Preface

For several decades, the public education system has been under attack or blamed for many of society’s ills. During the election campaigns of 2012, political debates swirled around the increase in violence among our youth, the decline in family values, our economy’s failure to produce jobs in a globalized world, health-care inequity, and the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer—all issues that were connected in discourse to the rethinking of public education and its need for reform.

This volume proposes that to achieve the historical objectives of public education—educating the diverse masses for effective participation and leadership both in our great democracy and in the larger global society—we may well need to reinvent public education for a new century. A number of proposals and suggestions for the achievement of better outcomes for our children were offered during the election debates of 2012: (1) zero-to-five plans that would quadruple the number of eligible children in early Head Start programs; (2) additional learning time in schools; (3) encouraging schools to develop strong relationships with parents and students; (4) developing more charter school options; (5) promoting evidence-based models that would decrease dropout rates; (6) supporting summer learning opportunities for disadvantaged children through partnerships between local schools and community organizations; and (7) improving assessment models that would provide educators and students with feedback in real time and that would extend beyond standardized tests. The seventh edition of Social Work Services in Schools provides depth and insight into these agenda items and offers supplemental research and commentary to help reconsider the needs of public schools in the 21st century.

This book discusses historical and contemporary concepts, policies, and evidence-based interventions in the field of social work in schools. Among the new concepts addressed are integrated service or full-service schools, preventive interventions to diminish school violence, and issues of education and welfare reform. It is a basic book designed for persons specializing in social work services in schools, as well as for those who are preparing to work in related agencies of the community and find it necessary to understand school policies, educational practices, social services, and groups of pupils who are at risk of educational failure.

In recent years, school social workers have grown in number and have become a well-organized and vocal group. Many have completed their professional education and are seeking to increase their competence by acquiring knowledge about new aspects of educational policy, evidence-based intervention, and alternative models of social work services in schools. Social workers who are now providing services will find the book a valuable resource for comprehending the current state of the field and new forces shaping its future.

The materials integrated here include empirical findings described in professional literature, case illustrations of social work practice in schools, and interviews. Social work practice is examined in relation to the present emphasis on charter schools, school reform, full-service schools, and the quest for overall improvement in the quality of education. Major educational policy issues, societal conditions that impact the quality of life of pupils and their families, and the strategic position of the school in attempting to solve critical problems of children and young people are also brought into focus. The chapter authors
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and many other leading scholars believe that social workers who are unfamiliar with major educational policies and practices and with the societal conditions that affect pupils cannot deliver responsive, quality social services in schools. A sound background in school social work and an understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of the field will lead to successful collaboration in practice.

The major objectives of this textbook are the following: (1) to consider the conceptual framework of social work as currently developed by the profession and to apply these concepts to school social work; (2) to examine the roles and responsibilities of school personnel and of the children and parents served, including the legal framework for the establishment, financing, and governance of the school, and the complexity of a school’s interacting systems and their functions; (3) to explain the major problem areas of public school education and to analyze the resultant sociological policy issues that affect the quality of education; (4) to identify target populations of schoolchildren for whom social work services are indicated at critical points of the life cycle; (5) to understand social work intervention and prevention in relation to the ecology of the schoolchild; and (6) to present a foundation to design, deliver, and evaluate the effectiveness of school social work services within a multicultural context.

Although the order of the chapters lends itself to the construction of a coherent course and teaching outline, each chapter is written to stand alone or to be reordered to reflect individual preferences. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction that identifies the substantive content and unifying ideas.

Questions for study and discussion, suggestions for projects, and additional references for further study appear at the end of each chapter. Relevant Internet websites are identified. The endnotes within each chapter are a source for additional exploration of the ideas raised in the text. Illustrations of school–community–pupil problems and appropriate interventions are intended to help the reader become familiar with the holistic school setting. Assessment instruments are also discussed. The chapter on evaluation introduces different approaches to evaluation, design, and implementation; highlights examples of studies that demonstrate this variety of approaches, and clarifies ethical issues pertaining to human subjects. The appendices contain rich practice-relevant resources.

Almost three decades ago, Lela B. Costin developed the original prospectus for this endeavor. As we complete a contemporary and expanded seventh edition of *Social Work Services in Schools*, we continue to honor her memory with gratitude.

Paula Allen-Meares

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Chapter 1

School Social Work: A Historical and Contemporary View

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Learning Objectives

America’s future will be determined by the home and the school. The child becomes largely what he (or she) is taught; hence, we must watch what we teach and how we live.

—Jane Addams

INTRODUCTION

The history of school social work is interesting and rich. Beginning in the early 1900s, this rich history helped define the profession of social work, as it built a foundation on evolving values, purposes, knowledge, sanctions, and methods of intervention.

In 1906, social conditions, life struggles, and a growing immigrant population were forceful factors that supported the development and expansion of education and, in turn, school social work. As education became increasingly regarded as a right for every child, the importance of linking school and community took on more significance. It was during this period that school social workers (then known as visiting teachers) recognized that their role should be more in tune with the social conditions and social movements of the day, and they sought changes in school policies that adversely affected the lives of children. Essentially, they served as the link between the school and the home.

Unfortunately, as this field of practice grew, the role of liaison received less emphasis. School social workers, concerned about their identity, sought a more specialized role, one that they believed would link their efforts more closely to the central purpose of education. The 1940s and 1950s were primarily dominated by the social casework approach. The emphasis on establishing a liaison between home and school was not considered as important. However, by the late 1960s and 1970s, the literature once more demanded a broader, more responsive role definition and approach to practice.

Presently, legislation and mandates to a large degree determine role definitions. Reactions from school social workers have been mixed. Some fear that mandates may cripple the search for different approaches that began during the 1970s. Others feel that what school social workers should contribute to the educational process is clear for the first time in the history of education.
Chapter 1

This introductory chapter first describes the profession of social work, including the development of its values, purposes, knowledge, sanctions, and methods of intervention. The profession and definition of school social work have evolved over the past century, and each of the key influential milestones will be described. Finally, the chapter will conclude with how the history of school social work affects the profession today.

THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK

Throughout its history and development, the social work profession has sought a schema that conceptualizes its practice. But how do we conceptualize practice when social work is so diverse in methods, clients, settings, funding sources, and focus? What is the common base? The profession has spent considerable time and energy studying these questions. The milestones in this process are (a) the 1929 Milford conference, which confirmed that the various specialty interests had enough in common to validate the idea that all social workers are part of one profession; (b) the 1951 Hollis–Taylor report, which attempted to define what social work was and what it was not; (c) the 1958 meeting of a subcommittee of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Commission on Practice, which devised a definition of social work practice that included an explanation of social work value, purpose, sanction, knowledge, and method; and (d) the 1959 curriculum study of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) (Brieland, 1977; Conceptual Frameworks, Special Issue, 1977). The curriculum study offered the following definition of social work:

Social work seeks to enhance the social functioning of individuals, singly, and in groups, by activities focused upon their social relationship that constitute the interaction between man and his environment. These activities can be grouped into three functions: restoration of impaired capacity, provision of individual and social resources, and prevention of dysfunction. (Werner, 1959, p. 54)

The fifth milestone in this process was the publication in 1977 of a special conceptual frameworks issue of the NASW journal, Social Work (Conceptual Frameworks, Special Issue, 1977). In this issue, such scholars as A. Minahan, A. Pincus, W. Reid, W. Gordon, and S. Cooper examined existing perspectives and raised some serious but crucial questions concerning the context of contemporary problems: What is the mission of social work practice? What are the skills, values, and commonalities of the profession? What are the practical and educational implications of these dynamics? The same types of questions were considered more fully in a second special issue of Social Work 4 years later (Minahan, 1981). We have learned from these efforts that certain concepts or elements distinguish the various specializations of social work from other professional practices. These include values, purpose, knowledge, sanction, and methods of intervention.

Values

In general, the profession of social work has a unique value system. Values, in this context, are defined as ethical concepts or principles that provide a philosophical foundation for a profession. It is their values that determine how social workers relate to people and provide services to them. According to Harriett Bartlett, values are frequently divided into ultimate (or ideal) values and instrumental values (the means to achieve ultimate values). That every human being is entitled to liberty and self-realization is an example of an ultimate value. An example of an instrumental value, which is more specific, is that every individual has a right to self-determination and equal educational opportunity. The second level of values refers to the valued qualities of a well-functioning person; and the third level focuses on operational values, which are the means to achieve the higher value (Bartlett, 1970). Ultimate and instrumental values are to be distinguished from cultural values, which are
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concerned with societal mores and expectations for social behavior in society. Some primary social work values and examples of applications in school social work follow.

Social Work Values

1. Recognition of the worth and dignity of each human being.
2. The right to self-determination or self-realization.
3. Respect for individual potential and support for an individual's aspirations to attain it.
4. The right of each individual to be different from every other and to be accorded respect for those differences.

Applications to Social Work in Schools

1. Each pupil is valued as an individual, regardless of any unique characteristic.
2. Each pupil should be allowed to share in the learning process and to learn.
3. Individual differences (including differences in rates of learning) should be recognized; intervention should be aimed at supporting pupils’ educational goals.
4. Each child, regardless of race and socioeconomic characteristics, has a right to equal treatment in the school.

These social work values highlight the central position of the individual pupil in social work. The practitioner should keep in mind that although the child may be the identified client, that child may actually be signaling for help for the family or the class or bringing attention to an area of injustice in some other system. However, the focus on the individual reflects the democratic commitment to the welfare of each individual in society and to the assumption of social responsibility by citizens.

In situations involving one or more persons, some values appear to weigh more heavily or even to conflict. When this is the case, school social workers must then search for an acceptable balance. The “best interest of the child” should guide these deliberations. One example of conflicting values, taken from school social work practice, is a gifted child whom the father wants to be just average because the child, who is showing signs of stress from underachievement, “will be happier that way.” Another example is secondary school students whose excessive absenteeism shows that alternative forms of education are needed, even though the community and school do not recognize such need. Ultimate value should guide practice. Additionally, the school social worker’s course of action should profit the client(s), but not at the expense of another person.

Purpose

School social workers contribute to improving the quality of life by adding their efforts to the school’s attempt to achieve its central purpose—to provide a setting for teaching and learning in which children and young persons can acquire a sense of competence, a capacity for problem solving and decision making, and a readiness to adapt to change and to take responsibility for their own continued learning. Just as the values of the profession determine its purpose, knowledge makes some purposes and goals more practical and attainable than others.

Knowledge

According to Bartlett, a profession’s strongest foundation is its body of knowledge (Bartlett, 1970; Gordon, 1962). Newly attained knowledge drawn from research and study results in verifiable propositions that can be confirmed. Knowledge can be distinguished from value
assumptions—propositions that do not appear confirmable, although they may become so later. Most important, all knowledge building is guided by the ultimate values of the profession.

The knowledge base of social work and school social work is as broad as human behavior. This characteristic has led social workers to borrow knowledge from other fields, such as education, behavioral and biological sciences, psychiatry, medicine, law, and political science. The borrowed knowledge includes concepts and principles selected for relevance to social work, then tested in practice, and sometimes reformulated in social work terms. Such clusters of borrowed knowledge are useful and legitimate if appropriately integrated with social work purpose. Essentially, the concepts of the social work profession guide in the selection of knowledge.

Sanction

The authority to act is granted to school social workers by the state (in many instances), the community, the school, the profession of social work, and the record of competent performance of individual professional social workers. Sanction does not define school social work in the same sense that value, purpose, and knowledge do; nevertheless, sanction is a necessary condition for professional practice.

Sanction from the community comes through federal and state legislation that provides for social work services in schools, systems of licensure and certification, and allocation of resources. The sanction of the school is indicated by the hiring policies of the school board and by consultations and negotiations with school administrators.

The NASW enforces professional sanctioning for certain kinds of ethical behaviors and the basic values and principles undergirding social work. A unique characteristic of social work is the focus on the empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. The focus on individual well-being in a social context and on environmental forces that create and contribute to problems in living also distinguishes social work from other professions. The core professional values are service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. It is truly this constellation of values from which concern about balance between context and the complexity of the human experience is derived (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 1999). Clients are individuals, families, communities, groups, and organizations, which exist in culturally diverse contexts. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustices.

School social workers also obtain sanction from the clients they serve. One illustration is parental permission to provide social services to young children and participation by parents in determining appropriate intervention. Also important is the sanction acquired through competence in the performance of school social work tasks, which brings respect for the profession and for the individual social worker.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

School social work began at about the same time (during the school year 1906–07), although independently, in three cities: New York, Boston, and Hartford. The development originated outside the school system; private agencies and civic organizations in these three localities supported the work (Costin, 1969b).

As in the development of social work generally, school social work was first intended to benefit the so-called underprivileged. In New York City, settlement workers from the Hartley House and Greenwich House thought it was necessary to know the teachers of
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children who came to the settlements, and they assigned two workers to collaborate with the community and visit schools and homes for the purpose of promoting understanding and communication (Lide, 1959). In Boston, a similar development was taking place. The Women’s Education Association placed visiting teachers in the schools to connect the school and home, and make the child’s education more effective. Lastly, the director of the Psychological Clinic in Hartford initiated the first visiting teachers’ program in the area. The director of the clinic recognized the help that could be derived from such a program. This person would assist the psychologist in securing histories of children and implementing the clinic’s treatment plans and recommendations.

It was not until 1913, in Rochester, New York, that the first board of education initiated and financed a “visiting teacher program.” The board of education stated,

This is the first step in an attempt to meet a need of which the school system has been conscious for some time. It is an undisputed fact that in the environment of the child outside of school are to be found forces which will often thwart the school in its endeavors. The appointment of visiting teachers is an attempt [to take] responsibility for the whole welfare of the child and to maximize cooperation between the home and the school. (Oppenheimer, 1925, p. 5)

The Rochester Board of Education took an active role in the development of the service. The board placed visiting teachers in special departments of the school. This arrangement drew attention to the necessity of avoiding separation of the school social worker from the whole school system and the community. From this program, a national professional association emerged—the National Association of Visiting Teachers. It held its first meeting in New York City, where concern was expressed about the organization, administration, and role definition of visiting teachers.

Early Influences

The early 20th century was a fertile period for the development of school social work. Important influences in its early development were:

- Passage of compulsory school attendance laws. A concern for the illiteracy of immigrant children and then the illiteracy of American-born children brought attention to the child’s right to at least a minimum education and the states’ responsibility for securing this for all children and gave support to the enactment of compulsory attendance statutes in some states. However, statutes were often circumvented both by parents, who wished their children to work to supplement inadequate adult wages, and by factory owners, who wished to use the cheap labor of children. Without compulsory birth registration to make a child’s age a matter of public record, it was easy for children to secure working papers before they were legally of age. This situation was aggravated by the failure of school districts to provide facilities for children who were ready and willing to attend school.

