development and management of district-based support team (DBST)	4.57	1.618
10. Participate in the transformation process of schools into full service schools, and special schools into resource centres	4.71	1.113
11. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition, upgrading and maintenance of physical resources that will support the transformation process of schools into inclusive education sites	4.14	0.900
12. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive system with special focus on social issues to departmental officials	5.43	0.787
13. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive education system with special focus on social issues to other government departments, NGOs, CBOs and parents	5.43	0.976

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.896 (See Annexure 24, Table 12 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

Two items received the highest average mean score of 5.71. These were Item 3: 'participate in the professional development of provincial, district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development' and Item 8: 'promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders' (see Table 11). The very high rating of item 3 would indicate that school social workers at district level

has a very important 'psychosocial education' responsibility and should empower other role-players within the education system regarding this dimension of human functioning (Northern Ireland Social Care Council, 2015:35). The networking responsibility as implied by item 8, is described by DuBois and Miley (2010:53) as "essential".

The advocacy role of school social workers received the second-highest average mean score of 5.43 (see Table 11: items 12 & 13). This rating is in line with the views of Segal *et al.* (2007:280) who state that school social workers should be in the forefront in the promotion of rights.

Many of the responsibilities are covered by the questionnaire focusing on the development within inclusive education mechanisms such as manuals, databases, guidelines, frameworks, etc. These items' means ranged from 4.14 to 5.14, which suggests that they were all regarded as either 'very important' or 'critically important'.

The social workers in districts were requested to add other key functions that were not covered by the questionnaire. Only two were provided, viz. to develop 'parenting skills' and 'life skills programmes'. These recommendations will be borne in mind in the further development of practice standards.

In this section there is a slight difference between what the top management (national study) and school social workers (Free State) perceive as the most important responsibilities. The Free State study placed the following two responsibilities as highest, while they received a lower rating in the national study:

- 'participate in the professional development of provincial, district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development' (5.71 vs. 4.93) and
- 'promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders' (5.71 vs. 4.89).

#### **4.4 Section 4: The school social worker's (SSW's) responsibilities at mainstream and special schools level**

The social workers in mainstream and special schools completed a separate section of the survey questionnaire which consisted of five scales and covered their potential responsibilities:

- towards learners;

- towards educators/teachers;
- regarding social work and educational policy changes and new trends;
- in terms of their role as members of multi-disciplinary teams;
- their general functions/ responsibilities.

#### **4.4.1 SSWs’ potential responsibilities towards learners**

The baseline research indicates that practitioners in schools could have four core responsibilities towards learners. These responsibilities, and the respondents’ views of each one’s relative importance, is summarised in Table 12.

**Table 12: Scale 2.1 - The potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at schools towards learners**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Develop and implement an individual support plan (ISP) for each learner	4.9	0.889
2. Participate in multi-disciplinary meetings with regard to learners	5.67	0.658
3. Offer crisis intervention programmes when relevant	5.10	0.944
4. Assist and support in learner disciplinary hearings	4.67	1.278

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.477 (See Annexure 24, Table 13 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

Scale 2.1 Cronbach alpha of 0.477 indicated that it did not meet the set minimum reliability coefficient. This could be viewed as an indication that the selected set of items may not in fact have covered all relevant responsibilities. The data produced by the scale should, therefore, only be seen as an *indication* of each individual items relative importance. It also implies that further research should be undertaken in this regard.

Two items, viz. ‘participation in multi-disciplinary meetings’ (mean = 5.67) and ‘offering crisis intervention programmes’ (mean=5.10), fell into the ‘critically important’ category, while the ‘development and implementation of individual support plans (ISP)’ (mean = 4.9) and ‘support of learners in disciplinary hearings’ (mean of 4.67) were rated as ‘very important’. These responses are in line with Rosenberg’s (2009:198) view that school social workers should focus their services on the support of individual learners.

In the open section of the questionnaire one respondent recommended that the responsibility: ‘screening and assessment of learners who are abused sexually, emotionally, verbally or (who are) neglected’ should be added. Apart from the value of this recommendation as such, it could also be taken as an indication of the type of responsibility that in future should be included in research into the SSWs’ responsibilities towards learners.

The results of this components of the research and those of the national study are in line with one another.

#### **4.4.2 SSWs’ potential responsibilities towards educators/teachers**

Openshaw (2008:16) is of the opinion that educators are not trained in the psychosocial dynamics pertaining to learners and might, in this regard, need assistance, empowerment and support from the school social worker. Nine different forms of assistance, empowerment and support were covered in the survey (see Table 13).

**Table 13: Scale 2.2 - The potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs in schools towards educators (teachers).**

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>1. Assist with the early identification of learner’s needs</b>	5.38	0.740
<b>2. Assist with reporting and supporting learners with social barriers to learning</b>	5.15	1.108
<b>3. Assist in teacher support meetings</b>	4.81	0.873
<b>4. Empower educators with regard to policies, legislation, and statutory matters</b>	4.86	1.195
<b>5. Empower educators with regard to classroom management</b>	4.00	1.449
<b>6. Empower educators with regard to social issues relating to the curriculum (e.g. bullying, violence)</b>	4.95	0.805
<b>7. Liaise between learners and staff with regard to social work issues</b>	5.14	0.910
<b>8. Support educators during parent consultations</b>	4.48	1.030
<b>9. Participate in the professional development of educators in order to identify and manage social barriers to learning and development in terms of the SIAS policy</b>	4.62	1.024

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.848 (See Annexure 24, Table 14 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The results obtained in respect of Scale 2.2 can be considered as highly reliable, due to its Cronbach alpha of 0.848. The following trends emerged from an analysis of the data produced by the scale:

- The responsibilities 'assist with the early identification of learner's needs' (mean = 5.38), and 'assist with reporting and supporting learners with social barriers to learning' (mean = 5.15) received the highest individual ratings. It is noteworthy that both of these focus on the needs of learners.
- The function of the school social worker as a *link* between learners and teachers was highlighted by the function that received the third-highest rating, viz. 'liaise between learners and staff with regard to social work issues' (mean = 5.14).
- The group of functions which was focussed on the empowerment of teachers regarding curriculum, statutory knowledge and professional development issues (items 4, 6 and 9), and to 'empower educators with regard to classroom management' (Item 5), tended to have a relatively low rating.

The profile of the results produced in terms of Scale 2.2 seem to vindicate Kemp's (2014:34), view that educators often fail to understand the impact of social context on learners. There is also a strong correlation between this scale and the results produced by the national study. School social workers must, consequently, identify the social barriers to learning that individual learners experience and interpret these to teachers.

#### **4.4.3 *SSWs' potential responsibilities regarding profession-based policies and trends***

Continuous professional development is a statutory responsibility of the social worker (Social Service Professions Act, 1978:110). In the case of school social work, this responsibility is not just limited to keeping abreast of developments within the profession, but also in the broader educational field. Both these two facets were covered by Scale 2.3 (see Table 14).

**Table 14: Scale 2.3 - The potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs in schools regarding social work and educational policy changes and new trends**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Be knowledgeable about relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	5.29	0.717
2. Attend and participate in continuous professional development activities	5.38	0.498
3. Attend and provide feedback on workshops and conferences to principal of the school	5.05	0.865
4. Attend and participate in social work district sub-committee	4.48	1.250

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.719 (See Annexure 24, Table 15 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The first three responsibilities were each rated as ‘critically important’. These are: ‘knowledge of policies and new trends’, ‘attending CPD activities’, and ‘attending workshops and providing feedback to the principal’. These responsibilities also received high ratings from school social workers at district level, leading to the conclusion that they are regarded as important on both levels.

Attending and participating in the social work district sub-committee was regarded as ‘very important’. This somewhat lower rating could be attributed to the fact that not all the respondents were in the employ of the Department of Basic Education.

#### **4.4.4 SSWs’ potential responsibilities in terms of multi-disciplinary teams**

School social workers must generally be able to function well in, and contribute effectively to multi-disciplinary teams (Northern Ireland Social Care Council, 2015:37). Within the South African context and because of the nature of their profession, they can also contribute significantly to the ‘Life Orientation’ component of the school curriculum. Respondents’ ratings of these types of functions are summarised in Table 15.

**Table 15: Scale 2.4 - The potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs in schools in terms of their role as members of multi-disciplinary teams**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Participate as member of school-based support team (SBST), circuit-based support team (CBCT) or, if required, district-based support team (DBST)	5.19	0.928
2. Participate in the screening and assessment of new admissions	5.60	0.681
3. Participate in the development of life skills programmes, material and information to support the Life Orientation learning area	5.24	0.768
4. Assist with the development of the school's code of conduct	4.86	1.108

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.257 (See Annexure 24, Table 16 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The Cronbach Alpha for Scale 2.4 was 0.257 and the mean inter-item correlation is 0.170. Both are low and consequently the responsibilities will be discussed individually as per statistical standards.

The responsibility of 'participate in the screening and assessment of new admissions', received the highest individual rating (mean = 5.6). This would indicate that school social workers have a critical role to play in the screening process.

The relatively high rating of the social workers' potential contribution to the life skills component reconfirmed the contribution that the social work profession could make to this component of education. All the other ratings were in line with expectations.

#### **4.4.5 General responsibilities of SSWs**

The baseline research produced 13 potential functions and responsibilities that did not fit into the four others clusters utilised in the survey questionnaires. These general functions were covered by Scale 2.5. The respondents rating of each is summarised in Table 16.

**Table 16: Scale 2.5 - General functions/ responsibilities that SSWs in schools**

Key responsibility / function	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Develop programmes to address specific barriers to learning and development (e.g. anxiety)	4.81	0.602
2. Develop a strategic plan for service delivery	4.95	0.805
3. Develop an annual plan to guide the functions and operations of social work	4.85	0.813
4. Present workshops on social issues to learners, staff, parents and/or other groups (e.g. on the dangers of social media)	4.81	1.030
5. Liaise with external social workers and other professionals where relevant	5.67	0.577
6. Record-keeping	5.48	0.750
7. Assist with the management of trauma and disaster situations within the school and direct community	5.38	0.805
8. Consult with the provincial or district office social workers with regard to social work related matters	5.00	0.949
9. Facilitate parent evenings on e.g. social media, bullying, parental guidance	4.76	0.768
10. Be a behaviour specialist and apply behaviour modification interventions	4.71	0.902
11. Be a mental health expert and provide consultation services on related issues (e.g. on ADHD and anxiety)	3.90	1.091
12. Be an alcohol and drug abuse specialist and provide related services (e.g. by creating and implementing relevant programmes)	4.19	1.470
13. Be a violence-prevention specialist and provide related services (e.g. by addressing gangs, juvenile offences and violence against teachers)	4.19	1.289

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.855 (See Annexure 24, Table 17 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The responsibility to 'liaise with external social workers and other professionals where relevant' received the highest individual rating (mean = 5.67). Another responsibility linked to it was to 'consult with the provincial or district office social workers with regard to social work-related matters' (mean = 5.00). These ratings correlate with the findings of DuBois and Miley (2010:55) that such liaison and consultation functions constitute core elements of day-to-day practice.

Not unexpectedly, the respondents also rated record-keeping as critically important (mean = 5.48). Their views are in line with the ethical code of South African social work (Social Service Professions Act, 1978:110) and 'accountability' responsibility that all school social workers should meet (Northern Ireland Social Care Council, 2015:17).

A cluster of items dealt with the development of programmes and project (see Table 16, items 1, 2 and 3), all of which received a relatively high rating. These types of responsibilities are viewed by Openshaw (2008:2) as basic tasks common to school social work.

The scale included three potential fields of specialisation within school social work, namely mental health (Item 11), alcohol and drug abuse (Item 12) and violence (Item 13). Somewhat unexpectedly, these fields received a relatively low rating. No substantive reason for this trend could be found even after data sets were triangulated. There were some indications that the reason might be that not all the respondents have to deal with these issues on a daily basis or because they have not yet had specialised training in them. In the latter regard, Rosenberg (2009:201) recommends that school social workers be given specialised training and Openshaw (2008:15-17) describes some fields of additional knowledge that would benefit the school social worker. This includes mental health.

## **4.5 Section 5: General matters that may influence school social work**

The questionnaire included a section that needed to be completed by all the respondents. It covered their infrastructure- and equipment-related needs and the necessity for (more) school social workers in the Free State Province.

### **4.5.1 *Infrastructure and equipment needed to perform school social work duties***

It is common knowledge that, in order to function effectively, all social workers would need some basic infrastructure and equipment. The questionnaire was focussed on eight types of items with particular relevance to school social work settings. The respondents' ratings of these items are summarised in Table 17.

**Table 17: Infrastructure and equipment needed**

Infrastructure and / or equipment	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Office accommodation which is accessible and allows for confidentiality	5.92	0.262
2. Transport (e.g. to conduct home visits and other contact-making which requires travelling)	4.86	1.649
3. Furniture suitable for interviews and other tasks (e.g. group work)	5.42	0.997
4. Communication media (e.g. telephone, fax machines, email, internet)	5.71	0.713
5. Computers	5.78	0.62994
6. Photocopiers and printers	5.71	0.65868
7. Filing cabinets (e.g. for safekeeping of records)	5.86	0.5909
8. Basic stationary (e.g. pens, files, notepaper, scissors, ruler, etc.)	5.71	0.713

*Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.771 (See Annexure 24, Table 18 for full details of the data produced by this scale)*

The infrastructure and equipment listed in Table 17, except transport (Item 2: mean = 4.86) received a 'critically important' rating. The reason for the latter may be that social workers in some types of schools have to travel less than others.

The high importance rating given to the other infrastructure and equipment related questions should be seen against the background that SSW's are often appointed in settings where management (principals and SGB's) do not know what infrastructure they need to perform their tasks effectively (Morgan, 2017). Inadequacies in this regard may have a serious negative influence on their service delivery. It, for example, includes the ethical implications of office accommodation do not allow for confidentiality.

#### **4.5.2 The need for school social work in the Free State Province**

In the questionnaire, all the respondents were provided with the opportunity to state whether or not they felt that there is a need for school social workers in the Free State Province, and to motivate their views. All stated that there was such a need. The following six themes emerged from an analysis of their written motivations.

#### **4.5.2.1 More support to learners**

Most of the respondents stated that (more) social workers are needed to support learners. The types of support needed and not directly included in the questionnaire, were the following.

- The identification and addressing of emotional barriers to learning. One respondent stated: *“Learners have lots of barriers and they need assistance, especially psychosocial support”*.
- Addressing learners’ psychosocial barriers to learning.
- Therapeutic services to those learners whose families cannot afford to take them to private therapists.
- The running of programmes to educate learners throughout the school year.

The above comments link to the Department of Education’s (2016:15) statement that schools are “...a critical space to provide psychosocial support and care” and that schools have an “...important role to play in promoting the overall well-being of learners, which contributes to better learning and to the holistic development of learners.”

#### **4.5.2.2 More support to parents**

Some of the respondents stated that parents form a vital part of the education community but do not necessarily have the parental skills needed. In this regard, a respondent expressed the following view: *“The pressure on parents are too much and they just want to survive. The children suffer a lot. Many parents would be relieved if a school social worker can refer them when a problem is indicated during assessment or in the class.”* Another respondent stated: *“Parents don’t know how to handle children”*.

It was suggested by respondents that (more) school social workers are needed to deliver services to parents. One summarised this view as follows: *“Parents can be included in the therapeutic process and can be educated”*.

The responses indicate that parents/guardians/caregivers should be viewed as an important (Pretorius, 2015:322) and distinct target system in school social work. The limited attention they received in the questionnaires could be viewed as a limitation in the study.

#### **4.5.2.3 Support to educators**

The respondents reiterated the need for social work support and guidance to teachers because the latter face many challenges they are not equipped to manage. One respondent formulated the following: *“There is a need for school social work as there are many challenges faced by school teachers that require the assistance of these professionals.”* Another respondent wrote: *“With teachers not trained in this field, they need support.”* and another stated: *“Teachers are not always competent to handle children with problems”*.

The importance of liaising with teachers was identified by a respondent who stated: *“Teachers work with children on a daily basis and can identify children in need. Early intervention is therefore possible”*.

#### **4.5.2.4 Psychosocial challenges in communities**

The majority of respondents implied that the challenges faced by learners justify the appointment of school social workers. Some of these respondents' views on the nature of these challenges were the following:

- *“There are a lot of social ills – the rate of crime in schools, drug and alcohol abuse, rape...”*
- *“Figure of children in need are rising. SA displays moral, social, psychological deterioration...”*
- *“For learners to learn effectively, those barriers must be dealt with. For that reason, more social workers are needed in schools”*.

The views above are in line with Department of Basic Education's (2016:14) motivation for psychosocial support in schools. Some also relate to the reasons for the high dropout rate from Grade 1 to Grade 12 (Kügel, 2018:10).

#### **4.5.2.5 Shortage of school social workers at mainstream schools**

A number of respondents indicated that there is a shortage of social workers in mainstream schools and/or that this type of service should be expanded. These responses should be seen against the backdrop of the fact that currently school social workers are employed at mainstream schools, only if their SGBs can afford to appoint them.

Some respondents motivated their views by stating that the appointment of practitioners at mainstream schools would help to alleviate the burden on those school social workers at district offices who are overwhelmed by their caseloads. In this regard, one respondent remarked: *“As a district social worker, we service quite a number of schools. This makes us crisis management social workers and not effective services.”* Another stated the following regarding high caseloads: *“...as a result, services offered are not up to standard.”*

Another motivation concerned changes in the education environment. In this regard, one respondent said that *“Problems in schools (are) growing day by day”* and another: *“School social workers for mainstream schools are vital”*.

An increase in the number of school social workers at mainstream schools would improve the learner:social worker ratio within the system. The impact of the current deficient ratio is illustrated by the following two statements: *“We are only three social workers who are servicing the whole district. ...shortage of manpower is hampering effective service delivery. More school social workers need to be employed”* and finally *“Per district we are only three social workers... for 357 schools. The travelling distance for school social workers at district offices is problematic.”*

#### **4.5.2.6 Placement of learners at specialised schools**

The potential role of social workers in the prevention of the unnecessary placement of learners in special schools was not directly addressed in the survey questionnaire. It emerged from the respondents' remarks that this is an aspect which should receive attention. In this regard, one respondent stated: *“Most learners are being wrongly placed in special schools, due to behaviour – as an example. If social issues such as problematic behaviour can be addressed at mainstream schools and if learners can be provided with therapeutic interventions, it will allow more space at special schools for those candidates who meet the necessary criteria for being placed at such schools.”*

The potential role of school social workers in the early and correct identification of barriers to learning was highlighted by a number of respondents. One illustrated this issue by stating that: *“...an emotional barrier can sometimes present itself in another*

*form and be incorrectly identified. This situation may have the effect that the learner end up being referred to the wrong school".* Another respondent wrote that the bigger involvement of school social workers: *"...will help learners at an early age and support them, as well as their parents, to avoid possible misplacement in future, especially on primary school level".* This aspect might be the reason why the responsibility of 'participate in the screening and assessment of new admissions' in Table 15, scale 2.4, received such a high rating from ground level SSWs.

One respondent to some extent summarised the views of the others regarding the need for more school social workers when he/she wrote:

*"There is a number of issues affecting children in the whole country, not just the Free State alone. Children suffer abuse, they experience loss, they are being bullied, behavioural problem, etc. There is always a reason or cause for this. As parents, we wake up and go to work, while the learner carry these burdens to school every day, the teachers are there, but they are there to teach. So having a school social worker (will) ensure that there is somebody who is always there, to help or even just to listen."*

### **4.5.3 Challenges school social workers experience**

The respondents were afforded the opportunity to articulate the challenges that they might experience in their daily work within the education system. Only the themes that came to the fore most strongly in their replies will be covered next.

#### **4.5.3.1 Lack of professional supervision/consultation**

The need for improved professional supervision/consultation services was a recurrent theme. Many respondents stated that their administrative supervisors/managers were up to standard, but that they also needed a qualified social work supervisor and/or consultant who could provide educational and supportive services. Some of their comments included: *"Lack of direct supervision by a principal social worker"*, *"Lack of support from supervisors"* and *"...no supervision at all"*. These comments indicate that effective supervision and management of SSW is an area of concern and that specific structures are needed to address this challenge (Kemp, 2014:47-55; Van Sittert, 2016:55).

#### **4.5.3.2 Lack of understanding from educators of the scope of school social work**

Openshaw (2008:13) states that the nature and scope of practice of social work within the education system is not always understood by teachers and other role-players. This also seems to be the case in the Free State Province. One respondent said: *“The main challenge is the lack of understanding from teachers ...of the role of the social worker at school and the services the social workers render. This often leads to conflict and impacts negatively on progress”*. Some other remarks were: *“Teachers can feel that social workers are intruding in their field”*, and *“Teachers are not open to change”*.

It might also be a challenge when it becomes too easy to refer learners to the SSW. As one respondent indicated: *“The staff members interfere a lot and want to pass their responsibilities. They just refer a learner before assessing”*.

#### **4.5.3.3 Lack of clear guidelines on roles and responsibilities**

Another problem linked to the scope of practice, is a lack of clear guidelines on what the role-players within the education could or should not expect from school social workers. One respondent stated: *“No standard requirements/guidelines established yet”* and others noted that *“The social worker is not always seen as a professional and must assist wherever there is a need. Boundaries must be set”* and that a *“Lack of clear guidelines on what is expected, creates confusion and this can create other challenges, for example the unavailability of proper infrastructure for work to be done”*.

A lack of role demarcation and clarity also creates problems. One respondent wrote *“I am also a teacher at the school, which does not always make me available to the children as my hours are not set”* and another stated: *“You are a ‘Jack of all trades – master of none’ most of the time”*. These comments indicate that a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities are needed in order to guide SSWs (Van Sittert, 2016:55-56).

#### **4.5.3.4 Lack of resources**

It emerged from the respondents' comments that a lack of appropriate resources tends to impede effective service delivery. Two of the remarks in this regard follow:

- *“The challenge that I am facing at present is transport for conducting home visit, I am currently using my own vehicle for this.”*

- *“Lack of resources, e.g. transport, manpower, stationery hinders proper service delivery to our learners in schools.”*

#### **4.5.3.5 Other challenges**

A number of other challenges were mentioned by only one or two of the respondents. These may be summarised as follows:

- The lack of parental involvement: *“Another challenge is with parents who do not co-operate”*.
- Poor working relations with other professionals: *“(Other professionals) do not want to accommodate social workers. They (think they) are better, wise and set in their ways”*.
- Working in dangerous communities: *“‘safety scales’ and the uncontrollable behaviour of learners”*.
- Career path limitations: *“Career development is limited because the highest level is that of a senior education specialist”*.

## **5 MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study into the roles, tasks and challenges faced by school social workers in the Free State’s education system produced a large number and variety of results. Only the most pertinent findings and the recommendations that flow from these, will be covered next.

The study produced a clear profile of the minimum qualifications and experience levels that candidates should possess before being appointed as school social workers, and also of requirements that their supervisors should meet. It is recommended that these findings should be taken into account in the setting of practice standards for school social work.

In the study, a distinction was drawn between the functions and responsibilities of school social workers at district level and of those in mainstream and special schools. In both cases, a prioritised list of functions was produced which could guide future service delivery. It should, however, be noted in this regard that respondents tended to adjudge most of the items provided as being important. Consequently, only the

functions that were categorised as 'critically important' should be viewed as representing the *core* functions that *must* be included in the practice standards.

The study also produced a number of factors that have a negative effect on school social work in the province. Foremost among of these was a lack of sufficient numbers of social workers on most levels of the education system. There were, for example, too few school social workers on district level to cope with the numbers of schools and learners that needed their services. This led to extremely high and seemingly unmanageable caseloads. Social workers in mainstream schools were limited to those institutions which could afford to pay them from their own pockets. Together, these circumstances led to a lack of equity and sometimes to a situation where learners who urgently needed social worker services, were deprived of it.

One mechanism through which the lack of appropriately deployed school social workers could be addressed, is the appointment of more practitioners at circuit level, which currently is not the case. The basic structure of the education system at district level does provide for such a recommendation (Department of Basic Education: 2018). Such appointments would enable practitioners to work directly with schools, making the current district workers available to provide professional supervision and perform more managerial roles and tasks. The higher echelons district level workers should have at least five to ten years of working experience as social workers, but preferably be in a possession of an additional MSW qualification, teaching degree or diploma, or other training in areas related to the education system.

Another mechanism that could be considered, is to make it easier for mainstream schools to appoint social workers. The ideal would be for each large school to have its own school social worker or at least for two or more schools situated in the same community to 'share' a social worker.

A second factor which had a negative effect on school social work in the province is deficient supervision. It emerged that not one of the school social workers in the Free State has a supervisor with a social work qualification. The respondents also tended to rate their current administrative supervisors as only having 'poor' to 'fair' levels of

knowledge and understanding of the social worker's work. This implies that a system should be put in place to educate these functionaries re the roles and tasks of the SSW.

It is recommended that supervisors with a social work qualification and an understanding of the nature and scope of school social work should be appointed to provide education, guidance and support services. Their roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and could be based on the results of this study.

A third trend to emerge from the study was that nature and scope of practice of social work within the education system was not always understood by teachers and other role-players and that this had a detrimental effect on services delivery. A concerted effort should be made 'officially' to demarcate the scope of a school social worker's practice and disseminate this information through official channels to all role-players in the province. The results of this study could, once again, provide a basis for such a demarcation.

Finally, it was, lastly, clear that insufficient infrastructure and equipment had a major negative impact on effective service delivery. Provision to address such deficiencies should be made in budgets.

## **6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This study provided a 'practitioner-eye-view' of the need for, and nature of school social work in the Free State's education system. It could be concluded from the study that although social workers are already rendering a valuable service, only a fraction of current needs are being addressed. To a large extent, schools are a microcosm of South African society and they suffer from the same psychosocial 'ailments' that beset the communities within which they operate. More social workers are, consequently, needed to address the resultant psychosocial barriers to learning and to empower the learners of today to become the leaders of tomorrow.

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## ARTICLE 4:

# THE DEVELOPMENT AND VERIFICATION OF PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

**Key words:** *Social work; school social work; practice standards; inclusive education; social work roles, functions, expectations, responsibilities.*

### Abstract

**Background:** The practice standards contained in this article represent the final outcome of a comprehensive, multi-phased and multi-method research project. The research took the form of a literature review of the background, theoretical foundations and policy dictates that govern South African school social work, a national survey of the country's provincial departments of education's expectations of school social workers in their employ, and a survey of practising school social workers' own views of their roles, functions and challenges. The results of these phases were then combined to create a set of draft practice standards.

**Aim:** The aim of the final stage was to verify the suitability/relevance and correctness of the newly created set of practice standards for school social workers.

**Method:** The Delphi technique was used in the verification process. In this regard, the draft set was first presented to a panel of five experts, viz. an expert in school social work, a senior school social worker employed at district level, a senior school social worker from a special school, an experienced practitioner in the employ of a school governing body and a senior researcher/lecturer in social work. The panel was then provided with the opportunity to recommend changes in respect of the document. These were incorporated into a new document and the process repeated until all the participants were satisfied with the final product.

**Results:** The study produced a set of research based and verified practice standards that could be used as a basis in the further development of the field of school social work in South Africa.

# THE DEVELOPMENT AND VERIFICATION OF PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

EM Vergottini & ML Weyers

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In spite of a substantial increase in the number of school social work posts in South Africa during the past few years (NACOSSWEP, 2015), various structural-functional deficiencies have had a detrimental effect on the utilisation and functioning of these practitioners. These include marked dissimilarities between different provincial education departments' employment and deployment of school social workers, the structuring of their services and their expectations of such functionaries. What was evidently required, was some type of 'guideline' for school social workers in South Africa (cf. Van Sittert, 2016:56). Such a 'guideline' could take the form of practice standards (Banks, 2006:97).

## 2 THE NATURE AND NEED FOR PRACTICE STANDARDS

The setting of practice standards or codes of professional responsibility for social work in general and school social work in particular is a common practice in countries such as the United States and Australia (AASW, 2011; NASW, 2012). These standards may be described as authoritative statements by which a profession defines and describes the set of behaviours or range of activities for which its practitioners are accountable (Scott *et al.*, 2004: 213-217; Munson, 2011:41; SANC, 2013:2). Such statements are agreed upon (articulated and promulgated) by a profession and are used to judge the quality of practice and the suitability of services or education. It is, ultimately, a regulatory body's responsibility to establish, monitor and enforce such practice standards (Scott *et al.*, 2004: 213-217; SANC, 2013:2).

Apart from their regulatory function, practice standards can also be used for a number of other purposes. These, according to Banks (2006:97), include:

- to contribute to the 'professional status' of an occupation,
- to establish and maintain professional identity,
- to guide practitioners in the way in which to act,
- to protect service users from malpractice or abuse,
- to discipline the profession.

Banks (2006:97) argues that perceptions about social work by the outside world, as well as practitioners themselves, contribute to the 'status' of the profession. In the South African context, where school social work is a relatively new field, this aspect is of particular importance. Laragy *et al.* (2012:649) suggest that practice standards would assist social workers to gain the needed status to implement social work interventions as these standards would define their roles, confirm their identity and give them credibility. They are of particular importance when a social worker is employed in a host setting such as health, the police, justice or education (Rosenberg, 2009:194).

