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The teachers' view of the school social workers' function in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Elementary Schools

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THE TEACHERS' VIEW OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS' FUNCTION IN THE CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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BY
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DEDICATION

To my parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Woodard, Jr., and grandfather, Mr. C. A. Woodard, Sr., whose devoted love provided the ultimate incentive for the successful completion of this thesis.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher wishes to express gratitude to Mrs. Bobbie Toatley for her excellent field work supervision during the data gathering period for this thesis.

The researcher is deeply indebted to the elementary teachers and their principals in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System without whose cooperation the present research could not have been completed.

The researcher wishes to express her gratitude for the assistance received from Mrs. Doris C. Bridges, Thesis Advisor, and from Dr. Hugh Peck, Director of Educational Evaluation Services, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.

Finally, the researcher acknowledged her appreciation to the Director and staff members of the Department of School Social Work Services— with a special acknowledgment of appreciation to staff member, Mrs. Thelma Miller— for their assistance in the ultimate completion of this study.

M.J.W.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Procedure</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Limitations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. HISTORY OF THE AGENCY</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. DATA PRESENTATION</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of School Social Work Services</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Social Worker in School and</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in their Particular Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Involvement in Consultation</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with School Social Worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Cases</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases Most in Need of Social Work Skills</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function of School Social Worker</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Questionnaire for Teachers</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Number and Per Cent of Teachers Who Use School Social Work Services</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number and Per Cent of Teachers Who Recognize Need for School Social Work Services</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number and Per Cent of Teachers Who Recognize Need for School Social Worker's Participation in the School Program</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Number and Per Cent of Teachers Who Recognize Need of Being Involved in Consultation With the School Social Worker</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teachers' Conception of Priority Cases for School Social Worker</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Conception of Cases Most in Need of Social Work Skills</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Conception of the Primary Function of the School Social Worker</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Teachers' View of the Reason the School Social Worker is in the School</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

As is true of any specialized service in the school setting, school social work cannot function unless it is part of an interdisciplinary team which includes all of the adults -- both in the school and in the community -- who are concerned with the individual child and with all children.

In addition to social work, the school's educational "specialists" customarily include doctor, nurse, attendance worker, psychologist, psychiatrist, guidance and educational counselors, reading and speech correctionists, and special education teacher. The mainstays of the team are, of course, the teacher and principal.

The educational team is advantageous in that each participating member can limit his contribution to those areas in which he is particularly trained. Limiting each member's contribution to his specialized area of training, however, does not preclude each member's need to understand and accept the role, function, skills, contributions, and limitations of the other team members. Especially must each team specialist be familiar with the role of the teacher with whom he, more than likely, will have a great deal of consistent, direct contact. The teacher, in turn, must familiarize himself with the function of each team specialist.

The particular members of the educational team with whom this study is concerned are the teacher and the "specialist" known
as the school social worker.

In many instances where the school social work department has been instituted much later in the school program than other specialists' departments, the role of the school social worker in the interprofessional team relationship will likely be the least understood by other team members. Because this is so, conflicts have arisen which stem from the teacher's misconception that the services of the school social worker seeks to replace rather than supplement his services.

It, then, is the teacher who, in actuality, can "make or break" the school social work program, for it is he who makes the initial decision as to whether or not the child will have this service. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that the teacher and school social worker effect a good working relationship.

Thus, the researcher's prime incentive for conducting the following study was her recognition of the profound significance of role familiarity among team members for promoting effective relationships.
CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Significance of the Study

Our educational system has been established on the principle of providing for every individual those developmental experiences that will help him attain his maximum potential.\(^1\) Often-times, however, educators still fail in their attempts at helping each child use the school to the limit of his capacity.

Repeatedly, consistent observations have confirmed the fact that no matter how advanced the curriculum, how competent the teachers, or how adequate the physical facilities, the child who comes to school socially or emotionally disturbed, will not be able to take full advantage of educational opportunities. Thus, in order to release the full potential of each student, the school must provide facilities and personnel to deal effectively with his needs.\(^2\) Special services, therefore, have been provided in school programs to assist teachers, parents, and others in meeting the educational needs of pupils.

One of these special services is social work, which when practiced in a school setting, is termed school social work.


\(^2\) Ibid.
The years for inception of school social work programs were 1936 and 1907 in New York, Boston, and Hartford, respectively.

Betram Beck states that the first school social workers, called visiting teachers, were actually classroom teachers who had assumed the responsibility of visiting in the homes of pupils in an effort to understand family difficulties that were interfering with pupils' participation in classroom activities.³

Their basic reason for being was the same as the school social worker today, although their training and method was, of course, quite different. In time, some of these visiting teachers recognized that the problems they were encountering in the homes of their pupils were the day-in-day-out business of an up and coming profession called social work. Some of these visiting teachers began to seek training in the developing courses of social work being given at universities.⁴

The visiting teacher movement, then, gave impetus to the establishment of a branch, not of education, but, of social work.