The lack of effective enforcement of school attendance laws led to such studies as that of Abbott and Breckinridge (1917) on the nonattendance problem in the Chicago schools. The findings of this study supported the need for school attendance officers who understood the social ills of the community, such as poverty, ill health, and lack of secure family income, and their effects on attendance (Abbott & Breckinridge, 1917). Abbott and Breckinridge held that this responsibility should be assigned to the school social worker, someone knowledgeable about the needs of children and the effects of such conditions. Further, they indicated that some poverty-stricken families had not come to the attention of community social service agencies, implying that the school was an important institution in the lives...
of these families. By 1918, each state had passed its own compulsory attendance law, stating that each child had not only the right to benefit from schools, but an obligation to secure these advantages. School social workers played an important role—one of clarifying and sensitizing school personnel to the out-of-school lives of children and how they are affected.

- Knowledge of individual differences. As the scope of compulsory education laws expanded, states were forced to provide an educational experience for a variety of children. Simultaneously, new knowledge about individual differences among children and their capacity to respond to improved conditions compelled school personnel to look to other fields for an understanding of these differences.

  Previously there had been no real concern about whether children had different learning needs; those who presented a challenge were not enrolled. Compulsory attendance laws changed this situation very quickly. The role of school social workers was one of sensitizing both teachers and other school personnel to the life conditions and forces that affect learning. The Henry Street Settlement, under the auspices of the New York City Board of Education and with social work leadership, formed the first class for upgraded pupils (children who suffered from “mental defects”). This settlement provided the necessary equipment and instructional resources so that these children could be educated. This was one of the first attempts to adapt instructional materials to meet the special needs of students (Wald, 1915).

- Realization of the strategic position of education. Social workers of the early 20th century were keenly aware of the opportunities schools provided for youth. S. P. Breckinridge begged for a closer look into how schools could meet the social needs of students. Addressing the National Education Association in 1914, she stated,

  To the social worker the school appears as an instrument of almost unlimited possibilities, not only for passing on to the next generation the culture and wisdom of the past, but for testing present social relationships and for securing improvement in social conditions (Breckinridge, 1914).

- Concern for the relevance of education. Simultaneously, social workers in the settlement houses were expressing the need for the school to relate itself more closely to the present and future lives of the children. Oppenheimer (1925) noted that during the early 20th century the influence of the social settlement on the development of school social work was very strong, “both in respect to the type of methods used and in respect to the development of [the] social center in the schools” (Oppenheimer, 1925, p. 2). Social workers in the settlements expressed concern about “the insufficient number of visiting teachers to bring the school and home together” (Lide, 1959, p. 109).

**Early Definitions**

In 1916, Jane Culbert defined the role of school social worker as follows:

Interpreting to the school the child’s out-of-school life; supplementing the teacher’s knowledge of the child so that she may be able to teach the whole child; assisting the school to know the life of a neighborhood, in order that it may train the children for the life to which they look forward. Secondly, the visiting teacher interprets to the parents the demands of the school and explains the particular difficulties and needs of the child. (Culbert, 1916, p. 595)

The principal activity in school social work continued to be as a home–school–community liaison. In 1925, Julius Oppenheimer carried out a study to obtain a more detailed list of
tasks than had been delineated in the 1916 definition of function. This study affirmed the emphasis on school–family–community liaison as the main body of school social work activity. One of the most important functions of the school social worker, Oppenheimer stated, “was to aid in the reorganization of school administration and of school practice by supplying evidence of unfavorable conditions that underlie children's school difficulties and by pointing out needed change” (Oppenheimer, 1925). According to Oppenheimer, the visiting teacher was the one person in the school who was knowledgeable about the outside life and social environment of children.

**Expansion in the 1920s**

The number of school social workers increased during the 1920s, largely as a result of a series of 3-year demonstrations, under the auspices of the Commonwealth Fund of New York, which were aimed at the prevention of juvenile delinquency (Oppenheimer, 1925). Commonwealth Fund gave the National Committee of Visiting Teachers financial support for a countrywide experimentation in the field of school social work. Thirty school social workers were placed in 30 different communities, both rural and urban, throughout the country for a demonstration project. Each local community shared in the payment of the salaries for these visiting teachers. When the Fund withdrew its support in 1930, 21 of the communities that had served as demonstration sites continued the programs. Meanwhile, other cities were busily implementing their visiting teacher programs, creating some 244 school social workers in 31 states. As a result of this project, boards of education, noting the value of the service, established visiting teacher programs in other communities. In turn, the National Association of Visiting Teachers grew and focused its efforts on establishing professional standards and direction for its membership. The school was viewed as a strategic center of child welfare work, linking children and families with resources.

**Influence of the Mental Hygiene Movement**

In the 1920s, social workers were recognized for their therapeutic role, and the mental hygiene movement brought about an increasing emphasis on treating the individual child. According to Lela Costin, the increasing recognition of individual differences among children and interest on the part of mental hygienists in understanding behavior problems led to an effort by the visiting teachers to develop techniques for preventing social maladjustment (Costin, 1978, p. 4).

Mental hygiene clinics sprang up in almost every community. Their central purpose was to diagnose and treat nervous and difficult children. Such questions as, “How can we help the emotionally disturbed child through the school experience?” and “How can we help all children to find in their lives at school an emotionally enriching and stabilizing experience?” guided both school social workers and mental hygienists.

Jessie Taft wrote,

> The only practical and effective way to increase the mental health of a nation is through its school system. Homes are too inaccessible…. It is for us who represent mental hygiene and its application through social casework to help the school and teacher to see their vital responsibility…. (Taft, 1923, p. 398)

**Shifting Goals of the 1930s**

The development of social work service in the schools slowed during the Depression, as did other social service programs for children. Services provided by visiting teachers were either abolished or seriously cut back in volume. The provision of food, shelter, and clothing
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preoccupied much of what activity there was. At this time, visiting teachers began to view their role differently. Many workers were anxious to improve their earlier image as enforcers of mandatory attendance laws, since the role of attendance officer was not viewed as “professional.” Further, because some were being used as “errand boys,” school social workers were eager to have a more defined role—with more specialized skills and less stigma.

Abandoning their earlier commitment to change adverse conditions in the schools and linking home, school, and community, school social workers sought a more specialized role of providing emotional support for troubled children (Hall, 1936). Gladys Hall and Edith Everett saw the primary role of visiting teachers as supporting “wholesome childhood.” Hall noted that the role of the school social worker was changing from one of school–community liaison to preventing poor mental health among children. Everett even spoke against the visiting teachers who took on a community responsibility outside the field of casework.

Others disagreed. Bertha Reynolds was one of the first to recognize that the school itself could be the source of the child’s problem.

If a faulty school curriculum is causing thousands of school failures, it would be stupid to engage visiting teachers to work individually with the unsuccessful children. Why not change the curriculum and do away with that particular problem at one stroke? (Reynolds, 1935, p. 238)

We are coming not only to recognize the futility of persisting in situations which are beyond the scope of casework help, but to realize also our social responsibility for revealing the inadequacy of social work in these instances, in order that interest and effort may be directed toward social action (Towle, 1936).

Emphasis on Social Casework and Policy Changes 1940–1960

By 1940, in contrast to the views of those like Reynolds and Towle, school social workers had taken on a more specialized role, and social change and neighborhood conditions were no longer seen as targets of intervention. The literature, which had grown markedly, called attention to “an appropriate function” of school social work: social casework. The individual needs of the child took primary attention.

Ruth Smalley described the role of the school social worker as being a “specialized form of social casework, a method of helping children use what the school offers” (Smalley, 1947, p. 22). Swithun Bowers described social casework as “an art in which knowledge of the science of human relations and skill in relationship are used to mobilize capacities in the individual” (Bowers, 1949, p. 417). Joseph Hourihan recommended limiting work to those duties and responsibilities that are related to assisting individual emotionally maladjusted children (Hourihan, 1952).

A book entitled Helping the Troubled School Child: Selected Readings in School Social Work, 1935–1955, dealt extensively with the provision of social casework services to different groups of children. “Casework Method: An Elementary School Child” and “The Child and the Social Caseworker in the Schools” are typical titles of the chapters contained in this volume. The introduction to the chapter on the practice of school social work begins,

Through casework skills the worker develops a relationship with an individual child through which he may be enabled to gain a better understanding of himself, the school situation, and the problem that is hindering his use of the school experience to his potential capacity (Lee, 1959, p. 231).

Ruth Smalley wrote,

The psychological base for social work is found in the [its] appreciation of the psycho-biological organizing force which characterizes and is the essence of every
living being… [The] casework method…comes alive as skill, and is made available and used, within an individual-to-individual relationship (1955).

Mildred Sikkema’s study of types of referrals made to school social workers confirmed that behavior or personality problems far outnumbered any other type of referral (1953). In contrast, during the 1920s, Jane Culbert had found that the largest number of referrals stemmed from maladjustment in scholarship and deficiency in lessons (1923). The literature of the 1950s further confirmed that a transition had taken place, and a new era had emerged.

In addition to the casework method, another social work method used in the schools was group therapy. Paul Simon studied the assumption that although school social work consisted primarily of casework with children and parents, children might also be helped to resolve some of their problems in interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers through the use of selected group experience (Simon, 1955).

Work with Others to Promote Social Casework Goals

The social worker recognized that the casework approach relied on communication with the parents of troubled children. A varying amount of casework was spent with parents, with the intent of helping the parent to perceive and share the school’s concern and to support the child’s casework relationship. Anna Braunstein stated that “the social worker’s objective in interviewing the parent is to understand the child and his behavior in order to learn the probable cause of it. She can then offer assistance in providing better conditions for the child” (1959, p. 268). The potentiality of working with parent groups was also acknowledged by Aline Auerbach (1955). The goal of these group sessions was to educate parents about their children, the school, and various developmental behaviors.

In the 1940s and 1950s, social workers consulted with teachers frequently to interpret the child’s emotional difficulties and to aid them in an early recognition of personality difficulty (Alderson, 1952). Sikkema attempted to broaden the bases of collaboration by stressing the point that the school social worker could aid other school personnel in understanding human behavior and then translating it into practice in curriculum planning (1949). John Nebo cited one instance in which school social workers, after 2 years of conferences, were instrumental in changing the unsound administrative practice of allowing uniformed police officers to come to the school and take children to the police station for questioning without the consent of their parents. However, the social work influence in changing school policies was atypical (Nebo, 1955).

During this period, concern was still expressed about who the school social worker was.

He may be “visiting teacher,” “visiting counselor,” “school counselor,” “school social worker,” or other several titles. This lack of uniformity seems to reflect to some extent the confusion as to the purpose and function of service (Kozol, 1967; National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders, 1968; Silberman, 1970; Task Force on Children Out of School, 1970).

Policy Changes

The Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 signaled a dramatic shift in how American society was to view and use its public schools. Stating that separate schools are inherently unequal, the Supreme Court overturned its 58-year-old doctrine affirmed in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). The implication of this decision was that segregation of schools was unconstitutional, although segregation continued, and some argued it had even expanded (see Orfield, 1978; Orfield & Eaton, 1996).

In addition, the launching of Sputnik in 1957 by the Soviet Union resulted in Congress passing the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) to promote increased attention and scrutiny of math and science education. The law used schools as a central agent to increase
the technical capacity of the country and counter the perceived scientific superiority of the Soviet Union. It was perceived that the American way of life was being threatened, and the schools were a major part of the solution to regain international superiority.

### Changing Goals and Methods in the 1960s

Public schools were under attack during the 1960s. Some argued that public education was not educating the pupils, and there was considerable discussion about the need for change in the public school as well as change in the practices of social workers and guidance counselors. It was claimed that inequality in educational opportunity existed as a result of segregation; that public schools were reinforcing the myth that minority children and those youths from low-income backgrounds could not perform as well as their middle-class white counterparts, with the result that the educational staff expected poor performance from these students; and that the school was essentially a repressive institution, hindering development of creativity and desire on the part of some pupils to learn. Some parents claimed to feel alienated from the school and wanted more voice in the education of their children (Lide, 1959).

Also during this time, Robert Kennedy trekked with the media through Appalachia, bringing the issue of rural poverty into the living rooms of middle-class America. Furthermore, President Johnson’s Great Society initiative included the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). For the first time, this act called for federal dollars to be given to public schools in an effort to improve the educational opportunities of economically and academically disadvantaged children. This began a new era of increased government intervention and state support for academic opportunity for poor children and provided new resources for schools. Along with the new resources, however, came heightened expectations and broader obligations for local educators.

On Saturday July 2, 1966, then U.S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe held a press conference to release a report in response to Section 402 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The act called for the commissioner to conduct a survey “concerning the lack of availability of equal opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions at all levels in the United States.” This report intended to document the unequal opportunities afforded minority students in the segregated and underfunded schools that existed at that time. Specifically, the report addressed four questions: (1) To what extent are racial and ethnic groups segregated from one another in public schools? (2) Do schools offer “equal educational opportunities” to students of different races? (3) How much do students learn in different schools as measured by standardized exams? and (4) What is the relationship between students’ achievement and the kinds of schools they attend? In conducting the study, Coleman and his colleagues surveyed approximately 600,000 students (roughly half white and half minority), 67,000 teachers, and 4,000 principals. This study, entitled *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Coleman, 1966), later came to be known as the Coleman Report. The report itself was more than 700 pages long and exceedingly complex (Grant, 1973). The danger with such complexity lies in its possible misinterpretation by the media, policymakers, citizens, and educators, and this study did not lend itself to simple messages and conclusions.

To the surprise of most, the results of the massive Coleman Report did not support the conventional wisdom that minority students were at a significant disadvantage, compared with white students, because of the “kind” of schools they attended. The summary report attempted to capture the essence of the study’s findings.

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2The report was released on the Saturday of July 4th weekend with the hope of minimizing media coverage. See Grant (1973) for the “best treatment” of the Coleman Report (personal communication with Harold Howe, Hanover, NH, February 1998).
• Segregation: Four in five white students attended schools that were at least 90% white. Sixty-five percent of Negro\textsuperscript{2} students attended schools that were at least 90% Negro. In the South, most students attended schools that were either 100% Negro or white.

• Teachers: Sixty-five percent of the teachers in the average Negro elementary school were Negro. In the South this was close to 100%.

• Facilities: “There is not a wholly consistent pattern—that is, minorities are not at a disadvantage in every item listed” (p. 9; e.g., age of building, class size, librarian, free textbooks, textbooks under 4 years old, chemistry laboratory), though a disadvantage exists most consistently with facilities more closely related to students’ learning (e.g., laboratories and numbers of books in libraries). This relationship is stronger in the South than in other regions of the country.

• Programs: Children attending Negro schools had slightly less access to curricular and extracurricular programs more related to academic learning (e.g., college preparatory curriculum, debate teams), although, again, the inequality was much greater in the South than elsewhere.

• Achievement: “The minority pupils’ scores are as much as one standard deviation below the majority pupil’s scores in the first grade. By 12th grade, the gap of average test scores between races is larger.”