Another factor to consider is that school social workers in host settings usually form part of multi-disciplinary teams. Braun (1990:74) indicates that when social workers work in an environment with other professionals in order to achieve the same broad goals, clear guidelines should exist to prevent duplication. Standards may then be utilised to define job descriptions and to negotiate for resources.

Laragy *et al.* (2012:650) raise the important aspect of 'defining expectations'. As stakeholders do not always have clarity on what work should be done by social workers, they need to be informed of what should be expected from these practitioners. Practice standards will provide clarity on accountability, guide practice (Laragy *et al.*, 2012:650; Rosenberg, 2009:xiii), provide performance expectations and targets that can be understood by all (Scott *et al.*, 2004:617) and prevent employers from expecting practitioners to perform roles and duties that are not related to their scope of practice.

Practice standards, in conjunction with codes of ethics, are an important mechanism in the regulation of a profession (Laragy *et al.*, 2012:653). These authors state that such documents can hold workers and employers accountable, although this does not necessarily guarantee that malpractice would not occur. Dealing with cases of malpractice would be up to a profession's regulatory body. In the case of South African social work, this body would be constituted by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP).

The promulgation of practice standards for South African school social work will ultimately be the responsibility of the SACSSP. This statutory body could follow a number of routes and consult with various other bodies to arrive at this outcome. This process could include taking cognisance of the results of this study.

### **3 BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

The practice standards as contained in this article are the result of a comprehensive research project. The nature of this project will be covered briefly.

#### **3.1 Literature study**

The research process started with an in-depth review of literature and research findings pertaining to the background, history and theoretical foundations of school social work, as well as best practices and trends both abroad and in South Africa. The review revealed a well-developed body of knowledge about school social work in international publications. It became apparent, however, that systems differed markedly from country to country and that none of these could be applied *ipso facto* to South Africa (Vergottini, 2018:33).

The literature study then covered the nature and state of school social work in South Africa. Among other markers, it showed that local publications on this field in the post-1994 era were somewhat limited and that more research was required. The study did cover all available publications, as well as the legislation and macro-policies that currently regulate the profession within the South African education system (e.g. Kasiram, 1988; Kemp, 2005; Kemp, 2014).

The results produced by the literature study were used as a basis for the next phase of the research. This, primarily, entailed a survey of provincial departments of education's expectations of school social workers in their employ.

#### **3.2 South African provincial departments of education's expectations of school social workers in their employ**

The survey consisted of two consecutive steps. It started with a qualitative exploration of the management cadre of the Free State Province's Department of Education's expectation of its school social workers and the structures and management systems that are in place to enable them to perform their roles and functions. This step produced specific themes and issues that were covered in the quantitative national survey.

The data and insights produced by the first step and the literature study were then combined to draw up a survey questionnaire. The second step targeted the management cadre of the inclusive education directorates of all provinces. The survey, among others, covered the ways in which school social work services (if any) are structured in their provinces, their views on the need for such a service, and the roles and functions they expected 'their' school social workers to perform at different levels of the education systems.

### **3.3 A survey of the Free State's school social workers**

The results of the national survey were then used as a basis to gain a 'practitioner-eye-view' of their roles, functions and challenges. The survey targeted all school social workers in the Free State Province. These included practitioners appointed by school governing bodies and those in the employ of the Department of Basic Education. The questionnaire used in the survey was similar to the one used in the national survey, but included only scales that focussed on practitioners at district- and school-level in the education system.

### **3.4 Development of practice standards**

All the data produced by the previous three steps of the research process was then used to develop a draft set of practice standards. These specifically covered:

- the minimum *requirements* that a practitioner should meet *before* being appointed as a school social worker,
- the *core roles and functions* that all school social workers should be able to perform within the South African setting,
- the *additional roles and functions* which they could perform within particular practice settings
- the *operational systems* that *should* be in place to enable the practitioner to perform his/her roles and functions effectively,
- the *management systems* that *should* be in place to enable practitioners to perform their roles and functions effectively.

The draft set of practice standards were finally subjected to a verification process.

## 4 VERIFICATION OF THE NEWLY DEVELOPED PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

The newly drafted set of practice standards were verified through the use of the Delphi technique. Ogbeifun *et al.* (2016:2008) describe this technique as a research method in which the main objective is to gain the “consensus opinion of a group of experts”. It involves structured interaction among a group of experts on a subject and typically includes at least two rounds during which they provide feedback on an issue and justify their responses. After each round, the anonymous responses are aggregated and then shared with the group during the next round. The experts are allowed to adjust their answers in subsequent rounds. In the case of this research, the interaction process was conducted electronically.

The draft practice standards document was presented to a panel of five experts. This is in line with the views of Latif *et al.* (2016:90) and Ogbeifun *et al.* (2016:2006) who state that panels may be small as long as the people who are selected are knowledgeable in the field and have a willingness to participate. The group selected for this research consisted of a person who had expert knowledge and experience in the field of school social work in South Africa, a senior departmental school social worker employed at district level, a school social worker from a special school, an experienced practitioner in the employ of a school governing body and a senior researcher/lecturer in social work.

The Delphi process as suggested by Rusnani *et al.* (2016:89) and Skulmoski *et al.* (2007:3-12) was then followed. It consisted of the following.

- A first phase in which the draft practice standards were explored and each panellist was given the opportunity to contribute additional information he or she considered to be pertinent.
- A second phase during which the added information and proposed changes were incorporated into the document and then circulated to panellists for consideration and further recommendations,
- The repetition of the process until all participants arrived at a consensus view of the validity of the document,

- A final phase during the course of which a summative assessment of the document was requested from panellists.

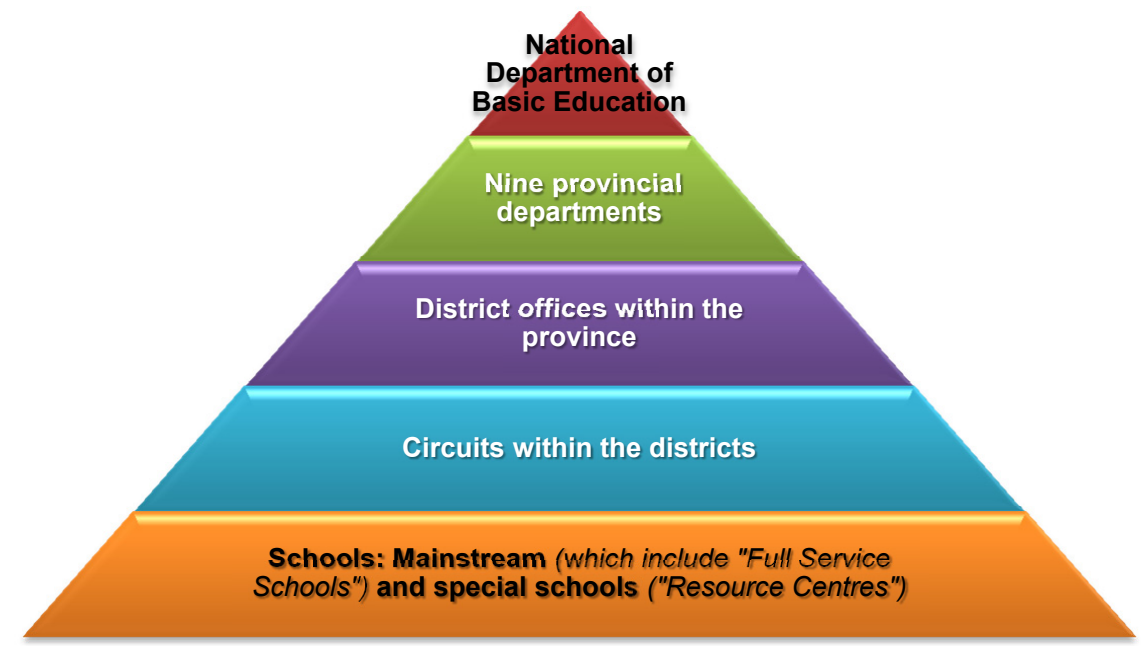
Due to ethical considerations, the identity of individual panellists was kept confidential and not revealed to the group.

## 5 CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE PRACTICE STANDARDS

In order to place the practice standards in perspective, the following information should be noted regarding the nature of the South African education system and the positioning of school social work within it.

The local system may be divided into five hierarchical levels. They are the national department of basic education, the provincial departments, districts within the provinces, circuits within districts and the schools at ground level (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Levels within the South African education system**



Social workers are employed at all five levels and their appointment, designation and functioning are regulated by the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998) and the Public Service Act (103 of 1994), as well as policies such as the OSD (Occupational Specific Dispensation, 2009). The practice standards were structured according to the five levels.

## **6 OVERVIEW OF THE CONTENT OF THE PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

Due to length constraints, the entire practice standards document produced via the research (see Annexure 26) cannot be included in this article (it is available on request). The following exposition will, consequently, consist only of excerpts of its most important components.

### **6.1 Aim of the practice standards**

The aim of the practice standards is to:

- determine and define the scope of services which school social workers should provide,
- serve as a broad guide to the practice of school social work as a specialised field of social work in South Africa,
- provide an understanding of intervention methods that could be used by school social workers,
- provide a basis for the standardisation of school social work practice,
- provide a benchmark for the employment and deployment of school social workers,
- clarify expectations and requirements with regard to school social work practice,
- provide a basis for the development of continuous education material and programmes for school social workers.

### **6.2 Definition of school social work**

The following definition of 'school social work' was developed and applies to the practice standards:

*School social work is the application of social work principles and methods within the education system to render holistic social work services to support learners, parents, educators and the school as community, with the main goal of establishing an environment where the learner can reach his or her full potential by addressing the social, emotional, socio-economic and behavioural barriers to learning.*

### **6.3 Methods of school social work practice**

All social work methods of intervention form part of the school social worker's practice. They specifically entail the following.

- Casework, which include the individual counselling of learners and/or their parents/guardians and family therapy (micro).
- Group work, which include therapeutic groups, life skills education and parental education (mezzo).
- Community work, which focuses on the school as a community and as a sub-system of a broader community (macro).
- Crisis intervention, which includes the implementation of critical incident management when a traumatic incident occurs.
- Research.
- Administration, which includes record-keeping, management, programme development, evaluation of own practice, and staff orientation, as well as training and supervision at certain levels.
- Supervision.
- Training of parents, educators and management in the management of social issues.

### **6.4 Required qualifications, experience and registration**

The current pre-requisite for being appointed as school social worker is a Bachelor of social work degree (BSW) plus a valid registration as a social worker with the SACSSP. Once school social work is recognised as a speciality by the SACSSP, the additional registration as a 'school social worker' should become a pre-requisite. A post-graduate qualification in Social Work is the *recommended* entry-level qualification for a school social worker position.

As this position comprises belonging to a separate field of speciality within the social work profession, school social workers require specialised knowledge and understanding of the education system. This should be provided by social work education institutions such as universities, as well as by employers themselves.

A social worker should have at least five (5) years' practical experience as a social worker before being eligible for appointment as a school social worker. Once school

social work has been recognised as a speciality by the SACSSP, an appointee must be registered as a 'school social worker' with the council (SACSSP) in order to meet the necessary requirements as regulated.

## **6.5 Appointments, designation / professional titles and supervision**

The professional title of school social workers at national level still needs to be clarified, but the current recommendation is that it should be 'chief education specialist'. The social workers at national level will only have an administrative supervisor or manager to whom to report to. According to the occupational specific dispensation (OSD), the professional title of school social workers at provincial level should be that of 'social work manager'. They should be appointed on a 'deputy chief education specialist' level and report to the head of department: psychosocial services or inclusive education as manager/administrative supervisor.

Social workers at district level, with the task of supervision, should be appointed on a 'senior education specialist' level and should, according to the OSD, be referred to as a 'social work supervisor'. These professionals should report directly to the social work manager at provincial level.

At district level, several circuits should be in place. Every circuit should have a school social worker as part of the multi-disciplinary team allocated to a cluster of schools. These social workers should be referred to as 'school social workers', form part of the circuit/district-based support teams rendering services to the school-based support teams in schools, and have the same basic roles and responsibilities as social workers in schools.. They should report directly to the social work supervisor at district level.

Social workers appointed at schools should be referred to as 'school social workers'. These functionaries should report to the school principal as administrative supervisor/manager and to a social worker supervisor at district level for professional supervision and consultation.

## **6.6 Roles and responsibilities at different levels in the education system**

The most important roles and responsibilities of school social workers at the different levels of the education system will be summarised next.

### **6.6.1 Social workers' specific responsibilities at national level**

- To develop school social work strategies and policies in line with those of the Department of Basic Education.
- To develop systems and structures for the mainstreaming of school social work services in education.
- To develop norms and standards for school social workers.
- To monitor and evaluate the translation and implementation of social work strategies, policies and programmes at provincial level.
- To strengthen the capacity of provinces, districts and schools to mainstream school social work services.
- To strengthen the relationships between important stakeholders (e.g. the DBE at national and provincial levels, national and provincial government departments, universities, NGOs, research entities and civil organisations).
- To coordinate school social work services between national and provincial levels and among the different provinces.
- To keep abreast of global, regional and national trends in social work and particularly school social work.
- To motivate, in collaboration with the different provinces, that more social work posts should be made available.
- To provide quality assurance services and monitor the compliance with norms and standards.
- To ensure the professional development, supervision and support of social workers in the department of basic education.
- To stimulate, encourage and guide research at all levels.

### **6.6.2 Social workers' responsibilities at provincial- and district levels**

Social workers should be appointed in managerial/supervisory positions at provincial as well as district levels. These social work managers' and social work supervisors' roles will, depending on their level of seniority, entail any combination of the following:

Social work manager's (provincial level) and social work supervisor's (district level) management and supervision responsibilities:

- To ensure that school social work services are being rendered in the province and all its districts.

- To develop and monitor the provincial plan of action for school social work service delivery.
- To facilitate the development of school social work services in line with the framework of inclusive education as contained in White Paper 6 and the Provincial inclusive education strategy plan.
- To ensure and sustain open channels of communication with all stakeholders.
- To develop an easily accessible database of all school social work programmes in the province and districts in order to prevent duplication.
- To keep abreast of policies and trends that guides the social work profession within the Department of Basic Education (DBE).
- To communicate the changes and trends to relevant management, staff and service providers.
- To ensure and promote inter-disciplinary collaboration by active participation in forums of the psychosocial and other sections within the department.
- To organise opportunities for the professional development of school social workers and other social workers within the DBE.
- To promote inter-sectorial collaboration and partnerships by the establishment and maintaining of forums contributing to effective school social work service delivery.
- To provide guidance on school social work matters to social workers seconded to the DBE by other government departments and partners.
- To coordinate and manage programmes on social issues/problems that impact on the school setting (e.g. child and substance abuse).
- To organise and present seminars on aspects of school social work services for office-based personnel and educators.
- To disseminate departmental policy to stakeholders/partners.
- To coordinate and assist universities with regard to service learning placements for school social work students.
- To screen and evaluate social programmes and projects delivered by external service providers in order to ensure that they are in line with departmental policy.
- To facilitate regular sub-committee meetings for social work supervisors and school social workers at district level and in schools.

Apart from the responsibilities mentioned, the social workers at provincial and district levels have responsibilities that **differ from each other**. These responsibilities are listed next:

The social work manager's field specific responsibilities at provincial level:

- To develop a school social work policy for the province which will include a relevant measurement tool(s).
- To coordinate school social work by acting as a link between school social workers at district level and other relevant sections at provincial level.
- To act as link between the department and other provincial-based agencies with regard to social issues/problems (e.g. violence and substance use).
- To provide comprehensive support to social work supervisors (in the form of e.g. in-service training, professional development, supervision and consultation services, as well as the monitoring of service delivery).
- To coordinate school social work services by acting as a link between the national department of basic education and the provincial DBE.
- To monitor and evaluate, in collaboration with social work supervisors in districts, the programmes and projects that are implemented at sites of learning by service providers.
- To participate in the development of national and provincial guidelines for inclusive teaching, learning and assessment.
- To participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition, upgrading and maintenance of physical resources that will support the transformation process of schools into Inclusive education sites.

Social work supervisor's field specific responsibilities at district level:

- To provide support to district- and school-based support teams with regard to social issues/problems.
- To monitor a provincial plan of action for school social work service delivery with the focus on districts.
- To develop and promote guidelines/programmes for micro-, mezzo- and macro-intervention based on an eco-system approach and crisis intervention with learners, parents and educators.
- To participate in the development of manuals for training in social issues that contain theories, models, practices and tools.
- To advocate, with special focus on social issues, for the further entrenchment of principles and rights within an inclusive education system. Such advocacy should target stakeholders such as departmental officials, other government departments, NGOs, CBOs and parents.

- To participate in the development of a database of community support services, agencies, NGOs, government departments, and other relevant organisations.
- To participate in the professional development of district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development.
- To promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders.
- To assist in the establishment, development and management of district-based support teams (DBST).
- To contribute in the development and updating of norms and standards for specialist support.
- To participate in the transformation process of schools into full service schools, and special schools into resource centres.
- To participate in the development of a framework for upgrading physical and material resources that will ensure the conversion of schools into full service schools.
- To identify, plan, organize, collaborate with stakeholders and facilitate awareness events as per the health calendar (e.g. child abuse week) across the district.
- To collaborate with other sections within the SNE (special needs education) component such as special education, HIV and Life skills to identify common issues and to offer support for identified issues.

### **6.6.3 School social workers at district/circuit and school level**

School social workers rendering services to schools are employed at district level within circuits and also in schools. The terms 'district' and 'circuit' are used interchangeably in this article due to the fact that circuits are clusters in districts. These social work workers' (SSWs) *school specific* roles and responsibilities will entail any combination of the following.

Roles and responsibilities towards learners and parents/guardians:

- To develop and implement an individual support plan (ISP) for each learner.
- To assess learners individually and/or their parents/guardians by means of a variety of social work methods and skills, for example through the use of the developmental assessment model.
- To provide individual counselling to the learners and/or their parents/guardians by means of a variety of social work methods and skills.

- To *address* social problems experienced by individuals and groups of learners directly (e.g. bullying, teenage pregnancy).
- To run therapeutic and educational groups for learners and/or their parents/guardians.
- To provide crisis intervention services or programmes where relevant.
- To participate in multi-disciplinary meetings with regard to learners.
- To provide assistance and support in learner disciplinary hearings.
- To facilitate informative events for parents on e.g. social media, bullying, and parental guidance.
- To develop and implement programmes to prevent social problems/issues among learners (e.g. bullying, child abuse, teenage pregnancy).
- To arrange referrals to external service providers for follow-up or statutory intervention (e.g. as in the case of child abuse).

Roles and responsibilities towards educators/teachers:

- To assist educators with the early identification of learners' needs/problems.
- To assist educators with the reporting and supporting of learners with social barriers to learning.
- To empower educators with regard to the management of learners with social barriers in the classroom.
- To liaise between learners and staff with regard to social work issues.
- To empower educators with regard to social issues relating to the curriculum (e.g. bullying, violence).
- To assist in teacher support meetings.
- To support educators during parent consultations.
- To assist with social work services and support programmes to teachers (e.g. debriefing sessions or motivational talks) where there is no EAP (employee assistance programme) support available.
- To participate in the professional development of educators in order to identify and manage social barriers to learning and development in terms of the SIAS (screening, identification, assessment and support) policy.
- To empower educators with knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters, and community change regarding social barriers to education and learning.

Roles and responsibilities with regard to screening, and the development and implementation of programmes and projects:

- To develop a strategic plan for service delivery.
- To develop an annual plan to guide the functions and operations of social work.
- To network and liaise with external resources.
- To assist with the development and to support organisational infrastructure at schools such as the school-based support teams (SBST).
- To develop and implement psychosocial programmes to address specific social barriers to learning and development (e.g. trauma management).
- To assist with the management of programmes and projects.
- To continually evaluate and monitor programmes and projects.
- To evaluate tools to evaluate the success of programmes and projects on an on-going basis.
- To compile business plans where required.

Roles and responsibilities regarding social work and educational policy changes and new trends:

- To master and disseminate knowledge of relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners.
- To attend, participate and provide feedback on conferences and workshops.
- To communicate changes and trends to district management teams.
- To participate in school social work sub-committees.
- To participate in continuous professional development activities.

Roles and responsibilities as a member of multi-disciplinary teams:

- To attend relevant provincial and regional meetings with other professions.
- To liaise with external social workers and other professionals where relevant.
- To participate in the development of programmes, material and information to support the life orientation learning area.

Other important roles and responsibilities of school social workers:

- To keep the required records.
- To assist with the management of trauma and disaster situations within the school and the surrounding community.

- To present workshops on social issues to learners, staff, parents and/or other groups (e.g. on the value and challenges of social media).
- To have extensive knowledge of behaviour and apply behaviour modification interventions.
- To have extensive knowledge of alcohol and drug abuse and provide related services (e.g. by creating and implementing relevant programmes).
- To have extensive knowledge of mental health issues and provide consultation services on related matters (e.g. on ADHD).
- To have extensive knowledge of violence prevention and provide related services (e.g. by addressing gangs, juvenile offences and violence against teachers).
- To conduct home visits (when needed).
- To train and empower hostel and associated staff through the use of appropriately developed programmes.

#### **6.6.4 Roles that differ at the district (circuit) and school levels**

The *specific areas* where the social work worker's roles and responsibilities at district and school level will *differ* are the following.

District school social worker:

- To support and guide learner support counsellors at circuit level-
- To participate as a member of the circuit-based support team (CBCT) or district-based support team (DBST).
- To support learner support advisors in the circuit.
- To support and supervise students placed in schools within the circuit.
- To consult with the provincial social worker with regard to social work-related matters when needed.

*Note:* School social workers in circuits/districts may be (by exception) requested to fulfil any of the responsibilities normally required only from school social workers in schools.

School social worker in the school setting:

- To attend and provide feedback on workshops and conferences to the principal of the school.
- To participate as a member of the school-based support team (SBST), or, if required in a specific case, in either the circuit-based support team (CBCT) or the district-based support team (DBST).

- To participate in the screening and assessment of new admissions where social barriers to learning are evident.
- To support and supervise students placed in schools.
- To assist with the development of the school's code of conduct.
- To consult with the provincial or district office's social workers with regard to social work-related matters when needed.

*Note:* School social workers employed in schools of industry may be allocated additional, context-specific responsibilities.

## **6.7 Professional development**

The school social worker should be committed to the ongoing development of skills and knowledge as is regulated for in terms of the Social Service Professions Act (110 of 1978). Such continuous professional development should form part of the school social workers' ethos by them:

- keeping abreast of developments in the education system, in school social work and across social work in general,
- identifying training needs and ensuring that the required training is undertaken,
- understanding and acknowledging the importance of professional supervision, and
- keeping abreast of professional ethical developments and associated requirements within the educational system.

## **6.8 Ethical considerations**

The school social worker must adhere to the ethics and values of the social work profession. In this regard, the Code of Ethics of the SACSSP (circa 2015) must be utilised as a guide in ethical decision making. Furthermore: when the school social worker identifies an ethical issue, it should be taken seriously and brought to the attention of the school principal where solutions should be sought. Should the issue continue, social work colleagues and the SACSSP should be consulted.

School social workers should also keep abreast of new ethical issues (related to e.g. the use of social media) that may arise in society and be culturally competent. In the latter regard, self-knowledge, cultural awareness and an understanding one's own diversity is especially important (Jarolmen, 2014:149).

Fundamental values such as social justice, dignity, integrity and competence should form an integral part of the school social worker's practice.

## **6.9 Administrative structure and support**

A professional work setting and infrastructure is required by a school social worker in order to practice effectively. The following basic infrastructure and equipment should be available.

- Office accommodation that is accessible and allows for confidentiality
- Furniture that is suitable for interviews and other tasks (e.g. group work)
- Basic stationary (e.g. pens, files, notepaper, scissors, ruler, etc.)
- Filing cabinets (e.g. for the safekeeping of records)
- Computers
- Communication media (e.g. telephone, email, internet)
- Photocopiers and printers
- Transport (e.g. to conduct home visits and for liaison work that requires travelling)

## **7 FEEDBACK FROM THE PANEL OF EXPERTS**

The panel of experts were, in addition to their recommendations for changes to the manuscript and comments on individual items, requested to provide a summative assessment of the entire document. The only instruction in this regard was that the assessment should cover its "...overall *strengths* and *weakness*, as well as *content issues* that should be addressed" (see Annexure 25).

The written feedback received only contained the panel members' views of the strengths and weaknesses of the document. The trends that emerged from an analysis of these assessments will be covered next.

### **7.1 Assessments of strengths**

A content analysis of the participants' assessments of strengths brought especially six themes to the fore. These covered the need for an instrument such as the Practice Standards Document (PSD), the value of its detailed demarcation of the scope of practice of school social workers on the different hierarchical levels of the education system, the school social worker's scope of practice in multi-disciplinary settings, the

demarcation of school social work, supervision and support, and admission requirements.

All the panel members felt that there is a need for a PSD for school social work. One panel member reflected this view in his/her statement that “...*the practice standards presented here are of vital importance*” and another mentioned that “*This document can really contribute towards the establishment of practical standards for South African School Social Work*”.

Some panellists reflected on the value of specific components of the document. One stated that “*In order to manage and coordinate the psychosocial support services rendered by social workers, the department need a set of standardise operational guidelines, in order to provide structure to the important role which are being performed by social workers and districts.*” Another stating that: “*This (the PSD) in return protects the social worker as well as the client system and assures effective and ethical service delivery*”.

Panel members specifically emphasised the value of the PSD’s detailed layout of the school social workers’ scope of practice on each hierarchical level within the education system. As one panel member stated: “*Especially valuable is the formulation of the tasks of social workers at every level and specifically on school level because that is where social work services become visible and where results will be felt*”. Another also came to the conclusion that it will also be helpful to the employer.

A third theme that emerged from the assessments dealt with the school social worker’s scope of practice in multi-disciplinary settings and the role conflict that might exist between different professionals in such settings. The usefulness of the PSD in these circumstances was summarised as follows by one panellist: “*It will assist the social worker in role-taking in the non-social work setting within the school system and in ‘wrestling’ (back) the tasks previously filled by teachers in the absence of a social worker*”.

Due to its specialised nature, school social work is in some respects different from generic social work. The potential value of the PSD in this context is summarised as follows by one panellist: “*School social work is a discipline that differs from generic or*

*clinical social work. The overall aim is to provide social work services to learners, parents and educators who experience social barriers within the context or the learning site, in order to reach their full potential”.*

One panel member indicated that the document will assist in the handling of ethical issues. The panellist commented: *“As there is yet no set standards for school social workers in mainstream education, these practice standards will be very helpful in assisting the social worker to render services that are ethically correct as well as relevant to the community that it serves”.*

The inclusion of supervision and support structures in the practice standards document could ensure that school social workers will have a solid base to operate from. A panel member mentioned that: *“I feel it is important that school social workers have the supervision and support from senior social workers that are familiar with the school environment and systems of the Department of Education”.* The same panellist also added: *“Support to the school social worker by a team of experts on all levels within the education system is very necessary as it provides the school social worker with backup and all responsibility does not rest on one person”.*

One panel member focussed strongly on the experience that a school social worker should have before being appointed. In this regard, he/she mention that *“...the social worker in the school community is mostly reliant on her own knowledge and experience during a crisis because you are usually the only person trained and designated to address certain issues in that community and can sometimes only get guidance from a supervisor after the action has been taken.”* The panellist explained his/her opinion by adding: *“It is not in the best interest of that social worker as well as the client system. Further education is also very important as the social worker need(s) to be familiar with the education system as well as what her jurisdiction is and where she need(s) to refer to other professional(s)”.* The guidelines contained in the PSD will assist in this regard.

## **7.2 Assessment of weaknesses**

None of the panellists mentioned any weakness in the practice standard document itself. One, however, had some trepidation regarding its future utilisation. In this regard he/she wrote: *“Weaknesses might be found in the implementation of these*

*practice standards as everything that need to be addressed and monitored might not be done due to lack of resources and enthusiasm regarding the necessity of school based social workers". This panel member continued by saying that "It will also be found in the willingness of school management to surrender a certain part of authority as social workers in mainstream schools will not be afforded by the governing bodies if they are well experienced and educated and therefore will have to be employed by the Department of Education. This can be a problem as the schools that most need the service will not be able to afford it if social workers are not departmentally appointed and schools that can afford it will not want to let go of their control of what the social workers do and not do".*

There is merit in the panel member's view and it should be taken into consideration as social work moves forward with the process of demarcating school social work as a speciality within the profession.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

South African school social workers have for many years rendered services without a set of practice standards to guide and regulate their functioning. This state of affairs has created some confusion with regard to the roles and responsibilities that they could and should perform and probably also contributed to some lack of 'professional status' within the educational milieu. The research that was undertaken was intended to help address this deficiency by producing a set of research based and verified practice standards for school social work.