Since the introduction of social work skills into the school setting, many educators have yet to accede to the supposition that social work skills are needed in school settings. Many school personnel still see the present school social worker as performing the function of the visiting school teacher of the past.⁵

⁴Ibid.
Although there is general agreement that school social work has received wider acceptance by school personnel, there still seems to be resistance and confusion as to the application and function of social work skills in the school setting.⁶

There are, however, some very apparent reasons why this confusion about the function of school social work exists.⁶

Many school personnel and people in the communities—at-large are confused about whether or not the school social worker is identified as being within the field of education or within the field of social work. They are not clear as to where social work belongs administratively. Helen Witmer has pointed out that the very term, "visiting teacher," confuses school personnel and others as to the true identity of the profession.⁷

Further complicating the school social worker's identity is the fact that there is a lack of uniformity in titles for the social worker in the school setting.⁸ According to a report of the U.S. Department of Labor, there are at least thirteen different titles used to designate social workers in school settings.⁹ Aside from "school social worker" and "visiting teacher," he may be "visiting

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⁶Ibid.


counselor," or "school counselor," or any of the several other titles. This lack of uniformity seems to reflect to some extent the confusion as to the purpose and function of the service. 10

The Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1965, purports that in many cities and states, the identity of the school social worker's function is still somewhat mystified by the tendency to merge the positions of attendance officer and school social worker when there are differences in the professional requirements and training of these two groups. 11

Although attendance programs are often recognized as problems for the school social worker, too often in the early stages, the school social worker was thought of as, and sometimes was, the attendance officer.

As attendance officers, John Altmeyer reports that school social workers have been traditionally associated with school systems in a negative sense as "hooky cops" constantly on the alert to pounce upon and punish the child. 12

In desperate quest of establishing an identity within the context of the school setting, William Lornell is convinced that often,

10Lide, loc. cit.


in the beginning, the school social worker allowed himself to be used as an "errand boy" who would accept miscellaneous responsibilities which were not necessarily related to his specific function.

In his treatise, "The Development of School Social Work," Joseph Frankford intimates similar feelings.

Sometimes in the 'old days' a referral was considered a reflection on the principal's, assistant principal's, counselor's, psychologist's and teacher's ability to control the class. This attitude was followed by a period when the way of referring was to 'turn a child over to a social worker,' 'dump him' sometimes 'wash her hands of him.' But why not? The social worker was still struggling with her job. The principal's, assistant principal's, counselor's, psychologist's and teacher's tendency to turn the child over was matched by the worker's willingness to take over.

William Lornell further postulates that, in spite of presently being more firmly implanted in the school setting, school social work has only partially achieved its struggle for identity as a specialized field within the context of social work and education.

A general contention for the lack of acceptance and understanding of the function of school social work has been offered by Bertram Beck as being the lack of acceptance and understanding of social work practice as a whole. If this is so, Mr. Beck's contention would further infer that society may not understand and accept

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15 Ibić, p. 1.

16 Lornell, loc. cit.
the function of social work as a profession.\textsuperscript{17}

The Department of School Social Work Services of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, Charlotte, North Carolina, formerly the Department of Child Accounting and Attendance, has defined its function in the School System as being the understanding and treatment of those emotional and/or environmental difficulties which interfere with the learning process:

Many children are unable to take advantage of their right to a good educational experience because of emotional and/or environmental difficulties, and they may be unable to benefit from the presently existing school programs. The basic function of School Social Work is to offer a specialized service to the individual schools by providing casework to these children and consultation with the school personnel.\textsuperscript{18}

In the school setting, the social worker's client is the child and much of the help given him consists not only of activity directly with him but lies also in the quality of the interaction between the school social worker and the other persons having responsibility for the child.

Of all the educators who make varied, lasting impressions on the child and on his educational career, the teacher is the most important. Because the teacher has a vested interest in her pupils and in their rights to achieve the most from their educational experiences, she should be acquainted with the functions of the

\textsuperscript{17}Beck, op. cit., pp. 87-89.

\textsuperscript{18}"School Social Work Function" (School Social Work Service Function Committee, Department of School Social Work Services, November, 1966), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)
special services which will attempt to render aid, if she so desires, in her work with pupils. Adequate knowledge of the function of school social work services and the recognition of a need for social work skills in the school setting could prove to be an asset in the quest to effectively promote a child's best use of school.

This study, then, was made to determine whether or not the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System know the function of the Department of School Social Work Services and recognize a need for social work skills in the school setting.