Finally, in what may be the most important and talked about finding from the study:

It appears that a pupil’s achievement is strongly related to the educational backgrounds and aspirations of the other students in the school. Further analyses suggest if a white pupil from a home that is strongly and effectively supportive of education is put in a school where most do not come from such homes, his achievement will be little different than if he were in a school composed of others like himself. But if a minority pupil from a home without much educational strength is put with schoolmates with strong educational backgrounds, his achievement is likely to increase (p. 22).

The repercussions from this study were felt across the country and still reverberate today. The study had a profound impact on policy decisions on matters of school reform, racial desegregation and busing plans, and school finance litigation. The most common interpretations from the Coleman Report, however, were that “money doesn’t matter” and that “schools don’t matter.” Coleman and his associates refuted these claims, but in part due to the complexity of the study and its complicated and contextualized findings, the simple interpretations held sway. One immediate implication was that there was no tangible infusion of funds into minority schools as was anticipated with the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Rather, attention turned toward efforts at racial integration programs, typically through voluntary or forced busing of minority children into predominantly white schools (see Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg, 1971).

In the midst of all of these critical issues confronting public education, many school social workers remained largely entrenched in their emphasis on individual work with emotionally disturbed children, even though the literature at this time was calling for a broader view of the role of the school and of social work services (Wessenich, 1972; Willis, 1969).

Some experimentation with different methods of social work was also cited in the literature of the time. Virginia Crowthers spoke strongly in support of “school social workers using group work for parents and students, stressing the importance of understanding the individual and his behavior in relationship to the group” (1963). In a research progress report, Robert Vinter and Rosemary Sarri described the effective use of group work in dealing with

\textsuperscript{2}“Negro” was the term used in this 1966 report.
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such school problems as high-school dropouts, underachievement, and academic failure. According to these authors, malperformance was a result of both individual characteristics and school conditions. This report led the researchers to conclude that school social workers should address themselves more to the conditions of the school and not limit their efforts to individual work; that school social workers were in a strategic position to identify school policies and arrangements that adversely affect children; and that social workers in the schools should have a dual function—to assist specific individuals and simultaneously deal with the sources of pupil difficulties within the school (Vinter & Sarri, 1965).

Accompanying a growing interest in the use of group work in the schools was attention to new ways of working within the community. A broader kind of community work was recognized, aimed at bringing the school community and geographical community closer together. A project in the Detroit public schools provided evidence that the community was taking on more importance. This project was to bring the inner-city community and school closer together. Because inner-city children were not achieving and were far behind other students, school–community agents were hired to connect school and community (Deshler & Erlich, 1972).

Confusion of Roles

As school social workers began to use different methods in the public schools, some were investigating how the social work role was viewed. The school social worker generally operated as a team member, working in collaboration with other school personnel—principal, psychologist, nurse, special educator, and so forth. Robert Rowen conducted a study in New Jersey to determine the differences in the perceptions of the function of school social workers by school superintendents and school social workers, respectively. He found significant disagreement or confusion existed in about one out of every four tasks performed by the school social worker. The superintendent saw the school social worker’s role as encompassing more tasks than most of the workers actually performed. These tasks included investigation of the child’s home, neighborhood, and environment; assistance in the collection of background materials on the child and family for the psychologist when mental retardation was suspected; and service on community committees and other social agencies (Rowen, 1965).

Merville Shaw, in a study of role delineation among the guidance professionals, found that their functions overlapped significantly with those that the school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologist wanted to carry out (Shaw, 1967). Richard J. Anderson also found that problems extended outside of the school. He studied the process of referring maladjusted schoolchildren to mental health clinics in Illinois and found difficulties as a result of the inability of clinic professionals and school personnel to cooperate with each other. Only the highly motivated child and parent would be willing to blunder through the lack of communication and coordination (Anderson, 1968). In 1969, Costin assessed the importance that a national sample of school social workers attached to specific tasks and sought to determine whether their practice was in tune with changes in social conditions and problems affecting public schools and youths (Costin, 1969a). Her findings revealed that the social workers’ description of social work reflected the clinical orientation of the social work literature of the 1940s and 1950s, showed little response to the concerns expressed in both education and social work literature, and ranked leadership/policy-making tasks as least important. Furthermore, these practitioners were not willing to delegate school social work tasks to individuals with less and/or different levels of education and training than their own. Based on these data and a review of issues in education, Costin urged a reassessment of the objectives of school social work:

[T]he focus of social work with pupils must be shifted away from a major emphasis on emotion, motivation, and personality and toward such cognitive areas as learning, thinking, and problem solving. Goals should center upon helping pupils
acquire a sense of competence, a readiness for continued learning, and a capacity to adapt to change (1972, p. 350).

John Alderson and Curtis Kirshf undertook a partial replication of Costin’s study, asking a population of Florida school social workers who had varying levels of professional training and preparation to indicate the importance of social work tasks and their willingness to delegate them (Alderson & Kirshf, 1973). This population ranked leadership and policy making as either first or second in priority. In Costin’s study, it had been ranked least important. Also, this group demonstrated greater readiness to experiment with different staffing patterns, suggesting a positive move not evidenced in Costin’s study. However, caution should be used in comparing these studies: Costin analyzed a national random sample of social workers with master’s degrees; Alderson and Kirshf analyzed professionals with different backgrounds and levels of training in only one state.

Robert Bruce Williams investigated the extent to which the behavior of the school social worker reflected the climate of the individual school and the professional acts of the school social worker in compatible (receptive to school social work) and incompatible (not very receptive) schools (1970). The results of this study suggested that the performance or nonperformance of the social worker was attributed to attitudinal and behavioral aspects of the principal–social worker relationship.

**Expansion in the 1970s: The Call for Leadership**

The 1970s were a time of great expansion. The number of school social workers increased, and more emphasis was placed on family, community, teaming with workers in other school-related disciplines, and pupils with disabilities. Social conditions were also changing rapidly.

A selection of court cases in the 1970s also dramatically shaped the purposes of public schools, along with the opportunities and responsibilities of local educators and social workers. Among them are *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), in which the Supreme Court ruled that schools must provide native-language instruction to children whose native language is not English. This, like the inclusion of special education children, requires schools to provide a wide range of services to an increasing number of children. In light of the tremendous exodus of white families from inner cities that took place between the 1950s and the 1970s, the *Miliken v. Bradley* (1974) decision had a profound effect on the ability of schools to provide an integrated educational experience for their students. Twenty years after *Brown*, and just 3 years after *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* (1971), which allowed forced busing as a strategy to integrate schools, the *Miliken* decision disallowed the inclusion of suburban communities in city desegregation plans.

In addition, the passage of Public Law 94–142 (1975) marked a watershed moment in the education of handicapped children. While guaranteeing handicapped children a federal statutory right to an education, the law (in 1990, the law was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, known as IDEA) provided guidelines, federal funding, and local accountability in promoting the education of children with handicaps. The fallout from P.L. 94–142 and the *Brown, Lau*, and *Miliken* cases is that the public schools are required to educate all children, though they typically do so in highly segregated communities (by race/ethnicity and wealth) and school buildings.

A document that also significantly influenced public education during this time was the 1968 Kerner Report (National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders, 1968). It

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2Two decisions that were handed down by the Supreme Court in 2007 (*Parents Involved with Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*) have now made it unconstitutional to use race as a deciding factor when assigning students to public schools to achieve desegregation. These decisions limited the role of government intervention in desegregating schools and left desegregation issues to be influenced by local housing choices.
analyzed the racial violence of the 1960s and placed much of the blame on public schools and their failure to educate minority children. The report recommended that racial segregation in the nation’s schools be eliminated and that opportunities for parental and community participation in the public schools be expanded. Sarri and Maple believe that school social work was greatly influenced by the Kerner Report (1972).

“Social Change and School Social Work in the 1970s” was the theme of the national workshop held at the University of Pennsylvania in June 1969. The thrust of the workshop was to “stimulate innovation and change in school social work throughout the United States and to encourage school social workers to assume leadership roles” (Sarri & Maple, 1972). Proceedings of these national and regional meetings were later incorporated in a book entitled The School in the Community. Linda Wessenich, Helen Nieberl, Betty Deshler, and John Erlich were among the contributors to The School in the Community. Wessenich studied systems analysis, proposing that systems theory be used as a basis for school social work problem solving (Wessenich, 1972). Nieberl urged focusing away from the microcosm of the individual child to the wider world of the school and community (Nieberl, 1972). This approach required the collection of data about the school and its community to determine the various factors that affect student learning. Deshler and Erlich reported on a demonstration project in Detroit in which social workers were used as agents to extend the links between school and community (Deshler & Erlich, 1972).

Other writers also denounced the stagnation gripping the field. Spitzer and Welsh called for a problem-focused practice approach rather than method orientation, delineating specific steps to be included in the problem-solving process (Spitzer & Welsh, 1969). Benjamin and Lois Gottlieb concluded that there were essentially three constraints inhibiting a more responsive approach to practice: (a) the educational preparation of school social workers focused too much on individual casework and method; (b) this training was based on a medical orientation, which focused on intrapsychic factors rather than environmental conditions; and (c) the traditional expectations held by educational administrators encouraged practitioners to be caretakers of deviants (Gottlieb & Gottlieb, 1971).

Models of Practice

As school social work practice has evolved, so have different practice models. A practice model can be defined as the “representation or statement of essential facts, central ideas and concepts and their interrelationships within the domain established for the expository model.” (Johnson, 1972, pp. 95–96). William Reid and Laura Epstein stated that a model is “a coherent set of directives which state how a given kind of treatment is to be carried out. A model is basically definitional and descriptive. It usually states what a practitioner is expected to do or what practitioners customarily do under given conditions” (1972, pp. 7–8). Peter Kettner identified several components for analyzing and comparing models: theoretical underpinning, level of intervention, target group or system, roles and responsibilities of the worker, goals and objectives, methods of assessment, and strategies employed, to name a few (Kettner, 1975). Models are developed to fit a particular practice need, which, of course, is designed in context to environmental conditions of the time.

Alderson (1972) has done considerable work in this area and has offered four models of school social work practice: the traditional clinical model, the school change model, the social interaction model, and the community school model. The best-known and most widely used model described by Alderson is the traditional clinical model, which focuses on individual students with social and emotional problems that interfere with their potential to learn. This model uses psychoanalytic and ego psychology as its primary theoretical base. A major assumption of the model is that the individual child (and/or the child’s family) is dysfunctional and is experiencing difficulty. Thus, the school social worker provides casework services to the child and/or the child’s family.
A second model identified by Alderson is the school change model. The target for this model is the school and its institutional policies and practices; the school in its entirety—all persons and subgroups—is viewed as the client. This model encourages changes in institutional policies that are seen as causing student malperformance.

The third model, the community school model, focuses primarily on deprived or disadvantaged communities. Its thrust is to educate these communities about what the school has to offer, to organize support for the school and its programs, and to explain to school officials the dynamics of the community and the operant societal factors.

A fourth model, the social interaction model, has as its emphasis reciprocal influences of the acts of individuals and groups. The target of intervention is the kind and quality of exchanges between parties (the child, groups of children, families, the school, and the community). The social worker is a mediator, a clarifier, and a facilitator of better understanding between and among the parties. This mediation involves identifying “common and shared ground”: The worker points out the mutual interests of the parties to help them define a specific goal or objective.

**Costin's Model**

An important model that grew from a demonstration project of a multiuniversity consortium for planned change in pupil personnel services is Costin’s school–community–pupil relations model (Anderson, 1974; Costin, 1975; Vargus, 1976). This model emphasizes the complexity of the interactions among students, the school, and the community. Its primary goal is to bring about change in the interaction of this triad and thus to modify to some extent harmful institutional practices and policies of the school. Attention is given to the characteristics of groups of pupils and of their school. The focus is on the situation of student groups, not on the personality development of individual group members.

Each problem involves groups of students with similar problems (truancy, pregnant teenagers, or children with similar learning needs) and who form a dysfunctional unit as their unique characteristics interact with conditions in the school and community. The problem is not viewed as springing entirely from the group; the school and the community are viewed as contributors.

Frequently, the school social worker may provide casework, group work, and crisis intervention on behalf of individual children who are members of a particular target group. However, social casework is not the major social work task, according to this model. Instead, the school social worker may assist in the development of new programs, consult and collaborate with school officials regarding policies and practices that contribute to malperformance, and work with community agencies to provide services for the pupils and their families. Interdisciplinary teamwork and cooperation between school social workers and auxiliary school personnel are necessary components of this model.

**Replication of Costin's Study: The 1970s**

In the late 1970s, Allen-Meares replicated Costin’s 1969 study to assess the status of social work practice in schools (Allen-Meares, 1977). Stimuli for this investigation were the social work literature calling for new roles and models of practice; the NASW Manpower Policy Statement (Willis & Willis, 1972), which brought renewed attention to teaming; the era’s unfavorable social conditions and the rapid social change confronting public schools (inflation, drug abuse, child abuse and neglect, poverty, and high dropout rates); and support for a new, humanistic approach to education, which had positive implications for school social work.

Allen-Meares modified Costin’s original questionnaire to incorporate activities that were currently being described in the literature and mailed it to a randomly selected national sample of school social workers. As in Costin’s study, respondents rated task importance and indicated their willingness to delegate tasks to persons with less and/or different educational
preparation than their own. Factor analysis of the data yielded seven factors. In rank order of importance, these were (a) clarifying the child's problem with others, (b) tasks preliminary to the provision of social work services, (c) assessing the child's problem, (d) facilitating school-community-pupil relations, (e) educational counseling with the child and parents, (f) facilitating the utilization of community resources, and (g) leadership and policy making. The five highest-ranked factors led to the conclusion that school social work practice was in transition, away from the predominantly clinical casework approach found in Costin's study to one of home-school-community liaison and educational counseling with children and their parents. However, leadership and policy-making were still considered least important. These conclusions fell between the traditional casework approach and the systems-change models, or those involving school-community relations. They did not indicate a strong emphasis on identifying target groups of children, changing adverse conditions of school and community, or responding to the crises in schools. These practitioners also remained reluctant to delegate and assign tasks, apparently maintaining that they were the only professionals within the school system who could perform these functions—a result that conflicted with literature findings that supported experimentation with teaming.

The NASW Study
The NASW Council on Social Work in Schools met for the first time in the fall of 1973 and identified numerous issues facing school social workers. Because inflation and budget cuts were threatening public education and other school personnel were claiming roles similar to those provided by school social workers, it became imperative for the council to assess the current status of practice. To bring attention to these issues, the council published an open letter in an issue of the NASW News, inviting school social workers to share their perceptions (Watson, 1975). The response was overwhelming; letters from all over the United States reinforced the council’s concerns. Later in 1974, the council made a report to the Midwest Conference on School Social Work. At this meeting, it became clear that national standards were needed to clarify the nature of services and to explain the parameters of the services to other personnel in the school setting.

Before embarking on this task, the council sought additional information on the status of practice, the educational preparation of school social workers, and the structure of school social work systems throughout the United States. The survey was done in the summer of 1975. Representatives of each of the 50 state departments of education were interviewed, and questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of school social workers and to graduate and undergraduate departments in schools of social work.