Previous research has indicated that there is a dire need for the appointment of more school social workers in South Africa (Vergottini, 2018:86). The practice standards document (PSD) can provide the structural-functional information that all the provinces could use for the establishment and expansion of its school social work services. This is especially true for those provinces that have not yet started with the appointment of school social workers. In other provinces, such as the Free State, it would be valuable in the appointment, utilisation and management of these professionals at different educational levels. It would also provide clarity regarding what could and should be expected of these functionaries and how services ought to be structured.

The wider adoption of the practice standards will also address a number of problems.

These include:

- insufficient professional supervision/consultation,
- a lack of understanding amongst educators/employers of the nature and scope of practice of school social work,
- an absence of clear guidelines on roles and responsibilities of school social workers,
- current career path limitations,
- role-confusion within multi-disciplinary teams, and
- lack of uniformity in the employment of school social workers.

The development of practice standards should, however, only be seen as one element in an ongoing and continuing process of research and development in school social work. It would, ultimately, be the responsibility of the South African Council for Social Service Professions to finally demarcate this field and to produce a set of legally binding practice standards. It is recommended that results produced by this research should be taken into account during this process.

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# **SECTION 3: A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

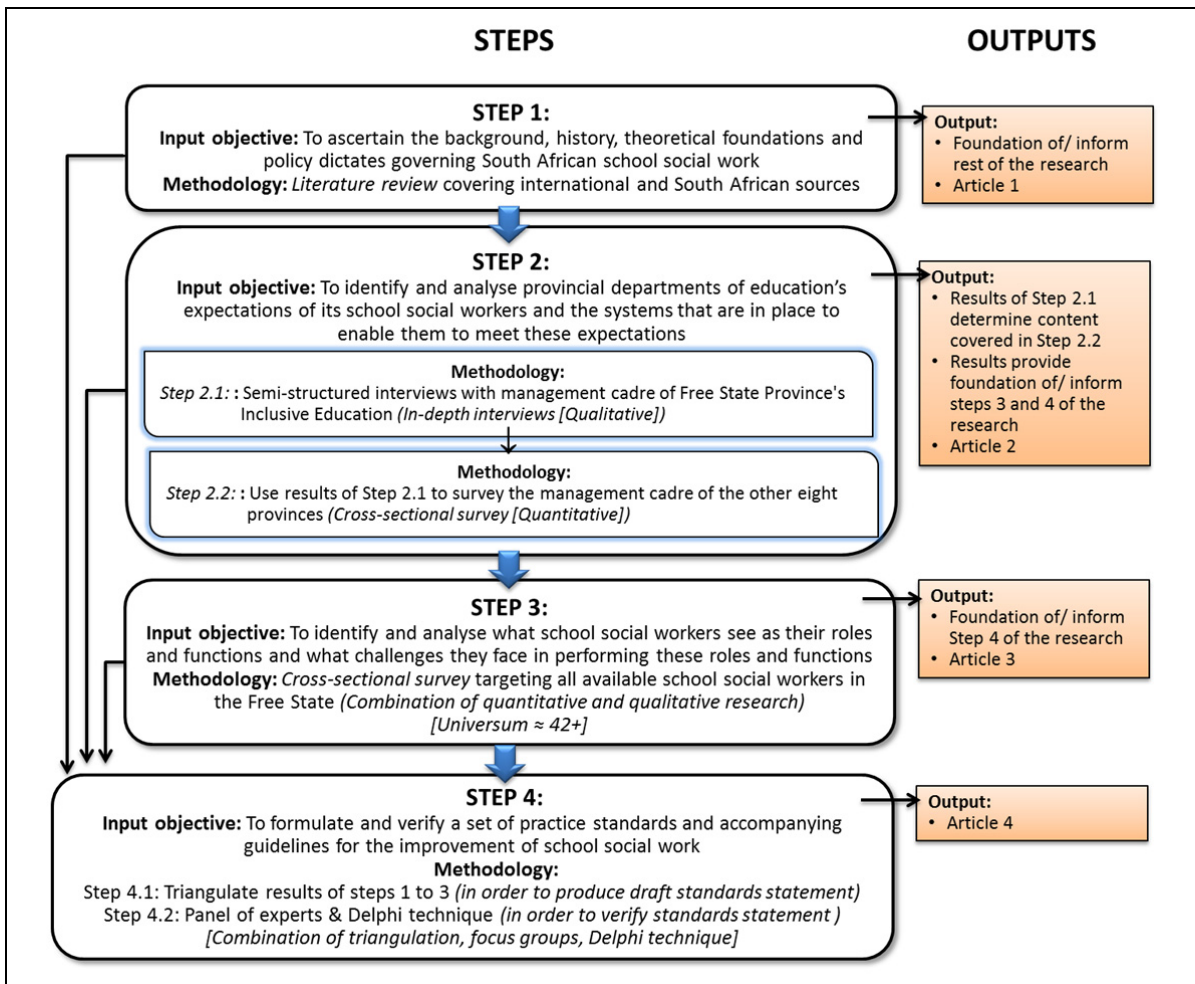
Although the Natal Province (currently KwaZulu-Natal) appointed the first school social worker in 1993 (Kemp, 2013), this type of service remained somewhat under-developed in South Africa for the subsequent three decades. It is only since the early 2010s that it has seen some remarkable growth with at least 268 social workers being employed within the education system by 2017 (Vergottini, 2018:85). This expansion of school social work services has, however, not been equitably spread throughout the country. Currently some provincial education departments have well-developed school social work services where more than 160 practitioners are employed, while others have only a handful of such employees functioning within the most basic of structures (Vergottini, 2018:85). There are also profound differences in what the provinces expect of these employees.

This current state of South African school social work was one of the driving forces behind a comprehensive research project that was ultimately aimed at the provision of an empirical base for the establishment of practice standards for local school social work. Its objectives were, more specifically:

- to provide the background and theoretical foundations of international, and particularly South African, school social work and the local legislation and policies that currently dictate the appointment and management of these functionaries,
- to provide an analysis of the Free State Department of Education's expectations of its school social workers and the operational and management systems that are in place to enable them to meet these expectations,
- to provide an analysis of the nine South African provincial departments of education's views of the need for, and the role and functions of, school social work within the inclusive education system,
- to ascertain
  - what school social workers in the Free State regard as their roles and functions,
  - the challenges they face in performing these roles and tasks,
- to formulate and verify a set of practice standards that could be used as a basis to improve school social work services in South Africa in general and the Free State Province in particular.

The methodology utilised to achieve these objectives are contained in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The research process**



The overarching project utilised a sequential exploratory mixed-method design, coupled with elements of a case study, since a somewhat new and unknown field had to be explored for which the sole use of either qualitative or quantitative methods would not be sufficient (Cabrera, 2011:80; Fetters *et al.*, 2013:2136; Cait *et al.*, 2017:615). It incorporated the QUAL/quan method whereby qualitative data collection and analysis is firstly done, followed by the collection and analysis of quantitative data and finally the integrated interpretation of all data sets (Creswell, 2009:209).

Its results have been extensively covered in the four articles (see Section 2). Only the main findings, as well as the recommendations that flow from these, will be covered next. It will, *inter alia*, include the background, theoretical foundations and policy dictates that govern South African school social work, the roles and responsibilities

expected of school social workers, and the practice standards document that was generated by the research. These findings will, to a large extent, represent the result of the triangulation of the different data sets produced by the research. It especially tested consistency and revealed similarities and incongruences between the data sets (Weyers *et al.*, 2008:342).

## **2 FINDINGS IN RESPECT OF THE BACKGROUND, THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND POLICY DICTATES THAT GOVERN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK**

A number of trends emerged from the review of international school social work. Foremost among these was an exponential increase in the number of new countries where such services have been established since the late 1990s. This seems to have resulted from their expectance of the principle of *inclusive education*. This principle emerged from the 1990 World Conference on “Education for All” and the World Conference on Special Needs Education of 1994. The principle is currently supported by most countries, although that not all have given practical substance to its implementation.

Secondly, it emerged that, although the roots and development of school social work may differ from country to country, its core focus has always been the same. This is to address the bio-psychosocial, behavioural and economic barriers to learning that prevent learners from reaching their full potential.

A third core trend was that, although countries adhered to the same principles and had the same focus, they still tended to develop somewhat unique, indigenous service delivery systems. These were primarily determined by the extent to which the functions of the school social worker was accepted as a separate speciality within the profession, the structural-functional positioning of the profession within the education system, the existence (or absence) of a recognised set of practice standards, and unique local education policies and service delivery structures.

Although the origins of South African school social work can be traced back to the 1980s, it only started to blossom after 2010. This makes it a relative newcomer on the international scene and one which is, to a large extent, still in its early development phase. This phase is, among others, characterised by the absence of uniform and

appropriately staffed service delivery structures across its nine provinces, by a diversity of appointment requirements and expectations between provinces, and by the lack of a single core descriptive professional title (e.g. 'school social worker'). There is also a shortage of research on which indigenous school social work could be based and its recognition as a separate speciality within the profession is still in progress.

The review revealed that, in spite of the current deficiencies, there were a number of factors that should lend momentum to the further development of local school social work. These include the fact that South Africa has accepted and supports the idea and principle of inclusive education. This should provide some standing for social workers within the education system. Another is that a significant proportion of learners are negatively affected by the bio-psychosocial and financial problems which they experienced at home or have to face in the community. Many of these challenges can only be effectively addressed by social workers. Thirdly, the fact emerged that the policies that give credence to school social work service are already in place, but that substance still needs to be given to the implementation of these policies.

### **3 FINDINGS IN RESPECT OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The research basically examined at the question of expectations from two sides. The one comprised the provincial managements' views of the roles, functions and responsibilities that school social workers should perform and the other was represented by some of these functionaries' own perspectives. Two surveys - based on the results of the literature review and the views of the Free State Province's management - were conducted. Some of the main findings to emerge from an analysis of the two sets of expectations that they have produced, will be covered next.

The first finding is that all the respondents in the national survey indicated that there was a need for more school social workers in their provinces. This confirmed the finding of the literature review on South African school social work and should provide credence to the further development of this field. However, it also raised the question of who should take responsibility for this development. Although the literature review indicated that this will ultimately depend on a political decision, two other role-players

would have to give substance to any such decision. They are the organised profession and the school social worker at national level in the department of basic education.

The survey, secondly, indicated that it is the main responsibility of the social worker at national level (the highest level of the 'school social work hierarchy') to bring about required structural-functional improvements to the overall school social work system. The responsibilities for the further development of social work services would then move to senior positions at provincial and, ultimately, district levels. One of the issues that would have to be addressed in this process constitutes the differences that currently exist in the structuring, functions and utilisation of school social work in the different provinces.

The national survey ascertained senior provincial management's expectations of all school social workers. It, therefore, covered those functioning on national, provincial and district levels, as well as in schools. The survey produced a prioritised list of the roles and responsibilities that practitioners at the different levels should perform and with which they should comply. This list can, as such, become a useful tool in the further development of this field of practice.

A noteworthy trend that emerged from the survey, however, was that most of the identified responsibilities received either a 'very important' or a 'critically important' rating. This could be an indication of two dynamics at play. The first is that there may be a perceived gap in current services and that it is expected of social workers to fill this entire gap. The second is that, because local school social work is still in the early developmental phase, the exact expectations that practitioners should meet are still unclear. If either both these hypotheses are correct, it would, among others, imply that an onus exists on the organised profession to clarify its responsibilities within the education system.

All school social workers in the Free State Province were selected to represent the 'practitioner's-eye-view' of the expectations that workers should meet. The prioritised list of the roles and responsibilities produced by this survey did not differ *significantly* from those produced by the national survey. At district level, the basic trends were in line with one another with small differences in the mean and priority list. These were

small, however and it may be deduced that the expectations from provincial departments and what functionaries believe they should do, are similar in principle. With a few exceptions, the same trend was found in respect of practitioners who worked at school level. The Free State functionaries prioritised screening and assessment of new admissions to schools, while the national participants did not view this task as a priority. In another vein, presentations of workshops or facilitations of parent evenings were prioritised at national level but not so at ground level. Although all these responsibilities still received high ratings by school social workers, they failed to reach the same high levels as those proposed by the provincial management cadres. It can be concluded that what is being expected at provincial level from school social workers and what they perceive as their core responsibilities are basically the same.

The survey also covered the challenges that practitioners at service delivery/'ground' level had to face. It emerged that they had to deal, among others, with a lack of professional supervision and consultation, a lack of understanding from other professionals (e.g. teachers) and/or their direct administrative supervisor and a lack of resources. They also had their own uncertainties regarding the particular roles they should perform and the responsibilities which they should assume. These are all indications of a lack of generally accepted practice standards.

The establishment of practice standards is primarily the responsibility of a profession itself (NLASW, 2011:1; SANC, 2013:2; Scott *et al.*, 2004: 213-7). In the case of South African school social work, this task would rest on the shoulders of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). It is, moreover, incumbent on others members of the profession, including researchers, to contribute to the development of such standards.

## **4 FINDINGS IN RESPECT OF PRACTICE STANDARDS**

The main aim of the research upon which this thesis is based, was:

to provide a ***set of practice standards*** that could be used as a basis for the conceptualisation and improvement of school social work services in South Africa in general and the Free State Province in particular.

The *modus operandi* that was followed in the development of a practice standard was, first, to utilise all the data generated during the previous steps of the research process to compile a draft set of practice standards. The draft was then presented to a panel of experts, before being refined by means of the use of the Delphi technique, until all the members of the panel were in agreement that the final document represented a valid set of standards for South African school social work.

## **5 MAIN CONCLUSION**

If all the above findings are combined, one may arrive at the conclusion that the research did indeed succeed in reaching its main aim. That is to produce a set of valid practice standards that could be used as a basis for the further conceptualisation and improvement of school social work services in South Africa in general and the Free State Province in particular.

The development of practice standards, however, represents only one of the steps required for the ultimate establishment of a fully functional school social work service in South Africa. Some of the other steps necessary to realise this vision also emerged from the research. These will be covered in the following recommendations.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Recommendations in respect of further research and training**

The development of the South African school social work system has been hampered somewhat by a lack of locally generated and relevant research results. This makes both theoreticians and practitioners too dependent upon the well-developed international body of knowledge and militates against the creation of a uniquely South African system.

More research into nearly all facets of local school social work is required. This would range from macro issues such as the influencing of the national policies and practices that dictate how services are structured, staffed and managed, to the development of setting specific service (e.g. social work in schools of industry). Some other research focusses may include the current position of school social workers employed by school

governing bodies and the formal establishment of school social work as part of the South African education system.

In-depth research into school social work in every province would provide more clarity on needs, expectations and the specific manner in which school social work may be utilised to address the unique system and structure of the environment.

Learners are currently at risk, due to several bio-psychosocial factors (e.g. violence in schools). Research into pro-active steps that could be taken to address these issues should be a priority. This could take the form of the development and dissemination of standardised prevention programmes and the establishment of clear protocols on ways of dealing with these challenges.

One of the pertinent needs expressed by most of the participants in the research, be it at provincial or service delivery level, was for more specialised training in school social work. The ideal appears to be that this should take the form of a specialised MSW level qualification. It is recommended that at least one tertiary training institution/university should take the lead and investigate the feasibility of such a step. The recent increase in the number of new entrants into the field, coupled with new research, may improve the chances of this becoming a reality.

Coupled with the possibility of a specialised MSW qualification is the question of an additional education qualification as an entry level requirement. More research should be undertaken into the suitability and feasibility of such a requirement.

One of the pertinent challenges identified during the study concerned the deficiencies in the supervision and management of school social workers. Further research into this aspect, including the qualifications and experience requirements that supervisors should meet and the structuring of supervision services, may prove to be of great value in the further development of South African school social work.

## **6.2 Recommendations in respect of South African school social work**

As far as is known, the current research was the first of its type in South Africa. Apart from the prioritised list of school social worker roles and responsibilities, the research

provided some valuable insights into senior management's own roles and responsibilities. Based on these insights, it is recommended that management should:

- significantly increase the number of social work posts and ensure that these are equitably distributed throughout all nine provinces of South Africa,
- standardise the criteria used for the selection of appropriate candidates for appointment in school social work posts,
- standardise the appointment process,
- develop a single service delivery structure that could be used in all provinces,
- take the necessary steps adequate to staff this structure with school social workers,
- standardise basic roles and responsibilities of school social workers within the different levels of the education system,
- appoint more supervisors throughout the education system in order to improve and streamline service delivery and ensure that these supervisors are suitably qualified for their task,
- provide information to provincial education departments on school social work and the utilisation of the profession in schools or circuits,
- facilitate the process that would lead to the development of relatively standardised pro-active and remedial social work services aimed at addressing the various challenges faced by South African learners,
- contribute to the SACSSP process of establishing school social work as an area of specialisation within the profession.

Some of the results produced by this research may be used as a basis in the execution of these responsibilities.

### **6.3 Recommendations in respect of the Free State Province's school social work services**

The results produced by the research indicate that the Free State Province's social work component does, when considered within the constraints set by policy dictates and limited financial resources, function fairly well at this stage. Those concerned may, moreover, even at this stage take the following more mezzo-level recommendations into consideration.

- The research shows that at present a substantive need exists for more school social work services. Steps should, consequently, be taken to appoint more social work practitioners.

- The establishment of multi-disciplinary teams at circuit level in which school social workers are included, is required.
- The structuring of school social work services within the province should receive attention. In this regard, the following could be considered.
  - The deployment to, and utilisation of, school social workers at circuit level within districts.
  - The establishment of more formalised and structured supervision and consultation services to practitioners.
  - The clarification of social workers' line functions and the responsibilities and powers of their administrative supervisors/managers.
  - The establishment of a structural-functional basis for the standardisation of school social work in the province (e.g. standardised legislation to be used).
  - The dissemination of information to teachers/principals on the role of the school social worker in the education system.
- The school social workers in the employ of school governing bodies currently function in relative isolation. The following steps may be taken to improve their integration and utilisation within the education system.
  - The development, in conjunction with school governing bodies, of a standardised set of the core roles and functions that these practitioners should perform – bearing in mind that school governing bodies may add additional roles and responsibilities as far as the school's needs and structure are concerned.
  - The inclusion of these functionaries in monthly/quarterly meetings of departmental school social workers.
  - Information sessions/workshops with school principals to introduce school social work and in order to motivate the principals to appoint practitioners.
  - Information sessions/workshops with members of school governing bodies, in conjunction with organisations such as the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools (FEDSAS), to introduce school social work and to motivate these governing bodies to appoint practitioners.

The Free State's provincial education department could use the results produced by both the national and provincial surveys as a basis and guideline for the improvement of its school social work services.

## **6.4 Recommendations in respect of the practice standard document**

The newly developed practice standard document will be of little practical value unless it is used in the further development of South African school social work. It is, therefore, recommended that it should be taken into consideration by the national committee for school social work education and practice (NACOSSWEP) and the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) during their development of school social work as a speciality within the profession. The Department of Basic Education, school governing bodies (SGBs) and the Department of Social Development should also take cognisance of its contents.

As agreed with all nine provinces, as well as the National Department of Basic Education, this thesis and the practice standards document will be made available to every province after completion of the research. It is important that all these role-players take cognisance of the contents of the document. It is particularly important that provinces which are currently under-utilising school social work use the practice standards document (PSD) as a basis in the creation and development of these highly needed services in their jurisdictions.

## **7 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The practice standards document was the ultimate outcome of the current research. This document is evidence-based, represents the views of a wide range of functionaries from within the South African education system and has been verified by some of the leading experts in the field of school social work. It could, as a result, make a substantial contribution to the further development of school social work on a theoretical/conceptual, professional, organisational and practical level. It is hoped that this potential will be realised in the long run. If so, it will contribute to the unlocking of the potential of South Africa's most important asset: its children.

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# **SECTION 4: ANNEXURES**

# ANNEXURE 1: APPROVAL FROM ETHICS COMMITTEE



NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY  
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA  
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT  
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Faculty of Health Sciences  
Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research,  
Training and Support  
Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

Tel: 018-285 2291  
Email: [Wayne.Towers@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Wayne.Towers@nwu.ac.za)

1 December 2016

Prof ML Weyers  
Social Work

Dear Prof Weyers

## **APPROVAL OF YOUR APPLICATION BY THE HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC) OF THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES**

**Ethics number: NWU-00370-15-S1**

Kindly use the ethics reference number provided above in all correspondence or documents submitted to the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) secretariat.

**Study title: Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a mixed-method study with special reference to the Free State Province**

**Study leader/supervisor: Prof ML Weyers**

**Student: EM Vergottini**

**Application type: Single study**

**Risk level: Medium**

You are kindly informed that your application was reviewed at the meeting held on 19/11/2015 of the HREC, Faculty of Health Sciences, and was approved on 01/12/2016.

The commencement date for this study is 01/12/2016 dependent on fulfilling the conditions indicated below. Continuation of the study is dependent on receipt of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation up to a maximum period of three years when extension will be facilitated during the monitoring process.

### **After ethical review:**

Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the HREC, Faculty of Health Sciences (if applicable).

# ANNEXURE 2: ABRIDGED CV OF INDEPENDENT SOCIAL WORKER

## LOOPBAANPROFIEL

JANINE OELOFSE

### PERSOONLIKE BESONDERHEDE:

**Van:** OELOFSE  
**Naam:** JANINE  
**IN:** 690424 0166 089  
**Woonadres:** Theronstraat 35, Suidrand, Kroonstad  
**Posadres:** Posbus 779, Kroonstad, 9500  
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### KWALIFIKASIES

Tersiêre Onderrig: BA(MW) PU vir CHO 1992 (SA Raad vir Maatskaplike Werk 10-14961)

Kursusse/Seminare: Botswadi-ouerleiding  
FRU-10 Ouerleiding (Vroue Reik Uit)  
Multi-Kulturele Maatskaplike Werk  
Fondsinsameling  
Aborsie  
Hantering van die volwasse oortreder en die gemolesteerde kind  
Meetinstrumente/skaie  
Proefbeamptes in die Kriminele Hof  
Ontwikkelings-assessering by kinders (Sirkel van Hoop)  
Sand en Klei Speltherapie  
Biblioterapie  
Tussenganger  
Opleiding van tussengangers  
Programskrywing  
Life Skill Education (Ouerleiding en Lewensvaardigheidsprogramme)  
Gesinsadvokaat  
VIGS (Voorkoms, tendense, voorkoming en berading)  
Getraumatiseerde Persoon: Ontlonting  
Emosionele intelligensie by kinders  
Diversiteit  
Transformasie  
Motivering en die hantering van Stres  
Gemeenskapsontwikkeling  
Onderhandelingsvaardighede  
Aanneming  
Hiperaktiewe kind  
Speeltegnieke in die assessering van 'n gemolesteerde kind

.../2

## ANNEXURE 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM



**Reference numbers:** NWU-00370-15-A1  
**Principal researcher:** Mrs. EM Vergottini  
**Address:** 5 Wekkie Saayman  
Street, Universitas,  
Bloemfontein, 9300  
**Contact number:** 083 628 5769  
**Date:** 2017/08/21

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM: THE DIRECTORS AND SENIOR MANAGERS: PROVINCIAL IE & SNE STRUCTURE**

#### **INVITATION:**

You are cordially invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my PhD (Social Work) studies. Please take time to read the information presented here as it will explain the details of the research, as well as the role that you could play in it.

#### **TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:**

*Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a multi-method study with special reference to the Free State Province*

#### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

It is very important that you must understand what the research and your potential involvement in it entails. Therefore, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher if anything is unclear. Also, note that your participation is **entirely voluntary**. You are free to decline to participate at the outset or to withdraw at any point during the study. Such a step will **not** affect you negatively in any way whatsoever.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee** of the **Faculty of Health Sciences** of the **North-West University (NWU-00370-15-A1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might, consequently, be necessary for a members/s the Research Ethics Committee or relevant authorities to inspect the research records in order to ensure that the principals involved were adhered to.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **What is this research study all about?**

- This phase of the research will be conducted in the different provincial Departments of Education and will consist of a survey to be completed by, ideally, all most senior managers of the Inclusive Education Directorate.
- The objectives are, basically, to identify what legislation and policies in general, govern the appointment and functioning of school social workers and to ascertain what the different provinces expects of their school social workers.
- Later phases of the research will focus on how the Free State's school social workers see their own, core roles and functions, as well as challenges that they face in daily practice.
- The ultimate goal of the research is to formulate a draft framework of practice standards for the further expansion and improvement of school social work services in South Africa in general and Free State Province in particular.

### **Why have you been invited to participate?**

- You have been invited to participate because you have been identified as one of the senior managers within the Department of Basic Education who is knowledgeable about both the functioning of school social work in the Province and the nature and requirements of Inclusive Education.
- The other criteria used for your inclusion were that you are or were involved in the appointment, deployment and management of school social workers and is knowledgeable about their current function within the school system.

### **What will be expected of you?**

- You will be required to complete an on-line survey that can be submitted immediately after completion. This survey will not take longer than approximately 20 minutes of your time.

### **Will you benefit from taking part in this research?**

- The benefits that you may gain from participating in the research will be of a more long-term nature. If the research as a whole is successful, it would generate findings and guidelines that you could possibly utilise in your role as a manager in Inclusive Education. Your inputs could also help shape the way in which school social work is utilised within the Free State and even in the country in future.

### **Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?**

- The risks of involvement in this study are minimal. The topics covered will be of a more 'intellectual' nature and all steps necessary will be taken not to link the views and opinions expressed to a specific respondent, but to work with aggregates.

### **What will happen in the unlikely event of some harm/ discomfort occurring during or as a direct result of your taking part in this research study?**

- You will have the right to terminate your participation at any time if you experience any form of discomfort and without having to give reasons for your decision.

### **Who will have access to the data?**

- The anonymity of respondents is our first priority. The names of the participants will be kept confidential. During the transcription and interpretation of data, codes will be used to ensure that no link could be made to a specific participant. All interviews captured on audio-tape will only be transcribed by registered data typists; the tapes, transcriptions and research notes will be stored in a safe only accessible to the researcher. No names or other particulars that might help to identify individual respondents or schools will be used in the reports; and that only pseudonyms will be used to explain individual responses. Only the researcher and person transcribing will have access to the data.

### **What will happen with the data?**

- The baseline data (i.e. tapes, transcriptions and research notes) will be kept by the researcher in a locked safe. On completion of the research, it would be handed over to the Social Work Division of the North-West University for safekeeping in the legally prescribed manner and for the legally required time. It will, afterwards, be destroyed in the prescribed manner.

### **Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?**

- No payments will be made to any participants in the study. You will also not have to incur any travel or other incidental expenses as the researcher will be travelling to you for the interviews. All we basically require is your time.

### **Is there anything else that you should know or do?**

- You are welcome to contact the researcher, me. Marelize Vergottini, at any time at 083 628 5769 or via email (mvergottini@gcpb.co.za) if you have any queries or encounter any problems.
- You may also contact mrs. Carolien van Zyl of the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University (cell 018 299 2089/carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za) if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

### **How will you know about the findings?**

- The Free State's Department of Education will, as provisionally arranged, be provided with a copy of the thesis that flow from the research.
- The participants will also be provided with copies of the scientific journal articles in which their contributions feature.

## DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I .....  
agree to take part in a research study entitled "*Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: an exploratory study with special reference to the Free State Province*":

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and that it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way by doing so.
- I am aware of the fact that the researcher may ask me to leave the study before it has finished, if she feels it is in my best interests or if I do not follow the study plan as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of participant**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

---

## DECLARATION BY THE PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to .....
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above.
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on(*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of researcher**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

---

**DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER**

I, *E.M. Vergottini*, declare that:

- I am witness that the information in this document was explained to .....
- He/she was encouraged to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on(*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of researcher**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

**ANNEXURE 4:  
SCHEDULE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH FREE  
STATE MANAGEMENT CADRE**



**Reference numbers:** NWU-00370-15-A1  
**Principal researcher:** Mrs.EM Vergottini  
**Contact number:** 083 628 5769

**Schedule for semi-structured interviews with officials of the Free State  
Department of Education**

**Identifying particulars:**

- Interview number (*for tracking purposes*): \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_
- Place of interview: \_\_\_\_\_
- Length of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview schedule:**

1. Please describe your core functions within the Department of Basic Education and how this relates to (a) school social work services within the Department (Special schools, district and provincial level) and (b) social workers appointed and managed by school governing bodies?
2. Do you think there is a need for school social workers and, if so, why?
3. What, in your opinion, are the core roles and tasks that social workers should perform at (a) special schools, (b) on district level and (c) on provincial level and why?
4. In your opinion, in which way does these core roles and functions of social workers on provincial level, district level and school level, district level differ from one other?
5. How and by whom are the school social workers in special schools and on district level managed? (e.g. What is the chain of command? Who do they report to? How are expectations communicated?)

6. What is a school social worker called in the Free State? To your knowledge, does this differ from other provinces? If so, why?
7. In your opinion, should a school social worker have specialised training? (e.g. Other degree or diploma or post graduate?)
8. In your opinion, should a school social worker in schools have a certain amount of years of experience before being appointed in the position?
9. The Free State Department of Education together with the Western Cape Department of Education, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng seems to be the four provinces that make the most use of school social workers. Would you recommend this practice to other provinces? Why?
10. Recently, the Department of Education in Limpopo province appointed 180 social workers within schools. This as a result of absorption of unemployed social workers. What is your opinion on this action?
11. Which policies and acts, to your knowledge, allow the appointment of School social workers within the Education system?
12. If you could make any recommendations of the improvement of school social work services in South Africa, what will it be?