Purpose of the Study

Even though school social work has been actively promoted by the School Administration this school year (1966-67) more than at any other time in the history of the Department, personal experiences encountered during the researcher's six-month block field placement, discussions with staff members, and a survey of the relevant literature have impressed the researcher with the contention that confusion still prevails among school personnel regarding the need for school social work.

This study is a sequel to a previous study which discussed the view of the principals toward the school social worker's function in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, 1964-65. The present study seeks to determine how the teacher, the second most important school official with whom the school social worker consults, views the function of the Department of School Social Work
Services as stated in the Special Services Handbook. This study also explores whether or not the teachers recognize a need for social work in the school setting.

The hypotheses tested are similar to those stated in the 1964-65 study. These hypotheses are:

1. More than seventy-five per cent of the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System do not know the function of the Department of School Social Work Services.

2. More than twenty-five per cent of the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System do not recognize a need for social work in the school setting.

Analysis of the collected data should answer the questions posed that will tend to support or disprove the above stated hypotheses. Some of these questions are: Have the teachers of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System ever used the services offered by a school social worker? Do the teachers in the School System see a need for the services of a social worker in a school setting? Do the teachers in the School System see a need for the services of a social worker in the particular schools in which they are employed? What do the teachers in the School System think should be the extent of the school social worker's participation in the school's program? Do the teachers see a need for being involved in consultation with the school social worker if she is working with one of the children?

19 Division of Special Services, "Department of School Social Work Service," Special Services Handbook (Charlotte: Division of Special Services, September, 1966), p. II.

20 Mosley, op. cit., p. 7.
in their classes? Which case situations do the teachers in the School System see as most in need of the skills of the school social worker? What case situations do the teachers in the School System see as priority cases for the school social worker?

Method of Procedure

The researcher's data were collected through use of a questionnaire. The particular questionnaire is a revision of the one used in the 1964-65 study of "The Principals' View of the School Social Worker's Function." The questionnaire contained both structured and unstructured questions.

The universe for the study consisted of 760 elementary school teachers who are employed in the thirty elementary schools in which the school social workers of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Department of School Social Work Services have been assigned on a permanent basis. These teachers are listed in the Directory of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 1966-67. The Directory, edited and published by the Board of Education, contains the names of all of the teachers in the School System.

The researcher alphabetized the 760 names of these teachers and then, by random method, selected each third name which eventually was compiled into a list of names totaling two hundred and thirty-four. The list of 234 names comprised the researcher's sample population. Questionnaires were then sent to the sample population of the 234 teachers who had been selected.

21 Mosley, op. cit., p. 33.
For the purpose of this study, two concepts are operationally defined. The concepts are, "School Social Worker" and "Teacher."

School Social Worker - Any person recognized and designated as occupying this role by the Department of School Social Work Services of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. As the Department of School Social Work Services consists of social workers, the exception being the secretarial staff, the term, "school social worker" is used interchangeably with the term, "Department of School Social Work Services."

Teacher - Any person recognized as filling this role by the Board of Education in the Handbook for Teachers, 1966-67, which is edited and published by the Board of Education.

After the data were compiled and tabulated, the findings were then presented in frequency tables. The researcher analyzed the data by quantifying them through the use of simple counting.

Scope and Limitations

This study was begun and completed in the span of six months - November, 1966 to May, 1967.

The study concerned one school official - the teacher - and was confined to only those teachers employed in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System and to those elementary schools serviced on a permanent basis by the Department of School Social Work Services.

The study was limited further by the researcher's having confined the study to the Department's statement of its function as described in the Special Services Handbook and by the unavailability of information and research relevant to the area in which the study was concentrated.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE AGENCY

The Department of School Social Work Services, initially the Department of Child Accounting and Attendance, was instituted in September, 1954, under the auspices of the Board of Education in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The rationale for the inception of the Department was, as its original name indicates, primarily the alleviation of the problem of poor attendance in the public schools.

Mrs. Anne Hausermann was the first director appointed by the Board of Education to head the Department. She was entirely qualified having earned an M.A. degree from Columbia University, and a degree from the New York University School of Social Work. Years of experience in the social work field of practice also deemed her qualified.¹

In conjunction with her personal selection of a co-worker, Mrs. Grace McCauley, a graduate of the Atlanta University School of Social Work, Mrs. Hausermann began aggressively seeking to promote the cooperation of the community whose support would be necessary to insure the proper coordination of the Department.

During the month of September 1954, individual conferences with the key person or persons in the various health and welfare agencies in the community were carried on for the purpose of learning the nature of the services provided by that agency, establishing friendly relationships and working out methods of referrals.2

Among those who represented community agencies were key personnel from the Mental Health Clinic, the Department of Family and Children's Services, and the Juvenile Court.