Almost all the school social workers surveyed at the time (88.4%) were employed by a local school district, and their positions were funded by state or local agencies or a combination of both (Summary of the Preliminary Report on the Survey of Social Workers in the Schools, 1978). Most (88.8%) had a master’s degree in social work (MSW) and were eligible for tenure and collective bargaining. One-fifth reported that they were directly responsible to a social work supervisor, and about 90% were members of an interdisciplinary team. Professional practice was defined primarily as direct service. Typical problems were those of parent-child relationships involving emotionally disturbed pupils. Almost half of these children came from low-income areas, and two-thirds were white. The most often identified work-related problems were too many referrals, excessive caseloads, and school personnel who did not understand the social workers’ role and functions.

Fifty states reported that school social workers were employed by school districts, but only six states required the employment of school social workers. About two-thirds of the states required that school social workers have an MSW degree.

At the undergraduate level (230 schools), less than one-third of the schools offered a specialized curriculum in school social work, but the school setting was frequently used as a fieldwork placement. Almost all reported that there was little collaboration between
them and the department of education on the same campus. At the master’s-degree level, only eight graduate schools (of 82 contacted) reported a special curriculum in school social work, and 19 offered some graduate courses in school social work. At the undergraduate level, the departments of education and the schools of social work had minimal, if any, collaborative arrangements.

When the findings of the NASW study were compared to Allen-Meares’ study, several similarities became apparent. Both found that the practice was described as focusing on the individual services rather than on helping target groups of children or changing adverse educational policies and practices, although Allen-Meares did find that practice was in transition.

1980s: The Interface of Social Work and Education

School Social Work: Practice and Research Perspectives (Constable & Flynn, 1982) captures the thrust of the service in the 1980s and some of the important research endeavors and educational issues of the future. School social work focused on pupil groups (specifically children with disabilities) and on work with other school personnel. The liaison role was emphasized, as was the role of promoting change in the school policies (Allen-Meares & Lane, 1982). Another research project confirmed these findings. This project sought information about school social workers’ perceptions of P.L. 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act) and its impact on their practice. Consultation, learning, diagnosing disabilities, a move away from long-term clinical treatment, and an organizational role that assisted the school in its primary function were found (Timberlake, Sabantino, & Hooper, 1982).

There was a strong push for adopting an ecological perspective of practice and the evaluation of practice (Constable & Flynn, 1982; Germain, 1979; Tripodi & Epstein, 1980; Winters & Easton, 1983). During the 1980s, school social workers grew in number, and so did their state associations. In response to this growth, NASW held a number of special conferences to address the needs of this group. These special conferences primarily focused on expanded roles (e.g., work with infants, the role of the school social worker in early childhood special education, school reform and how the school social worker could enhance cultural diversity, and mainstreaming children with learning disabilities), new populations (e.g., chemically exposed infants and youth infected with AIDS), and how to respond to the increasing number of homeless children and their families. In response, Social Work Services in Schools, published in 1986, was the first comprehensive text that dealt with this subject matter (Allen-Meares, Washington, & Welsh, 1986).

Educational legislation also continued to play a major role in shaping and expanding school social work services. For example, school social workers were included as “qualified personnel” in Part H of the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986, P.L. 99-457, Early Intervention for Handicapped Infants and Toddlers; in P.L. 100-297, the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988; and in P.L. 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The debate about the quality of education and the challenge to reform the system led to a national study of state departments of education to ascertain reform initiatives and conditions that were barriers to excellence. Less than a year after President Carter promoted the U.S. Office of Education to a federal department with cabinet-level status, newly elected President Ronald Reagan set out to abolish the Department of Education. The prevailing belief within the new Republican administration was that the federal role was unnecessary and that a return to more local control was what was needed to promote the improvement of public schools. To do so, the president established a blue-ribbon commission to report on the state of U.S. public education. The commission submitted their report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), and rather than reduce the federal role in
education, they stated that the nation was at risk and stressed the “imperative” for educational reform. This time the threat was economic, suggesting, “[i]f an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war” (p. 1). Rather than reducing the federal role in education, the report stirred so much interest that the federal government felt compelled to maintain its involvement. Allen-Meares (1987) maintained that the impetus for the study also evolved from concern about the erosion of federal support for social welfare programs for children and their families. The call for excellence in education ignored such barriers as poverty, inadequate health care, race and gender discrimination, and their interaction with schooling. Her study found that excellence was defined by having an effective school administrator, maintaining high expectations for students and staff, involving students in learning, and eradicating school problems. Reform initiatives were to appoint blue ribbon committees, pressure the legislature to increase funding, increase the scholastic requirements for teachers and pupils, and give attention to math and science. Barriers to excellence in education were parental apathy, poverty, child abuse and neglect, family crisis, poor parenting skills, economic deprivation, poor parent–teacher relationships, lack of dropout prevention programs, too little teamwork among school personnel, and inadequate financial resources.

1990s–Present

In 1994 (known as the Year of Education Reform), school social workers were once more included in a major piece of legislation—the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, P.L. 103-227. The Goals 2000 Act, first promoted by President George H. W. Bush and then signed into law by President Clinton, exemplifies Labaree’s statement that schools both reflect what “we hope society will become and what we think it really is” (Labaree, 1997, p. 41). Among its many components, it called for the United States to be first in the world in math and science (reminiscent of the NDEA in 1958) and called for all children to be “ready to learn” by the time they entered kindergarten by the year 2000. This act was signed into law on March 31, 1994. Eight national goals were outlined, including those related to school readiness, school completion, student achievement and citizenship, teacher education and professional development, achievement in math and science, goals related to adult literacy and continuing education, safety and discipline in schools, and parental involvement with their student’s learning. The major objectives of the act were to promote research, consensus building, and systemic change to ensure equality of educational opportunities for all students.

The Growth of State Associations of School Social Workers and a New National Organization

Since the early 1970s, the number of state associations of school social workers has risen. Many NASW chapters now have school social work committees. In many state offices of education, there are persons who assume administrative responsibility for school social work services. These individuals are known as school social work state consultants. There is a National Council of State Consultants in school social work. These state, regional, and national organizations are providing their members with educational opportunities for professional growth, yearly workshops, job networks, continuing education credit, and legislative advocacy. As state associations increase and develop, it will be essential for them to form linkages with NASW and other related school-based progressive groups. It would be detrimental to the profession if these independent membership groups isolated themselves from the national organization. In 1994, NASW identified school social work as the first section under its then newly organized structure. The NASW School Social Work Section has celebrated several anniversaries. The section provides members with national
leadership for school social workers, a newsletter, professional development opportunities at the national conference, lobbying at the national level, comment on federal education legislation and regulations, and advocacy to influence relevant policies.

School Social Work Credentials
States are now taking a more active role in specifying education requirements for practice in the school. For example, in Illinois, practitioners seeking certification must complete an approved graduate social work program that includes special coursework on school social work (e.g., educational legislation, exceptional children, models of practice, and state and school laws) and take two special exams (a test of knowledge specific to school social work and a test of basic skills in math, reading, and other subjects). For those practitioners who completed their coursework prior to the implementation of these requirements, procedures are in place to certify them. Because so many states are adopting credentialing procedures for all school employees as a way to upgrade the quality of personnel, NASW, in consultation with Allen-Meares and the Education Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, developed the first School Social Work Credential Exam. This exam was first administered in 1992.

However, in 1999, the National Teacher’s Exam decided to remove the social work portion of the exam due to declining interest. Because the National Teacher’s Exam was one of the requirements for a school social work credential, NASW responded by creating the Certified School Social Work Specialist (C-SSWS) designation to replace the credential program in 2000 (NASW, n.d.). Like the School Social Work Credential Exam, the C-SSWS recognizes the holder of the certification as a professional in the field of social work and that the holder meets national standards in the field. Although the C-SSWS certifies the holder as a professional in social work, it does not replace any license or certification that individual states require of school social workers (NASW, n.d.). Licensing remains under the control of the state, and school social work requirements vary accordingly.

Standards for Social Work Services in Schools
In 1976, the first standards for school social work services were developed. An important theme running throughout the standards was prevention. In 1992, the standards for social work services in schools were revised by the Education Task Force and again in 2012 (NASW, 2012). The new standards were divided into 11 sections: (a) ethics and values, (b) qualifications, (c) assessment, (d) intervention, (e) decision making and practice evaluation, (f) record keeping, (g) workload management, (h) professional development, (i) cultural competence, (j) interdisciplinary leadership and collaboration, and (k) advocacy. The goal behind the updated standards is to offer school social workers a description of the types of services they should provide to the school, the student, and the individuals (NASW, 2012).

Future Directions and Challenges
Questions about the quality of schooling, reduced tax base, increased demand to serve a more diverse student population, increased poverty among children and families, and increased violence will challenge the profession to think creatively and differently about their services. The capacity of the community to devote its resources to enhance the availability and scope of social and economic supports will be a decisive factor. Building integrated school and community service models will be important if we are to achieve success.

A recent trend in school social work has been to embrace technology as a tool to continually evaluate social work interventions in the school setting (NASW & ASWB, 2005; Pahwa, 2003; Redmond, 2003). Pahwa (2003) noted that the use of technology and consistent data collection at one school helped to support the positive impact that school social workers had with students who had not been documented otherwise. Other social workers
have developed guides for school social workers to work within their existing system to create and implement a new information system and database using the School Social Work Information Systems (SSWIS) as a model (Redmond, 2003). In response to the vast technological advancements, the National Association of Social Workers and the Association of Social Work Boards have published *NASW & ASWB Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice* (2005).

The specific goals of the standards are: to maintain and improve the quality of technology-related services provided by social workers; to serve as a guide to social workers incorporating technology into their services; to help social workers monitor and evaluate the ways technology is used in their services; and to inform clients, government regulatory bodies, insurance carriers, and others about the professional standards for the use of technology in the provision of social work services (NASW & ASWB, 2005, para 5). For the full document, see http://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/TechnologySWPractice.pdf. More research is needed, however, to see how this network of social services would affect student interventions in the schools.

**CONCLUSION**

Since the early 20th century, school social work has been preoccupied with essentially three questions: Who are the school social workers? What services can such individuals provide? To whom must they relate? To do full justice to the historical development of the service, we should trace the history of education in the United States. Table 1.1 summarizes some of the key forces in society and education that have shaped social work services in schools. School social workers should be conscious of the changes in approaches to education and in those social conditions that education responds to. By doing so, school social workers can be proactive rather than reactive in the determination of their role. As the rich history of school social work illustrates, the profession has evolved in complex ways to meet the changing needs of the student, the school, and the community.

**Key Points**

- There are several key milestones associated with school social work: (a) the 1929 Milford conference, (b) the 1951 Hollis–Taylor report, (c) the 1958 meeting of a subcommittee of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Commission on Practice, (d) the 1959 curriculum study of the Council on Social Work Education, and (e) the publication in 1977 of a special conceptual frameworks issue of the NASW journal, *Social Work*.
- The field of school-based social work is informed by social work’s unique value system, purpose, knowledge, and sanction.
- Early influences of school social work include the passage of compulsory school laws, knowledge of individual differences, realization of the strategic position of education, and concern for the relevance of education.
- The influence of the mental hygiene movement in the 1920s brought increasing attention to the emphasis of treating the individual child.
- School social work services slowed substantially during the Depression, but during the 50s and 60s the profession was shaped by the casework approach. This era was also heavily influenced by key policy changes, such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and the National Defense Education Act.
- Key influences in the 1960s included the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Civil Rights Movement, and the publication of the Coleman report. In
### Historical Development of and Influences on School Social Work, 1800–21st Century

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<tr>
<th>Social Trends and Movements</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1800–1919</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age of progressiveness: liberalism, social Darwinism. Immigrant population increase. Development of social science as a body of knowledge. Growth of labor movement and child labor movement; concern for working conditions. Establishment of juvenile courts. World War I (“Make the world safe for democracy”). Nativists believe that the new wave of immigrants from Europe was destroying the “fabric of society and the race.” Development and influence of psychology and Freudian theory.</td>
<td>Crusade for public education; expansion of public education at elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels (1875–1900) in northern and western states. Influence of John Dewey and “progressive education.” Concern for the development of the individual child. Compulsory attendance required in all 48 states (first: Massachusetts, 1852; last: Mississippi, 1918) Smith-Hughes Act for the support of vocational education. Emergence of nonpublic schools.</td>
<td>Movement from volunteer to paid employment. Growth of the immigrant population leads to the first settlement house in the United States, 1887. Beginning of social work education with an emphasis on method of practice; social science theory predominant. Beginnings of establishing practice theory with the publication of Mary Richmond’s <em>Social Diagnosis</em> (1917). Development of practice in specialty areas.</td>
<td>Outside agencies provided social work services to students in schools in Hartford, Boston, and New York City, 1906–1907. First school system to finance school social work service: Rochester, New York, 1913.</td>
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<td><strong>1919–1929</strong></td>
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<td>Prosperity: national income high, unemployment low. Reduction in immigration; deportation of alien radicals. Increase in racial intolerance; upsurge of the Ku Klux Klan.</td>
<td>Establish that nonpublic schools may be an acceptable alternative to public schools, 1925. Increase in student population and growth of school programs reflective of prosperity.</td>
<td>Marked increase in philanthropic foundations. Formation of community chests and reorganization of private charities. Rise of “child guidance” and character-building agencies; concern for the prevention of delinquency. Emphasis on function rather than on social cause; emphasis on the adjustment of individuals.</td>
<td>Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation, supported 30 school social workers in 20 communities. Increase in the number of visiting teachers. National Association of Visiting Teachers established 1919.</td>
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<td>1930–1945</td>
<td>Great Depression; solutions sought for economic and social ills in action by the federal government.</td>
<td>Development of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC); education programs were developed in each CCC camp; significant influence on the youth. National Youth Administration (NYA) provided employment for students in high schools and colleges.</td>
<td>Federal government became involved in social welfare, relief programs, and public works programs. Federal funding; state administration of assistance for children, the elderly, and the disabled. Group work became a part of social work; formation of the National Association of the Study of Groups, 1936. Lane Report on Community Organization as a method; fewer settlement houses established.</td>
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Space Program.
High-profile assassinations.
Vietnam War and student demonstrations and protests.
*Gault* decision (1965) adjudicated the right of juveniles to legal representation.

**1963**
- National assessment of educational progress.
- Supreme Court calls for immediate termination of dual school systems.
- Increased federal support for education.
- Child abuse legislation in many states making school personnel, including social workers, responsible for reporting.
- Move toward community control of schools.

**1971–1989**
- Inflation, fiscal retrenchment.
- Concern for law and order; Watergate; consumerism; conservative trend.
- Unemployment climbs.
- Rights of people with disabilities recognized.
- Influence of computer in business, education, and scientific advances in all areas.
- Continued recession with high unemployment at all levels of society.
- Reduction in social programs and aid to the poor.
- Conservative national policies.
- Beginning of the PC era and other technological advances.