Thank you for taking time for his interview!

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# ANNEXURE 5: CURRICULUM VITAE OF INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER WHO UNDERTOOK INTERVIEWS

## CAREER PROFILE: RIAAN OELOFSE

### PERSONAL DETAILS

**Surname:** OELOFSE  
**Name:** RIAAN  
**IN:** 680223 5101 08 9  
**Residential address:** 35 Theron Street, Suidrand,  
KROONSTAD,9499  
**Postal address:** P. O. Box 779, KROONSTAD, 9500  
**Tel (Home):** 056 215 1373  
**Tel (Work):** 056 213 1809  
**Cell:** 082 564 3387  
**Fax:** 086 587 4221  
**E-mail:** [oela@vodamail.co.za](mailto:oela@vodamail.co.za) or [oela@act.co.za](mailto:oela@act.co.za)  
**Date of Birth:** 1968 - 02 - 23 (Odendaalsrus)  
**Age:** 47  
**Race:** White  
**Gender:** Male  
**Nationality:** SA Citizen  
**Marital Status:** Married  
**Home Language:** Afrikaans  
**Other Languages:** English  
**Criminal Record:** None  
**Health:** Excellent  
**Valid Driver's License:** Yes - Code A1 and Code EB

### EDUCATION

#### Tertiary Education:

**PhD: Business Administration, NWU (2015)**

Title of Thesis: "An evaluation of South African worker co-operatives against specified business success factors"

**Master of Business Administration (MBA), PU for CHE (2002)**

**Baccalaureus Technologiae (Policing), Technikon SA (2000)**

**Subjects:** Investigation of Crime IV, Police Management IV, Internal Auditing, End User Computing

**National Diploma: Police Administration, Technikon SA (1994)**

**Subjects:** Criminal Law, Law of Criminal Procedure and Evidence, Investigation of Crime, Police Administration, English: Police, Afrikaans: Police

#### Secondary Education:

**National Senior Certificate, Welkom - Gimnasium (1985)**

**Subjects:** Afrikaans, English, Science, Biology, Mathematics, Accounting

**Other Education:** **Diploma (Commercial Art), Intec College (2000)**

**Certificate for Registered Accounting Clerk, FASSET (2009)**

**Professional Affiliations:** Business Accountant, SAIBA  
 Certified Office Manager: Institute for Certified Bookkeepers and Accountants  
 Principal Business Adviser: Institute of Business Advisers of South Africa

**Other Affiliations:** Member: Golden Key International Honour Society

**Conference Presentations:** The Determinants for the success of worker co-operatives as a means of social and economic development in South Africa. Work-in-process presentation at the 2013 SAIMS Annual Conference, Potchefstroom.

**Publications:** An evaluation of South African worker co-operatives against specified business success factors, Journal of Contemporary Management, Vol. 12 (2015), p. 289-312.

**Courses & Workshops attended:**

<b>SAP Training:</b> 1987 1987 1992 1992 1994 1996 1998 1998 1998 2000	S A Police	Basic Training Riot and Crowd Control Detective Course Forensic Course for Investigators SWAT Junior Commanders Course Workshop for Entry Level Managers (OMC) Informers Course Operational Management Course II Interviewing & Interrogation Course Commercial Crime Level I (UN endorsed)
<b>Seda Training:</b> 2009 2009 2009 2009 2010 2010 2011 2011 2011	Seda	Business Planning for Small Enterprises : Training of Trainers Assessment of Company Operations Presentation Skills Basic Business Skills (Train-the-Trainer Course) Tender to secure business Critical Planning Exercise (CPE) and SME Cost 3 <sup>rd</sup> International Best Practice Exposure Programme: Taiwan Small Business Counselling Basic Auditing Techniques
<b>Other Training:</b> 1999 2001 2001 2002 2010 2013 2013 2015	Werludu NW University NW University NW University NW University SABS SABS UNCTAD	Basic Computer Skills, Windows, Word, Excell Negotiation & Presentation Workshop Goal Setting & Utilising Diversity Workshop Sailing with Conflict and Converting Plans into Action Workshop Research Methodology Short Course Quality Management Systems & ISO 9001 Environmental Management Systems, Food Safety Management and Occupational Health and Safety. Empretec (Entrepreneurial Development Programme)

**CAREER**

**Current Employer:** Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda): Fezile Dabi Branch

**Period of employment:** 2010-12-03 to Date

**Current Position:** Branch Manager: Fezile Dabi District (from 2011/09/01).  
 Branch Manager: Thabo Mofutsanyana District (from 2011/07/01 - 2011/08/31)  
 Acting Branch Manager: Fezile Dabi (from 2010-12-03 until

2011/04/30) and Thabo Mofutsanyana (from 2011-05-01 to 2012/01/15)

**Responsibilities:** Management of District Branch Operations including Finance, Logistics, HR and general management. Daily consultations, meetings and interviews with clients, service providers, local government, representatives of government departments and other stakeholders in small business development

**Previous Employer:** Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda): Fezile Dabi Branch  
**Period of Employment:** 2009-08-01 to 2011-06-30  
**Position:** Business Advisor

**Previous Employer:** Self-Employed  
**Period of employment:** March 2008 to 2009-07-31  
**Position held:** Managing Member: Kroonstad Paint Centre (From August 2005 to June 2010)  
Managing Member: Firefly Energy Solutions (From January 2008 to February 2012)

**Previous Employer:** South African Police service  
**Period of employment:** December 1994 to March 2008  
**Position held:** Section Commander (Captain), Detective Service

**Previous Position:** Non-Commissioned Officer (Detective Service)  
**Employer:** S A Police Service  
**Period:** October 1989 - December 1994

**Previous position:** Non-Commissioned Officer (Visible Policing)  
**Employer:** S A Police Service  
**Period:** December 1987 - September 1989

#### Other positions

**Position :** Owner  
**Institution :** Micro businesses: R & J Designs and Jonicmar Studios  
**Period :** 1994 – 2000 (Part time)

**Position** Part-time lecturer, Management of Training  
**Institution** :Central University of Technology: Free State (Kroonstad Campus)  
**Period** January - December 2003

**Position** Part-time facilitator, MBA programme  
**Institution** North West University, PUK Campus  
**Period** February 2004 to June 2004

**Position** E-tutor  
**Institution** UNISA  
**Period** February 2013 to August 2014 (Office Administration I), August 2014 to date (Business Management I)

**Position :** Chairperson

**Institution** :Parent Committee, Oompie Kedoompie Pre-primary School,Kroonstad  
**Period** February 2007 to March 2010 (previously vice-chairman: 2005 & 2006)

**Position** : Member of Management Committee  
**Institution** Free State Care in Action (a welfare organisation), Kroonstad  
**Period** : April 2006 to 2011

**Position** :President: 2013/14 (Board Member: Community Projects 2011/2,  
Club Secretary 2012/3)  
**Institution** : Rotary International, Kroonstad  
**Period** : Member from March 2010

# ANNEXURE 6: GOODWILL LETTER FROM THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Enquiries: BE Qwelane  
Tel: 051 404 8758  
Ref: Placement  
E-mail: [rapulumo@edu.fs.gov.za](mailto:rapulumo@edu.fs.gov.za)

To: Whom it may concern

Faculty of Education  
University of Potchefstroom

**EM Vergottini: Persal number: 80034250**

The abovementioned social worker is an employee of the Department of Education stationed at Johan Slabbert Special School for learners with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. She has been employed at the school since April 2011.

She mentioned that she has registered for her PhD in Social work with the University and plans to research on school social work. The Department supports her fully with this undertaking and welcomes the research in order to utilise the outcomes in the Departmental policies, planning and structures.

The planned research is seen as an advantage and she will receive full support.

I trust that you will find this in order.

Me Qwelane

Director: HIV & AIDS Support Programmes, Inclusive and Special Needs Education

Date: 23/06/15

# ANNEXURE 7: LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION



Department of  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag 2805, Pretoria 0001, Set Square House, 225 Balfour Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa  
Tel: (011) 281 2100 Fax: (011) 281 2829 www.education.gov.za

Ref no: S/1011 - 01/02/2016  
Enquiries: Mr. F Mndle  
Tel: 012 267 3435  
E-mail: Mndle.F@dbk.gov.za

Ms EM Vergottin  
PO Box 6096  
KROONHEUWEL  
9601

sonlatw@esikaol.co.za

Dear Ms Vergottin,

## LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR UNDERTAKING PHD STUDY ON SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 December 2015 requesting a letter of support for your research.

The education system employs social workers at various levels due to the recognition that a range of social problems create barriers to learning and may even be attributed to children dropping out of school. Weaknesses have been identified in the implementation of psychosocial support at school level, including the lack of a uniform system for implementing both social work and psychological services in the basic education sector.


Consequently, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has developed a draft Psychosocial Support Strategy for Learners. Implementation of the strategy will rely largely on the support of social workers, psychologists as well as educators and other professionals.

We welcome the initiative to develop practical standards for social workers as these can assist the Department in developing guidelines for all Provincial Education Departments. The Department supports the research as it is essential for the basic education sector and we look forward to receiving the final report.

I encourage you to contact the respective Provincial Education Departments to obtain their permission for the surveys to be administered to their staff. Note that their participation is voluntary, information from databases should be requested on a separate letter, all research reports should refrain from using the personal details of officials and all information collected should be anonymous.

I wish you every success with your studies. Should you require additional information, you may contact the above mentioned official.

Yours sincerely

  
**MR H. MNDLE**  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
DATE: 17/02/2016

# ANNEXURE 8: PROVINCES INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY  
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPIERWA  
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT  
POTCHEFSTROOM, CAMPUS

**Reference numbers:** NWU-00370-15-51  
**Principal researcher:** Mrs. EM Vergottini  
**Address:** 5 Wekkie Saayman Street,  
Universitas, Bloemfontein,  
9300  
**Contact number:** 083 628 5769  
**Date:** 2017/09/01

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM**

You are cordially invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my PhD (Social Work) studies. Please take time to read the information presented here as it will explain the details of the research, as well as the role that you could play in it.

### **TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:**

*Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a multi-method study with special reference to the Free State Province*

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

It is very important that you must understand what the research and your potential involvement in it entails. Therefore, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher if anything is unclear. Also, note that your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate at the outset or to withdraw at any point during the study. Such a step will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever.

This study has been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-00370-15-51) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might, consequently, be necessary for a member/s the Research Ethics Committee or relevant authorities to inspect the research records in order to ensure that the principals involved were adhered to.

### **BACKGROUND:**

#### **What is this research study all about?**

- This phase of the research will be conducted in the different provincial Departments of Education and will consist of a survey to be completed by, ideally, all most senior managers of the Inclusive Education Directorates.

- The objectives are, basically, to identify what legislation and policies in general, govern the appointment and functioning of school social workers and to ascertain what the different provinces expects of their school social workers.
- Later phases of the research will focus on how the Free State's school social workers see their own, core roles and functions, as well as challenges that they face in daily practice.
- The ultimate goal of the research is to formulate a draft framework of practice standards for the further expansion and improvement of school social work services in South Africa in general and Free State Province in particular.

**Why have you been invited to participate?**

- You have been invited to participate because you have been identified as one of the senior managers within the Department of Education who is knowledgeable about both the functioning of school social work in the Province and the nature and requirements of Inclusive Education.
- The other criteria used for your inclusion were that you are or were involved in the appointment, deployment and management of school social workers and is knowledgeable about their current function within the school system.

**What will be expected of you?**

- You will be required to complete a survey that can be submitted immediately after completion. This survey will not take longer than approximately 30 minutes of your time.

**Will you benefit from taking part in this research?**

- The benefits that you may gain from participating in the research will be of a more long-term nature. If the research as a whole is successful, it would generate findings and guidelines that you could possibly utilise in your role as a manager in Inclusive Education. Your inputs could also help shape the way in which school social work is utilised within the Free State and in the country in future.

**Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?**

- The risks of involvement in this study are minimal. The topics covered will be of a more 'intellectual' nature and all steps necessary will be taken not to link the views and opinions expressed to a specific respondent, but to work with aggregates.

**What will happen in the unlikely event of some harm/ discomfort occurring during or as a direct result of your taking part in this research study?**

- You will have the right to terminate your participation at any time if you experience any form of discomfort and without having to give reasons for your decision.

**Who will have access to the data?**

- The anonymity of respondents is our first priority. The names of the participants will be kept confidential. During the transcription and interpretation of data, codes will be used to ensure that no link could be made to a specific participant.

**What will happen with the data?**

- On completion of the research, it would be handed over to the Social Work Division of the North-West University for safekeeping in the legally prescribed manner and for the legally required time. It will, afterwards, be destroyed in the prescribed manner.

**Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?**

- No payments will be made to any participants in the study. You will also not have to incur any travel or other incidental expenses. All we basically require is your time.

**Is there anything else that you should know or do?**

- You are welcome to contact the researcher, me, Marelize Vergottini, at any time at 083 628 5769 or via email ([mvergottini@gcob.co.za](mailto:mvergottini@gcob.co.za)) if you have any queries or encounter any problems.
- You may also contact Mrs. Carolien van Zyl of the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University (cell 018 299 2089/[carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za](mailto:carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za)) if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.

**How will you know about the findings?**

- The Department of Education will, as provisionally arranged, be provided with a copy of the thesis that flow from the research.
- The participants will also be provided with copies of the scientific journal articles in which their contributions feature.

---

**CONSENT FORM**

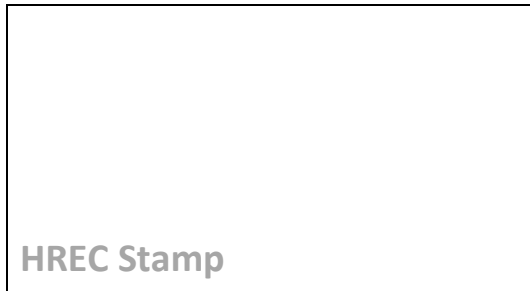
Because this component of the study takes the form of an emailed based national survey:

- your completion and return of the survey questionnaire implies that you give consent that your responses may be used for research purposes
- on the conditions stated above.

---

Thank you in advance for your contribution: *"Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work"*

## ANNEXURE 9: NATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRES



**Reference numbers:** NWU-00370-15-A1  
**Principal researcher:** Mrs.EMVergottini  
**Address:** 5 WekkieSaayman Street,  
Universitas, Bloemfontein, 9300  
**Contact number:** 083 628 5769  
**Date:** 2017/09/07

### **SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA:**

### **TO BE COMPLETED BY THE MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DIRECTORATES**

#### **Introduction**

Dear sir/madam

I am a doctoral student in Social Work at the North-West University's Potchefstroom Campus. The purpose of the research project of which this survey forms a part, is to contribute to the establishment of **practice standards for South African school social work**. In order to attain this goal, we need your help.

This survey is to be completed by the **management** of the **Inclusive Education Directorates** of all 9 Provinces of South Africa. If you fall *outside* this category, please do not complete this survey. If however, you do meet the requirements, your inputs are essential.

#### **Legal and Ethical considerations**

This study *has been approved* by the 9 Province's Department of Basic Education, as well as the North-West University's Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Ethics number: NWU-00370-15-A1). The nature of the study, the research approval letters of the provinces and University, as well as the contents of the agreement that you enter into by completing this survey, are contained in an attachment.

Please click on this icon to access this data.

#### **Declaration by respondent.**

##### **1. I accept the agreement**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Instruction

Thank you for your willingness to take part in this research study.

It is important to complete the following questionnaire **honestly and in full**. Your honest, personal views are crucial for the ultimate success of the research and the recommendations that will be derived from it.

The questionnaire will take you approximately **30 minutes** to complete. It is divided into the following **five** sections:

- Section 1: Demographic information.
- Section 2: Your opinion regarding the functions/responsibilities of school social work at **national level**.
- Section 3: Your opinion regarding the functions/responsibilities of school social work at **provincial level**.
- Section 4: Your opinion regarding the functions/responsibilities of school social work at **district level**.
- Section 5: Your opinion regarding the functions/responsibilities of school social work at **school level**.

Please note the following

- Please answer in **full by marking with a "X" in appropriate block**.
- Spaces are, where applicable, provided in the questionnaire for written comments.
- Please complete the questionnaire on your own. We need your individual view.
- **NB:** Please do not type *your name anywhere in the response sheet*.

### Submission of a completed questionnaire

When you reach the end of the questionnaire, save the questionnaire and email it back to [mvergottini@gcpb.co.za](mailto:mvergottini@gcpb.co.za)

---

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### 2. SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC AND RELATED INFORMATION

2.1 In which category do you fall?(*Note: this is an optional question*)

Director	1
Deputy Director	2
Chief Education Specialist	3
Senior Education Specialist	4
Social work Supervisor	5
Social work Coordinator	6
Other	7

2.2 Please indicate your *province*

Free State	1
Western Cape	2
Northern Cape	3
Eastern Cape	4
Limpopo	5
North West	6
Kwazulu-Natal	7
Mpumalanga	8
Gauteng	9

2.3 Which structures employ the school social workers in your Province? *(Note: you may mark more than one of the options below.)*

Department of Basic Education (DBE)	1
Department of Social Development (DSD)	2
School Governing Bodies (SGB's)	3
Unsure	4
There are no school social workers in this Province	5

- **Please note:** Complete the rest of the questionnaire even if there are no school social workers in your Province.

2.4 Where are the school social workers (if any) situated in your Province? *(Note: you may mark more than one of the options below.)*

Provincial Office	1
District Office	2
Special Schools	3
Schools of Industry / Reform Schools	4
School governing bodies (SGB's)	5
No school social workers/unsure	6

2.5 According to your knowledge, how many school social workers are employed within the Province? *(Note: please type the numbers in the spaces provided. Type "Unsure" if you are not aware of the numbers involved.)*

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of posts</b>
Provincial office	
District offices	
Special schools	
Schools of industry / reform schools	
School governing body positions	

2.6 Is there, in your opinion, a growing need for school social work in your Province?

Not at all	1
To a small extent	2
To a moderate extent	3
To a large extent	4

2.7 To your knowledge, under which act are school social workers employed in your Province? (Note: you may mark more than one of the options below.)

Public Servant Act	1
Employment of Educators Act	2
Unsure	3
Not applicable (school governing body positions)	4
No school social workers	5

2.8 To your knowledge, who are the direct supervisors of the appointed school social workers? (Note: you may mark more than one of the options below.)

Principals of schools where appointed	1
Chief Education Specialist	2
Principal Social Worker	3
Social Work Coordinator	4
Unsure/ not applicable	5

2.9 What are the school social workers called in your province? (Note: you may mark more than one of the options below.)

Social Worker	1
School Social Worker	2
Socio-Pedagogue	3
Educational Therapist	4
Senior Education Specialist	5
Other*	6

\* Other, please specify?: .....

2.10 Recently, 180 new social workers were employed in schools in the Limpopo Province with the main purpose of providing care and support to educators and learners. Will your province follow suit by employing more social workers? (Note: Limpopo Province to mark "Not Applicable")

Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3
Not Applicable	4

### 3. SECTION 2: THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S RESPONSIBILITIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Please note:

- Even though you may not function at national level, your views with regard to responsibilities on *all levels* are important.
- Please answer in full by marking with a "X" in the appropriate block.
- The following options will be used in gauging your views:

<b>Not important= 1</b>	<b>Slightly important= 2</b>	<b>Moderately important= 3</b>	<b>Important= 4</b>	<b>Very important= 5</b>	<b>Critically important = 6</b>
-----------------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------------------

3.1 Rate the importance of the following potential functions/ responsibilities of the school social worker at **national level**?

<b>Key Responsibility</b>	<b>Not important= 1</b>	<b>Slightly important= 2</b>	<b>Moderately important= 3</b>	<b>Important= 4</b>	<b>Very important= 5</b>	<b>Critically important= 6</b>
1. Develop school social work strategies and policies in line with DBE	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Develop norms and standards for school social workers	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Develop systems and structures for mainstreaming school social work services in education	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Monitor and evaluate the translation and implementation of strategies, policies and programmes in school social work at provincial level	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Strengthen the capacity of provinces, districts and schools to mainstream school social work services	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Strengthen relationships between important stakeholders (e.g. the DBE on national and provincial levels, national and provincial government departments, universities, NGOs, research entities, and civil organisations).	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Coordinate school social work services between national and provincial levels and among the various provinces	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Keep abreast of global, regional and national trends in social work and especially school social work	1	2	3	4	5	6

3.2 Please indicate any other key responsibilities not mentioned in this section or any issue requiring clarification (*Note: not compulsory*):

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**4. SECTION 3: THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER’S RESPONSIBILITIES AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL**

4.1 Rate the importance of the following potential functions/ responsibilities of the school social worker on **provincial level**.

Key responsibility	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6
1. Facilitate and develop school social work service in line with the Framework of Inclusive Education as in WP 6 and the Provincial Inclusive Education Strategy Plan	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Develop a school social work policy for the province that will include a relevant measurement tool	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Develop a provincial plan of action for school social work service delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Ensure that school social work services are being rendered in all districts	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Develop and promote guidelines/ programmes for micro-, mezzo- and macro-intervention based on an eco-systemic approach and crisis intervention with learners, parents and educators	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Organise and present seminars on aspects of school social work services for office based personnel and educators	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Provide comprehensive support to district-based school social workers (for example in the form of in-service training, professional development, supervision and consultation services as well as the monitoring of service delivery)	1	2	3	4	5	5

8. Provide support to district- and school-based support teams with regard to social issues/problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Keep abreast of policy and trends which guide the social work profession within the DBE	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Communicate changes and trends to relevant management, staff and service providers	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Coordinate school social work services by acting as a link between National Department of Basic Education and the Provincial DBE	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Coordinate school social work by acting as link between school social workers at district level and relevant section at provincial level	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Coordinate and assist universities with service learning placements for school social work students	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Facilitate regular subcommittee meetings for school social workers at district level	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Coordinate and manage programmes on social issues/problems that impact on the school setting (e.g. child and substance abuse)	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Organise opportunities for professional development of school social workers and other social workers within the DBE	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Promote inter-sectoral collaboration and partnerships by the establishment and maintaining of forums that contribute to effective school social work service delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Disseminating departmental policy to stakeholders/partners	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Screen and evaluate the social programmes and projects delivered by external service providers in order to ensure that they are in line with departmental policy	1	2	3	4	5	6

20. In conjunction with district social workers, monitor and evaluate the programmes and projects that are implemented at sites of learning by service providers	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Provide guidance on school social work to social workers seconded to the DBE by other government departments and partners	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Ensure and promote inter-disciplinary collaboration by active participation in forums of psychosocial and other sections within the department	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Act as link between the department and other province-based agencies with regard to social issues/problems (e.g. violence)	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Develop a database of all school social work programmes in the province in order to prevent duplication	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. Ensure and sustain open channel of communication with all stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5	6

4.2 Please indicate any other key responsibilities not mentioned in this section or any issue requiring clarification (*Note: not compulsory*):

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## 5. SECTION 4: THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S RESPONSIBILITIES AT DISTRICT LEVEL

5.1 Rate the importance of the following potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at **district level** might have towards **learners**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6
1. Address social problems experienced by individuals and groups of learners (e.g. bullying, teenage pregnancy)	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Provide crisis intervention services (e.g. death of parent)	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Referral to external service providers for follow-up or statutory intervention (e.g. child abuse)	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Develop and implement programmes to prevent social problems/issues among learners (e.g. bullying, child abuse, teenage pregnancy)	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Implement parental guidance programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5.2 Rate the importance of the following potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSW's) at **district level** might have towards **educators/teachers****

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	<b>Not important= 1</b>	<b>Slightly important= 2</b>	<b>Moderately important= 3</b>	<b>Important= 4</b>	<b>Very important= 5</b>	<b>Critically important= 6</b>
1. Assist educators with the early identification of learner's needs/problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Assist educators with reporting learners with social barriers of learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Assist educators with supporting learners with social barriers of learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Empower educators with regard to knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters, and community changes	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Empower educators with regard to the management of learners in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5.3 Rate the importance of the following potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at **district level** might have regarding **screening, development and implementation of programmes and projects****

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	<b>Not important= 1</b>	<b>Slightly important= 2</b>	<b>Moderately important= 3</b>	<b>Important= 4</b>	<b>Very important= 5</b>	<b>Critically important= 6</b>
1. Evaluate and monitor programmes and projects	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Assist with the management of programmes and projects	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Develop tools to evaluate the success of projects and programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Compile business plans where required	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Implement and monitor the progress of psychosocial programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Network and liaise with external resources	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Develop and support infrastructure at schools such the school-based support teams(SBST)	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5.4 Rate the importance of the following possible functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at district level might have towards social work and education policy changes and new trends**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6
1. Master and disseminate knowledge of relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Communicate changes and trends to district management teams	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Attend, participate and provide feedback on conferences and workshops	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Attend and participate in school social work sub-committee	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5.5 Rate the importance of the following possible functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at district level might have in terms of their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6
1. Attend relevant provincial and regional meetings with other professions	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Support and guide learner support counsellors at circuit level	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5.6 Rate the importance of the following possible functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at **district level** might have in terms of **the implementation of inclusive education****

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	<b>Not important= 1</b>	<b>Slightly important= 2</b>	<b>Moderately important= 3</b>	<b>Important= 4</b>	<b>Very important= 5</b>	<b>Critically important= 6</b>
1. Participate in the development of national and provincial guidelines for inclusive teaching, learning and assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Participate in the professional development of provincial, district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Participate in the development of training manuals in social issues that include theories, models, practices and tools	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition of necessary assistive devices	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Participate in the development of a framework for upgrading physical and material resources that will ensure the conversion of schools into full service schools	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Contribute in the development and updating of norms and standards for specialist support	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Participate in the development of a database of community support services, agencies, NGOs, government departments, and other relevant organisations	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Assist in the establishment, development and management of district-based support team (DBST)	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Participate in the transformation process of schools into full service schools and special schools into resource centres	1	2	3	4	5	6

11. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition, upgrading and maintenance of physical resources to support the transformation process of schools into inclusive education sites	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive system with special focus on social issues to departmental officials	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive education system with special focus on social issues to other government departments, NGOs, CBOs and parents	1	2	3	4	5	6

5.7 Please indicate any other key functions/responsibilities not mentioned in this section or any issue requiring clarification (*Note: not compulsory*):

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## 6. SECTION 5: THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S FUNCTIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES IN SCHOOLS (MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS)

6.1 Rate the importance of the following potential functions/ responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) in schools might have towards learners

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6
1. Develop and implement an individual support plan for each learner	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Participate in multi-disciplinary meetings with regards to learners	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Offer crisis intervention programmes when relevant	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Assist and support in learner disciplinary hearings	1	2	3	4	5	6

6.2 Rate the importance of the following potential functions/ responsibilities that school social workers (SSW's) in schools might have towards educators (teachers).

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6
1. Assist with the early identification of learner's needs	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Assist with reporting and supporting learners with social barriers to learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Assist in teacher-support meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Empower educators with regard to policies, legislation, and statutory matters	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Empower educators with regard to classroom management	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Empower educators with regard to social issues relating to the curriculum (e.g. bullying, violence)	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Liaise between learners and staff with regard to social work issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Support educators during parent consultations	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Participate in the professional development of educators in order to identify and manage social barriers to learning and development in terms of the SIAS policy	1	2	3	4	5	6

6.3 Rate the importance of the following potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) in schools might have regarding social work and educational policy changes and new trends

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6
1. Be knowledgeable about relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Attend and participate in continuous professional development (CPD) activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Attend and provide feedback on workshops and conferences to principal of the school	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Attend and participate in social work district sub-committee	1	2	3	4	5	6

6.4 Rate the importance of the following potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) **in schools** might have in terms of their role as a member of **multi-disciplinary teams**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6
1. Participate as member of school-based support team (SBST), circuit-based support team (CBCT) or, if required, district-based support team (DBST)	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Participate in the screening and assessment of new admissions	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Participate in the development of life skills programmes, material and information to support the life orientation learning area	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Assist with the development of the school's code of conduct	1	2	3	4	5	6

6.5 Rate the importance of the following **general** functions/ responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) **in schools** might have

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6
1. Develop programmes to address specific barriers to learning and development (e.g. anxiety)	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Develop a strategic plan for service delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Develop an annual plan to guide the functions and operations of social work	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Present workshops on social issues to learners, staff, parents and or other groups (e.g. on the dangers of social media)	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Liaise with external social workers and other professionals where relevant	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Record-keeping	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Assist with the management of trauma and disaster situations within the school and direct community	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Consult with the provincial or district office social workers with regard to social work related matters	1	2	3	4	5	6

9. Facilitate parent evenings on e.g. social media, bullying, parental guidance	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Be a behaviour specialist and apply behaviour modification interventions	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Be a mental health expert and provide consultation services on related issues (e.g. on ADHD and anxiety)	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Be an alcohol and drug abuse specialist and provide related services (e.g. by creating and implementing relevant programmes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Be a violence-prevention specialists and provide related services (e.g. by addressing gangs, juvenile offences and violence against teachers)	1	2	3	4	5	6

6.6 Please indicate any other key functions/responsibilities not mentioned in this section or any issue requiring clarification (*Note: not compulsory*):

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***Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.***

**Please submit the questionnaire by saving the document and emailing it back to:**  
[mvergottini@gcpb.co.za](mailto:mvergottini@gcpb.co.za)

# ANNEXURE 10: LETTER OF APPROVAL - FREE STATE PROVINCE



Enquiries: KK Motshumi  
Ref: Notification of research: EM Vergottini  
Tel. 051 404 9221 / 079 503 4943  
Email: K. Motshumi@fseducation.gov.za

The District Directors: Xhariep, Motheo and Fezile Dabi Districts  
The Acting District Directors: Lejweleputswa and Thabo Mofutsanyana Districts

Dear Messrs Mothebe, Moloi, Chuta and Mesdammes Zonke and Mabasso

## NOTIFICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT BY EM VERGOTTINI

1. The above mentioned candidate was granted permission to conduct research in your district and your Chief Directorate as follows:

**Topic:** Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school Social Work: An Exploratory study with special reference to the Free State Province.