September, 1954, witnessed Mrs. Hausermann's initiation of a work schedule designed to attempt to discern the type of services which her Department could offer the School System. Dilworth Elementary and Piedmont Junior High were the two demonstration schools which were initially offered the services of the Department. The schedule demanded Mrs. Hausermann's presence at each school two days per week for conferences and consultation with principals and teachers regarding attendance problems. Not only was consultation with school officials utilized, but also counseling with the referred children's families, and with community agencies to help buttress the Department's efforts to help the child.

Realizing the need to improve and expand the Department's services, Mrs. Hausermann made several visits in 1954, to other cities and states. In Richmond, Virginia, she examined the services offered by the public school system in this city. In Chapel Hill, North Carolina, she met and discussed with Dr. Arthur E. Pink, Dean of the School of Social Work, University of North Carolina, recruitment of staff personnel for the forthcoming year, and sought

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2 Ibid., p. 6.
aid in constructing an adequate program to help meet the needs of the schools.

In time, the Department was allowed to assume several responsibilities which had formerly been those of the Board of Education. For example, during the school year, 1955-56, the Department was handed the responsibility of investigating free lunch applicants and also the clothing requests of needy children who were not otherwise eligible for assistance from other social agencies. The school social workers were also delegated the authority to decide which children could be certified to receive clothing provided from the funds donated from private sources, such as the Parent-Teacher Association, and church groups.

Departmental services were multiplied in the years before 1963. The first graduate student unit was implanted in the agency in 1957-58. Heretofore, Winthrop College, Rock Hill, South Carolina, had initiated with the agency an under-graduate program for the student preparing for a social work career. In the aforementioned school year, however, two graduate schools of social work, Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia, and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, were permitted to establish permanent student training units in the Department.

The ranks of the Agency's staff were also swelled considerably between the years 1954 and 1963. Nine experienced social workers, two full-time secretaries, and one full and one part-time clerical worker were employed for the Continuous Census File which included all
children in public schools.\textsuperscript{3}

Prior to 1963, the function of the Department was primarily the alleviation of attendance problems. Other responsibilities added later were investigation and certification of lunch and clothing needs related to a child's adjustment in school.

Of significance also was the expansion of the Departmental staff to include nine social workers in lieu of the original two, adequate clerical workers, and two graduate and one undergraduate student training units.\textsuperscript{4}

With the school year 1963-64 came changes in the Department of Child Accounting and Attendance. For one, the name of the Department was changed to the Department of School Social Work Services. The Director came to be known as the Coordinator of School Social Work Services.

In the summer of 1963, Mr. Joseph Frankford, ACSW, succeeded Mrs. Hausermann as the Coordinator of the Department, a position which he still holds.

Another major development in 1963-64 was the Department's being integrated into the Division of Special Services. The Division of Special Services consists of Guidance, Services, Psychological Services (individual testing), Educational Services (group


testing) and School Social Work Services.

Each department in the Division has its specialized function, but together they provide a coordinated and integrated program to help schools carry out their central purpose, the education of children.\textsuperscript{5}

In 1953, the staff was again enlarged to include ten social workers, the Coordinator, and four secretaries. A statement of function was published in 1963 which put down in simple, understandable terms what the school social worker's job was. Although the major portion of the school referrals were still related to attendance and free lunch requests, there was slight indication that the Department was beginning to give impetus to the "Function Statement's" shift from the primary concentration of dealing with attendance problems, to the application of social work skills in any situation which is symptomatic of poor school adjustment.

Starting in 1964, the Department began concentrating on case-work services to children in the elementary schools. Junior high and high schools were serviced on an "on-call" basis. The major philosophy governing this shift was, and still is, the belief that the child may be more amenable to social work services in the elementary grades.\textsuperscript{6}

In the school years, 1964-65, the Coordinator instigated the support of the School Administrative heads for helping the Department bring to the schools and to the community a more concise understanding

\textsuperscript{5}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{6}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 16-17.
of its services as stated in the Function Statement. Accordingly, in-service workshops were established for all principals and assistant principals in the school system. The first workshop was held on February 16, and its recognized purpose was:

   To acquaint school personnel with the services of school social workers offered to pupils having difficulty in using the school program and to explain how these services are coordinated within this school system. 7

Again, the title of Director was assumed by Mr. Frankford, Coordinator of the Department, in 1965-66. In addition, Miss Ann Lafevers, a recent graduate and former member of the student unit from the University of North Carolina, joined the family of school social workers.

A significant innovation of paramount importance occurred during the 1955-66 school year. The services of a Volunteer Attendance group were utilized.