**1973**
- Section 504, Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- P.L. 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act.
- Family Rights and Privacy Act.
- Drop in student enrollment; closing of school buildings.
- Dismissal of school personnel, including some tenured persons.
- Emphasis on accountability.
- Development of student codes of conduct.
- Violence in schools becomes more prevalent.
- Concern about illiteracy at graduation.
- Bilingual education programs.
- Development of preschool public education.
- Increased number of private schools.
- Continued reduction of school programs.
- Reduced federal support to education.
- Development of Office of Education.

**1979**
- Accreditation of bachelor of social work programs; development of doctoral programs; diversity of educational programs.
- NASW accepts BSWs for membership; new NASW code of Ethics, 1979.
- Proliferation of new practice modalities.
- Emphasis on research and theory development.
- Growing emphasis on the ecological perspective.
- Development of integrated or generalist methods.
- Growth of state licensing laws.
- Increases in number of social work journals.
- Development of specializations in graduate social work programs.
- Emphasis on prevention of social and mental health problems.
- Continued rise of “clinical social work” movement and private practice.
- Increased emphasis on the evaluation of practice and accountability.

**1986**
- Decrease in number of social workers in schools because of economic situation and decrease in enrollment.

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<tr>
<td>Threat to eliminate the Office of Education. Increased development of vocational education. Evaluations of education urge an overhaul to the system.</td>
<td>Integration of research and practice.</td>
<td>National Survey of School Social Workers in collaboration with Allen-Meares, ETS, and NASW. Links with related National organizations take on more importance (e.g., National Association of School Psychologists, Council on Exceptional Children).</td>
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<td>1995–present</td>
<td>Increased pressure for choice and alternative schools as a result of a decrease in confidence in the public schools. Many states move toward statewide academic standards and assessments in an attempt to increase performance standards of students and schools. Increase in public preschool, day care programs, and after-school care. Increase in violence in schools. Increased attention to bullying in schools. Call for more school–community partnerships to improve school and student performance. Continued debate on public vs. private education. Increased pressure to fully include special education students in general education classes. Pressure comes from the courts, statutes, and advocacy groups. Extension of school services to at-risk and disabled children prior to them beginning kindergarten.</td>
<td>A new structure was adopted by the NASW Board of Directors in the early 1990s, which created optional specialty practice sections. The first section is School Social Work. Increased community-based vs. residential-based services. Call for a better understanding of the influence of chronic urban violence on teens. Continued increase in private practice. Increased development of social work services in business and industry. A call for more political action. More emphasis on research to undergird evidence-based practice. NIMH research centers focus on mental health of children and families. Emphasis on family preservation. Increase in number of specializations. Move toward solution-focused, short-term interventions.</td>
<td>A trend exists that creates integrated collaborative services in which schools and community agencies provide health, mental health, and social services to children and families in or near schools. School social workers are the “glue-factor” for the collaboratives. Increase in school-based linked services. School social workers serve more populations (e.g., Head Start, children with disabilities, alternative education). School social work becomes NASW’s first Section—more than 16,000 signed the petition. Some states adopt competency requirements for practice. New standards for School Social Work Services, 1992, most recently revised in 2012. Increased emphasis on coordination of family, school, and community—an ecological approach. Provides services to reduce or eliminate substance abuse, bullying, and violence in schools.</td>
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Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and was updated in 2009.
Increase in school-age population, reaching increasing record number estimates each decade between now and 2050.
Increase in self-advocacy and empowerment among varied groups.
An increased move toward inclusion in all sectors.
People first language (i.e., child with disabilities, not disabled child).
Elimination of entitlements to welfare; passage of welfare reform.
Research on brain development focuses new emphasis on the importance of early development.
More grandparents and other non-parental family members parenting children.
Increased homelessness as housing becomes a larger percentage of income.
Although rates are beginning to decline, teen pregnancy across the United States is still a concern.
Childcare continues to be debated in Congress on funding allocations.
Child abuse remains an underestimated issue in the United States.
The aging baby boom generation and lengthening life span has increased the proportion of older people in the population.
Increased partnerships and alliances among governments, school boards, schools, and individual educators.
The largest recession since the 1930s.
Comprehensive health education, which includes sex education and other concerns, such as HIV/AIDS.
Debates on teaching human sexuality.
Increased emphasis on technology in schools.
Increase in charter schools.
Wraparound services for children with complex needs.
Increasing recognition of need for developing community in schools.
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, increased associated pressures, and President Obama’s recent waivers granted to most states as a result of Congress’s slow movement to amend.
Mental health services contracted out to other agencies.
Increase in the use of schools of choice for student enrollment.
Increase in public school enrollment.
Students from low-income areas and minority youth are more likely to drop out of school.
The Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative created to reduce violence in schools.
Overall increase in academic performance in mathematics, reading, and the sciences.
Increased demand for bilingual education due to immigration.
Increased conversations around the voucher system.
Social workers support the view that homosexuality is not a mental health disorder, but is a normal form of sexuality.
NASW involved in legal developments for LGBT rights and Supreme Court decisions.
With the aging baby boom generation, there has been a greater need for social workers with specialized knowledge in aging.
NASW Code of Ethics highlights that social workers will not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.
Social workers embrace technology for ongoing evaluation and database management.
Social work has become one of the fastest-growing careers in the United States, expected to increase by 25% between 2010 and 2020.
There are now 42 different specializations in social work.
Social workers are the largest groups of mental health service providers; there are more than psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric nurses combined.
Social work is recognized by law as one of the five core mental health professions.
Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) launches the National Research Capacity Building Initiative (NRCBI) to train and grow social work researchers.
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Increased emphasis on multidisciplinary work.
Position statement on the School Social Worker and Confidentiality.
Elimination of NASW Commission on Education.
School social workers required to have active role in early childhood special education, and in some states are the lead agency in the delivery of services.
Guidelines for HIV/AIDS student support services.
Transition planning for special education to students.
In some states, the social worker acts as advocate/parental surrogate for children in residential facilities.
Promote safe schools and positive environments for LGBT students.
Continued policy-level encouragement for evidence-based practice in schools.
School social workers are increasingly becoming involved and coordinating in school-linked services.
Increased emphasis on accountability has resulted in school social workers needing to keep track of and report outcome data associated with their services.

(Continued)
There is an unprecedented number of foreclosures. States are under enormous economic pressure and losing interest in public education. States are finding it difficult to fund in partnership with local municipalities. Unemployment rates recently passed the 10% mark for the first time since 1983. The gap between the upper and lower class continues to grow. “Obamacare,” a bill to reform health care was passed. New strict laws around housing loans make it difficult for many people to get housing. Number of Latinos in our country continues to grow.

“Obamacare,” a bill to reform health care was passed. New strict laws around housing loans make it difficult for many people to get housing. Number of Latinos in our country continues to grow.

Globalization has increased the social work presence regarding aiding the following international issues: counseling and aiding refugees, facilitating international adoptions, providing disaster relief, developing, managing, and staffing international service-delivery programs like Red Cross, and researching international issues related to social justice and poverty.

Increased need for skills in using technologies in service delivery. Due to the recession and budget cuts, many social workers have lost their jobs, and fewer school social work jobs are available. Increased focus on culturally grounded interventions that serve diverse populations. Increased need for bilingual social workers. Due to standardized testing associated with NCLB and the nearing 2014 deadline, social workers are increasingly called upon to help students meet testing requirements, and spend less time with intervention.

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<td>Increased attention and conversation around the urban education crisis.</td>
<td>Increased teacher education and accountability.</td>
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<td>Increased need for skills in using technologies in service delivery. Due to the recession and budget cuts, many social workers have lost their jobs, and fewer school social work jobs are available. Increased focus on culturally grounded interventions that serve diverse populations. Increased need for bilingual social workers. Due to standardized testing associated with NCLB and the nearing 2014 deadline, social workers are increasingly called upon to help students meet testing requirements, and spend less time with intervention.</td>
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<td>Increased number of teachers delivering universal (Tier 1) interventions. Schools are under greater pressure to produce excellence in research in teacher preparation. Obama is calling for greater accountability in the schools and launched Race to the Top in 2009. Increase in 2 + 2 programs. Increased use and integration of technology. Individualized, customizable, and learner-centered approaches. Globalized approaches to learning. Emergency of nonformal and informal learning, largely driven by technology.</td>
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addition, it was during this time period that there was a confusion of roles associated with the school social worker.

- By the 1970s, school social work was being informed by several models. Alderson proposed the clinical model, school change model, community school model, and the social interaction model. Costin also put forth a model known as the school–community pupil relations model, where the focus was on the situation of student groups.

- There was a strong push to adopt the ecological perspective of practice among school social workers in the 1980s. In addition, the field of school social worker, as well as related associations, grew substantially.

- Several key factors have influenced school social work between the 1990s to today: growth of stats associations of school social workers and new organizations, school social work credentials, standards of care for social work services in schools, the Goals 2000 ACT, and No Child Left Behind Act.

**FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION**

1. Go online and listen to Dr. Frederic Reamer’s podcast entitled *Ethical Dilemmas in Contemporary Social Work: Trends and Challenges* (http://www.uky.edu/sites/www4.uky.edu.SocialWork/files/nasw-standards-ssw.pdf). This podcast describes how the Code of Ethics was created. If you were in his position, what concepts do you feel like are most important to consider? How do you believe the Code of Ethics impacts school social workers today?

2. Visit the School Social Work Association of America’s (SSWAA) website, and review the Ethical Guidelines series (http://www.sswaa.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=102). Discuss what your thoughts are on differentiating minors from adults. Discuss what your thoughts are on interpreting the Code of Ethics for group work. Review and discuss each of the questions at the beginning of each document.

3. Identify positive and negative vestiges of the historical development of social work services that exist in schools today.

4. Identify and discuss reasons why social workers in schools have been so preoccupied with role definition.

5. Visit a local school and talk with administrators, other school personnel, and the social worker about their roles and tasks. Find out how they “team,” and what factors undermine teaming. Also obtain their opinions about what each discipline contributes to the education of children. Is there overlap?

6. Identify several social forces or conditions that presently have a direct bearing on education in the United States. What are the implications for social work practice in the schools? What are the implications for the educational preparations of social workers?

7. Obtain a copy of the *NASW Standards for Social Services in the Schools*, or visit the following website: http://www.uky.edu/sites/www4.uky.edu.SocialWork/files/nasw-standards-ssw.pdf. Evaluate these standards in light of contemporary educational issues and concerns. What targets of service would you give most attention to? Why?
Additional Readings


References
Learning Objectives

Each time a [person] stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope...and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

–Robert F. Kennedy

INTRODUCTION

Public education continues to play a complex role in American society. This role is associated with hope, sharp criticism, and incessant calls for change. Most Americans view the educational system as the heart of the quest to form a more perfect nation, a nation that provides unparalleled opportunities to all children, no matter what their background. Schooling is the springboard for the American Dream; with equal access to education, goes the belief, there is equal access to the dream. Yet schools are also the recipients of continual criticism and blame for economic woes; socioeconomic, racial, and gender disparities; and unfavorable international comparisons. It is in this context that we wish to introduce the major issues in American education in hopes of motivating a discussion and analysis of the role that social work plays in the future of education in the United States and in the betterment of individuals and society.

We suggest that the future of public education rests in the struggle between three sets of competing—and sometimes overlapping—responses to social expectations: government involvement, free markets, and professionalism. This chapter will explore each of these responses.

The past century has witnessed a steady increase in the centralization of decision making and funding at both the state and federal levels. The early half of the 20th century brought about standardized school organization and the standardized role and preparation of teachers. The latter half witnessed dramatic increases in state funding and involvement in curriculum and accountability standards. More recently, we have witnessed the creation of school choice programs in steadily increasing numbers and an expansion of alternatives to the traditional model of university-based teacher preparation. We are at the brink of
major change in federal education policy, change that will press for greater (1) federal funding (and influence) and/or (2) market pressures and school choice. Not unrelated to these two fundamental directions is the set of policies that will affect who is educating our children and just how much autonomy and professional knowledge are demanded or allowed.

We suggest the various policies and programs discussed in this chapter can be located either within only one of the circles or within the nexus of two or even three of these competing pressures (Figure 2.1). For instance, increasing federal financial support for charter schools would intersect government involvement and free markets, whereas deregulating teacher education (e.g., removing the near-monopoly of university-based teacher education and state certification) would link free markets to the push for professionalism.

PURPOSES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Posing a question to parents about what they want their local school to provide for their child will likely reveal an array of interests, needs, purposes, and goals. Posing the question to community members (i.e., taxpayers) who have no formal link to the local schools reveals a different though overlapping set of expectations, purposes, and goals. These multiple purposes are not new. There is much historical evidence that schools (public and private) have, from their inception, fulfilled multiple and competing purposes (Kaestle, 1983; Ravitch, 2000; Rury, 2005; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). These purposes encompass religious, social, political, economic, racial, and scientific interests. Remarkably, contemporary public schools attempt to provide for most of these interests by offering a range of academic subject area courses, remediation courses, advanced placement offerings, interscholastic athletics, art and music, student government, health and sex education, college advising, and—for too many children—the best nutrition and care they receive all day. The modern, comprehensive high school has even been compared to a shopping mall in that it caters to such a variety of interests and needs so that most consumers can find at least something

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1See, for example, Rose & Gallup (2001) The 33rd Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, and U.S. Department of Education (1999), NCES, Digest of Education Statistics, Table 23.
they like (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985). Of course, there is great variation across schools, school districts, and states in their ability or interest in providing what Kozol (1991) termed the "savage inequalities" between poor and wealthy schools, opportunities, and outcomes.

A central focus of the socially determined purposes of public schools is the relative opportunity afforded each child. There is no debate that children arrive in kindergarten with very different levels of preparation and require a unique set of services to succeed. And researchers have found that school readiness influences academic achievement, attention, and socioemotional skills (Duncan et al., 2007). What is debated are the nature of the educational services offered, how such services are provided, and who is responsible for the provision of such services. As was illustrated in Chapter 1, the history of American public schools provides a richly decorated canvas for further discovering and understanding the tensions and debates about what social services can be provided, by whom, and to whom.

David Labaree (1997) offers a set of alternative goals for American education, and how these goals have been at the center of conflict since the founding of this nation. He writes that schools are in an "awkward position" between what “we hope society will become and what we think it really is” (p. 41). Labaree argues that the core problems with American schools are not pedagogical, organizational, social, or cultural, but rather “fundamentally political.” The philosophical and pragmatic dilemma between Thomas Jefferson’s political idealism and Alexander Hamilton’s economic realism (Curti, 1959, cited in Labaree, 1997) has outlasted two centuries of school reforms. Labaree suggests that schools promote equality while at the same time adapting to inequality; hence schools promote excellence for all children, though they are often organized to provide differential services to different students. In doing so, schools translate these contradictory purposes into three goals:

1. **Democratic equality**—A democratic society cannot persist unless it prepares all of its young with equal care to take on the full responsibilities of citizenship in a competent manner. Schools must promote both effective citizenship and relative equality. Education is seen as a public good, designed to prepare people for political roles.