**Target Population:**

- o 4 Members of Senior Management: HIV & AIDS Support Programme, Inclusive Education, Special Needs Education at the Provincial Office.
- o All the Socio-pedagogues (SES) in the District offices of Xhariep, Motheo, Lejweleputswa, Thabo Mofutsanyana and Fezile Dabi District.
- o School Social workers from the following Special schools: Bartimea, Boitumelong, Dr Bohmer, Jimmy Roos, Ladybrand, Lettie Fouche, Martie du Plessis, Pholoho, Rosenhof, Tswelang (Motheo Districts), Amari, Lebong, Nobilis, Orion, (Lejweleputswa) Maluti, Tloloche, (Thabo Mofutsanyana District) Johan Slabbert, Mphahlelsanyane (Fezile Dabi).

**Period:** From date of signature to 30 September 2017. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours.

2. **Research benefits:** School Social work is a growing profession internationally as well as nationally, with the Western Cape, Free State, Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal being the four provinces that mostly appoint social workers within the South African education system. With the new tendency to employ school social workers (also in School Governing Body positions), there is an urgent need to have a basic, uniform set of practice standards for the profession. The research results will be submitted to the DoBE as well as all provinces for their information and to utilize in the employment of school social workers within different sections.
3. Logistical procedures were met, in particular ethical considerations for conducting research in the Free State Department of Education.
4. The Strategic Planning, Policy and Research Directorate will make the necessary arrangements for the researcher to present the findings and recommendations to the relevant officials in your district.

Yours sincerely

  
DR JEM SEKOLANYANE  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE 07/08/2017

# ANNEXURE 11: LETTER OF APPROVAL - EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE



STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES  
Steve Yulele Tshwete Complex - Zone 6 - Zwelofsha - Eastern Cape  
Private Bag 30032 - Bhebe - 5803 - REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
Tel: +27 (0)40 608 4773/40354537 - Fax: +27 (0)40 608 4574 - Website: [www.ecdoe.gov.za](http://www.ecdoe.gov.za)

Enquiries: B Pama Email: [babolwa.pama@ecdoe.gov.za](mailto:babolwa.pama@ecdoe.gov.za) Date: 10 August 2017

Ms. EM Vergottini

P O Box 6096

Kroonheuwel

9501

Dear Ms. Vergottini

## **PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTERS THESIS: TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK – A MIXED-METHOD STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FREE STATE PROVINCE.**

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.
2. Your application to conduct the above mentioned research in four selected schools in Amatole East District (Butterworth) and the Provincial Office of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:
  - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
  - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
  - c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
  - d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
  - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;
  - f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;



- g. your research will be limited to those institutions for which approval has been granted, should changes be effected written permission must be obtained from the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;
  - h. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis.
  - i. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary.
  - j. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation upon completion of your research.
  - k. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you.
  - l. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).
  - m. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation
3. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there not be compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE.
  4. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
  5. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Ms. NY Kanjana on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email [nykanjana@live.co.za](mailto:nykanjana@live.co.za) should you need any assistance.

  
 NY KANJANA  
 DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH & SECRETARIAT SERVICES  
 FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION

## ANNEXURE 12: LETTER OF APPROVAL - GAUTENG PROVINCE



**GAUTENG PROVINCE**  
Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

### GDE AMENDED RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	12 July 2017
Validity of Research Approval:	06 February 2017 – 29 September 2017 D2017/001A
Name of Researcher:	Vergottini E.M
Address of Researcher:	P O Box 6096
	Kroonheuwel
	Kroonstad, 9501
Telephone Number:	056 212 3881 083 628 5769 056 212 3881
Email address:	mariezevergottini@vodamail.co.za
Research Topic:	Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a mixed methods study with special reference to the Free State Province
Number and type of schools:	None
District/s/HO	GDE Head Office

**Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

*Handwritten signature and date: 12/07/2017*

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1

Making education a societal priority

**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management**

7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simons Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Ms Faith Tshabalala  
CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 12/07/2017

# ANNEXURE 13: LETTER OF APPROVAL - KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE



education

Department:  
Education  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1041

Ref:204/8/1318

Mrs M Vergottini  
5 Welkie Saayman Street  
Bloemfontein  
9300

Dear Mrs Vergottini

## PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK: A MIXED METHOD STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FREE STATE PROVINCE", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 04 August 2017 to 09 July 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Head Office

Dr. EV Ncama  
Head of Department: Education  
Date: 04 September 2017

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 - Pietermaritzburg - 3200 - Republic of South Africa  
Physical Address: 347 Burger Street - Anton Lembede Building - Pietermaritzburg - 3201  
Tel: +27 33 392 1004/411 - Fax: +27 033 392 1200 - Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za - Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za  
Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DOE\_KZN... Instagram: kzndoe\_education... Youtube: kzndoe

..Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

# ANNEXURE 14: LETTER OF APPROVAL - LIMPOPO PROVINCE



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ref: 202      Eng: MC Makola PhD      Tel No: 015 290 9448      E-mail: [McMakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:McMakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

Vergottini EM  
5 Wekkie Saayman Street  
Universitas  
Bloemfontein  
9300

### RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

---

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: "TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SOUTH AFRICA SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK : MIXED METHOD STUDY ".
3. The following conditions should be considered:
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the schools concerned.
  - 3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
  - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
  - 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: VERGOTTINI EM

CONFIDENTIAL

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4320/4494

*The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!*

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



**Ms NB Mutheiwana**  
**Head of Department**



**Date**

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: VERGOTTINIEM

CONFIDENTIAL

# ANNEXURE 15: LETTER OF APPROVAL - MPUMALANGA PROVINCE



education  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Building No. 5, Government Buildings, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province  
Private Bag X1341, Nelspruit, 1200  
Tel: 013 766 6626/616 Toll Free Line: 0500 263 416

Umlalo: Imibutho: Iminyaniso: Fako

Departmentsuul van Onderwy

Idzawulo ya Dwaand

Ms Marilize E Vergottini  
P O Box 6096  
Kroonheuwel  
9501  
Cell: 083 6285 769

## **RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MS MARILIZE VERGOTTINI – NORTH-WEST UNIV.**

Your application to conduct research study was received and is therefore acknowledged. The title “Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a mixed-method study with special reference to the Free State Province”. I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the whole department especially the children who are the beneficiaries. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research policy which is available in the department website. You are requested to adhere to your university’s research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics.

In terms of the research policy, data or any research activity can be conducted after school hours as per appointment with affected participants. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the departments’ annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department’s research unit @ 013 766 5476/5148 Or [a.balovi@education.mpu.gov.za](mailto:a.balovi@education.mpu.gov.za)

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.

MRS MOC MHLABANE  
HEAD EDUCATION

23.8.17  
DATE



# ANNEXURE 16: LETTER OF APPROVAL - NORTH WEST PROVINCE



## Education and Sport Development

Department of Education and Sport Development  
Departement van Onderwys en Sport Ontwikkeling  
Leleqha le Thuto le Tlhabololo ya Metshameko

**NORTH WEST PROVINCE**

1st Floor, East Wing  
Garens Building, Mmabatho  
Private Bag 32044  
Mmabatho 2795  
Tel.: (018) 388-3432  
Fax.: (018) 388-3430  
Office Manager: ekgoetau@nwpg.gov.za

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL

Enq: Mr L.N Mofinane  
Tel no. 018 388 3428

To: **Prof M Weyers**  
**North West University Potchefstroom Campus**  
**Faculty of Social work**

13 July 2017

From: **Dr. I.S. Molele**  
**Superintendent General**

#### REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MS E M VERGOTTINI

Reference is made to your letter regarding the above matter. The content is noted and accordingly, approval is granted to your kind self to conduct research as per your request, subject to the following provisions: -

- That you contact the relevant District Managers of your target schools about your request and this letter of permission. In this regard you have my consent to contact

Mr B. Monale at	018 388 3383	Ngaka Modiri Molema District
Ms P Mokhulle at	014 590 4802	Bojanala District
Ms M Thejane at	053 928 0200	Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District
Mr H Motara at	018 299 8264	Dr Kenneth Kaunda District

- Considering that your research will involve both Educators and Learners, the general functionality of the school should not be compromised by the research process.
- That participation in your project will be voluntary.
- That the findings of your research will be made available to the NW Department of Education & Sports Development upon request.
- That the principle of confidentiality will be observed in its strictest terms in relation to information sourced from such research.

With my best wishes

Thanking you.

  
**MR R. MOLEMA**  
**ACTING SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL**



"Towards Excellence in Education and Sport Development"

**ANNEXURE 17:  
LETTER OF APPROVAL - NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Enquiries: JK Duze  
[khayaduze@gmail.com](mailto:khayaduze@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 063 967 3584  
063 839 6386  
Ref No: S. 4.2.2  
Date: 17 July 2017

**TO: MS EM VERGOTTINI  
P.O. BOX 6069  
KROONHEUWEL  
9501**

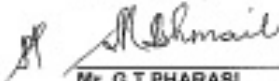
**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK IN THE  
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**

Permission is hereby granted to conduct research on school social work in the Northern Cape.

We agree that the research can be done through Monkey Survey questionnaires that will focus on the management cadre of the province who are managing social work services. You have not stated the particular management positions to complete the questionnaire and it is therefore your responsibility to make the necessary arrangements with the Acting Director: Institutional Management and Governance Development and Support, Mr SM Mayongo. The proviso for conducting research is that the data will be handled confidentially and that officials remain anonymous.

The permission is granted with the understanding that all the findings and recommendations will be made available to the Northern Cape Department of Education.

Yours sincerely

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mr. G.T. PHARASI  
SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL**  
DATE: 17.07.2017



# ANNEXURE 18: LETTER OF APPROVAL - WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE



Western Cape  
Government

Education

Directorate: Research

[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)

tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

**REFERENCE:** 20160406-9216

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Elizabeth Vergottini  
PO Box 6096  
Kroonheuwel  
9501

**Dear Mrs Elizabeth Vergottini**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK: A MIXED-METHOD STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **08 April 2016 till 30 September 2016**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 06 April 2016**

Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001  
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282  
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000  
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22  
[www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)

# ANNEXURE 19: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM - FREE STATE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS



**Reference numbers:** NWU-00370-15-A1  
**Principal researcher:** Mrs. EM Vergottini  
**Address:** 5 Wekkie Saayman Street ,  
Universitas, Bloemfontein, 9301  
**Contact number:** 083 628 5769  
**Date:** 2017/09/01

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM: SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

### INVITATION:

You are cordially invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my PhD (Social Work) studies. Please take time to read the information presented here as it will explain the details of the research, as well as the role that you could play in it.

### TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

*Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a multi-method study with special reference to the Free State Province*

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

It is very important that you must understand what the research and your potential involvement in it entails. Therefore, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher if anything is unclear. Also, note that your participation is **entirely voluntary**. You are free to decline to participate at the outset or to withdraw at any point during the study. Such a step will **not** affect you negatively in any way whatsoever.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee** of the **Faculty of Health Sciences** of the **North-West University (NWU-00370-15-A1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might, consequently, be necessary for a members/s the Research Ethics Committee or relevant authorities to inspect the research records in order to ensure that the principals involved were adhered to.

### BACKGROUND:

#### What is this research study all about?

- You will, if agreed to, be involved in a third phase of a study into school social work in the Free State Province. This phase targets all schools social workers (both those employed by the Department of Basic Education and by the management boards of schools) and follows on from the first phase in which the views and inputs of the management carder of the Department's Inclusive Education Directorate was garnered.
- Your involvement will consist of the completion of a survey.

- The objectives of this phase are, basically, to ascertain how the Free State's school social workers see their core roles and functions, as well as challenges that they face.
- The ultimate goal of the research is to formulate a draft framework of practice standards for the further expansion and improvement of school social work services in South Africa in general and Free State Province in particular.

**Why have you been invited to participate?**

- You have been invited to participate because you are a school social worker in the employ of the Free State Department of Education or by a school governing body in the province. As such, you are viewed as knowledgeable about the actual and potential roles and functions of school social workers and the challenges that practitioners face in practice.

**What will your responsibilities be?**

- You will first be expected to complete a questionnaire. This task should not take more than 20 minutes.

**Will you benefit from taking part in this research?**

- The benefits that you may gain from participating in the research will be of a more long-term nature. If the research as a whole is successful, it would generate findings and guidelines that you could possibly utilise in your practice as a school social worker. Your inputs could also help shape the way in which school social work is utilised within the Free State and even in the country as a whole in future.

**Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?**

- The risks of involvement in this study are minimal. The topics covered will be of a more 'intellectual' nature and all steps necessary will be taken *not* to link the views and opinions expressed to a specific respondent or school, but to work with aggregates.

**What will happen in the unlikely event of some harm/ discomfort occurring during or as a direct result of your taking part in this research study?**

- You have the right not to participate in the survey.

**Who will have access to the data?**

- The anonymity of respondents is our first priority. The names of the participants will be kept confidential. During the presentation of the data produced by the survey, codes will be used to ensure that no link could be made to a specific participant or school.

**What will happen with the data?**

- The baseline data (i.e. surveys and research notes) will be kept by the researcher in a locked safe. On completion of the research, it would be handed over to the Social Work Division of the North-West University for safekeeping in the legally prescribed manner and for the legally required period. It will, afterwards, be destroyed in the prescribed manner.

**Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?**

- No payments will be made to any participants in the study. You will also not have to incur any travel or other incidental expenses. A self-addressed envelope will be provided for the questionnaire and the researcher will be travelling to you for the interview. All we basically only require is your time and expertise.

**Is there anything else that you should know or do?**

- You are welcome to contact the researcher, me. Marelize Vergottini, at any time at 083 628 5769 or via email ([mergottini@gcpb.co.za](mailto:mergottini@gcpb.co.za)) if you have any queries or encounter any problems.
- You may also contact Mrs. Carolien van Zyl of the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University (cell 018 299 2089 / [carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za](mailto:carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za)) if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

**How will you know about the findings?**

- All participants will be provided with copies of the scientific journal articles in which their contributions feature.

---

## DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in a research study entitled “Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: an exploratory study with special reference to the Free State Province”:

### I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and that it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way by doing so.
- I am aware of the fact that the researcher may ask me to leave the study before it has finished, if she feels it is in my best interests or if I do not follow the study plan as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
Signature of participant

.....  
Signature of witness

---

## DECLARATION BY THE PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to .....
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above.
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on(*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
Signature of researcher

.....  
Signature of witness

---

**DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER**

I, *E.M. Vergottini*, declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to .....
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above.
- I did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on(*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of researcher**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

## ANNEXURE 20: FREE STATE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS QUESTIONNAIRE



**Reference numbers:** NWU-00370-15-A1  
**Principal researcher:** Mrs .EM Vergottini  
**Address:** 5 Wekkie Saayman Street,  
Universitas, Bloemfontein,  
9300  
**Contact number:** 083 628 5769  
**Date:** 2017/07/25

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS AT SPECIAL SCHOOLS, DISTRICT LEVEL AND IN SGB POSITIONS

#### Introduction

Dear sir/madam

I am a doctoral student in Social Work at the North-West University's Potchefstroom Campus. The purpose of my research is to contribute to the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work. In order to attain this goal, I need your help.

This survey is aimed at all **school social workers** in the employment of the Department of Education or school governing bodies (SGB's) in the **Free State Province**. If you do not fall into these categories or do not work in the Free State Province, please do not complete this survey. If however, you do meet the requirements, your inputs are essential. It should not take you more than 30 minutes to complete this survey.

#### Legal and Ethical considerations

This study has been approved by the Free State Department of Education, as well as the North-West University's Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC). (Ethics number: NWU-00370-15-A1). The nature of the study and contents of the agreement that you enter into by completing this survey, is contained in the "Participant Information Leaflet and Consent Form". Please complete the consent form **before** commencing with the completion of the questionnaire.

#### Instructions:

Thank you for your willingness to become a participant in this important research study.

Please answer the following questionnaire **honestly and in full**: Your honest views are crucial for the ultimate success of the research and the recommendation that will be derived from this study.

The questionnaire consists of the following five sections:

- Section 1: Some of your socio-demographic information (**to be completed by all respondents**)
- Section 2: The general requirements that school social workers should meet (**to be completed by all respondents**)
- Section 3: The roles, functions and key responsibilities of school social workers in **district positions** (**to be completed by district social workers/ socio-pedagogues only**)
- Section 4: The roles, functions and key responsibilities of school social workers **in schools** (**to be completed by school social workers in schools only**)
- Section 5: Some general matters that may influence the way in which school social work is done (e.g. infrastructure) (**to be completed by all respondents**)

**Please note the following:**

- In order to ensure anonymity, please *do not* write your name anywhere on the response sheet.
  - Please answer **all** the questions.
  - Unless stated otherwise, indicate your choice with an “x”.
  - Spaces are provided in the questionnaire for written comments.
  - Please complete the questionnaire on your own. We need your personal/individual views.
- 

## THE QUESTIONNAIRE

### 1. SECTION 1: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**Instructions:** This Section must be completed by **all respondents**.

1.1 Indicate the **district** in which you work

Motheo	Fezile Dabi	Lejweleputswa	Thabo Mofutsanyana	Xhariep
1	2	3	4	5

1.2 Indicate the **type of post/position** in which you are employed

School social worker at a district office (i.e “Senior Education specialist” / “Socio pedagogue”	School social worker at a special school	School social worker at a school of Industries	School social worker appointed by a school; of governing body
1	2	3	4

1.3 How many **years of experience** do you have as a school social worker:

Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	10 – 15 years	15 - 20 years	20- 25 years	25 – 30 years	More than 30 years
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1.4 How many years have you been **practicing social work** (including the above?)

Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	10 – 15 years	15 - 20 years	20- 25 years	25 – 30 years	More than 30 years
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## 2. SECTION 2: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS THAT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS SHOULD MEET

**Instructions:** This Section must be completed by *all respondents*.

2.1 What, in your opinion, are the minimum number of years **of practical experience** that a candidate should **have** to be appointed as a school social worker?

Can start immediately after qualifying	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	10 – 15 years	15 - 20 years
1	2	3	4	5	6

2.2 What, in your opinion, are the **minimum qualification(s)** that a candidate need before being appointed as a school social worker? (You may mark more than one answer)? (Note: a BSW degree is viewed as a pre-requisite.)

A Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW)	Masters level degree in Social Work (MSW)	A teaching degree or diploma	Other
1	2	3	4

2.3 If marked “other”, please specify

- .....
- .....
- .....

2.4 Who is your direct supervisor?

I do not have a supervisor	Principal of school where appointed	Chief Education Specialist	Principal Social worker	Unsure	Other
1	2	3	4	5	6

2.5 If marked “other”, please specify

- .....
- .....

2.6 How would you rate your direct supervisor’s **knowledge and understanding** of the work of a school social worker?

I don’t have a direct supervisor	Poor	Fair	Neutral	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6

### 3. SECTION 3: THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S RESPONSIBILITIES AT DISTRICT LEVEL

#### Instructions:

- This Section must **only be completed by social workers at district level**. If this does not apply to you, please proceed to Section 4.
- In this section we want to ascertain your views on what the school social worker's **key responsibility or function** should be. Please indicate the level of importance for each possible responsibility, by using the options ranging between "1. Not important" to "6. Critical"
- Once **district level** social workers have completed this section, please proceed on to **Section 5**.

3.1 Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) might have towards **learners**.

Key responsibility / function	Not important=1	Slightly important=2	Moderately important=3	Important=4	Very important=5	Critical = 6
1. Address social problems experienced by individuals and groups of learners (e.g bullying, teenage pregnancy)	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Provide crisis intervention services	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Referral to external service providers for follow-up or statutory intervention (eg. child abuse_	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Develop and Implement programmes to prevent social problems/issues among learners (e.g. bullying, child abuse, teenage pregnancy)	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Implement parental guidance programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6

**3.2** Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) might have towards **educators/teachers**.

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Assist educators with early identification of learner's needs/ problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Assist educators with reporting learners with social barriers to learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Assist educators with supporting learners with social barriers to learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Empower educators with knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters, and community changes	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Empower educators with regard to management of learners in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5	6

**3.3** Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) might have towards **screening, development and implementation of programmes and projects**.

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Evaluate and monitor programmes and projects	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Assist with the management of projects and programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Develop tools of evaluating success of projects and programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Compile business plans where required	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Implement and monitor the progress of psychosocial programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Network and liaise with external resources	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Develop and support infrastructure at schools such as the school-based support teams (SBST)	1	2	3	4	5	6

**3.4** Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) might have towards **social work and education policy changes and new trends.**

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Master and disseminate knowledge of relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Communicate changes and trends to district management teams	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Attend, participate and provide feedback on conferences and workshops	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Attend and participate in school social work sub-committee	1	2	3	4	5	6

**3.5** Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) might have in terms of their role as a member of **multi-disciplinary teams.**

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Attend relevant provincial and regional meetings with other professions	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Support and guide Learner support counsellors at circuit level	1	2	3	4	5	6

**3.6** Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) might have in terms of **the implementation of Inclusive Education**

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Participate in the development of national and provincial guidelines for inclusive teaching, learning and assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Participate in the professional development of provincial, district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Participate in the development of approved manuals for training in social issues that include theories, models, practices and tools	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition of necessary assistive devices	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Participate in the development of a framework for upgrading physical and material resources that will ensure the conversion of schools to full service schools	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Contribute to the development and updating of norms and standards for specialist support	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Participate in the development of database of community support services, agencies, NGOs, government departments, and other relevant organisations	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Assist in the establishment, development and management of district-based support team (DBST)	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Participate in the transformation process of schools to full service schools and special schools to resource centres	1	2	3	4	5	6

11. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition, upgrading and maintenance of physical resources that will support the transformation process of schools to inclusive education sites	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Advocacy of principles and rights within the inclusive system with special focus on social issues to departmental officials	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Advocacy of the principles and rights within an inclusive education system with special focus on social issues to other government departments, NGOs, CBOs and parents	1	2	3	4	5	6

3.7 Please indicate any other key responsibilities not mentioned above (not compulsory)

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

#### 4. SECTION 4: THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER’S RESPONSIBILITIES IN SCHOOLS (MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS)

**Instructions:**

- This Section must only be completed by *social workers employed at schools*.
- In this section we want to ascertain your views on what the school social worker’s **key responsibility or functions** should be. Please indicate the level of importance of each possible responsibility by using the options ranging between “1. Not important” to “6. Critical”
- Once you have completed this section, proceed on to **Section 5**.

4.1 Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities towards **learners**.

Key responsibility / function	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Develop and implement an individual support plan (ISP) for each learner	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Participate in multi-disciplinary meetings with regard to learners	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Offer crisis intervention programmes when relevant	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Assist and support in learner disciplinary hearings	1	2	3	4	5	6

4.2 Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) might have towards **educators (teachers)**.

Key responsibility / function	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Assist with early identification of learner's needs	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Assist with reporting and supporting learners with social barriers to learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Assist in Teacher support meetings	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Empower educators with knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Empowerment of educators with regard to classroom management	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Empower educators with regard to social issues relating to the curriculum (e.g bullying, violence)	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Liaise between learners and educators with regard to social work issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Support educators during parent consultations	1	2	3	4	5	6

9. Participate in the professional development of educators in order to identify and manage social barriers to learning and development in terms of the SIAS policy	1	2	3	4	5	6
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**4.3** Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities that the school social worker might have with regard to **social work and educational policy changes and new trends.**

Key responsibility / function	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Be knowledgeable about relevant policies as well as new trends that impact on learners	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Attend and participate in continuous professional development (CPD) activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Attend and provide feedback on workshops and conferences to principal of school	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Attend and participate in Social work district sub-committee	1	2	3	4	5	6

**4.4** Rate the importance of the following potential responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) might have in terms of their role as members of **multi-disciplinary teams.**

Key responsibility / function	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Participate as member of school- based support team (SBST), circuit-based support team (CBST) or, if required, district-based support team (DBST)	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Participate in screening and assessment of new admissions	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Participate in development of life skills programmes,	1	2	3	4	5	6

material and information to support the Life Orientation learning area						
4. Assist with the development of the school's code of conduct	1	2	3	4	5	6

**4.5** Rate the importance of the following potential **GENERAL** responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) might have.

<b>Key responsibility / function</b>	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Develop programmes to address specific barriers to learning and development	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Develop a strategic plan for service delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Develop an annual plan to guide the functions and operations of social work						
4. Present workshops with regards to social issues to learners, staff, parents and/or other groups (e.g dangers of social media)	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Liaise with external social workers and other professionals where relevant	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Record-keeping	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Assist with management of trauma and disaster situations within the school and direct community	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Consult with the provincial or district office social workers with regards to social work related matters	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Facilitate parent evenings on e.g. social media, bullying, parental guidance and related social challenges	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Be a behaviour specialist, applying behaviour modification interventions	1	2	3	4	5	6

11. Be a mental health consultant and expert, who can be consulted on mental health aspects for example ADHD and anxiety	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Be an alcohol and drug abuse specialist, creating and implementing different programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Be a violence-prevention specialist and provide related services (eg. by addressing gangs, juvenile offences and violence against teachers)s	1	2	3	4	5	6

4.6 Please indicate any other key responsibilities not mentioned above (not compulsory)

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

**5. SECTION 5: SOME GENERAL MATTERS THAT MAY HAVE AN INFLUENCE THE WAY IN WHICH SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK IS DONE**

**Instructions:** This section must be completed by **all respondents**

In this section we want to ascertain your view on general matters that might have an influence on the effectiveness of the school social worker.

5.1 In order to function effectively, certain basic infrastructure and equipment are needed. Please indicate the level of importance of each indicated.

<b>Infrastructure and / or equipment</b>	Not important = 1	Slightly important = 2	Moderately important = 3	Important = 4	Very important = 5	Critical = 6
1. Office accommodation which is accessible and allows for confidentiality	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Transport (e.g. to conduct home visits and other contact-making which requires travelling)	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Furniture suitable for interviews and other tasks (e.g. group work)	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Communication media (e.g. telephone, fax machines, email, internet)	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Computers	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Photocopiers and printers	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Filing cabinets (e.g. for safekeeping of records)	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Basic stationary (e.g. pens, files, notepaper, scissors, ruler, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5.2 Is there, in your opinion, a growing need for school social work in the Fee State?**

Yes	No	Unsure
1	2	3

**Please motivate your answer:**

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

**5.3 Please indicate any challenges that you might experience in the execution in your tasks and responsibilities.**

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey**

## ANNEXURE 21: INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS: *SOCIAL WORK/ MAATSKAPLIKE WERK*

The South African journal for social work "*Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*" (ISSN – 0037-8054) provides the following instructions to authors:

<b>INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS</b>	<b>VOORSKRIFTE AAN OUTEURS</b>
<p>The Journal publishes articles, short communications, book reviews and commentary on articles already published from any field of social work. Contributions relevant to social work from other disciplines will also be considered. Contributions may be written in English or Afrikaans. All contributions will be critically reviewed by at least two referees on whose advice contributions will be accepted or rejected by the editorial committee. All refereeing is strictly confidential. Manuscripts may be returned to the authors if extensive revision is required or if the style or presentation does not conform to the Journal practice. Commentary on articles already published in the Journal must be submitted with appropriate captions, the name(s) and addressees) of the author(s) and preferably not exceed 5 pages. The whole manuscript plus one clear copy as well as a diskette with all the text, preferably in MS Windows (Word or WordPerfect) or ASCII must be submitted. Manuscripts must be typed double spaced on one side of A4 paper only. Use the Harvard system for references. Short references in the text: When word-for-word quotations, facts or arguments from other sources are cited, the surname(s) of the author(s), year of publication and page number(s) must appear in parenthesis in the text, e.g. "... (Berger 1967:12). More details about sources referred to in the text should appear at the end of the manuscript under the caption "References". The sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors. Note the use of capitals and punctuation marks in the following examples.</p>	<p>Die Tydskrif publiseer artikels, kort mededelings, boekbesprekings en kommentaar op reeds gepubliseerde artikels uit enige gebied van die maatskaplike werk asook relevante bydraes uit ander dissiplines. Bydraes mag in Afrikaans of Engels geskryf word. Artikels in Afrikaans moet vergesel wees van 'n Engelse opsomming van ongeveer 200 woorde. Alle bydraes sal krities deur ten minste twee keurders beoordeel word. Beoordeling is streng vertroulik. Manuskripte sal na die outeurs teruggestuur word indien ingrypende hersiening vereis word of indien die styl nie ooreenstem met die tydskrif se standaard nie. Kommentaar op artikels wat in die Tydskrif gepubliseer is, moet van toepaslike titels, die naam (name) en adres(se) van die outeur(s) voorsien wees en verkieslik nie langer as 5 bladsye wees nie. 'n Disket met die hele teks, verkieslik in MS Windows of ASCII moet die hele manuskrip en een duidelike kopie daarvan vergesel. Manuskripte moet slegs op een kant van die bladsy in dubbelspasiëring getik word. Verwysings moet volgens die Harvard-stelsel geskied. Verwysings in die teks: Wanneer woordelikse sitate, feite of argumente uit ander bronne gesiteer word, moet die van(ne) van die outeur(s), jaar van publikasie, en bladsynommers tussen hakies in die teks verskyn, bv. "... (Berger, 1967:12). Meer besonderhede omtrent bronne moet alfabeties volgens die vanne van die outeurs aan die einde van die manuskrip onder die opskrif "Bibliografie" verskyn. Let op die gebruik van hoofletters en leestekens by die volgende voorbeelde.</p>

# ANNEXURE 22: INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS: *AFRICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT*

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## SUBMISSIONS

- Online Submissions
- Author Guidelines
- Privacy Statement

## ONLINE SUBMISSIONS

Already have a Username/Password for Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development?  
**GO TO LOGIN**

Need a Username/Password?  
**GO TO REGISTRATION**

Registration and login are required to submit items online and to check the status of current submissions.