During the previous school term, this program was used on an experimental basis, and proved to be such a great help with attendance problems, that it was permanently instated into the Department of School Social Work Services. 8 To quote Mr. Frankford, "the program is not one of merely combating truancy. It involves changing


the attitudes of parents and students toward school.9

Each volunteer attendance worker is attached to a school for the purpose of investigating the cases of habitual irregular attendance where there is no reliable information available to the principal and school concerning the cause of absences. By request from the school principal, the volunteer worker seeks to discover the reason for the non-attendance, advises the parent and child of the State Compulsory School Attendance Law, and reports the reason for absence and all pertinent information which can help the school understand and work with the child's situation.

If no response to the efforts of the volunteer attendance worker and the school are forthcoming, the volunteer attendance worker, of necessity, transfers the case to the school social worker.10

An appreciation for the volunteer workers' progress in the "local war on hockey" was expressed in an article which appeared in the Charlotte News:

The group of about fifteen volunteers—all but one of these women—has been working in eight schools this year. Several principals report that attendance already has improved. The volunteer attempts to find the reason a child is cutting school and solve the problem. The solution may be as simple as getting a child shoes or it may require the services of a professional social worker.11

For the school year, 1966-67, the introduction of the Task Force was highly significant. The Task Force, a group of educational

9 Quoting from an article written by Hugh Fullerton, The Charlotte News, December 25, 1965, p. 12 D.
(curriculum) specialists was created as a kind of ancillary service to the Department of School Social Work Services. The Task Force has the specific responsibility of advising and consulting with school personnel who have educational-oriented problems in relation to school integration. More specifically, the Task Force helps the educator (principal, teacher) to assume his responsibilities more effectively.

The semblance between the Department and Task Force lies within the fact that their goals are directed toward the same end — the promotion of a more perfect academic atmosphere within each school for both the educator and the student.

As the two services strike a balance, plans are underway to house the two services together in the same building, in order that the staffs of these two services may work more closely together.

Both the Department and Task Force are concentrating on working with the staff and the students in the schools where the greatest educational needs have to be met. Educational needs here refer to school societies where the majority of the pupil population have needs resulting from severe impoverishment. These needs tend to be heightened by traumatic experiences encountered within these racially integrated school settings.

Assignments of schools were tentative during the months of September to March, 1966-67, because of the Director's, the Administration's, and the school social workers' attempts at establishing valid criteria for selecting priority schools to be serviced by school social workers. An important criterion for assignments in the schools was the principal's understanding and appreciation of the need for
school social work services. After testing a tentative list of priority schools — elementary, junior high, and high — Mr. Frankford assigned the ten workers, including Mrs. Sarah Medlin, the most recent addition to the staff, to thirty elementary schools which presumably have the greatest educational needs. The school social workers are working on a more permanent basis in these schools, while continuing to give minimal service to "on-call" schools.

The proposed future plans for the Department include additional staff members, a new home, and one permanent school assignment for each social worker.

In the nearly thirteen years of service to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the Department of School Social Work Services has achieved great momentum toward having the social work principles which undergird the Department's philosophy, understood and accepted.
CHAPTER III

CONTENT AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data for the researcher's study were collected through the use of a questionnaire. Two hundred and thirty-four questionnaires were sent to those elementary teachers who comprised the researcher's random sample population. These teachers are employed in the thirty elementary schools which are serviced on a permanent basis by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System's Department of School Social Work Services. Of the 234 questionnaires distributed, 150 (more than fifty per cent) of these were returned, thus providing the data for the present study.

The data were tabulated by hand with the use of tally sheets. The raw data were then placed in the form of frequency tables to present the findings in summarized form.

To test the hypotheses which guided the present study, the researcher analyzed the data by quantifying them.

The data are presented under seven major table headings:

(1) Number and Per Cent of Teachers Who Use School Social Work Services; (2) Number and Per Cent of Teachers Who Recognize Need for School Social Work Services; (3) Number and Per Cent of Teachers Who Recognize Need for School Social Worker's Participation in the School Program; (4) Number and Per Cent of Teachers Who Recognize the Need of Being Involved in Consultation With the School Social Worker;
(5) Teachers' Conception of Priority Cases for School Social Worker; 
(6) Conception of Cases Most in Need of Social Work Skills; and, 
(7) Conception of the Primary Function of the School Social Worker.

**TABLE 1**

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF TEACHERS WHO USE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
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<td>123</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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The data presented indicate that the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System have used the services of school social workers. More specifically, eighty-two per cent of the teachers studied indicated that they have used the services of a school social worker.

**TABLE 2**

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF TEACHERS WHO RECOGNIZE NEED FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number who see need for social worker in school</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
<th>Number who see need for social worker in their school</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>97.33</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>94.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*Other – Those responses not included in the other structured responses given.