2. **Social efficiency**—[Society’s] economic well-being depends on our ability to prepare the young to carry out useful economic roles with competence. Society as a whole must see to it that we invest educationally in the productivity of the entire workforce. Education is seen as a public good designed to prepare workers to fill structurally necessary market roles.

3. **Social mobility**—Education is a commodity, the only purpose of which is to provide individual students with a competitive advantage. Education is seen as a private good designed to prepare individuals for successful social competition for the more desirable social roles (Labaree, 1997, p. 42).

How government policy decisions and legal decisions affect these goals, free market pressures, and educator professionalism should be of great interest to readers of this volume. Specifically, are we more apt to achieve democratic equality with greater government intervention, free market pressures, or real improvements in the professionalism of educators and support personnel in schools?

Chapter 1 highlighted that American schools over the past century have faced a variety of external pressures that have elicited responses embedded in one or more of the purposes.

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2 The National Center for Education Statistics’ *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS)* is one of the first nationally representative studies to allow examination of early childhood and early educational experiences (see http://nces.ed.gov/ecls/).
of schooling. The pressures have come from the early industrialists (see Bowles & Gintis, 1976), the scientific managers of early corporate America (see Callahan, 1962), more contemporary business and political leaders (Chubb & Moe, 1990; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), and research-based instructional methods and programs required by President Bush’s Leave No Child Behind Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004).

One of the most recent political influences on schools is the No Child Left Behind Act. On January 3, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which reauthorized the ESEA. This 670-page bill is the most recent attempt to use the power and authority of the federal government to improve the performance of American public schools. This law, however, ties together many themes and reflects the confounding nature of the multiple and competing purposes of public schools. The full title of the act signals the attempt to promote each of the goals: “An act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind.” This accentuates the need to reduce the achievement gap while also preserving the American commitment to liberty. In addition, this act has influenced and prompted all three of the reactions mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. It increases government intervention in schools by requiring the reporting of achievement data. Moreover, it allows a greater influence of free markets by encouraging reforms such as charter schools and limited intradistrict school choice, which are discussed in further detail later in this chapter. Finally, NCLB calls for highly qualified teachers who are not only state certified but who also possess degrees in their area of instruction, which affects the level of professionalism of the field.

Since its inception, NCLB has created substantial controversy. For example, on August 22, 2005, the state of Connecticut filed suit against the U.S. Secretary of Education. The plaintiffs argued that the federal government is imposing an unfunded mandate on states by requiring annual testing (in grades 3–8) to assess student performance and progress. Although the suit highlighted the growing tension between states’ rights and federal control of local schools, the final verdict in 2010 favored the U.S. Secretary of Education, and the case was dismissed.

Recognizing that NCLB was not sufficient to meet the needs in the American education system, Obama allocated $4.35 billion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to create the Race to the Top Fund. The U.S. Department of Education described the program as:

…a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform: achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas: 1) adopting standards and assessment that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; 2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction; 3) recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and 4) turning around our lowest-achieving schools. (2009, p. 2)

Although there is much overlap in the goals of NCLB and the Race to the Top, the approaches are quite different. Rather than punishing schools for not meeting criteria by taking away existing funding in already strained systems, the Race to the Top offered incentives and rewarded states for improvements and exemplary programs. For a thorough
Chapter 2

description of the Race to the Top Fund, as well as the most recent reports of states’ progress, visit http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html. Additionally, the following website offers an easy-to-read example of the differences and similarities regarding NCLB and Race to the Top for the state of Connecticut: http://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/rpt/2010-R-0235.htm.

Although both the NCLB and Race to the Top laws are currently in effect, the necessity to amend NCLB has become an important topic. Policy makers have recognized the importance of amending NCLB and have attempted to do so over the past several years. In 2010, the Obama administration issued a proposed amendment for the NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The amended legislation proposes to address the problematic “one-size-fits-all” approach of the current NCLB by making standards more individualized around specific characteristics of schools. Urging the importance of the issue, Congress was recently made aware that approximately half of all schools across the country failed to meet the educational targets set by NCLB for the 2010–2011 school year (Rich, 2012). This rate was much higher in some states. For example, over 80% of the schools in Massachusetts failed to meet NCLB standards. Despite substantial efforts to initiate reform, Congress has been unable to agree upon amendments to NCLB.

The Obama administration has recognized the negative implications of Congress’s slow progress regarding NCLB reform. In response, the federal government granted waivers to 10 states in February of 2012 (The White House, 2012). The waivers have allowed states to be released from federal NCLB mandates. In exchange, states have to provide a clear accountability plan (specifically around raising achievement, advancing teacher effectiveness, increasing college and career readiness, and improving low-performing school outcomes) that is tailored to meet the individual needs of their schools. As of October, 2012, a total of 33 states have been granted waivers, and another 11 states’ applications are under review (Cook, 2012). Again, members of Congress do agree that public education reform is a necessity and assert that it will be a top priority at the next regular annual session. With the 2014 NCLB deadline fast approaching, it is likely that the country will see additional public education reform in the coming years.

Poverty and School Performance

As highlighted in Chapter 1, the educational system in America has had substantial achievement gaps for years. The seemingly ubiquitous relationship between students’ social class or race/ethnicity and school performance is a continual challenge for educators, policymakers, and communities. Whether comparing SATs, reading aptitude, or science achievement, the relationship holds. This relationship is not new, however, nor has it been ignored in the past. Researchers have documented the relationship for nearly 40 years, while schools, communities, and governments have undergone multiple attempts to reform.

Unfortunately, these gaps still continue. In 2007, The Nation’s Report Card found that White, Black, and Hispanic students all scored higher on the fourth- and eighth-grade reading tests than in 1992; however, this did not reduce the overall achievement gaps except in the White–Black fourth-grade reading scores, between which the gap was narrower than it was in 1992 or 2005. In addition, The Nation’s Report Card: Mathematics 2011 reported that although White, Black, and Hispanic students all scored higher on both fourth- and eighth-grade mathematic scores, the gaps between White–Black and White–Hispanic groups were still present in 2011 fourth-grade mathematic scores (National Center for
Education Statistics, 2011a). These mathematics scores rose 1 point between 2009 and 2011, which translates to over 20 points higher than scores reported in 1990.

Recent statistics support discrepancies in school experiences by race. A 2010 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report, Status and Trends in Education of Racial and Ethnic Minorities (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010), highlights these differential school experiences:

- In 2009, approximately half of all Black (47%) and Hispanic (52%) students were enrolled in schools with more than 75% of the students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, whereas only 7% of White students were enrolled in such schools.
- In 2008, 63.1% of all White students were enrolled in schools with more than 75% White enrollment, whereas only 8.4% of all Black and 7.6% of all Hispanic students were in schools with high White enrollment. Conversely, less than 8% of all White students were enrolled in schools with 75% or more minority enrollment.
- From 1999 to 2008, the number of students taking AP exams has more than doubled. This number has increase for all minority groups, with the largest increase occurring for Black students. In addition, the number of Hispanic students taking an AP exam has more than tripled over that same time period. Black students, however, continue to have the lowest mean grade score in AP exams.
- In 2007, 9% of White, 21% of Black, and 12% of Hispanic students had ever repeated a grade.
- In 2007, 16% of White, 43% of Black, and 22% of Hispanic students had been suspended from school between 6th and 12th grade.
- In regard to school safety, 7% of White, 10% of Black, 9% of Hispanic, and 13% of mixed race students reported having been threatened or injured with a weapon in school in 2007.
- In 2005, 10.2% of White, 17.6% of Black, 15.5% of Hispanic, and 19.6% of mixed-race students reported having been engaged in a physical fight in school.

Schools, Their Students, and Their Communities

Given what we know about the link between race, ethnicity, poverty, and student achievement and academic outcomes, it is especially important to examine the changing demographic makeup of the school-age population. As a result of recent immigration, migration, and fertility patterns, an increasing proportion of school-aged children are Black or African, Asian, and Hispanic American.

Demographic and Population Changes

The population of school-aged children closely reflects the changes in the U.S. population and is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, language, and religion. According to the 2011 Digest of Educational Statistics, the number of children in elementary and secondary schools increased from 35 million children in 1960 to 45 million in 1970 (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). This number fell back to less than 40 million by 1985, but then increased steadily through 2011, returning to approximately 49.4 million students. Despite the fluctuations in the overall population, there has been a steady increase in prekindergarten education. The number of children enrolled in prekindergarten
programs has increased dramatically, from 200,000 in 1985 to 1.2 million in 2009 (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). The percentage of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in preschool programs has grown from 37.5% in 1970 to more than 60% in 2010. Among older students, the percentage of 18- and 19-year-olds enrolled in high school has increased from 10% in 1970 to 18% in 2010. And the percentage of 18- to 19-year-olds enrolled in higher education has increased from 37% in 1970 to 51% in 2010 (Snyder & Dillow, 2012; see Figure 2.2). In addition, the percentage of students enrolled in secondary schools increased by 28% between 1990 and 2011.

The national trends, however, mask important state-level differences in K–12 enrollments. From 2004 to 2009, two states had an increase in enrollment of more than 10%; Utah and Texas. In addition, seven states had a 5% to 10% increase in enrollment (Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, North Carolina, Nevada, and Oregon). Over the same time period, the District of Columbia had the largest decrease (9%), with four other states having a decrease between 5% and 9% (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). The population growth is overrepresented by increases in minority populations, in particular growth in the number of Hispanic children.

More specifically, there have been substantial changes in the United States regarding changing racial demographics in the school setting. Between 2000/2001 and 2007/2008 school year, public school enrollment of White students decreased from 61% to 56% (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). Although the number of Black and Native American students remained the same during this time period, Hispanic (from 17% to 21%) and Asian/Pacific Islander student enrollment increased (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010).

Such demographic changes create both an opportunity and demand for the provision of additional social work services. Given the achievement gap and the disproportionate growth of minority children, it is particularly important that greater numbers of children receive appropriate educational, social work, and health-care services before and during their formal schooling. Several other factors also influence a child’s success in school. Some of these include familial conflict and divorce, children who are in the foster care system, substance use and violence in the home and/or community, and homelessness. These influences are described in greater detail in Chapters 4–8 of this book. The integration of children and family services, economic development, and educational opportunities, all of which are sensitive to the particular needs of greater proportions of minority children and families, is critical.

Figure 2.2 Trends in the Expansion of Prek–12 and College Enrollments, 1970–2010

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**Figure 2.2** Trends in the Expansion of Prek–12 and College Enrollments, 1970–2010

- **3- to 5-year-olds**
- **18–19 in High School**
- **18–19 in College**
Among the myriad efforts at improving school performance, reducing the achievement gap, and increasing the effects of schooling, a number of reforms warrant further attention. These reforms offer an interesting blend of government intervention, market forces, and professionalism.

As schools, the communities they serve, and state and federal governments all seek new and improved strategies to improve the education of all children, a number of old ideas have been thrust to the forefront of the conversations on school improvement. Some of these ideas have been school based (e.g., improved curriculum, testing, staff development), and others have been community based (e.g., child care, health care). However, we are now witnessing an exciting and challenging blurring of the boundaries between school- and community-based reforms aimed at improving the lives of children, their families, and the broader community.

Standards-Based Reform

The most visible and controversial reform shaping schools in recent decades has been the dramatic change in K–12 curriculum standards and accountability systems. Of course, the headliner in this push is government intervention in the form of the federal law, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. As mentioned earlier, the NCLB has garnered much attention and criticism; however, the law sometimes reinforced state initiatives already underway and pushed other states into the age of school-based accountability.

Several states initiated heightened graduation requirements, state testing at specific grades or exit exams, and school accountability systems prior to NCLB. These systems were often the result of public pressure to produce tangible results, given the dramatic increase in state funding of local schools (see Figure 2.6). Moreover, when teacher grades are the only assessment of student performance, parents and students pressure teachers to reduce rigor (Figlio & Lucas, 2004).

The most aggressive of the pre-NCLB state initiatives took place in Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, and New York. These states were in front of the push to externally control curriculum variation and accountability measures. In New York, the state required all fourth- and eighth-grade students to be tested in mathematics and English/language arts beginning in 1996. Beginning in 2000, any student wanting to graduate from high school in New York State would have to meet a set course of requirements and end-of-course examinations established by the state. Similarly, Michigan began its MEAP testing program in the mid-1990s, Texas the TAAS, Massachusetts the MCAS, and Florida the FCAT, with many other state offering similar evaluations. So when the NCLB was passed, these states already had testing programs in place, although often they had to increase the number of grades involved in the testing program, typically from two grades to all children in grades 3 through 8 and one grade in high school.

In other states, however, the federal testing requirements brought them into the fold of standardized school accountability. Most often, states purchased the tests from private companies, with the curriculum material often tailored to the individual state curriculum frameworks.

It is important to note that although the federal government has spurred interest in school-based accountability systems, there is no national curriculum, testing program, or even a common standard of “proficiency.” Under current law, the states are responsible for creating (or adopting) state curriculum standards and a testing program and use the four-level rubric to assess performance (Figure 2.3). Schools are held accountable for annual gains in student performance as measured by gains in their performance index from one year to the next.
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**Figure 2.3** NCLB Proficiency Levels for State-Level Examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Highly proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Basic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Below basic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If all students in a school are graded as proficient, then a school’s performance index would be 200. Current law requires all districts to be on a performance trajectory to reach a PI of 200 by 2014. Although government officials hoped that NCLB would bring positive change and public education reform, only approximately half of the schools across the nation are on track to meet NCLB requirements (Rich, 2012). In addition, recent research documented that one-fourth of students in public schools are not graduating on time with their peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011b). Congress has been made aware of these statistics, and members agree that public education reform is a necessity, although at present, members of Congress cannot yet agree on the best path to meaningful reform.

The most recent proposal to hold schools accountable to standards-based reforms comes from the U.S. Education Secretary, Arne Duncan (Chorneau, 2012). In December of 2012, Duncan proposed a new rule that could give him the authority to require schools to report additional information when submitting annual data on school performance. Specifically, he has proposed to require additional data such as project-specific performance measures, baseline data, and targets (Chorneau, 2012). Only time will tell how standards-based reform will impact the future education.

**Market-Based Reforms**

Allowing market forces to enter the environment of public education is not a new idea. In fact, in the early decades of the republic, this model was all there was. But with the growth of the bureaucratic educational system throughout the last century (see Meyer, Scott, Strang, & Creighton, 1988; Tyack, 1974), market-based reforms have taken a prominent position among some school reformers (see Belfield & Levin, 2005; Chubb & Moe, 1990). An interesting mix of conservative and liberal reformers have called for the break-up of the public school “monopoly”—conservatives because of their inherent beliefs in the efficiency and productivity of free markets, and liberals because of the need to provide any kind of choice alternatives for those parents and children left with no options other than a local school infested with academic apathy and violence. Those with economic means typically have choices for their children. These choices may take the form of paying private school tuition or, in growing numbers, the decision to homeschool their children. In addition, the growing number of charter schools provides a free and public option for many families. Even so, a parent’s freedom and ability to choose from these market-based options is often greatly limited by their time and financial resources.