## AUTHOR GUIDELINES

**Instructions to Authors: Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development (SAJSWSD)**

Please adhere strictly to these instructions to facilitate the publication process of articles.

## REGISTER ON THE SAJSWSD WEBSITE

If you are not already registered please register on the SAJSWSD website: <http://ajournals.co.za/index.php/SWPE/user/register>

Please see the User Guide for further information:

<http://pdp.sfu.ca/ojs/docs/userguide2.3.3/basicRolesRegister.html>

If you are already registered as a Reviewer or in another role you can edit your profile when logged in to also register as an Author. Please see the Users' Guide:

<http://pdp.sfu.ca/ojs/docs/userguide2.3.3/basicRolesProfile.html>

## SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE ONLINE

Please refer to the Users' Guide for further details:

<http://pdp.sfu.ca/ojs/docs/userguide2.3.3/authorUserHome.html>

## STYLE GUIDELINES (CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE: AUTHOR-DATE)

This guide endeavours to achieve a standardised typographical style and consistent language choices. The main objective is to make it easier for authors, editors, copyeditors, layout editors and all those who publish to know what choices to make in the myriad of existing options. Unisa Press uses the Chicago Manual of Style (<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/>).

The style guide focuses on two major aspects:

- 1) Guidelines for technical preparation, 2) Citation guidelines.

## 1. Guidelines for Technical Preparation of Manuscript

### Layout

Submit manuscripts electronically—MSWord file.

All graphic material has to be positioned at the correct place in the text and should be of a good quality. Do not add supplementary files with graphic content.

Manuscripts must be presented as: A4 pages; normal margins; 12pt Times Roman; 1.5 line spacing.

Proofing language must be set as UK English (colour—not color; travelled—not traveled; organise, organisation, organising—not -ize).

Do not type double spaces anywhere; not between words, at the end of sentences or after colons.

Type hard spaces (shift + control + space bar) when phrases are preferred as a unit, e.g. 10\_000; Vol. 1 (2); 22-21.

Articles should not exceed 6000 words from the first word in the title to the last word in the list of references.

Make sure you follow the guidelines for ensuring a blind peer review:

Then present an indented abstract of not more than 250 words. Abstracts should not contain any footnotes or citations. Do not type the abstract in italics.

Below the abstract, please provide 4–6 keywords for indexing (only proper nouns in capitals). Distinguish between keywords/phrases with semicolon, e.g. Pentecostal; hymnal records; migration; southern regions of Africa.

Authors should include their affiliation or ORCID below their name, after the title of the article.

No numbers should be used in headings or in lists

Please note the format and order of information required for the presentation of book reviews:

*Oxford Dictionary of Journalism* <Book title in italics>

Tony Harcup <Book author name(s) and surname>

Oxford University Press. 2014. xiv + pp. 368 <Publisher, date and number of pages>

ISBN: 978-0-0000000-1 <ISBN>

Reviewed by Rod Amner <Reviewer detail>

Department of Languages <Affiliation: Department>

University of Limpopo (Turfloop), South Africa <Affiliation: Institutions>

macmikeah@ul.ac.za <email address>

### Style

Do not use the ampersand (&) anywhere in the text or citations; use "and" instead.

In text, only sparingly emphasise words by using italics. Italicisation should otherwise be reserved for book titles and words from a language other than that of the text.

Italicised words/phrases in another language are glossed by an equivalent word/phrase in the language of the text in single inverted commas placed in brackets, e.g. ...*indoda* ("a man"). Words well-known in South African English are set as roman, for example, lobola, ubuntu, indaba.

Words/terms that need to be singled out as being "borrowed" from another author/source may be placed in double inverted commas.

Titles of publications must be in headline style (significant words are capitalised) and in italics when typed in the text. Titles of articles are placed between "double inverted commas." Also see citation guidelines for examples.

### Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements appear at the end of the article, should be brief, and recognise sources of financial and logistical support and permission to reproduce material from other sources. Save a copy of documentation granting such permission. Adherence to copyright rules remains each author's sole responsibility.

## 1. Guidelines for Technical Preparation of Manuscript

### Layout

Submit manuscripts electronically—MSWord file.

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Department of Languages <Affiliation: Department>

University of Limpopo (Turfloop), South Africa <Affiliation: Institutions>

macmikeah@ul.ac.za <email address>

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### **Footnotes**

Footnotes with references in Arabic numbers (i, ii, iii) are allowed on condition that these are limited to essential notes that enhance the content without impeding the fluent reading of the article.

Footnotes are typed in 10pt. font and single spacing, hanging indent.

Endnotes are not allowed.

Footnotes do not replace the alphabetical list of references at the end of the text. References in notes are regarded as text references and not bibliographic information.

### **Quotations**

When quoting from a source, use "double inverted commas."

To quote within a quote, use 'single inverted commas.'

When quoting more than five lines, indent. Do not print indented text in italics and do not use quotation marks. A citation after the indented quote follows after a full stop, e.g.

According to the report the council will discuss the matter at the next council meeting to be held on 5 January 2017. (Smit 2002, 1)

When quoting within an indented quotation, use "double inverted commas."

Final full stops and commas are placed inside the quotation marks.

Colons and semicolons are placed outside of quotation marks.

Question and exclamation marks are only placed inside quotation marks if they form part of the quoted material.

E.g.

Do you know if she is "accredited"?

He asked: "Are you accredited?"

When adding notes to a quote or changing a quotation, use square brackets, e.g. [own translation/emphasis] [today].

### **Numbers**

In text, numbers one to nine are in words; numbers 10 and above are in digits.

At the start of a sentence all numbers are in words.

In brackets all numbers are in digits, as for numbers of tables, figures and chapters.

When in text, percentages (below 10) are in words—seven per cent; above 10 are digits—22 per cent|3.5 per cent.

Decimals—7.5 per cent—are always in digits (also in text).

Use the % sign in brackets and per cent in text.

### **Equations**

Use MathType for display and inline equations, but not for single variables. Single variables should be inserted into the text as Unicode characters.

### **Abbreviations**

Abbreviations that begin and end on the same letter as the word, do not get a full stop (Mr/Dr/Eds) but Ed.

Academic degrees: (Preferably without any punctuation) BA; DPhil; MSc

### **Ellipsis**

Use the ellipsis when indicating that text has been left out in the middle of a quoted sentence—preferably not at the start or end of the sentence. It is given that text has been left out preceding and following your quote.

Insert spaces before and after the ellipse.

Use only three full stops for an ellipse (A full stop is added *before* an ellipse to indicate the omission of the end of a sentence, unless the sentence is deliberately incomplete. Similarly, a full stop at the end of a sentence in the original is retained before an ellipse indicating the omission of material immediately following the full stop.)

E.g.

In May 1862, two new missionaries, Endeman and Albert Nechtigal, joined Grützner and Merensky. . . . It was decided that Endeman and Grützner continue working. . . . The latter two eventually established the mission station Botshabelo . . . which later would play an important role in the Ba-Kopa history.

### **Dashes**

The unspaced em-dash (—) is used (Alt 0151).

An unspaced en-dash (–), NOT A HYPHEN ( - ) is used to indicate ranges (e.g. of numbers or page numbers: 15–21).

### **Initials**

One initial: Steyn, P. 2009.

Multiple initials: Steyn, P. R. G. 2009. (spaces between initials)

### **Acronyms**

Give the full name when first mentioned (with acronym in brackets), thereafter use the acronym uniformly and consistently: Unisa, CSIR, HSRG, Sabine/SABINET

**et al.**

et al. (not italics) Never use in the reference list.

When citing a text with four+ authors, use only the first author's name followed by et al. in text, but list all authors in the reference list.

### **Tables and Figures**

Table headings appear above the tables and are numbered.

E.g. **Table 1:** Our Table

Figure captions appear below the figures and are numbered.

Captions should include, in the following order:

Figure 1. Artist, *title* (date), Medium/support, metric dimensions, Name of collection, city of collection, other collection information such as "gift of . . .", accession number (copyright or credit-line information in parentheses).

Credit lines should include all elements specified in the letter of permission from the rights holder, institution and/or photographer:

Figure 1: Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera* (ca. 1482). Tempera on panel, 203 x 315 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (photograph provided by Scala / Art Resource, New York).

Figure 2: Roman sarcophagus, *Death of Ménéger* (3<sup>rd</sup> century CE). Detail. Musée de Louvre, Paris (photograph © James Smith, Rome).

Figure 3: Alfred Stieglitz, *Egyptianer* (1925-27). Gelatin silver print, 11.7 x 9.2 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, anonymous gift (© 2009 Estate of Alfred Stieglitz / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York).

If using a scan from e.g. a catalogue, this must be indicated by means of an exact reference: Figure 4: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Misanthrope* (1568). Tempura on canvas, 86 x 85 cm. Signed and dated: "BRUEGEL 1568". Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples, catalogue number 335 (reproduced from Martin 1978, figure 37).

## 2. Citation Guidelines: Chicago Author-Date

### *In Text*

Within the body of your text, citations are indicated in parentheses with the author's surname, publication date, and page number (if needed, as when quoting direct words), e.g. (Smith 2012, 45).

Citations are placed within the text where they offer the least resistance to the flow of thought, frequently just before a mark of punctuation.

Single-author citations: If the author's name appears in the text it is not necessary to repeat it, but the date should follow immediately. Main (2014, 4) refers to this ...

Single author with two or more works in the same year: (Gray 2009a, 2009b)

One publication with two+ authors: ... contested by Smith and Jones (2013, 16). Also (Smith and Jones 2013, 16)

Multiple publications: ... venture failed (Bergin 2009, Chance 2008, 14–17).

When citing multiple publications/authors do so alphabetically (Loun 2010a, 3; Neube 2008, 77; Zeiss 1993, 4).

Multiple authors with the same initial surname and same year of publication—shorten titles: (Coe et al., "Media diversity," 2001) and (Coe et al., "Social media," 2001)

No page numbers are needed if citing a text on the internet, e.g. academic freedom (Smith 2014), unless page numbers are available

**Avoid citing a secondary source:** ... greater good (Mullins as quoted in Khan 2014, 6). Mullins (as quoted in Khan 2014, 6) argues ...

Blogs are only referenced in-text.

### *References (See examples below)*

Use the heading: References.

Only list sources actually referred to in the text.

### **Authors**

List authors alphabetically. Use surnames, first names (if known) and initials.

The entries are additionally sorted by the work's date of publication (oldest to newest).

Do not use a dash to replace author names.

If no author or editor, order alphabetically by title (corresponding with text citation).

A single-author entry precedes a multi-author entry beginning with the same surname.

Successive entries by two+ authors, when the first author is the same, are alphabetised by co-authors' surnames.

### *Titles*

Use headline-style capitalisation in titles and subtitles of works and parts of works such as articles or chapters (i.e., *Biology in the Modern World: Science for Life in South Africa*). Capitalise significant words and proper nouns.

Use headline-style capitalisation for titles of journals and periodicals (i.e., *Journal of Social Activism*).

Titles of stand-alone publications are typed in italics when used in text: *Evangelism and the Growth of Pentecostalism in Africa*.

### **Compound Sources**

Source within another source: Smit, R. 2012. "Where to Now?" In *Climates Change in the Next Decade*, edited by S.Y. Tovey and T. Rosti, 200–234. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Treat pamphlets, reports, brochures and freestanding publications (such as exhibition catalogues) as books. Give sufficient information to identify the document.

**Electronic references (NB:** The text reference must correspond with the alphabetical reference list):

Author's surname, name and initial (if available), title of article/publication, website address (URL)

Macdonald, Fiona. 2017. "The Extraordinary Life of the 1920s Lady Gaga." BBC Culture, September 20. Accessed October 6, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20170920-the-extraordinary-life-of-the-1920s-lady-gaga>

Personal communications, letters, conversations, emails, interviews, recordings may be listed separately in the reference list.

Omit: Inc., Co. Publishing Co. etc. from the name of the publisher.

**EXAMPLES** (For full list of examples see [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html))

R: Reference list

T: Text citation

**Books**

*One Author*

R: Pollan, Michael. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin.

T: (Pollan 2006, 99–100).

*Two or Three Authors*

R: Ward, Geoffrey C., and Ken Burns. 2007. *The War: An Intimate History, 1941–1945*. New York: Knopf.

T: (Ward and Burns 2007, 52).

**Four or More Authors**, list all of the authors in the reference list; in the text from 2nd citation, list only the first author, followed by et al. ("and others"):

R: Barnes, L. A., A. M. Harcombe, P. B. Ball, M. Z. Moola, and W. Grové. 2010. *Unisa Press: An Illustrated History*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.

T: (Barnes et al. 2010).

*Editor, Translator, or Compiler instead of Author*

R: Latimore, Richmond, trans. 1951. *The Iliad of Homer*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

T: (Latimore 1951, 91–92).

*Editor, Translator, or Compiler in Addition to Author*

R: García Márquez, Gabriel. 1988. *Love in the Time of Cholera*. Translated by Edith Grossman. London: Cape.

T: (García Márquez 1988, 242–55).

**Chapter or Other Part of a Book**

R: Kelly, John D. 2010. "Seeing Red: Mao Fethalism, Pax Americana, and the Moral Economy of War." In *Anthropology and Global Counterinsurgency*, edited by John D. Kelly, Beatrice Jauregui, Sean T. Mitchell, and Jeremy Walton, 67–83. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

T: (Kelly 2010, 77).

**Chapter of an Edited Volume Originally Published Elsewhere** (as in primary sources)

- R: Cicero, Quintus Tullius. 1986. "Handbook on Curvassing for the Consulship." In *Rome: Late Republic and Principate*, edited by Walter Emil Kaegi, Jr. and Peter White. Vol. 2 of *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization*, edited by John Boyer and Julius Kirshner. 33–46. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Originally published in Evelyn S. Shuckburgh, trans., *The Letters of Cicero*, vol. 1 (London: George Bell & Sons, 1908).
- T: (Cicero 1986, 33)

**Preface, Foreword, Introduction, or Similar Part of a Book**

- R: Rieger, James. 1982. Introduction to *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley; xi–xxviii. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- T: (Rieger 1982, xx–xxxi)

**Book Published Electronically**

If a book is available in more than one format, cite the version you consulted. For books consulted online, list a URL and an access date. If no fixed page numbers are available, you can include a section title or a chapter or other number.

- R: Austen, Jane. 2007. *Pride and Prejudice*. New York: Penguin Classics. Kindle edition.
- T: (Austen 2007)
- R: Kurian, Philip B., and Ralph Lerner, eds. 1987. *The Founders' Constitution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/> (accessed January 1, 2012).
- T: (Kurian and Lerner, chap. 10, doc. 19)

**Journal Articles**

**Article in a Print Journal**

In the text, list the specific page numbers consulted, if any. In the reference list entry, list the page range for the whole article.

- R: Weinstein, Joshua I. 2009. "The Market in Plato's Republic." *Classical Philology* 104 (4): 439–58. <https://doi.org/10.1086/650979>
- T: (Weinstein 2009, 440)

**Article in an Online Journal**

Include a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) if the journal lists one. A DOI is a permanent ID that, when appended to <https://doi.org/> in the address bar of an Internet browser, will lead to this source. If no DOI is available, list a URL and include an access date.

- R: Kossinets, George, and Duncan J. Watts. 2009. "Origins of Homophily in an Evolving Social Network." *American Journal of Sociology* 115: 403–50. <https://doi.org/10.1086/599247>
- T: (Kossinets and Watts 2009, 411)

**Other Sources**

**Book Review**

- R: Kamp, David. 2006. "Deconstructing Dinner." Review of *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, by Michael Pollan. *New York Times*, April 23, Sunday Book Review. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/23/books/review/23kamp.html> (accessed January 1, 2012).

- T: (Kamp 2006)

**Thesis or Dissertation**

- R: Choi, Mihwa. 2008. "Contesting Imaginaries in Death Rituals during the Northern Song Dynasty." PhD dissertation, University of Chicago.
- T: (Choi 2008)

#### **Archival material/manuscript collections**

When citing archival material in the author-date style, it is unnecessary to use *n.d.* (no date) in place of the date. Dates of individual items should be mentioned in the text, when applicable:

R. Egmont Manuscripts. Phillips Collection. University of Georgia Library.

Kallen, Horace. Papers. NYIO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.

T. Ojéshorpe wrote to the trustees on January 13, 1733 (**Egmont Manuscripts**), to say...

Alvin Johnson, in a memorandum prepared sometime in 1937 (**Kallen Papers, file 36**), observed that...

If only one item from a collection has been mentioned in the text, however, the entry may begin with the writer's name (if known). In such a case, the use of *n.d.* may become appropriate:

R. Dinkel, Joseph. n.d. Description of Louis Agassiz written at the request of Elizabeth Cary Agassiz. Agassiz Papers. Houghton Library, Harvard University.

T. (Dinkel, n.d.)

#### ***Paper Presented at a Meeting or Conference***

R. Adelman, Rachel. 2009. "Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made Of": God's Footstool in the Aramaic Targumim and Midrabic Tradition." Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society of Biblical Literature, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 21-24.

T. (Adelman 2009)

#### **TYPES OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED**

As SAJSWSD is an accredited academic journal, it needs to adhere to the minimum requirements of the Department of Higher Education and Training of South Africa. This means that mostly empirical peer reviewed research articles should be published, but a limited number of pages can contain book reviews or conference reports. In exceptional cases one article per issue might address research issues *per se*. The decisions of the reviewers and the editors are final.

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## ANNEXURE 23: STATISTICAL DATA GENERATED BY THE NATIONAL SURVEY

**Table 1: Composition of the national questionnaire**

Section	Aspects that were covered	Questions
<b>Section 1</b>	<i>Demographic and related information</i>	
<b>Section 2</b>	<i>The school social worker's responsibilities at national level</i>	2.1 Scale : Responsibilities 2.2: Space for comments
<b>Section 3</b>	<i>The school social worker's responsibilities at provincial level</i>	3.1: Scale: Responsibilities 3.2: Space for comments
<b>Section 4</b>	<i>The school social worker's responsibilities at district level</i>	4.1 Scale 3.1: Responsibilities towards learners 4.2 Scale 3.2: Responsibilities towards educators 4.3 Scale 3.3: Responsibilities towards screening, development and implementation of programmes and projects 4.4 Scale 3.4: Responsibilities towards social work and education policy changes and new trends 4.5 Scale 3.5: Responsibilities in terms of their role towards multi-disciplinary teams 4.6: Scale 3.6: Responsibilities in terms of the implementation of inclusive education 4.7: Space for comments
<b>Section 5</b>	<i>The school social worker's responsibilities in schools (mainstream and special)</i>	5.1 Scale 4.1: Responsibilities towards learners 5.2 Scale 4.2: Responsibilities towards educators 5.3 Scale 4.3: Responsibilities towards social work and education policy changes and new trends 5.4 Scale 4.4: Responsibilities in terms of role as member of multi-disciplinary teams 5.5 Scale 4.5: General responsibilities 5.6 Space for comments

**Table 2: Composition of participants in terms of title/rank**

Title/Rank	Number	Percentage (%)
Director	1	3.70
Deputy Director	0	0.00
Chief Education Specialist	0	0.00
Senior Education Specialist	5	18.52
Social work supervisor	8	29.63
Social work coordinator	0	0.00
Other	13	48.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Table 3: Feedback from provinces**

Province	Number of completed questionnaires received	Percentage (%)
Free State	3	11.1
Western Cape	5	18.5
Northern Cape	3	11.1
Eastern Cape	2	7.4
Limpopo	1	3.7
North West	3	11.1
Kwazulu-Natal	3	11.1
Mpumalanga	2	7.4
Gauteng	5	18.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4: Number of school social workers per province**

Province in South Africa	Number of school social workers	Location
Eastern Cape	46	District offices (46)
Free State	32	Provincial office (1), District Offices(7), Special Schools(15), Schools of Industry (4) and SGB positions (5)
Gauteng	Unsure	Provincial Offices, Special schools
Kwazulu-Natal	14	Provincial Offices (1), District Offices (12), School of Industry (1)
Limpopo	Unsure	Mainstream schools and special schools
Mpumalanga	4	District Offices (4)
Northern Cape	1	District office (4)
North West	2	Provincial office (1), SGB position (1)
Western Cape	165	Provincial Office(1), District Offices(79), Special schools(65), SGB (21)

**Table 5: The need for school social work**

Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent
0	0	2 (7,4%)	25 (92.6%)

**Table 6: Professional title / designation of school social workers**

Title/Designation	Number	Percentage (%)
Social worker	13	34.2
School social worker	12	31.6
Socio-pedagogue	3	7.9
Educational therapist	1	2.6
Senior Education Specialist	5	13.2
Other	4	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 7: Will other provinces follow suit on Limpopo?**

Yes	No	Unsure	Not applicable (Limpopo)
5	1	18	2

**Table 8: Scale 1 - School social worker's responsibilities at national level**

Key Responsibility	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Develop school social work strategies and policies in line with DBE	0	0	0	4 (14.8%)	4 (14.8%)	19 (70.4%)	5.56	0.751
2. Develop norms and standards for school social workers	0	0	0	3 (11.1%)	7 (25.9%)	17 (63%)	5.52	0,700
3. Develop systems and structures for mainstreaming school social work services in education	0	0	1 (3.7%)	2 (7.4%)	5 (18.5%)	19 (70.4%)	5.56	0,801
4. Monitor and evaluate the translation and implementation of strategies, policies and programmes in school social work at provincial level	0	0	0	3 (11.1%)	8 (29.6%)	16 (59.3%)	5.48	0.700
5. Strengthen the capacity of provinces, districts and schools to mainstream school social work services	0	0	0	5 (18.5%)	5 (18.5%)	17 (63%)	5.44	0,801
6. Strengthen relationships between important stakeholders (e.g. the DBE on national and provincial levels, national and provincial government departments, universities, NGOs, research entities, and civil organisations).	0	0	1 (3.7%)	0	13 (48.1%)	13 (48.1%)	5.41	0.694
7. Coordinate school social work services between national and provincial levels and among the various provinces	0	0	2 (7.4%)	2 (7.4%)	8 (29.6%)	15 (55.6%)	5.33	0,920
8. Keep abreast of global, regional and national trends in social work, school social work	0	0	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	7 (25.9%)	15 (55.6%)	5.33	0,877

**Table 9: Scale 2 - School social worker's responsibilities at provincial level**

Key responsibility	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Facilitate and develop school social work service in line with the framework of inclusive education as in White Paper 6 and the Provincial Inclusive Education Strategy Plan	0	0	1 (3.7%)	2 (7.4%)	6 (22.25%)	18 (66.7%)	5.52	0.802
2. Develop a school social work policy for the province that will include a relevant measurement tool	0	0	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	5 (18.5%)	17 (63%)	5.41	0.888
3. Develop a provincial plan of action for school social work service delivery	0	0	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	6 (22.2%)	19 (70.4%)	5.59	0.747
4. Ensure that school social work services are being rendered in all districts	0	0	0	1 (3.7%)	6 (22.2%)	20 (74.1%)	5.70	0.542
5. Develop and promote guidelines/ programmes for micro-, mezzo- and macro-intervention based on an eco-systemic approach and crisis intervention with learners, parents and educators	0	0	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	11 (40.7%)	11 (40.7%)	5.19	0.834
6. Organise and present seminars on aspects of school social work services for office-based personnel and educators	0	0	2 (7.4%)	5 (18.5%)	10 (37%)	10 (37%)	5.04	0.940
7. Provide comprehensive support to district-based school social workers (for example in-service training, professional development, supervision and consultation services as well as the monitoring of service delivery)	0	0	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	9 (33.3%)	14 (51.9%)	5.33	0.832

<b>8. Provide support to district- and school-based support teams with regard to social issues/problems</b>	0	1 (3.7%)	0	9 (33.3%)	7 (25.9%)	10 (37%)	4.93	1.035
<b>9. Keep abreast of policy and trends which guide the social work profession within the DBE</b>	0	0	0	5 (18.5%)	8 (29.6%)	14 (51.9%)	5.33	0.784
<b>10. Communicate changes and trends to relevant management, staff and service providers</b>	0	0	0	7 (25.9%)	7 (25.9%)	13 (48.1%)	5.22	0.847
<b>11. Coordinate school social work services by acting as a link between National Department of Basic Education and the Provincial DBE</b>	0	0	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	9 (33.3%)	13 (48.1%)	5.26	0.859
<b>12. Coordinate school social work by acting as link between school social workers at district level and relevant section at provincial level</b>	0	0	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	12 (44.4%)	13 (48.1%)	5.37	0.742
<b>13. Coordinate and assist universities with service learning placements for school social work students</b>	0	0	2 (7.4%)	8 (29.6%)	6 (22.2%)	11 (40.7%)	4.96	1.018
<b>14. Facilitate regular subcommittee meetings for school social workers at district level</b>	1 (3.7%)	0	3 (7.4%)	7 (25.9%)	7 (25.9%)	9 (33.3%)	4.70	1.265
<b>15. Coordinate and manage programmes on social issues/problems that impact on the school setting(e.g. child and substance abuse)</b>	1 (3.7%)	0	2 (7.4%)	4 (14.8%)	6 (22.2%)	14 (51.9%)	5.07	1.269
<b>16. Organise opportunities for professional development of school social workers and other social workers within the DBE</b>	0	0	0	6 (22.2%)	10 (37.0%)	11 (40.7%)	5.19	0.786
<b>17. Promote inter-sectoral collaboration and partnerships by the establishment and maintaining of forums that contribute to effective school social work service</b>	0	0	2 (7.4%)	6 (22.2%)	4 (14.8%)	15 (55.6%)	5.19	1.039

<b>delivery</b>								
<b>18. Disseminating departmental policy to stakeholders/partners</b>	0	0	1 (3.7%)	7 (25.9%)	9 (33.3%)	10 (37%)	5.04	0.898
<b>19. Screen and evaluate the social programmes and projects delivered by external service providers in order to ensure they are in line with departmental policy</b>	0	0	1 (3.7%)	8 (29.6%)	10 (37%)	8 (29.6%)	4.93	0.874
<b>20. In conjunction with district school social workers, monitor and evaluate, the programmes and projects that are implemented at sites of learning by service providers</b>	0	0	0	6 (22.2%)	11 (40.7%)	10 (37%)	5.15	0.770
<b>21. Provide guidance on school social work to social workers seconded to the DBE by other government departments and partners</b>	0	0	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	12 (44.4%)	10 (37%)	5.15	0.818
<b>22. Ensure and promote inter-disciplinary collaboration by active participation in forums of psychosocial and other sections within the department</b>	0	0	0	6 (22.2%)	9 (33.3%)	12 (44.4%)	5.22	0.801
<b>23. Act as link between the department and other province-based agencies with regard to social issues/problems (e.g. violence)</b>	1 (3.7%)	0	0	7 (25.9%)	9 (33.3%)	10 (37%)	5.04	0.898
<b>24. Develop a database of all school social work programmes in the province in order to prevent duplication</b>	0	0	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	7 (25.9%)	16 (59.3%)	5.41	0.844
<b>25. Ensure and sustain open channel of communication with all stakeholders</b>	0	0	0	4 (14.8%)	6 (22.2%)	17 (63%)	5.48	0.753