The data disclose the teachers in the School System as recognizing a need for school social work in the schools. Ninety-seven per cent of the teachers studied indicated a need for the school social worker in the school setting. Only one teacher, representing less than one per cent of the sample population, did not recognize a need for a social worker in the school setting. One per cent of the sample population did not have any idea as to whether or not social workers are needed in a school setting. One teacher, representing less than one per cent of the teachers studied, expressed the feeling that the services of a social worker are needed in some school settings, but are not needed in all school settings. This implication was indicated by the answer given to clarify the structured response, "other."

These data tend to disprove the researcher's hypothesis that more than twenty-five per cent of the teachers in the School System do not recognize a need for social work in the school setting.

Table 2 also indicates the number of teachers who see a need for a social worker in the respective schools in which each is employed. Accordingly, ninety-four per cent of the teachers studied responded that a school social worker is needed in their particular schools. One itinerate teacher, representing less than one per cent of the teachers studied, explained in the "other" category that some of the schools which she services need school social workers and some do not. The data, then, appear to answer the question as to whether or not the teachers in the School System see a need for social workers
in the particular schools in which each is employed.

TABLE 3
NUMBER AND PER CENT OF TEACHERS WHO RECOGNIZE NEED FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Participation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considered as an active member of the school's program and school team</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>92.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation purposes only</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used on an emergency or temporary basis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exception*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Exception - This category includes those questions where two or more of the structured responses were checked.

The data in Table 3 show the majority of the respondents as considering the school social worker to be an active member of the school's program and a part of the school team as is any other staff member. Ninety-two per cent of these respondents so indicated. Three per cent of the respondents believe that the school social worker should be considered for consultation purposes only. Another two per cent of the responding teachers feel that the school social worker should be used on an emergency or temporary basis in the schools, and only then after the schools have exhausted all other resources. These data tend to answer the question as to how the teachers in the School
System think the school social worker should participate in the school's program.

TABLE 4

NUMBER AND PER CENT OF TEACHERS WHO RECOGNIZE THE NEED OF BEING INVOLVED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>93.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exception</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in Table 4 convey the fact that the teachers in the School System do recognize the need of being involved in consultation with the school social worker if she is working with children in their classes. The data, then, tend to answer and concur that the teachers view consultation as being important. Ninety-three per cent of the teachers who responded to this question express recognition and an appreciation for consultation. No more than two per cent of the responding teachers indicated that they do not see the need for consultation.
TABLE 5
TEACHERS' CONCEPTION OF PRIORITY CASES FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive child who violates school rules and threatens safety of self and others</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>75.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch requests</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing requests</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exception</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Unanswered - This category refers to the questions which were not answered by the respondents.

The data formulated in Table 5 show teachers in the School System as seeing certain kinds of case situations as more urgent or important than others. Seventy-five per cent, through their returns, expressed the belief that the school social worker should give priority to cases involving a disruptive child who interferes with learning and teaching, violates school rules, and threatens the safety of self and others. Seven per cent of the sample population view attendance cases as the second most urgent of the situations to which the school social worker should attend.
Of notable significance is the responding teachers' failure to see a priority need for a case involving consultation only with teacher and principal regarding a non-reader's difficulties in school after ninety-three per cent had previously responded to the question relative to recognition of consultation. (See Table 4.)

**TABLE 6**  
**CONCEPTION OF CASES MOST IN NEED OF SOCIAL WORK SKILLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive child</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exception</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free lunch requests</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing requests</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 presents the data which tend to reflect the responding teachers' conception of which cases are most in need of social work skills. The data yield the figure seventy-four per cent as being the number of respondents studied who conceive of work with the disruptive child as being the most important case situation employing the greatest amount of skill on the part of the school social worker. Again,
it is significant to note that cases involving consultation only have been rated by the respondents as being the least in need of social work skills.

TABLE 7
CONCEPTION OF THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and treatment of social and emotional difficulties which interfere with adjustment is school</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispensing of clothing and free lunches</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exception</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other* - Those replies which were not covered by the three structured items. This respondent sees all three of the given items as being equally important.

The data shown in Table 7 list eighty-one per cent of the respondents as having checked the category stating the primary function of the school social worker as being the understanding and treatment of social and emotional difficulties which interfere with adjustment in school. These data would tend to disprove the
hypothesis that more than seventy-five per cent of the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System do not know the function of the Department of School Social Work Services.

TABLE 8
TEACHERS' VIEW OF THE REASON THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER IS IN THE SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The understanding and treatment of the emotional and social difficulties which interfere with adjustment in school</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>37.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague conceptions of the reason school social worker is in the school*</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An active, necessary member of school program whose use of consultation with school personnel is greatest skill for helping child adjust to school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain**</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigation and improvement of home-school relationships</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers specialized service to school children unable to take advantage of their educational experiences and consultation to school personnel (exact function statement)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance, lunch and clothing investigations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 8 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Vague conceptions* - This category included such responses as "provide needs home or school can't," and "investigate home situation where teacher or principal would not be welcomed." Such responses seem to indicate lack of clarity about the social worker's reason for being in the school setting.