**Vouchers**

Access for all parents, regardless of income, to school choice is at the heart of a voucher program upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2002 (*Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*,}
Major Issues in American Schools

No. 00-1751). In what may be the most important K–12 education-related case argued before the high court in decades, the Court decided 5–4 that the Cleveland (OH) voucher plan is constitutional. The plan offers a voucher worth $2,500 toward tuition at any public or private school to students living in the city of Cleveland. The vouchers presumably offer choice options for children and parents who are not satisfied with their assigned public school in the city of Cleveland. In practice, however, the plan is restricted by the fact that not a single suburban district chose to participate in the voucher program. The result is that 97% of the students taking advantage of the vouchers are attending private or religious schools in and around Cleveland.

The Court’s decision rested on whether the program violates the establishment clause of the federal Constitution. This clause prohibits the state from promoting or inhibiting the establishment of religion and thus violating the separation of church and state. While there was precedent for state money to be given to religious schools in the past, these funds were typically restricted to textbooks and transportation. The argument was that government payments for books and busses narrowly assist the education of children, thus benefiting the child, and do not more broadly benefit the religion or church. In *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971), the Court established guidelines for such state involvement in religious schools in the form of a three-part “Lemon” test: “a statute or other government policy (1) must have a secular legislative purpose, (2) must have a principal effect that neither advances nor inhibits religion, (3) and must not foster ‘an excessive government entanglement with religion’” (*Lemon v. Kurtzman*, cited in Zirkel, Richardson, & Goldberg, 1995).

Two other voucher plans have also received much attention. The Milwaukee plan is the oldest, having begun in 1991 and hence has received the most study and scrutiny. This plan differs from Cleveland’s in that it offers vouchers only to poor families. There is no widespread agreement as to whether this program is effective, as both proponents and opponents find data to support their positions.

A more recent plan in Florida uses school performance to determine who qualifies for participation. Each school in the state is assigned a grade (A, B, C, D, F) based on the achievement of its students on state exams. If a school receives a grade of an F twice in a 4-year period, the students attending that school are given a voucher to use toward the cost of enrolling in another public or private school. Given the tremendous growth in the school-aged population in recent years, the elasticity of the market in Florida is in question. In other words, as more schools receive Fs, will other public and private schools have enough available seats to enroll the students from the failing schools? Preliminary analyses are skeptical on how much of a market is available in South Florida (Diaz de La Portilla, 2002). The future of voucher programs depends greatly on the political officials in office at the time because it is a politically contested element of the role of the free market in the education sector.

Charters

A second type of school reform founded on free market principles, though avoiding the litigious nature of voucher programs, is the creation of charter schools. Charter schools are publicly funded schools without attendance boundaries and are free of at least some state regulation or local work rules. Depending on the strength of the authorizing state statute, some charter schools are free of most regulation that governs the public schools, whereas others are constrained in their effort to be different from the public schools (see Education Commission of the States at http://www.ecs.org/).

The first charter school law was passed in 1991 in Minnesota, and since that time the numbers have grown exponentially (Figures 2.4 and 2.5). The number of students enrolled in charter schools quadrupled between 1999 and 2010, going from 300,000 students to over 1.6 million (U.S. Department of Education, 2012b). As of 2010, 41 states have passed
a law allowing the creation of charter schools, and within these states the number of charter schools varies widely. Although approximately 5,714 charter schools were in operation during the 2011–2012 school year, California (1,008) and Arizona (538) are the states where charter schools are most prevalent (Center for Education Reform [CER], 2012). The total enrollment in charter schools in the 2011–2012 school year was 1,941,831, which is about 3.9% of the total public K–12 enrollment. In 2011, 518 new charter schools opened their doors to students across the county. Since 1992, 1,036 schools have closed, and although
the reasons vary, they may include, but are not limited to, financial troubles and declining enrollments (Downey, 2011).

The Center for Education Reform (CER, 2012) is an organization that publicly supports the charter school movement. CER assesses the strength of charter schools in four major categories, including the number of charter schools allowed, whether there are multiple chartering authorities, the degree of fiscal autonomy, and equitable funding (go to the following report to see more specific information on charter schools in the United States: http://www.edreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/CER_2012_Charter_Laws.pdf). According to the CER (2012), Arizona, Minnesota, Washington, D.C., Michigan, and Indiana have enacted the strongest laws and received a grade of “A.” On the other end of the continuum are Arkansas, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maryland, Wyoming, Hawaii, Alaska, Rhode Island, Virginia, Kansas, Iowa, and Mississippi, which received a grade of “D” or “F.”

Key questions abound for voucher and charter school programs. For whom are they created? Whom do they serve? Are they effective? No doubt it is easier to document who they serve than how effective they are. Charter schools, on average, serve students that closely mirror the populations that attend the surrounding traditional public schools. The fear that charter schools will promote additional white flight from the public schools is largely unfounded. A proportional number of poor and minority children are attending charter schools and using vouchers (Gill, Timpane, Ross, & Brewer, 2001). Chingos and Peterson (2012) recently reported the results of a longitudinal randomized controlled trial that investigated the impact of the voucher program with students from New York on college enrollment. They found that Black students who participated in the voucher program as elementary students in 1991 were 24% more likely to attend college (Chingos & Peterson, 2012). Research investigating the impact of charter schools on learning and behavior outcomes is in its infancy; however, some preliminary studies exist and offer insight. For example, Imberman (2011) conducted a study that examined charter schools in the Southwest. He found that charter school participants were significantly more likely to show improvement in disciplinary and attendance problems. Students participating in charter schools in their study also had higher math scores in middle school when compared to traditional public schools (Imberman, 2011).

One obstacle to the growth in the number of charter schools (beyond the authorizing legislation) is the start-up cost of opening a charter school. Building the infrastructure for charter schools requires significant capital. A Government Accounting Office report (Government Accounting Office [GAO], 2000b) identified three major issues in charter school development: (1) the degree to which charter schools have access to traditional public school facility financing, (2) whether alternative sources of facility financing are available to charter schools, and (3) potential options available to the federal government if it were to assume a larger role in charter school facility financing.

A recent addition to the charter school movement has been the growth of networks of schools sharing names, methods, and curricula. In the early days of charter schools, the for-profit model, exemplified by Edison Schools, seemed to be expanding; however, running schools did not appear to be profitable. More recently, nonprofit entities, such as KIPP, seem to be succeeding. KIPP, which stands for the Knowledge for Power Program, was started by two teachers who had worked with Teach for America and decided to start a school in Houston based on the goal of helping minority students succeed. There are 125 KIPP schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia serving more than 39,000 students as of 2012 (www.kipp.org). Over 85% of the students enrolled in KIPP schools are from low-income families, and approximately 95% of the students are either
Black or Hispanic. Space permitting, KIPP schools will accept all students, regardless of prior discipline or academic histories. These schools share a set of principles referred to as the Five Pillars, which include high expectations, choice and commitment, more classroom time, the power to lead, and a focus on results. For example, the pillar of more time is typically enacted at a KIPP school by having students in school from 7:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. every weekday, every other Saturday, and for 3 weeks during the summer. KIPP claims that this is 60% more time in school than a typical public school student in the United States (www.kipp.org). Reforms such as charter schools and KIPP, in particular, exemplify the role of the free market system within the public K–12 educational system. They also call into question the role of professionalism, as alternative routes to certification and programs such as Teach For America are placing an increasing number of uncertified teachers in classrooms. Many of these programs offer support to their new teachers and require that they pursue certification while teaching. Nonetheless, these programs hint at the potential overlap between the role of the free market and of professionalism in education.

Homeschooling

*Time* magazine featured a question on its cover: “Is homeschooling good for America?” (August 27, 2001). This is a new wrinkle on the typical question of whether homeschooling is good for the homeschooled child or the local school. Homeschooling, another free-market pressure on schools, has come of age in the last two decades. It is now more publicly acknowledged in many circles as acceptable and is exhibiting significant growth in the numbers of homeschooled children. Researchers have begun to study the phenomenon, policymakers are paying attention, and educators are beginning to feel the effects of greater numbers of children staying at home to go to school. More recently, homeschooling has benefited from increasing legal, political, and social support (Cooper & Sureau, 2007). The movement has been politicized and draws strength from its grassroots organization, lobbying strategies, and organizations such as the National Home Education Research Institute, the Home School Legal Defense Association, and the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania (Cooper & Sureau, 2007).

The National Center for Education Statistics published a report from the U.S. Department of Education in 2009 with recent homeschooling statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). In 2007, an estimated 1.5 million students nationwide were being homeschooled. This amounts to 2.9% of U.S. students, ages 5 to 17, with a grade equivalent of kindergarten through grade 12. Data from 1999 and 2007 estimate that most homeschoolers were homeschooled only (84%), and few were enrolled in public or private schools part time (16%). The majority of students being homeschooled were White (77%), and 89% of homeschooled students came from two-parent households. Parents gave a variety of reasons regarding their choices to homeschool their children. In 2007, 36% of parents said the most important reason they homeschooled was to be able to provide religious or moral instruction, and another 21% said the primary reason was associated with the school environment (safety, drugs, or negative peer pressure). Seventeen percent cited dissatisfaction with the academic instruction; 14% noted reasons such as travel, family time, or finances; 7% cited a desire to provide their child with a nontraditional approach; and 6% referred to either physical or mental health problems or to other special needs (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Ray (2009) recently conducted a study investigating the academic achievement of homeschooled students. He collected cross-sectional data from approximately 12,000 students from 50 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Finding that students in his study scored 34–39 percentile points higher than the normative scores on standardized achievement tests, homeschool students national average ranged from the 84th percentile for math, language,
social studies, to the 89th percentile in reading (Ray, 2009). He also found that parents’ receipt of a teacher certification had no impact on scores. Additionally, the extent to which state government regulated the homeschool curriculum also did not have bearing on students’ scores.

These data clarify some of the assumptions surrounding who is being homeschooled. What remains unclear is whether children in need of special education services or other social services are disproportionately kept in schools to receive the services, or whether schools must provide such services for homeschooled children. A clear concern with at-risk children being homeschooled is the separation or isolation from the school and services provided there. Just how social service agencies can find and track at-risk children if they are homeschooled remains to be seen.

THE SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY HUB

Schools and communities have been inextricably linked across the history of American education. In many areas, schools provide a town or neighborhood center, where school plays and athletic events may be the main source of entertainment. As previously mentioned in this chapter, the role of schools and purpose of education have been debated. Increasingly, schools are home to services beyond the traditional realm of education, including school-based health centers, after-school programs, mental health services, public libraries, community centers, and others. Recent research has indicated that when collaborations exist between school, family, and community stakeholders, achievement gaps decrease (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). Time will tell if this centralization of the services will help to meet the needs of students and in turn prepare them for academic success, or if this arrangement of services is a distraction from academic goals.

Early Childhood Care and Pre-K Education

Long an eclectic web of care in homes, centers, nursery schools, and government-sponsored organizations (i.e., Head Start), the early care and education of children ages birth to 4 is being thrust into a relationship with K–12 public educational systems. Motivating this marriage are calls for public schools to provide prekindergarten education to 4-year-olds through what are now commonly called universal pre-K programs.

Universal pre-K (UPK), the notion of making publicly funded prekindergarten available to all children via government intervention in the form of the K–12 system, is becoming more popular in many states across the nation (Zigler, Gilliam, & Jones, 2006). For example, New York allocated over $385 million for UPK programs during the 2012–2013 school year (New York State Education Department, 2012). Whereas Head Start and Even Start (two federally funded programs supporting poor families) have needs-based eligibility standards, the new trend is to make pre-K available to all children, regardless of family income. In most states this takes place in elementary schools, though some states allow contracting with local community-based organizations. In West Virginia and New York, school districts are even required to subcontract with community-based organizations (CBOs) as a condition of receiving the state grant to help fund the local programming. The partnering with entities outside schools is meant to preserve the free market of the early child care system and to ensure a variety of choices for parents within a community and to not snuff out the financial viability of CBOs. The subcontracting relieves space constraints in schools,
allowing some or all of the UPK services to be offered off the school site. In small and rural communities, the context is different. In these communities, there are few if any CBOs with which to partner, and hence the school districts become fully responsible for hosting the pre-K programming (Sipple, McCabe & Ross-Bernstein, 2007; Sipple, McCabe, Ross-Bernstein & Casto, 2008).

Of import is the meshing of services provided by two distinct systems: early care and education and the K–12 system. For instance, Head Start is financed and regulated through the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and has shown to have consistent though modest effects (United States DHHS Head Start Impact Study, 2010). Federal aid for schools comes through the Department of Education. At the state level, state departments of health and/or offices of children’s and family services often regulate early care programs. Regulations for schooling are rooted in state boards of education and state departments of education. Moreover, counties play a key role in the regulation and funding of these early care and education services. In some states (e.g., Maryland, Florida), the county and school district boundaries are one in the same. In these states, the linking of early care and K–12 governance is markedly easier than in those states where there is no relationship between district and county boundaries and governance (e.g., New York).

Given the broad attention given to the state-level investments in UPK in recent years, obvious questions of effectiveness arise (Zigler et al., 2006). Whereas most research has cited the long-term benefits of early education based on the High/Scope Perry Preschool project in Michigan and the Abecedarian program in North Carolina, these programs were full-day, year-round and enrolled children for at least 2 years. Furthermore, the short-term positive outcomes from these programs were more noncognitive (i.e., attendance and growth–motor development) than cognitive. It was argued that such direct noncognitive benefits are essential to successful cognitive development. These programs, however, are in contrast to most of the current UPK programming across the country that are typically half day and only meet during the 9-month school year. Precisely, how effective these less-intensive programs are is less well understood (Cunha & Heckman, 2006), though recent research suggests that the benefits of UPK accrue not only to poor children but to middle-class children as well (Gormley, Phillips, & Gayer, 2008). In recent years, federal organizations have begun creating resources to make evaluating and choosing programming easier. For example, SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP) highlights 23 interventions that have been studied with preschool-aged students (see www.nrepp.samhsa.gov). Although not comprehensive, resources such as these can be helpful to the school social worker looking for specific interventions with research support.

Children’s Health and Schools

It is common knowledge that healthy children learn more than unhealthy ones, and that schools are the one place that all children (by law) must attend on a regular basis. Merging these two sectors results in a fast-growing trend of linking schools with other social and health services. School-based health centers (SBHCs) are growing in popularity. The National Assembly of School-Based Health Centers (NASBHC)\(^3\) conducts a regular census that tracks the location, services provided, and state and national trends. Although only 600 SBHCs existed in 1994, the most recent census accounted for approximately 1,909 such health centers located in schools (Strozer, Jusczak, & Ammerman, 2010).