**Table 10 Scale 3.1 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level towards learners**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Address social problems experienced by individuals and groups of learners (e.g. bullying, teenage pregnancy)	0	0	0	0	7 (25.9%)	20 (74.1%)	5.74	0.447
2. Provide crisis intervention services (e.g. death of parent)	0	0	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	8 (29.6%)	17 (63.0%)	5.52	0.753
3. Referral to external service providers for follow-up or statutory intervention (e.g. child abuse)	0	0	1 (3.7%)	0	5 (18.5%)	21 (77.8%)	5.70	0.669
4. Develop and implement programmes to prevent social problems/issues among learners (e.g. bullying, child abuse, teenage pregnancy)	0	0	0	0	6 (22.2%)	21 (77.8%)	5.78	0.424
5. Implement parental guidance programmes	0	0	0	1 (3.7%)	9 (33.3%)	17 (63%)	5.59	0.572

**Table 11: Scale 3.2 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level towards educators/teachers**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Assist educators with the early identification of learner’s needs/ problems	0	0	0	1 (3.7%)	10 (37.0%)	16 (59.3%)	5.56	0.577
2. Assist educators with reporting learners with social barriers of learning	0	0	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	12 (44.4%)	11 (40.7%)	5.22	0.801
3. Assist educators with supporting learners with social barriers of learning	0	1 (3.8%)	0	3 (11.5%)	8 (30.8%)	14 (53.8%)	5.31	0.970
4. Empower educators with regard to knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters, and community changes	0	0	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	9 (33.3%)	13 (51.9%)	5.26	0.859
5. Empower educators with regard to the management of learners in the classroom	0	0	4 (14.8%)	5 (18.5%)	8 (29.6%)	10 (37%)	4.89	1.086

**Table 12 Scale 3.3 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level regarding the screening, development and implementation of programmes and projects**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Evaluate and monitor programmes and projects	0	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	6 (22.2%)	10 (37%)	9 (33.0%)	4.93	1.035
2. Assist with the management of programmes and projects	0	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	7 (25.9%)	11 (40.7%)	7 (25.9%)	4.81	1.001
3. Develop tools to evaluate the success of projects and programmes	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	7 (25.9%)	9 (33.3%)	8 (29.6%)	4.70	1.265
4. Compile business plans where required	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	6 (22.2%)	7 (25.9%)	5 (18.5%)	5 (18.5%)	4.00	1.414
5. Implement and monitor the progress of psychosocial programmes	0	0	0	5 (18.5%)	12 (44.4%)	10 (37.0%)	5.19	0.736
6. Network and liaise with external resources	0	0	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	7 (25.9%)	16 (59.3%)	5.41	0,844
7. Develop and support infrastructure at schools such the school-based support teams (SBST)	0	0	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	7 (25.9%)	15 (55.6%)	5.33	0.877

**Table 13: Scale 3.4 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSW's at district level towards social work and education policy changes and new trends**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Master and disseminate knowledge of relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	0	0	0	3 (11.1%)	15 (55.6%)	9 (33.3%)	5.22	0.641
2. Communicate changes and trends to district management teams	0	0	0	4 (14.8%)	15 (55.6%)	8 (29.6%)	5.15	0.662
3. Attend, participate and provide feedback on conferences and workshops	0	0	0	4 (14.8%)	14 (51.9%)	9 (33.3%)	5.19	0.681
4. Attend and participate in school social work sub-committee	0	0	1 (3.7%)	8 (29.6%)	8 (29.6%)	8 (29.6%)	4.96	0.898

**Table 14: Scale 3.5 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level in terms of their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Attend relevant provincial and regional meetings with other professions	0	0	0	6 (22.2%)	14 (51.9%)	7 (25.9%)	5.04	0.706
2. Support and guide learner support counsellors at circuit level	0	0	3 (11.1%)	8 (29.6%)	8 (29.6%)	8 (29.6%)	4.78	1.03

**Table 15: Scale 3.6 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs at district level in terms of the implementation of Inclusive Education**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Participate in the development of national and provincial guidelines for inclusive teaching, learning and assessment	0	1 (3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	9 (33.3%)	8 (29.6%)	6 (22.2%)	4.56	1.086
2. Participate in the professional development of provincial, district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development	0	0	1 (3.7%)	8 (29.6%)	10 (37%)	8 (29.6%)	4.93	0,874
3. Participate in the development of Training manuals in social issues that include theories, models, practices and tools	0	0	3 (11.1%)	1 (3.7%)	13 (48.1%)	10 (37%)	5.11	0.934
4. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition of necessary assistive devices	0	2 (7.4%)	4 (14.8%)	6 (22.2%)	9 (33.3%)	6 (22.2%)	4.48	1.221
5. Participate in the development of a framework for upgrading physical and material resources that will ensure the conversion of schools into full service schools	0	2 (7.4%)	4 (14.8%)	6 (22.2%)	10 (37.0%)	5 (18.5%)	4.44	1.188
6. Contribute in the development and updating of norms and standards for specialist support	0	0	4 (14.8%)	7 (25.9%)	11 (40.7%)	5 (18.5%)	4.63	0.967

<b>7. Participate in the development of a database of community support services, agencies, NGOs, government departments, and other relevant organisations</b>	0	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	12 (44.4%)	9 (33.3%)	5.00	1.000
<b>8. Promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders</b>	0	0	2 (7.4%)	7 (25.9%)	10 (37%)	8 (29.6%)	4.89	0.934
<b>9. Assist in the establishment, development and management of district-based support team (DBST)</b>	0	0	3 (11.1%)	7 (25.9%)	8 (29.6%)	9 (33.3%)	4.85	1.027
<b>10. Participate in the transformation process of schools into full service schools and special schools into resource centres</b>	0	2 (7.4%)	3 (11.1%)	7 (25.9%)	10 (37%)	5 (18.5%)	4.48	1.156
<b>11. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition, upgrading and maintenance of physical resources to support the transformation process of schools into Inclusive education sites</b>	0	3 (11.1%)	6 (22.2%)	5 (18.5%)	9 (33.3%)	4 (14.8%)	4.19	1.272
<b>12. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive system with special focus on social issues to departmental officials</b>	0	0	2 (7.4%)	6 (22.2%)	8 (29.6%)	11 (40.7%)	5.04	0.980
<b>13. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive education system with special focus on social issues to other government departments, NGOs, CBOs and parents</b>	0	1 (3.7%)	2 (7.4%)	5 (18.5%)	8 (29.6%)	11 (40.7%)	4.96	1.126

**Table 16: Scale 4.1 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs in schools towards learners**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Develop and implement an individual support plan for each learner	0	0	3 (11.1%)	5 (18.5%)	9 (33.3%)	6 (37%)	4.96	1.018
2. Participate in multi-disciplinary meetings with regards to learners	0	0	0	2 (7.4%)	11 (40.7%)	14 (51.9%)	5.44	0.641
3. Offer crisis intervention programmes when relevant	0	0	0	3 (11.1%)	8 (29.6%)	16 (59.3%)	5.48	0.700
4. Assist and support in learner disciplinary hearings	0	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	9 (33.3%)	10 (37.0%)	6 (22.2%)	4.70	0.993

**Table 17: Scale 4.2 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs in schools towards educators (teachers)**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Assist with the early identification of learner's needs	0	0	0	3 (11.1%)	12 (44.4%)	12 (44.4%)	5.33	0.679
2. Assist with reporting and supporting learners with social barriers to learning	0	0	1(3.7%)	3 (11.1%)	11 (40.7%)	12 (44.4%)	5.26	0.813
3. Assist in teacher-support meetings	0	0	0	10 (37%)	10 (37%)	7 (25.9%)	4.89	0.801
4. Empower educators with regard to policies, legislation, and statutory matters	0	0	0	5 (18.5%)	15 (55.6%)	7 (25.9%)	5.07	0.675
5. Empower educators with regard to classroom management	0	3 (11.1%)	1 (3.7%)	8 (29.6%)	10 (37.0%)	5 (18.5%)	4.48	1.189
6. Empower educators with regard to social issues relating to the curriculum (e.g. bullying, violence)	0	0	0	5 (18.5%)	11 (40.7%)	11 (40.7%)	5.22	0.751
7. Liaise between learners and staff with regard to social work issues	0	0	0	4 (14.8%)	10 (37.0%)	13 (48.1%)	5.33	0.734
8. Support educators during parent consultations	0	0	0	8 (29.6%)	15 (55.6%)	4 (14.8%)	4.85	0,662
9. Participate in the professional development of educators in order to identify and manage social barriers to learning and development in terms of the SIAS policy	0	0	1 (3.7%)	5 (18.5%)	10 (37.0%)	11 (40.7%)	5.15	0.864

**Table 18: Scale 4.3 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSWs in schools regarding social work and educational policy changes and new trends**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Be knowledgeable about relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	0	0	0	2 (7.4%)	9 (33.3%)	16 (59.3%)	5.52	0.643
2. Attend and participate in continuous professional development (CPD) activities	0	0	0	2 (7.4%)	9 (33.3%)	16 (59.3%)	5.52	0.643
3. Attend and provide feedback on workshops and conferences to principal of the school	0	0	0	4 (14.8%)	11 (40.7%)	12 (44.4%)	5.30	0.724
4. Attend and participate in social work district sub-committee	0	0	0	7 (25.9%)	9 (33.3%)	11 (40.7%)	5.15	0.818

**Table 19: Scale 4.4 - Potential functions/responsibilities of SSW's in schools in terms of their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Participate as member of school-based support team (SBST), circuit-based support team (CBCT) or, if required, district-based support team (DBST)	0	0	1 (3.7%)	4 (14.8%)	10 (37.0%)	12 (44.4%)	5.22	0.847
2. Participate in the screening and assessment of new admissions	1 (3.7%)	0	4 (14.8%)	5 (18.5%)	11 (40.7%)	6 (22.2%)	4.59	1.217
3. Participate in the development of life skills programmes, material and information to support the life orientation learning area	0	0	3 (11.1%)	9 (33.3%)	9 (33.3%)	6 (22.2%)	4.67	0.961
4. Assist with the development of the school's code of conduct	0	0	6 (22.2%)	8 (29.6%)	8 (29.6%)	5 (18.5%)	4.44	1.050

**Table 20: Scale 4.5 - General functions/ responsibilities of SSWs in schools**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Develop programmes to address specific barriers to learning and development (e.g. anxiety)	0	1 (3.7%)	0	6 (22.2%)	11 (40.7%)	9 (33.3%)	5.00	0.961
2. Develop a strategic plan for service delivery	0	1 (3.7%)	0	11 (40.7%)	8 (29.6%)	7 (25.9%)	4.74	0.984
3. Develop an annual plan to guide the functions and operations of social work	0	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	7 (25.9%)	8 (29.6%)	10 (37.0%)	4.93	1.072
4. Present workshops on social issues to learners, staff, parents and or other groups (e.g. on the dangers of social media)	0	0	0	1 (3.7%)	14 (51.9%)	12 (44.4%)	5.41	0.572
5. Liaise with external social workers and other professionals where relevant	0	0	0	1 (3.7%)	14 (51.9%)	12 (44.4%)	5.41	0.572
6. Record-keeping	0	0	0	2 (7.4%)	3 (11.1%)	22 (81.5%)	5.74	0.594
7. Assist with the management of trauma and disaster situations within the school and direct community	0	0	0	2 (7.4%)	9 (33.3%)	16 (59.3%)	5.52	0.643

<b>8. Consult with the provincial or district office social workers with regard to social work-related matters</b>	0	0	0	5 (18.5%)	11 (40.7%)	11 (40.7%)	5.22	0.751
<b>9. Facilitate parent evenings on e.g. social media, bullying, parental guidance</b>	0	0	0	4 (14.8%)	14 (51.9%)	9 (33.3%)	5.19	0.681
<b>10. Be a behaviour specialist and apply behaviour modification interventions</b>	0	0	4 (14.8%)	6 (22.2%)	9 (33.3%)	8 (29.6%)	4.78	1.050
<b>11. Be a mental health expert and provide consultation services on related issues (e.g. on ADHD and anxiety)</b>	1 (3.7%)	2 (7.4%)	4 (14.8%)	8 (29.6%)	7 (25.9%)	5 (18.5%)	4.22	1.340
<b>12. Be an alcohol and drug abuse specialist and provide related services (e.g. by creating and implementing relevant programmes)</b>	1 (3.7%)	0	5 (18.5%)	7 (25.9%)	9 (33.3%)	5 (18.5%)	4.41	1.27
<b>13. Be a violence-prevention specialist and provide related services (e.g. by addressing gangs, juvenile offences and violence against teachers)</b>	1 (3.7%)	0	8 (29.6%)	6 (22.2%)	7 (25.9%)	5 (18.5%)	4.22	1.281

## ANNEXURE 24: STATISTICAL DATA GENERATED BY THE FREE STATE PROVINCE SURVEY

**Table 1: Composition of the Free State questionnaire**

Section	Aspects that were covered	Questions
<b>Section 1</b>	<i>Socio-demographic information</i>	
<b>Section 2</b>	<i>General requirements that school social workers should meet</i>	2.1 Minimum years of practical experience 2.2 Minimum qualification 2.3 Direct supervisor 2.4 Knowledge and understanding
<b>Section 3</b>	<i>The school social worker's responsibilities at district level</i>	3.1 Scale 1.1 : Responsibilities towards learners 3.2 Scale 1.2: Responsibilities towards educators 3.3 Scale 1.3 : Responsibilities towards screening, development and implementation of programmes and projects 3.4 Scale 1.4 : Responsibilities towards social work and education policy changes and new trends 3.5 Scale 1.5 : Responsibilities in terms of their role towards multi-disciplinary teams 3.6: Scale 1.6: Responsibilities in terms of the implementation of Inclusive Education 3.7: Space for comments
<b>Section 4</b>	<i>The school social worker's responsibilities in schools (mainstream and special)</i>	4.1 Scale 2.1: Responsibilities towards learners 4.2 Scale 2.2: Responsibilities towards educators 4.3 Scale 2.3: Responsibilities towards social work and education policy changes and new trends 4.4 Scale 2.4: Responsibilities in terms of role as member of multi-disciplinary teams 4.5 Scale 2.5: General responsibilities 4.6 Space for comments
<b>Section 5</b>	<i>Some general matters that may have an influence on the way in which school social work is done</i>	5.1 Scale: Basic infrastructure that is needed 5.2 Growing need for school social work 5.3 Challenges

**Table 2: Participants' years of experience as a school social worker**

Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	10 – 15 years	15 - 20 years	20- 25 years	25 – 30 years	More than 30 years
1 (3.6%)	3 (10.7%)	1 (10.7%)	13 (46.6%)	6 (21.4%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)	0	2 (7.1%)

**Table 3: Participants' years practicing social work**

Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	10 – 15 years	15 - 20 years	20- 25 years	25 – 30 years	More than 30 years
0	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)	5 (17.9%)	3 (10.7%)	6 (21.4%)	7 (21.4%)	3 (10.7%)	3 (10.7%)

**Table 4: Minimum years of experience of practical experience that a candidate need before being appointed as a school social worker**

Can start immediately after qualifying	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	10 – 15 years	15 - 20 years
1 (3.6%)	3 (10.7%)	9 (32.1%)	9 (32.1%)	6 (21.4%)	0

**Table 5: Minimum qualifications before being appointed as a school social worker**

A Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW)	Masters level degree in Social Work (MSW)	A teaching degree or diploma	Other
18 (64.3%)	7 (25%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)

**Table 6: Direct supervisor of the school social worker**

I do not have a supervisor	Principal of school where appointed	Chief Education Specialist	Principal Social worker	Unsure	Other
3 (10.7%)	14 (50%)	2 (7.1%)	0	1 (3.6%)	8 (28.6%)

**Table 7: The direct supervisor’s knowledge and understanding of the school social worker’s work**

I don’t have a direct supervisor	Poor	Fair	Neutral	Good	Excellent
0	9 (32.1%)	6 (21.4%)	3 (10.7%)	3 (10.7%)	2 (7.1%)

**Table 8 Scale 1.1 - The importance of the potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at district level might have towards learners**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Address social problems experienced by individuals and groups of learners (e.g. bullying, teenage pregnancy)	0	0	0	0	1 (14.3%)	6 (85.7%)	5.86	0.378
2. Provide crisis intervention services (e.g. death of parent)	0	0	1 (14.3%)	1 14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	4 (57.1%)	5.14	1.215
3. Referral to external service providers for follow-up or statutory intervention (e.g. child abuse)	0	0	0	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	4 (57.1%)	5.43	0.787
4. Develop and implement programmes to prevent social problems/issues among learners (e.g. bullying, child abuse, teenage pregnancy)	0	0	0	0	1 (14.3%)	6 (85.7%)	5.86	0.378
5. Implement parental guidance programmes	0	0	0	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)	5.29	0.756

**Table 9: Scale 1.2 - The importance of the potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at district level might have towards educators/teachers**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Assist educators with the early identification of learner's needs/problems	0	0	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	5.00	1.528
2. Assist educators with reporting learners with social barriers to learning	0	0	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	5.00	1.155
3. Assist educators with supporting learners with social barriers to learning	0	0	1 (14.3%)	0	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)	5.14	1.069
4. Empower educators with knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters, and community changes	0	0	0	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	5 (71.4%)	5.57	0.787
5. Empower educators with regard to the management of learners in the classroom	0	1 (14.3%)	0	0	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)	5.00	1.414

**Table 10 Scale 1.3 - The importance of the potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at district level might have regarding the screening, development and implementation of programmes and projects**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Evaluate and monitor programmes and projects	0	0	0	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	5.14	1.069
2. Assist with the management of programmes and projects	0	0	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	4.86	1.215
3. Develop tools to evaluate the success of projects and programmes	0	0	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)	3 (50%)	1 (16.7%)	4.68	1.033
4. Compile business plans where required	0	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	0	3.43	1.134
5. Implement and monitor the progress of psychosocial programmes	0	0	0	0	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	5.57	0.535
6. Network and liaise with external resources	0	0	0	0	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)	5.71	0.488
7. Develop and support infrastructure at schools such the school-based support teams (SBST)	0	0	0	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	4.86	0.900

**Table 11: Scale 1.4 - The importance of the possible functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at district level might have towards social work and education policy changes and new trends**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Master and disseminate knowledge of relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	0	0	0	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	4 (57.1%)	5.29	0.951
2. Communicate changes and trends to district management teams	0	0	0	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	5.00	0.816
3. Attend, participate and provide feedback on conferences and workshops	0	0	0	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	4 (57.1%)	5.43	0.787
4. Attend and participate in school social work sub-committee	0	0	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	5.00	1.155

**Table 12: Scale 1.5 - The importance of the possible functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at district level in terms of their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Attend relevant provincial and regional meetings with other professions	0	0	1 (14.3%)	0	2 (28.6%)	4 (57.1%)	5.29	1.113
2. Support and guide learner support counsellors at circuit level	0	0	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	4 (57.1%)	5.14	1.215

**Table 13: Scale 1.6 - The importance of the possible functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) at district level in terms of the implementation of Inclusive Education**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Participate in the development of national and provincial guidelines for inclusive teaching, learning and assessment	0	0	0	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	42.9%	5.00	1.000
2. Participate in the professional development of provincial, district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development	0	0	0	0	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)	5.71	0.488
3. Participate in the development of manuals for training in social issues that include theories, models, practices and tools	0	0	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	4 (57.1%)	5.14	1.215
4. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition of necessary assistive devices	0	0	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.2%)	4,71	1.113
5. Participate in the development of a framework for upgrading physical and material resources that will ensure the conversion of schools into full service schools	0	0	2 (28.6%)	0	5 (71.4%)	0	4.43	0.976
6. Contribute to the development and updating of norms and standards for specialist support	0	0	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	4.86	1.215

<b>7. Participate in the development of a database of community support services, agencies, NGOs, government departments, and other relevant organisations</b>	0	0	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	4 (57.1%)	5.14	1.215
<b>8. Promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders</b>	0	0	0	0	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)	5.71	0.488
<b>9. Assist in the establishment, development and management of district-based support team (DBST)</b>	0	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	4.57	1.618
<b>10. Participate in the transformation process of schools into full service schools, and special schools into resource centres</b>	0	0	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	2(28.6%)	4.71	1.113
<b>11. Participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition, upgrading and maintenance of physical resources that will support the transformation process of schools into inclusive education sites</b>	0	0	1 (14.3%)	5 (71.4%)	0	1 (14.3%)	4.14	0.900
<b>12. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive system with special focus on social issues to departmental officials</b>	0	0	0	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	4 (57.1%)	5.43	0.787
<b>13. Advocacy of principles and rights within an inclusive education system with special focus on social issues to other government departments, NGOs, CBOs and parents</b>	0	0	0	2 (28.6%)	0	5 (71.4%)	5,43	0.976

**Table 14: Scale 2.1 - The importance of the potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSW's) in schools might have towards learners**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Develop and implement an individual support plan (ISP) for each learner	0	0	1 (4.8%)	6 (28.6%)	8 (38.1%)	6 (28.6%)	4.9	0.889
2. Participate in multi-disciplinary meetings with regards to learners	0	0	0	2 (9.5%)	3 (14.3%)	16 (76.2%)	5.67	0.658
3. Offer crisis intervention programmes when relevant	0	0	1 (4.8%)	5 (23.8%)	6 (28.6%)	9 (42.9%)	5.10	0.944
4. Assist and support in learner disciplinary hearings	1 (4.8%)	0	2 (9.5%)	5 (23.8%)	7 (33.3%)	6 (28.6%)	4.67	1.278

**Table 15: Scale 2.2 - The importance of the potential functions/ responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) in schools might have towards educators (teachers)**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Assist with the early identification of learner's needs	0	0	0	3(14.3%)	7 (33.3%)	11 (52.4%)	5.38	0.740
2. Assist with reporting and supporting learners with social barriers to learning	0	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	7 (33.3%)	10 (47.6%)	5.15	1.108
3. Assist in teacher support meetings	0	0	2 (9.5%)	4 (19%)	11 (52.4%)	4 (19%)	4.81	0.873
4. Empower educators with regard to policies, legislation, and statutory matters	0	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	7 (33.3%)	3 (14.3%)	9 (42.9%)	4.86	1.195
5. Empower educators with regard to classroom management	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	5 (23.8%)	5 (23.8%)	4 (19%)	4 (19%)	4.00	1.449
6. Empower educators with regard to social issues relating to the curriculum (e.g. bullying, violence)	0	0	0	7 (33.3%)	8 (38.1%)	6 (28.6%)	4.95	0.805
7. Liaise between learners and staff with regard to social work issues	0	0	1 (4.8%)	4 (19%)	7 (33.3%)	9 (42.9%)	5.14	0.910
8. Support educators during parent consultations	0	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	7 (33.3%)	8 (38.1%)	3 (14.3%)	4.48	1.030
9. Participate in the professional development of educators in order to identify and manage social barriers to learning and development in terms of the SIAS policy	0	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	7 (33.3%)	8 (38.1%)	4 (19%)	4.62	1.024

**Table 16: Scale 2.3 - The importance of the following potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) in schools might have regarding social work and educational policy changes and new trends**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Be knowledgeable about relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners	0	0	0	3 (14.3%)	9 (42.9%)	9 (42.9%)	5.29	0.717
2. Attend and participate in continuous professional development (CPD) activities	0	0	0	0	13 (61.9%)	8 (38.1%)	5.38	0.498
3. Attend and provide feedback on workshops and conferences to principal of the school	0	0	1 (4.8%)	4 (19%)	9 (42.9%)	7 (33.3%)	5.05	0.865
4. Attend and participate in social work district sub-committee	1 (4.8%)	0	2 (9.5%)	8 (38.1%)	5 (23.8%)	5 (23.8%)	4.48	1.250

**Table 17: Scale 2.4 - The importance of the potential functions/responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) in schools in terms of their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams**

Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Participate as member of school-based support team (SBST), circuit-based support team (CBCT) or, if required, district-based support team (DBST)	0	0	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)	9 (42.9%)	9 (42.9%)	5.19	0.928
2. Participate in the screening and assessment of new admissions	0	0	0	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	14 (70%)	5.60	0.681
3. Participate in the development of life skills programmes, material and information to support the life orientation learning area	0	0	0	4 (19%)	8 (38.1%)	9 (42.9%)	5.24	0.768
4. Assist with the development of the school's code of conduct	0	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	5 (23.8%)	7 (33.3%)	7 (33.3%)	4.86	1.108

**Table 18: Scale 2.5 - The importance of the general functions/ responsibilities that school social workers (SSWs) in schools might have**

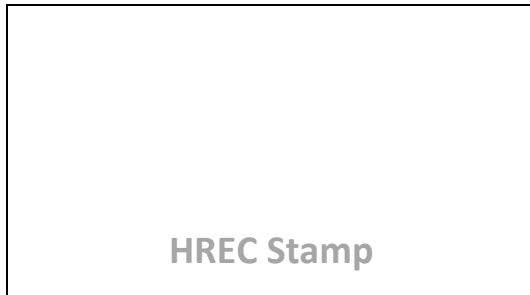
Key responsibility / function	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Develop programmes to address specific barriers to learning and development (e.g. anxiety)	0	0	0	6 (28.6%)	13 (61.9%)	2 (9.5%)	4.81	0.602
2. Develop a strategic plan for service delivery	0	0	0	7 (33.3%)	8 (38.1%)	6 (28.6%)	4.95	0.805
3. Develop an annual plan to guide the functions and operations of social work	0	0	0	8 (38.1%)	7 (33.3%)	5 (23.8%)	4.85	0.813
4. Present workshops on social issues to learners, staff, parents and/or other groups (e.g. on the dangers of social media)	0	0	3 (14.3%)	4 (19%)	8 (38.1%)	6 (28.6%)	4.81	1.030
5. Liaise with external social workers and other professionals where relevant	0	0	0	1 (4.8%)	5 (23.8%)	15 (71.4%)	5.67	0.577
6. Record-keeping	0	0	0	3 (14.3%)	5 (23.8%)	13 (61.9%)	5.48	0.750
7. Assist with the management of trauma and disaster situations within the school and direct community	0	0	0	4 (19%)	5 (23.8%)	12 (57.1%)	5.38	0.805

<b>8. Consult with the provincial or district office social workers with regard to social work related matters</b>	0	0	1 (4.8%)	6 (28.6%)	6 (28.6%)	8 (38.1%)	5.00	0.949
<b>9. Facilitate parent evenings on e.g. social media, bullying, parental guidance</b>	0	0	1 (4.8%)	6 (28.6%)	11 (52.4%)	3 (14.3%)	4.76	0.768
<b>10. Be a behaviour specialist and apply behaviour modification interventions</b>	0	0	3 (14.3%)	3 (14.3%)	12 (57.1%)	3 (14.3%)	4.71	0.902
<b>11. Be a mental health expert and provide consultation services on related issues (e.g. on ADHD and anxiety)</b>	0	2 (9.5%)	6 (28.6%)	6 (28.6%)	6 (28.6%)	1 (4.8%)	3.90	1.091
<b>12. Be an alcohol and drug abuse specialist and provide related services (e.g. by creating and implementing relevant programmes)</b>	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	6 (28.6%)	3 (14.3%)	5 (23.8%)	5 (23.8%)	4.19	1.470
<b>13. Be a violence-prevention specialist and provide related services (e.g. by addressing gangs, juvenile offences and violence against teachers)</b>	1 (4.8%)	0	6 (28.6%)	4 (19%)	7 (33.3%)	3 (14.3%)	4.19	1.289

**Table 19: Infrastructure and equipment needed**

Infrastructure and / or equipment	Not important= 1	Slightly important= 2	Moderately important= 3	Important= 4	Very important= 5	Critically important= 6	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Office accommodation which is accessible and allows for confidentiality	0	0	0	0	2 (7.1%)	26 (92.9%)	5.92	0.262
2. Transport (e.g.to conduct home visits and other contact-making which requires travelling)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.6%)	4 (14.3%)	1 (3.6%)	4 (14.3%)	16 (57.1%)	4.86	1.649
3. Furniture suitable for interviews and other tasks (e.g. group work)	0	0	2 (7.1%)	4 (14.3%)	2 (7.1%)	20 (71.4%)	5.42	0.997
4. Communication media (e.g. telephone, fax machines, email, internet)	0	0	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)	3 (10.7%)	23 (82.1%)	5.71	0.713
5. Computers	0	0	1 (3.6%)	0	3 (10.7%)	24 (85.7%)	5.78	0.62994
6. Photocopiers and printers	0	0	1 (3.6%)	0	5 (17.9%)	22 (78.6%)	5.71	0.65868
7. Filing cabinets (e.g. for safekeeping of records)	0	0	1 (3.6%)	0	1 (3.6%)	26 (92.9%)	5.86	0.5909
8. Basic stationary (e.g. pens, files, notepaper, scissors, ruler, etc.)	0	0	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)	3 (10.7%)	23 (82.1%)	5.71	0.713

**ANNEXURE 25:  
INSTRUCTIONS, PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT:  
PARTICIPANTS IN THE DELPHI STUDY**



**Ethics reference numbers:** NWU-00370-15-A1  
**Principal researcher:** Mrs. EM Vergottini  
**Address:** P/o Box 25493,  
Langenhovenpark, 9330  
**Contact number:** 083 628 5769  
**Email address:** [mvergottini@gcpb.co.za](mailto:mvergottini@gcpb.co.za)  
**Date:** 2018/06/18

To:

Members of the Delphi team

**INSTRUCTIONS, PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT:  
PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS:  
ME. EM (Marelize) VERGOTTINI**

Dear panel member

**Introduction**

My previous contact with you in the above regard refers.