**Uncertain** - This category included such responses as "to intercede for the teacher or to help the child, or for social work services," and, "just exactly what the title says, social work." Such responses indicate no real comprehensible knowledge of the social worker's reason for being in the school.

Table 8, which summarizes the responses of these subjects, also tends to disprove the researcher's hypothesis. The data summarized in Table 8 show that many of these same teachers who checked the response stating the primary function of the Department, have vague comprehension of the Department's exact function. Accordingly, thirty-seven per cent of the respondents summarily stated the Department's primary function, while another eight per cent alluded to a general comprehension of the function of the Department. Surprisingly, slightly more than four per cent of the respondents were able to relate the exact function statement of the Department of School Social Work Services. (See Table 8.)

The data thus show fifty per cent of the teachers of the sample population as actually knowing the primary function of the school social
worker. These data disprove the researcher's hypothesis that more than seventy-five per cent of the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System do not know the function of the Department of School Social Work Services.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The present study is an inquiry of the views the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System hold in regard to the services of the Department of School Social Work Services. More specifically, the study seeks to determine whether or not the teachers (1) know the function of the Department of School Social Work Services and (2) recognize a need for social work skills in the school setting. The inquiry was made in the span of six months - November, 1966 through May, 1967.

For eliciting the desired data for the inquiry, the researcher used a questionnaire.

Questionnaires were sent to 234 teachers who are employed in the thirty elementary schools where the social workers of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Department of School Social Work Services are placed on a permanent basis. Of the total universe of 760 teachers employed in the thirty schools serviced by school social workers on a permanent basis, the sample population of 234 was chosen by random method to represent the views of the elementary teachers in the School System regarding the School System's Department of School Social Work Services.
The hypotheses constructed for the present study are:

1. More than seventy-five per cent of the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System do not know the function of the Department of School Social Work Services.

2. More than twenty-five per cent of the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System do not recognize a need for social work in the school setting.

The researcher encountered specific limitations in making the present study. There were the limitations of (1) the limited availability of information and of relevant research found in the area in which the inquiry concentrated; (2) the researcher's confinement of the study to the Department's statement of its function as described in the Special Services Handbook (see pages 9, 10, and 11); and, (3) the researcher's confinement of the study to only those teachers in designated schools.

Analysis of data was included under seven major headings:

Teachers' Use of School Social Work Services

The teachers studied have used the services of a school social worker. Eighty-two per cent of the teachers studied have used the services of the school social worker. (See Table 1.)

Teachers' Conception of the Need For Social Work Services in the School and in Their Particular Schools

Ninety-seven per cent of the teachers in the present study see a need for the social worker in the schools. The data, then, disprove the hypothesis that more than twenty-five per cent of the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System do not recognize
a need for social work in the school setting. (See Table 2.)

These same teachers also see a need for a school social worker in the respective schools in which each is employed. Ninety-five per cent of these teachers indicated the recognition of a need for social workers in their schools. (See Table 2.)

School Social Worker's Participation in the School Program

The teachers studied feel that the school social worker should be an active participant in the school's program. Ninety-two per cent of these teachers feel that the school social worker should be an active member of the school's program and part of the school team as is any other staff member. (See Table 3.)

Teachers' Recognition of Need For Consultation with School Social Worker

The teachers studied do recognize the need for being involved in consultation with the social worker if she is working with children in their respective classes. Ninety-three per cent of these teachers expressed recognition and an appreciation for the use of consultation. (See Table 4.)

Teachers' Conception of Priority Cases For the School Social Worker

The teachers studied see certain kinds of case situations as more urgent or more important than others. Seventy-five per cent of these teachers see cases involving the disruptive child who interferes with learning and teaching, violates school rules and threatens the safety of self and others as the most urgent case
situations of the four types of case referrals which the Department receives. (See Table 5.)

Cases Most in Need of School Social Workers' Function

The teachers who responded to the researcher's questionnaire feel that certain kinds of case situations are more in need of the skills of a school social worker than others. Again, seventy-five per cent of these teachers see cases involving the disruptive child as being the most in need of the skills of a school social worker. (See Table 6.)

Teachers' Conception of the School Social Workers' Function

Those teachers responding to the questionnaire indicated through their responses that half of the group studied do have a clear conception of the school social workers' function.

