



# W A S S W

## Legislative Agenda to Advocate for Key Educational Issues and the Role of School Social Work

**WASSW advocates for legislation for School Social Workers to accomplish their role in the learning environment, where they support student achievement while maximizing existing education and community resources.**

**A school social worker is a uniquely and highly trained professional who holds a valid Educational Staff Associate (ESA) certificate in School Social Work as defined by the Professional Educator Standards Board. The professional school social worker has specialized qualifications and skills to address all students' academic, social/emotional, and post secondary educational life planning needs.**

### **WASSW's Legislative Agenda**

WASSW participated in the process that contributed to the Quality Education Committee's (QEC) recommendation to include allocations for student support personnel (nurses, counselors, social workers, and graduation specialists), in order to provide prevention, intervention, and re-engagement strategies and programs for drop-out reduction.

### **WASSW supports the following:**

1. Increasing the graduation rate by engaging student support services in dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval programs that address non-academic barriers creating greater opportunities for learning and school success.
2. The creation of State-level comprehensive data collection and tracking systems that improve the student support specialist's ability to implement an early warning system which targets prevention and intervention programs that increase school success.
3. The QEC's recommendation to add Graduation Specialists at the high school level, provided that they are *highly trained certificated professionals*.
4. Implementation of school and district-wide anti-bullying programs, as per HB 2801 by highly trained certificated professionals.
5. Developing partnerships with State and community level resources to maximize existing resources for the benefit of student social/emotional and academic achievement.

## **WASSW Legislative Goals:**

### **Build relationships with members of House and Senate education committees**

Meet with key (education) legislators to discuss the following areas:

- The unique role of school social workers in the school setting,
- Developing and passing language in the law that defines School Social Workers as highly qualified certified educators,
- School Social Workers play a major part in the current educational reform to address drop-out prevention, retention, and retrieval and to create a world-class education system that produces creative, innovative workers ready to contribute to the knowledge based workforce.

Identify potential School Social Work/WASSW supporters in both House and Senate (Mary Lou Dickerson, Connie Ladenburg, Susan Fagan, Eric Pettigrew, Sharon Santos-Tomiko, Marcie Maxwell, Tim Probst, Rosemary McAuliffe, Ed Murray, Tina Orwall, Craig Pridemore and Pat Sullivan). Develop as Champions and maintain contact to keep SSW on their radar.

Encourage their support of specific **QEC** and **Building Bridges** recommendations in addition to **Graduation a team effort – Collaborative Partners**.

### **WASSW (proposed) Legislative Activities:**

1. Develop a talking point document that outlines education efforts and areas of advocacy that benefit School Social Work and the profession's contribution to the education process.
2. Develop language to pass a definition of School Social Work into law. Monitor other bills to ensure that school social workers are featured in any bill language related to dropout prevention/reduction, early warning data tracking systems, and support student support services, social/emotional learning.
3. Develop relationship with the State Board of Education to keep school social workers in forefront of conversations regarding drop-out early intervention/prevention and drop-out retrieval programs.
4. Develop relationships with key lobbyist for education and social service issues (WEA: Lucinda Young, and NASW: Bob Cooper).
5. Maintain ongoing working relationships with key OSPI contacts that support School Social Work.
6. Join with other student support organizations (counselors, psychologists, nurses, etc.) on important education legislation and workforce issues.