You have been chosen to be a member of the Delphi panel/team because of your expertise in the field of school social work or a related field. We thank you for your willingness to take part in this process during which use will be made of the Delphi technique.

**Some notes on the Delphi technique**

Ogbeifun *et al.* (2016:2008) describes the Delphi technique a research method in which the main objective is to gain the “...*consensus opinion of a group of experts*”. It involves structured interaction among a group of experts on a subject. It typically includes at least two rounds during which experts provide feedback on an issue and gives justification for their responses/answers. After each round, the anonymous responses are aggregated and the results then shared with the group during the next round. The experts are allowed to adjust their answers in subsequent rounds. The technique can take the form of face-to-face interaction between team members or could be done electronically.

## Process to be followed in this application of the Delphi technique

In this instance, the application of the technique will take the electronic route. It will basically entail the following:

1. **Step 1:** All panel members will receive an electronic copy of the draft document: **Practice Standards for School Social Workers** that has, thus far, been generated by the research. Each member will then have the opportunity to formulate comments and make recommendations re the improvement of the practice standards. See the **instructions below** for the types of comments/recommendations that are required and the format that it can take.
2. **Step 2:** Please return an electronic copy of your comments/recommendations via email **before** 12H00 on **2018/06/11**. The email address is: [mvergottini@gcpb.co.za](mailto:mvergottini@gcpb.co.za)
3. **Step 3:** The anonymous responses will then be aggregated and used to upgrade the draft **Practice Standards** document. It will then be shared with the group during the next round.
4. **Step 4:** The process will be repeated until a consensus opinion is reached by the group of experts.

## Instructions re feedback

1. The **purpose of your feedback** will be to contribute to the improvement of the document: **“Practice Standards for School Social Workers”**.
2. At the end of the Delphi process, all participants must reach **consensus** that “their final product” meets the **requirements** associated with a ‘typical’ practice standards document, as well as that of South Africa’s unique form of school social work.
3. In order to adhere to the general protocol followed in the application of the Delphi technique, respondents/you are given the opportunity to contribute in any way you see fit to the improvement of the accompanying **Practice Standards** document. You are, however, requested to use the **following mechanisms** to produce your responses as this will facilitate the aggregation of the responses of the various respondents.
  - 3.1. Use the **“Track Changes”** function on MS Word to show where and how changes to the **Practice Standards** document has been made.
    - 3.1.1. In order to activate this function, open the attached document in MS Word.
    - 3.1.2. With the document open, click on the **“Review”** button in the program’s toolbar.
    - 3.1.3. Make sure that the **“Track Changes”** button is selected (it will then indicate all the changes that you make to the content of the document).
  - 3.2. In order to **comment** on a section of the document, ‘capture’/highlight the section with your mouse and then click on the **“New Comment”** button under **“Review”**. A small side-window will then open in which you can type your comment/recommendation/ idea/etc.

- 3.3. Please then **systematically read** through the document and use the “*New Comment*” and “*Track Changes*” functions to **do the following**:
- 3.3.1. To change the **wording** in the document that you do not agree with.
  - 3.3.2. To **delete** concepts/sentences/sections you do not agree with.
  - 3.3.3. To **add** new concepts/sentences/sections that you think should be included, or that is missing from the document and should be added.
  - 3.3.4. Use the “*New Comment*” function to motivate **all your proposed changes** to the content if the manuscript.
  - 3.3.5. Use the “*New Comment*” function to indicate the **contents** of the document that you **do not agree** with and to motivate **why** you do not agree.
  - 3.3.6. Use the “*New Comment*” function to indicate the **contents** of the document that you think is **very important and should be included at all cost**, as well as briefly motivate **why** you think so.
  - 3.3.7. Use the “*New Comment*” function to indicate any “**gaps**” in the document that should be addressed.
- 3.4. Remember so “*Save*” the document before returning it via email.
- 3.5. Please provide a **summative assessment** of the “**Practice Standards for School Social Workers**” document in your covering return email to the researcher. This assessment should include your views of its overall *strengths* and *weakness*, as well as *content issues* that should be addressed.
- 3.6. Please **email your document, together with your summative assessment, before 12H00 on 2018/06/11** to the researcher, Marelize Vergottini, at: [mvergottini@gcpb.co.za](mailto:mvergottini@gcpb.co.za)

## Background of the study and ethical considerations

Information on the background of the study and ethical considerations are provided next. Please note that your electronic response(s) to the **Practice Standards** document will be viewed as a declaration of consent. This implies that the data (i.e. comments and recommendations) that you produce may be used for research purposes, but also that readers of the research reports will not be able to link specific comments/recommendations to individual respondents.

Thank you for your willingness to make an important contribution to the field of school social work in South Africa.

Kind regards,

*EM Vergottini*

## RESEARCH DETAILS

<b>Ethics reference number:</b>	NWU-00370-15-A1
<b>Title of the research project:</b>	Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a multi-method study with special reference to the Free State Province
<b>Level:</b>	Ph.D. (Social Work)
<b>Researcher/student:</b>	E.M. (Marelize) Vergottini
<b>Address:</b>	P/o Box 6096, Kroonheuwel, 9501
<b>Contact number:</b>	083 628 5769
<b>Email address:</b>	<a href="mailto:mvergottini@gcpb.co.za">mvergottini@gcpb.co.za</a>

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important that you must understand what the research and your potential involvement in it entails. Therefore, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher, me Marilize Vergottini, if anything is unclear. Also, note that your participation is **entirely voluntary**. You are free to decline to participate at the outset or to withdraw at any point during the study. Such a step will **not** affect you negatively in any way whatsoever.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee** of the **Faculty of Health Sciences** of the **North-West University (NWU-00370-15-A1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the International Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might, consequently, be necessary for a members/s of the Health Research Ethics Committee or relevant authorities to inspect the research records in order to ensure that the principals involved were adhered to.

## BACKGROUND

### What is this research study all about?

- This phase of the research will focus on the finalisation of the proposed **Practice Standards for School Social Workers** that was produced by the previous steps of the research process.
- This final phase will take the form of the unitisation of the Delphi research technique in order to gain consensus from among a group of experts on the content of the proposed **Practice Standards**.
- The application of the technique will be done electronically.

### Why have you been invited to participate?

- You have been invited to participate because you have been identified as one of the South African experts in school social work theory and or practice, or in a related field.

### What will be expected of you?

- You will be required to set aside time for the review of the draft document: **“Practice Standards for School Social Workers”** and to formulate and send your comments/recommendations for its improvement electronically.
- It is, unfortunately, to possible at this time to know how many times this process will have to be repeated until consensus is reached amongst the panel of experts.

**Will you benefit from taking part in this research?**

- The benefits that you may gain from participating in the research will be of a more long-term nature. If the research as a whole were successful, it would generate findings and guidelines that you could possibly utilise in your work environment or field of study.

**Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research?**

- The risks of involvement in this study are minimal. The topics covered will be of a more 'intellectual' nature and all steps necessary will be taken *not* to link the views and opinions expressed to a specific respondent, but to work with aggregates.

**What will happen in the unlikely event of some harm/ discomfort occurring during or as a direct result of your taking part in this research?**

- You will have the right to terminate the process at any time if you experience any form of discomfort and without having to give reasons for your decision. You will also have the right, upon reflecting on the views you expressed, to contact the researcher to delete some or all of your opinions "from the record". It would be appreciated that, in such an event, you would contact the researcher within 14 days.

**Who will have access to the data?**

- The anonymity of respondents is our first priority. The names of all the participants will, therefore, be kept confidential, unless a participant specifically request that his/her name is included in the research report(s). During the interpretation of data, codes will be used to ensure that no link could be made to a specific participant.

**What will happen with the data?**

- The baseline data will be kept by the researcher in a locked safe. On completion of the research, it would be handed over to the Compres Research Unit of the North-West University for safekeeping in the legally prescribed manner and for the legally required time. It will, afterwards, be destroyed in the prescribed manner.

**Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?**

- No payments will be made to any participants in the study. You will also not have to incur any travel or other incidental expenses to participate. All we basically require is your time.

**Is there anything else that you should know or do?**

- If you have queries regarding the research itself, you can contact the researcher, me. Marelize Vergottini, at any time at 0836285769 or via email (address is: [mvergottini@gcpb.co.za](mailto:mvergottini@gcpb.co.za)).
- You may also contact mrs. Carolien van Zyl of the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University (cell 018 299 2089/ [carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za](mailto:carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za)) if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

**How will you know about the findings?**

- The Ph.D. thesis will be available on the website of the North-West University once the research has been completed.
- The participants will also be proved with copies of the scientific journal articles in which their contributions feature.

---

## DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By responding to the electronic communications re Practice Standards for School Social Workers, I by implication, agree to take part in a research study entitled: *“Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a multi-method study with special reference to the Free State Province”*:

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and that it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and, when done so, my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way by doing so.
- I am aware of the fact that the researcher may ask me to leave the study before it has finished, if she feels it is in my best interests or if I do not follow the research plan as agreed to.
- I give permission that all the data provided through my involvement with the research may be used in the study of me. Vergottini and other research that might flow from it or be based on it.

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## DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER

I, *E.M. Vergottini*, declare that:

- I have explained the nature of the research and the respondents involvement in it, as well as the related ethical considerations, to the respondent
- He/she was encouraged to ask questions and I took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above.

**ANNEXURE 26:  
PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL SOCIAL  
WORK**

*Based on the study: Towards the establishment of practice standards for South African school social work: a mixed-method study with special reference to the Free State Province*

**Practice  
Standards:**  
School Social Work

**M Vergottini: January 2019**

## **Preface**

These practice standards for school social workers are based on a nation-wide study undertaken in 2017 by Mrs E M Vergottini as part of her PhD research. The document was presented to a selected group of professionals who, via the use of the Delphi research technique, helped to improve its validity and relevance. Feedback by this panel of experts were used to improve the stated practice standards.

It should also be noted that the document has already been written in the format which usually applies to manuscripts dealing with practice standards.

## **List of abbreviations**

- CBST = Circuit- Based Support Team
- DBST= District- Based Support Team
- DLST = District Learner Support Team
- DO = District Office
- DBE = Department of Basic Education
- DSD = Department of Social Development
- EMIS = Education Management Information System
- ESS = Educational Support Services
- FSDE = Free State Department of Education
- HOD = Head of Department
- IE = Inclusive Education
- LSA = Learner Support Adviser
- NCESS = National Committee for Education Support Services
- NCSNET = National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
- NDBE = National Department of Basic Education
- NDP = National Developmental Plan
- NWU = North-West University
- OSD = Occupational Specific Dispensation
- PDBE = Provincial Department of Basic Education
- SA = South Africa
- SACSSP = South African Council for Social Service Professions
- SBST = School Based Support Team
- SES = Senior Education Specialist
- SGBs = School Governing Bodies
- SLES = Specialised Learner and Educator Support
- SNE = Special needs education
- SSW = School social work
- SW = Social work
- WP 6 = White Paper 6

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# 1. AIM OF THE PRACTICE STANDARDS

The aim and goals of these standards are to:

- provide and define the scope of services that school social workers should provide;
- provide a broad guide to the practising of school social work as a specialised field of social work in South Africa;
- provide an understanding of intervention methods that could be used by school social workers;
- provide a basis for the standardisation of school social work practice across the Free State Province, as well as form a basis for the further development of school social work across South Africa;
- provide a benchmark in terms of the employment and deployment of school social workers;
- establish expectations and requirements relating to school social work practice;
- provide a basis for the development of continuing education material and programmes for school social workers.

## 2. DEFINITION OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK<sup>1</sup>

School social work is the application of social work principles and methods within the education system to render holistic social work services to support learners, parents, educators and the school as community, with the main goal of establishing an environment where the learner can reach his or her full potential by addressing the social, emotional, socio-economic and behavioural barriers to learning.

## 3. METHODS OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

All social work methods of intervention form part of the school social worker's practice. It specifically entails the following:

- Case work, which include the individual counselling of learners and/or their parents/guardians as well as family therapy.
- Group work, which include therapeutic groups, life skills education and parental education.

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<sup>1</sup> Own definition, see: Vergottini, E.M. .Article 1 of dissertation: *A review of the background, theoretical foundations and policy dictates that govern South African school social work*, 2018.

- Community work, which focuses on the school as a community and as a subsystem of a broader community.
- Crisis intervention, which includes the implementation of critical incident management when a traumatic incident occurs.
- Research.
- Administration, which includes record keeping, management, programme development, evaluation of own practice, and staff orientation, as well as training and supervision on certain levels.
- Supervision.
- Training of parents, educators and management in the management of social issues.

## **4. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND REGISTRATION**

### **4.1 Qualification and registration**

#### ***4.1.1 Pre-requisites for being appointed as a school social worker***

- A Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW) is a **pre-requisite**.
- A valid registration as a “social worker” with the SACSSP is a **pre-requisite**.

#### ***4.1.2 Future pre-requisite for being appointed as a school social worker***

Once school social work becomes recognised as a speciality by the SACSSP, the additional registration as a ‘school social worker’ is **strongly recommended**.

#### ***4.1.3 Recommended qualification in the appointment of a school social worker***

A **post-graduate qualification** in social work is the **recommended** entry-level qualification for a school social worker position.

#### ***4.1.4 Continuing education and training***

As school social work is a separate field of speciality within the social work profession, school social workers require specialised knowledge and understanding of the education system. This should be provided by social work education institutions such as universities, as well as by employers.

## 4.2 Experience

A social worker should:

- have at least **five (5) years' practical experience** as a social worker before becoming eligible for appointment as a school social worker (the quality and nature of the experience of a prospective social worker should also be a consideration),
- once school social work becomes recognised as a speciality by the SACSSP, be registered as a 'school social worker' with the council (SACSSP) or have the necessary requirements as regulated.

## 5. APPOINTMENTS, DESIGNATION/PROFESSIONAL TITLES AND SUPERVISION

### 5.1 National level

The professional title of school social workers at national level still needs to be clarified, but the current recommendation is that of '**chief education specialist**'.

Such social workers at national level will only have an *administrative supervisor or manager* to report to.

### 5.2 Provincial level

The professional title of school social workers at provincial level should, according to the OSD (occupational specific dispensation), be that of '**social work manager**'.

These workers should be appointed on a '*deputy chief education specialist*' level and should report to the HOD: psychosocial services or inclusive education.

### 5.3 District level

Social workers at district level, with the task of supervision, should be appointed on a '*senior education specialist*' level and should, according to the OSD, be referred to as a '**social work supervisor**'.

These professionals should report directly to the social work manager at provincial level.

At district level, several **circuits** are in place. Every circuit should have a school social worker as part of the multi-disciplinary team allocated to a cluster of schools. These social workers should be referred to as '**school social workers**' and form part of the circuit-/district-based support teams rendering services to the school-based support teams in schools. They report directly to the social work supervisor at district level. They mainly have the same roles and responsibilities as school social workers in schools.

## **5.4 School level**

Social workers appointed in schools should also be referred to as '**school social workers**'.

The school social worker should report to the **school principal** as administrative supervisor/ manager and to a **social worker supervisor** at district level for professional supervision and consultation.

# **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

## **6.1 National level**

### ***6.1.1 Social worker's specific responsibilities at national level within the education system***

- 6.1.1.1 To develop school social work strategies and policies in line with those of the DBE
- 6.1.1.2 To develop systems and structures for the mainstreaming of school social work services in education
- 6.1.1.3 To develop norms and standards for school social workers
- 6.1.1.4 To monitor and evaluate the translation and implementation of social work strategies, policies and programmes at provincial level
- 6.1.1.5 To strengthen the capacity of provinces, districts and schools to mainstream school social work services
- 6.1.1.6 To strengthen the relationships between important stakeholders (e.g. the DBE at national and provincial levels, national and provincial government departments, universities, NGOs, research entities, and civil organisations)

- 6.1.1.7 To coordinate school social work services between national and provincial levels and among the different provinces
- 6.1.1.8 To keep abreast of global, regional and national trends in social work and specifically in school social work
- 6.1.1.9 To motivate, in collaboration with the different provinces, the creation of more social work posts
- 6.1.1.10 To provide quality assurance services and monitor the compliance with norms and standards
- 6.1.1.11 To ensure the professional development, supervision and support of social workers in the department of basic education
- 6.1.1.12 To stimulate, encourage and guide research at all levels

## **6.2 Provincial and district level**

Social workers should be appointed in **managerial/supervisory positions** at provincial as well as district levels. These social work managers' and social work supervisors' roles will, depending on their level of seniority, entail any combination of the following:

### ***6.2.1 Social work managers'/social work supervisors' responsibilities at provincial and district level***

- 6.2.1.1 To ensure that school social work services are being rendered in the province and in all its districts
- 6.2.1.2 To develop and monitor the provincial plan of action for school social work service delivery
- 6.2.1.3 To facilitate the development of school social work services that are in line with the framework of inclusive education as contained in WP 6 and the provincial inclusive education strategy plan
- 6.2.1.4 To ensure and sustain open channels of communication with all stakeholders
- 6.2.1.5 To develop an easily accessible database of all school social work programmes in the province and districts in order to prevent duplication
- 6.2.1.6 To keep abreast of policies and trends that guide the social work profession within the DBE

- 6.2.1.7 To communicate the changes and trends to relevant management, staff and service providers
- 6.2.1.8 To ensure and promote inter-disciplinary collaboration by active participation in forums of the psychosocial and other sections within the department
- 6.2.1.9 To organise opportunities for the professional development of school social workers and other social workers within the DBE
- 6.2.1.10 To promote inter-sectorial collaboration and partnerships by the establishment and maintaining of forums that contribute to effective school social work service delivery
- 6.2.1.11 To provide guidance on school social work matters to social workers seconded to the DBE by other government departments and partners
- 6.2.1.12 To coordinate and manage programmes on social issues/problems that impact on the school setting (e.g. child and substance abuse)
- 6.2.1.13 To organise and present seminars on aspects of school social work services for office based personnel and educators
- 6.2.1.14 To disseminate departmental policy to stakeholders/partners
- 6.2.1.15 To coordinate and assist universities with regard to service learning placements for school social work students
- 6.2.1.16 To screen and evaluate social programmes and projects delivered by external service providers in order to ensure that they are in line with departmental policy
- 6.2.1.17 To facilitate regular sub-committee meetings for social work supervisors and school social workers at district level and in schools

Apart from the responsibilities mentioned above, the social workers at provincial and district levels have responsibilities that **differ from one another**. These responsibilities are listed next:

### ***6.2.2 The social work manager's field specific responsibilities at provincial level:***

- 6.2.2.1 To develop a school social work policy for the province that will include a relevant measurement tool(s)
- 6.2.2.2 To coordinate school social work by acting as a link between school social workers at district level and relevant section at provincial level

- 6.2.2.3 To act as link between the department and other provincial-based agencies with regard to social issues/problems (e.g. violence)
- 6.2.2.4 To provide comprehensive support to social work supervisors (in the form of e.g. in-service training, professional development, supervision and consultation services, as well as the monitoring of service delivery)
- 6.2.2.5 To coordinate school social work services by acting as a link between the national department of basic education and the provincial DBE
- 6.2.2.6 To monitor and evaluate, in collaboration with social work supervisors in districts, the programmes and projects that are implemented at sites of learning by service providers
- 6.2.2.7 To participate in the development of national and provincial guidelines for inclusive teaching, learning and assessment
- 6.2.2.8 To participate in the development of a framework for the acquisition, upgrading and maintenance of physical resources that will support the transformation process of schools into Inclusive Education sites

### ***6.2.3 Social work supervisor's field specific responsibilities at district level***

- 6.2.3.1 To provide support to district and school-based support teams with regard to social issues/problems
- 6.2.3.2 To monitor a provincial plan of action for school social work service delivery with the focus on districts
- 6.2.3.3 To develop and promote guidelines/programmes for micro-, mezzo- and macro- intervention based on an eco-system approach and crisis intervention with learners, parents and educators
- 6.2.3.4 To participate in the development of manuals for training in social issues that include theories, models, practices and tools
- 6.2.3.5 To advocate, with special focus on social issues, for the further entrenchment of principles and rights within an inclusive education system. Such advocacy should target stakeholders such as departmental officials, other government departments, NGOs, CBOs and parents.

- 6.2.3.6 To participate in the development of a database of community support services, agencies, NGO's, government departments, and other relevant organisations
- 6.2.3.7 To participate in the professional development of district and institutional managers with regard to social barriers to learning and development
- 6.2.3.8 To promote collaboration and alignment of services between stakeholders
- 6.2.3.9 To assist in the establishment, development and management of district-based support teams (DBST)
- 6.2.3.10 To contribute to the development and updating of norms and standards for specialist support
- 6.2.3.11 To participate in the transformation process of schools into full service schools, and special schools into resource centres
- 6.2.3.12 To participate in the development of a framework for upgrading physical and material resources that will ensure the conversion of schools into full service schools
- 6.2.3.13 To identify, plan, organise, collaborate with stakeholders and facilitate awareness events as per the health calendar (e.g. child abuse week) across the district
- 6.2.3.14 To collaborate with other sections within the SNE component such as special education, HIV and Life skills to identify common issues and to offer support for identified issues

### **6.3 School social workers in districts and at school level**

School social workers rendering services to schools are employed at district level and also in schools. These social work workers' (SSWs') **school-specific** roles and responsibilities will entail any combination of the following:

#### ***6.3.1 Roles and responsibilities of school social workers towards learners and parents/guardians***

- 6.3.1.1 To develop and implement an individual support plan (ISP) for each learner
- 6.3.1.2 To assess learners individually and/or their parents/guardians by means of a variety of social work methods and skills for example through the use of the

developmental assessment model

- 6.3.1.3 To provide individual counselling to the learner and/or his/her parent/guardian by means of a variety of social work methods and skills
- 6.3.1.4 Directly *address* social problems experienced by individual and groups of learners (e.g. bullying, teenage pregnancy)
- 6.3.1.5 To run therapeutic and educational groups for learners and/or their parents/guardians
- 6.3.1.6 To provide crisis intervention services or programmes when relevant
- 6.3.1.7 To participate in multi-disciplinary meetings with regards to learners
- 6.3.1.8 To provide assistance and support in learner disciplinary hearings
- 6.3.1.9 To facilitate informative events for parents on e.g. social media, bullying, and parental guidance
- 6.3.1.10 To develop and implement programmes to prevent social problems/issues among learners (e.g. bullying, child abuse, teenage pregnancy)
- 6.3.1.11 To organise referrals to external service providers for follow-up or statutory intervention (e.g. as in the case of child abuse)

### ***6.3.2 Roles and responsibilities of school social workers towards educators***

- 6.3.2.1 To assist educators with the early identification of learners' needs/ problems
- 6.3.2.2 To assist educators with the reporting and supporting of learners with social barriers to learning
- 6.3.2.3 To empower educators with regard to the management of learners with social barriers in the classroom
- 6.3.2.4 To liaise between learners and staff with regard to social work issues
- 6.3.2.5 To empower educators with regard to social issues relating to the curriculum (e.g. bullying, violence)
- 6.3.2.6 To assist in educator support meetings
- 6.3.2.7 To support educators during parent consultations

- 6.3.2.8 To assist with social work services and support programmes to educators (e.g. de-briefing sessions or motivational talks) where there is no EAP support available
- 6.3.2.9 To participate in the professional development of educators in order to identify and manage social barriers to learning and development in terms of the SIAS policy
- 6.3.2.10 To empower educators with knowledge of policies, legislation, statutory matters and community change regarding social barriers to education and learning

## **6.4 Roles and responsibilities of school social workers with regard to screening, and the development and implementation of programmes and projects**

- 6.4.1 To develop a strategic plan for service delivery
- 6.4.2 To develop an annual plan to guide the functions and operations of social work
- 6.4.3 To network and liaise with external resources
- 6.4.4 To assist with the development and to support organisational infrastructure at schools such as the school-based support teams (SBST)
- 6.4.5 To develop and implement psychosocial programmes to address specific social barriers to learning and development (e.g. trauma management)
- 6.4.6 To assist with the management of programmes and projects
- 6.4.7 Continually to evaluate and monitor programmes and projects
- 6.4.8 To develop tools to evaluate the success of programmes and projects
- 6.4.9 To compile business plans where required

## **6.5 Roles and responsibilities of school social workers regarding social work and educational policy changes and new trends**

- 6.5.1 To master and disseminate knowledge of relevant policies and new trends that impact on learners
- 6.5.2 To attend, participate and provide feedback on conferences and workshops
- 6.5.3 To communicate changes and trends to district management teams

- 6.5.4 To participate in school social work sub-committees
- 6.5.5 To participate in continuous professional development activities

## **6.6 Roles and responsibilities of school social workers in terms of their role as a member of multi-disciplinary teams**

- 6.6.1 To attend relevant provincial and regional meetings with other professions
- 6.6.2 To liaise with external social workers and other professionals where relevant
- 6.6.3 To participate in the development of programmes, material and information to support the life orientation learning area
- 6.6.4 Other important roles and responsibilities of school social workers
- 6.6.5 To keep the required records
- 6.6.6 To assist with the management of trauma and disaster situations within the school and the surrounding community
- 6.6.7 To present workshops on social issues to learners, staff, parents and/or other groups (e.g. on the dangers of social media)
- 6.6.8 To have extensive knowledge of behaviour and apply behaviour modification interventions
- 6.6.9 To have extensive knowledge of alcohol and drug abuse and provide related services (e.g. by creating and implementing relevant programmes)
- 6.6.10 To have extensive knowledge of mental health issues and provide consultation services on related matters (e.g. on ADHD)
- 6.6.11 To have extensive knowledge of violence prevention and provide related services (e.g. by addressing gangs, juvenile offences and violence against teachers)
- 6.6.12 To conduct home visits (when needed)
- 6.6.13 To train and empower hostel and associated staff through the use of appropriately developed programmes

## 6.7 Roles that differ on the district and school levels

The **specific areas** where the social work worker's roles and responsibilities at district and school level will **differ**, is summarised in the following table.

SSWs IN CIRCUITS/DISTRICTS	SSWs IN SCHOOL SETTINGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support and guide learner support counsellors at circuit level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To attend and provide feedback on workshops and conferences to the principal of the school</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To participate as a member of the circuit-based support team (CBCT) or district-based support team (DBST)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To participate as a member of the school-based support team (SBST), or if required in a specific case, in either the circuit-based support team (CBCT) or the district-based support team (DBST)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support learner support advisors in the circuit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To participate in the screening and assessment of new admissions where social barriers to learning are evident</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support and supervise students placed in schools within the circuit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support and supervise students placed in school</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consult with the provincial social worker with regard to social work-related matters when needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consult with the provincial or district office's social workers with regard to social work related matters when needed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assist with the development of the school's code of conduct</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Note:</i> School social workers in circuits/districts may be (by exception) requested to fulfil any of the responsibilities normally only required from school social workers in schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Note:</i> School social workers employed in schools of industry may be allocated additional, context-specific responsibilities</li> </ul>

## **7. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The school social worker should be committed to the on-going development of skills and knowledge regulated in terms of the Social Service Professions Act (103 of 1994). Such continuous professional development should form part of the school social workers' ethos by their:

- keeping abreast of developments in the school system, in school social work and across social work in general,
- identifying training needs and ensuring that the required training is undertaken,
- understanding and acknowledging the importance of professional supervision,
- keeping abreast of professional ethical developments and associated requirements within the educational system.

## **8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The school social worker must adhere to the ethics and values of the social work profession. In this regard, the code of ethics of the SACSSP, must be utilised as a guide in ethical decision- making. Furthermore, when the school social worker identifies an ethical issue, it should be taken seriously and brought to the attention of the school principal where solutions should be sought. Should the issue continue, social work colleagues and the SACSSP should be consulted. School social workers should also keep abreast of new ethical issues (related to e.g. the use of social media) that may arise in society.

Fundamental values such as social justice, dignity, integrity and competence should form an integral part of the school social worker's practice.

## **9. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT**

A professional work setting and infrastructure is required by a school social worker in order to practise effectively. The following basic infrastructure and equipment should be available:

- 9.1 Office accommodation that is accessible and allows for confidentiality
- 9.2 Furniture that is suitable for interviews and other tasks (e.g. group work)
- 9.3 Basic stationary (e.g. pens, files, notepaper, scissors, ruler, etc.)

- 9.4 Filing cabinets (e.g. for the safekeeping of records)
- 9.5 Computers
- 9.6 Communication media (e.g. telephone, email, internet)
- 9.7 Photocopiers and printers
- 9.8 Transport (e.g. to conduct home visits and for liaison work that requires travelling)

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