\(^3\)http://www.nasbhc.org/
The range of services provided by SBHCs varies greatly as state regulations differ dramatically from state to state. According to the census, the majority of the centers are located in urban areas, although there are a growing number in rural areas. Nearly 4 in 10 are in high schools, and nearly 1 in 4 is in elementary schools.

The research on the effectiveness of SBHCs has been slower to surface. There is strong evidence that SBHCs provide greater access to health care for poor and minority children than traditional health-care agencies. Earlier researchers found that greater attendance rates seem to correlate with the presence of an SBHC, but suggested that investigation of longer-term academic outcomes and positive cost–benefit analyses were needed (Geierstanger & Amaral, 2005). The Health Care Safety Net Act of 2008 (a reauthorization of the Community Health Center Program) calls for the General Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a cost–benefit study of federal investment in SBHCs and an assessment of the impact on student health at these centers. Recent research has been published that addresses this topic. For example, Guo and colleagues conducted a longitudinal quasi-experimental designed study in Ohio with 5,056 participants investigating the cost–benefit analysis and impact of SBHCs (Guo, Wade, Pan, & Keller, 2010). They found that SBHCs are cost beneficial, not only to the Medicaid system, but also to society in general. In addition, they reported that SBHCs may contribute to closing health care disparity gaps (Guo et al., 2010).

**FINANCE**

By any measure, Americans spend a great deal of money educating their children. While debate continues as to whether we spend too much or too little, there is also much debate about how current education revenues are raised, and how the money is spent. At the heart of the issue are questions of equity, equality, excellence, and accountability. The financing of American education is derived from local, state, and federal sources, with expenditures totaling $596.6 billion in the 2008 fiscal school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). According to the U.S. Department of Education, the average cost per student during the 2009 fiscal school year is approximately $12,274 per pupil, up from $6,508 (or $8,490 accounting for current inflation) in 1989–1990 (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Expenditures per pupil, however, vary greatly by state (see Figure 2.6), with 5% of school districts having spent approximately $7,355 or less per student and, conversely, the top 5% spending $19,103 or more per student (NCES, 2011).

Given that there is no mention of education in the U.S. Constitution and that the Tenth Amendment delegates all rights and privileges not included in the Constitution to the states or to the people, states are granted the plenary authority for the provision of public education. Following San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez (1973) in which the U.S. Supreme Court declared that there is no federal right to a public education, the state courts have been the locus of the debate on the equality, equity, and adequacy of school finance practices. The debates involve the distribution of local and state resources to school districts within each state. Specifically, the debates involve the degree to which state funding formulas equitably redistribute dollars from wealthy to poor communities and whether the absolute number of dollars spent on public education is adequate. Since the first state-court school finance case was decided in 1971 in California (Serrano v. Priest), at least 38 states have had their funding formulas reviewed by their state supreme court, with about one half being found unconstitutional. Muddying this fiscal debate is the lack of agreement among policymakers and researchers on how important additional dollars are to improving school performance (see, e.g., Ladd, Chalk, & Hansen, 1999).
Figure 2.6: U.S. School Expenditures Per Pupil by State
Federal Priorities
The federal government has long had a minor role in the financing of public education. The federal role has hovered at around 5% of local district revenue for nearly three decades (NCES, 2001a). The largest source of federal money is the ESEA (which has been amended and is also known as the No Child Left Behind Act). Although the IDEA and the free and reduced-price lunch/breakfast programs also contribute to local revenues, the bulk of federal funding for most school districts, particularly those serving a greater percentage of poor students, is found within the ESEA/NCLB. With the 2001 reauthorization of the ESEA, federal funding is less restrictive and hence less targeted than it has been since the early years of the Reagan administration, when the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 consolidated dozens of categorical programs into a block grant. Unfortunately, for many schools, this meant a reduction in the absolute number of federal dollars received. Several states, as was illustrated by the aforementioned case Connecticut filed against the U.S. Secretary of Education, have found that the NCLB act has cost them more money in attempts to meet the federal mandates. Until Congress can agree on the best approach to amend this bill, the associated future financial impact on states remains unclear.

In further trying to promote equity, excellence, and adequacy, the federal government allocates funds through Title 1 grants to school districts with high concentrations of students who come from low-income families. In the 2011 fiscal school year, Congress allocated $14.4 billion for Title 1, Part A grants. Although states who have received Title 1 funds are required to report data on students who are educationally disadvantaged as well as how the funds have been utilized, a recent report notes that only 19 states have submitted sufficient data (Center on Education Policy, 2011). The 19 states, however, represent just over 50% of the school districts that receive Title 1 funding. Researchers found that the test performance gaps between Title I students and non-Title I students have narrowed more often than they have widened since 2002. For example, the mean gap between Title I students’ and non-Title I students’ reading and math scores narrowed at both eighth grade and high school (Center on Education Policy, 2011). Congress is currently using data from this report to make decisions on how to amend ESEA/NCLB funds and requirements.

Special Education and Federal Funding
The promise of federal funding for 40% of the costs of special education has never been realized. In 2010, grants from the federal government covered approximately 17% of the excess cost of special education students served under IDEA, Part B (Aron & Loprest, 2012). Over time, amendments to the law and increased identification of individuals with disabilities have expanded the scope of special education, and the costs have mushroomed. Since its inception, the IDEA has been reauthorized every 5 to 10 years and has expanded educational opportunities to infants and preschoolers with disabilities, and to students with disabilities that are increasing in prevalence such as a traumatic brain injury or attention deficit disorders. It is estimated that educating children with disabilities costs approximately 10,380 dollars per year, however, for children with more involved disabilities, the costs are estimated at greater than 30,000 dollars per year (Stabile & Allin, 2012).

In 1999–2000 (the most recent information available on state and local spending), federal, state, and local government programs spent a total of $77.3 billion on special education services, both in and out of the general education classroom—approximately 21% of all education spending and a considerable increase from the 17% of education spending used in 1977–78. This increase is mostly attributable to the growing number of children identified and receiving special education services, rather than increases in the per student (Aron & Loprest, 2012). As total spending on special education has grown, federal spending has stagnated and state funding has decreased. As a result, local school districts bear the onus of the cost of providing services. Whereas in 1987–88, local school districts funded 36% of
education expenditures (with states funding 56% and the federal government funding 8%), local school districts funded 46% in 1999–2000 (with states funding 45% and the federal government funding 9%; Aron & Loprest, 2012).

State funding for special education reflects the large disparities among states in spending for general education. However, funding also differs across disability categories with some incentives inherent in the funding structure that may influence the way children are identified, the services they receive, and the settings in which they receive them (Aron & Loprest, 2012). For example, states that changed from funding based on number of children identified in special education to funding based on the total number of children in the school showed decreases in the number of students identified as eligible for IDEA services (Aron & Loprest 2012).

However, these disparities do not necessarily reflect the quality of services. Often, schools that spend less show greater proficiency in student achievement than schools that spend more (Levenson, 2012). Rather than increase the quality of services, the additional funding is used in many districts to hire more personnel, usually paraprofessionals rather than certified teachers. After reviewing data from more than 1,400 school districts, Levenson (2012) recommended a greater emphasis on the quality of special education personnel and more attention to managing special education teachers’ student to teacher ratio.

Local Effort
Although the local proportion of the cost of public education has diminished since the 1970s, the absolute number of local dollars being spent on local schools has steadily increased. Targeted state and federal programs supplement local funds but often are not allowed to supplant local effort. Therefore, as the expectations for public schools continue to increase (e.g., educate all children to high levels, provide additional social services, provide more meals, ensure a safe environment, provide extracurricular activities and character/ citizenship education), the money to provide such services is stretched thin and often requires additional local effort. This leaves local community and school leaders few choices. Options include increasing local property taxes, reducing services, and sometimes consolidation with other school districts. Each of these options is likely to improve the short-term fiscal picture, although the resultant effect on at-risk children can be harsh. These decisions, however, must be weighed carefully if children are to be adequately and equitably served by their public schools.

CONCLUSION
In reviewing the major issues in American schools, one is struck by the remarkable successes and failures of the American public educational system. Evidence of success is that we have achieved universal participation for school-aged children and continue to increase the number of very young children who are now provided with social and educational services. We have come to some sort of agreement that schools must serve all children in various ways, that no child should be left behind. Consistent efforts have been made at altering structural arrangements in schools in the name of improving the social and educational services. There are increasing intersections among the role of government intervention, free markets, and professionalism in the varying types of school reforms. Schools are becoming a hub for a wide range of services for children, especially with the rise of UPK programs and SBHCs. There are steady increases in funding from the local, state, and federal levels to pay for at least part of the cost for the additional services.

The public educational system has also been described as being in an “awkward position” between what “we hope society will become and what we think it really is” (Labaree, 1997, p. 41). The achievement gap documented so starkly in the mid-1960s
remains in place to this day. The current rhetoric of federal and state education policies are aimed at reducing this gap; however, it remains to be seen to what degree schools alone can minimize these achievement discrepancies based on socioeconomic and racial differences. Although schools appear very similar to the red brick schoolhouses we envision from more than a century ago, they are increasingly being asked to serve multiple purposes and solve larger societal problems. Although schools look similar to one another, they are greatly affected by the political shifts at the national level, especially in relation to the issues discussed in this chapter. With ever-increasing market forces and the related tension over increased professionalism on the part of educators, and with growing government intervention, time will tell just how education and schools will serve both individual students and the creation of a more perfect union in the 21st century.

Key Points

- There are many purposes of public education that encompass religious, social, political, economic, racial, and scientific interests. A central focus of the socially determined purposes of public schools is the relative opportunity afforded each child. Three contradictory purposes have been espoused: democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility.
- In recent years, the purpose of school education has been largely influenced by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, recent amendments, and the Race to the Top.
- Substantial achievement gaps still exist regarding poverty, race, and school performance.
- Attempts to close achievement gaps include various strategies to reform the education system, including standards-based reform and market-based reform (vouchers, charters, and homeschooling).
- Schools and communities have been inextricably linked across the history of American education. Increasingly, schools are home to services beyond the traditional realm of education, including SBHCs, after-school programs, mental health services, public libraries, community centers, and others.
- While debate continues as to whether we spend too much or too little on American Education, there is also much debate about how current education revenues are raised and how the money is spent. At the heart of the issue are questions of equity, equality, excellence, and accountability. The issue is influenced by federal priorities, special education and federal funding, and local efforts.

Case for Class or Online Group Discussion

The following case illustrates the many forces influencing the work of schools and the numerous opportunities and obstacles associated with partnering with community organizations to better serve students:

Trevor has worked as a social worker in the Woodville School District for 5 years and has recently been asked to move from the high school to the elementary school. Woodville is a geographically large district in an isolated rural area with a small student population of 1,400 being served by only one elementary, one middle, one intermediate, and one high school. At the high school level, Trevor worked with students from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, some of whom struggled to balance work and school. He was constantly trying to keep many of his students from dropping out of high school.

When he began working at the elementary school, he secretly thought the job would be easier without the threat of dropouts.

The elementary school had been offering preschool for 25 years, using local funds to children of low-income families, as well as targeted prekindergarten. However, the district
had recently taken a state grant, which would make it possible for them to allow students of all economic backgrounds into the program, provide universal prekindergarten, and expand it to a full-day program. In addition, this would make it possible for the school to identify children with special needs before they entered kindergarten. Although Trevor had been peripherally involved in this decision, he felt the earlier families were connected with the school, the more easily he could serve the needs of the children.

In his first week of work before the school year began, Trevor attended a meeting of a countywide network of organizations that, although separate from the school district, had been instrumental in the shift to universal prekindergarten. Trevor met the Even Start coordinator, who was connected with several low-income families with children from birth to 3 years old. The director said she would be able to introduce him to a few families who were terrified to send their children back to the school from which they had dropped out. She hoped he would be able to convince them to enroll in prekindergarten because, if they aged out of Even Start and were not in school, then the families would have no formal connection to the district.

He also met the director of the county Head Start, which served three school districts, but did not have any children enrolled from Woodville. She hoped Trevor would convince some of the local families to apply for Head Start so that additional 0- to 3-year-olds could be served. In addition, the state universal prekindergarten grant required the school to coordinate its services with community organizations, and Head Start was one of the few available. However, the children in Woodville would need to be transported 45 minutes, one way, on a bus.

Next, Trevor spoke with the coordinator of the county special-needs services for students needing physical or speech therapy or other services. She mentioned that although the county identified and provided services to pre-school-age children, Trevor would need to coordinate with her to enable the students enrolled in prekindergarten at the school or at Head Start to be served at these locations so the county therapists no longer had to drive across the county to serve these special-needs children in their homes.

Trevor met a number of other representatives from local organizations such as the United Way, the food bank, the library, and the health clinic. After the meeting, he wondered if getting children into school at age 4 and matching all their needs with the appropriate services was going to be just as hard, if not tougher, than keeping 16-year-olds from dropping out.

Case Study Questions and Online Exercises
1. If you were in Trevor’s position in rural area near your community, what possible solutions do you think you should propose?
2. Use the following links to explore service options in your area:
3. The following YouTube video is about Head Start (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF8XbaAr7l8). Toward the end of the video, the social worker says that Head Start has been studied and has mixed results. First watch this video and discuss why you feel like this program may or may not be effective in a rural community near you.
4. Go to the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices website (http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/). Click on the advanced search tab, and narrow the search to look for early childhood interventions only (0–5). Then click search. Look through the various interventions, and identify one or two you think might be an alternative option for Trevor. Compare interventions with your class or group, and discuss why you chose the interventions that you chose.
FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

The challenge for social workers, whether they work in schools or in community agencies that interface with schools, is to build on past successes and learn from the failures. Thoughtful provision of services that meet the individual needs of children is more likely when social workers have an enriched understanding of the broader issues at play in schools. This chapter, coupled with the more detailed chapters that follow, should provide the reader with knowledge necessary for improved practice and understanding of school social work and the remarkable organizations in which the work takes place.

1. Interview several teachers, administrators, parents, and policymakers inquiring about their expectations for their local school and the purposes of the broader public educational system. How (dis)similar are the responses, and what are the implications for practice?

2. Given the growth in homeschooling and market-based reforms (e.g., voucher programs and charter schools), how might free market forces shape the professional knowledge requirements of those working in the charter schools and their public school neighbors?

3. Efforts are often hampered by the overburdened agencies and educators due to two distinct, though related, issues: lack of sufficient resources and the ever-increasing need for schools to provide more and better services for all children. Consequently, does the practice of social workers need to change? What new services must be provided?

4. Labaree (1997) argued that the core problems with schools are political and not technical. Do you agree? How do local and national politics affect the services provided to different children? What technical services can be provided regardless of politics?

5. Researchers have documented the differential levels of school success for different groups of children for more than 50 years. What can be done to interrupt the reproduction of society’s social and economic strata?

6. Discuss the concept of equality of educational opportunity. How do the different types of school reform enhance or inhibit educational opportunity for poor or minority children?

7. What role does the current financing of public education play in the provision of equal educational opportunity?

Additional Readings


Chapter 2


Major Issues in American Schools


References