Fifty per cent of the teachers studied seem to have a clear conception of the Department's use of the school social worker. (See Table 8.) These data tend to disprove the hypothesis that more than seventy-five per cent of the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System do not know the function of the Department of the Department of School Social Work Services.

Conclusions

This research study has served to demonstrate the paramount enthusiasm and appreciation that the teachers in a specified school system, hold for this school system's social work program.
The research findings of this study reveal the significant impression that social work, in educational settings where the program is instituted, has achieved rapid strides toward wider acceptance, use, and appreciation among school personnel.

The study tends to further attest to the fact that the program has achieved a gainful measure of acceptance, use, and recognition in recent years through the achievement of greater rapport among school social worker, teacher, and other school personnel. It may be safely stated that this essential element of rapport has been acquired through increased team consultation and collaboration which has been expressed by numerous school personnel as perhaps the school social worker's greatest skill for helping the child achieve maximum school adjustment.

If the teachers are perceiving the importance of school social work service as well as utilizing the service, can one not speculate that their generally positive attitudes reflect the attitudes of their administrators - principals, superintendents, and perhaps school boards? These administrators, after all, initially insure the fruition, direction, and continuance of the program, and are directly responsible for influencing the attitudes of the school personnel they employ.

Furthermore, if this is true, then the findings of the present study deem the findings of the 1965 study no longer valid. The 1965 study purported that the majority of the principals in the same specified school system have a vague conception of the function of the school social worker.
Hopefully, by demonstrating that a large majority of the teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System do know the function of the Department of School Social Work Services and do recognize a need for social work skills in the school setting, the present study has depicted the importance and the effect that continued positive use of intensified interdisciplinary team interaction can produce for promotion of the school social work program.

Implications for Practice

The researcher finds it no simple task to translate the findings of this research into a form directly useful to the practitioner. As is so often the case with studies that attempt to open up a field that has not received much prior research attention, implications have been set forth very tentatively.

Examination of the professional literature shows almost complete absence of concern for school personnel's perception of the school social worker's role. Yet, the findings of this study indicate that school personnel - in this case, the teacher - do have attitudes which can be scientifically measured through, as was done in the present study, such research tools as the questionnaire and/or interview schedule. The data secured from this study and any other studies along this line may be presented to school boards and school administrators in school districts where a school social work program has either been instituted or is being considered. These findings and the findings of other studies can be utilized to help promote the expansion and/or institution of the service as a useful, needful
educational tool.

An example of a problem which could perhaps be highly re-searchable is the effect of a school personnel's attitude on the performance of the school social worker. Performance could be measured through case movement or output relative to reduction and adequate disposition of caseloads. The value of a research study such as this could prove immeasurable in the quest for further support of the promotion and expansion of the service.

By reviewing the literature, the researcher found that little has been written regarding the rationale for the confusion about the school social worker's role and function. More could be written, then, about the school social worker's historical struggle for recognition within the educational setting. The implications of such literature could serve to aid the practitioner in understanding factors which may still be hindering the promotion of the service in many cities and states.

Workshops within the schools which provide the service need to be instituted for teachers. In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, for example, workshops for principals and assistant principals are already in existence. These workshops are conducted by the Director of the Department of School Social Work Services. Each school, however, should allow its social worker to conduct a workshop early in the school year, especially for the novice teacher and/or any other interested teachers or community persons. The workshop would serve to help the novice teacher receive a more concise conception of the school social worker's function.
Other team specialists could also conduct workshops to help explain their particular relation to the school. The need for more research seeking to measure the attitudes of school personnel (mainly teacher and principal) toward other specialists' departments, which help these two basic educators "get the job done," would probably yield immeasurable implications. These research findings and implications could also serve to help school administrators understand the need for continuous upgrading of all specialists' programs.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please give only one answer for each question unless otherwise indicated. All questions refer to members of the Department of School Social Work Services. Check each question.

1. Have you ever used the services offered by a school social worker?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Do you see the need of the services of a social worker in a school setting?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Do Not Know ☐ Other

3. If "other" is checked, please explain.

4. Do you see the need for the services of a school social worker in your particular school?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Do Not Know ☐ Other

5. If "other" is checked, please explain.

6. Should the school social worker be:

☐ A. Used only on an emergency or temporary basis, and only then after the school has exhausted all other resources, such as parents, use of suspension or exclusion, Psychological Services, PTA Council, etc.
B. Considered as an active member of the school's program, and as a part of the school team as is any other staff member.

C. Considered for consultation purposes only.

D. Other. (Explain)

7. Do you see the need of being involved in consultation with the school social worker if she is working with one of the children in your classes?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Do Not Know ☐ Other (Explain)

8. Below are listed five typical case situations. If all five case situations were referred to the school social worker at the same time, which one would you expect her to give priority?

A. A family requesting a free lunch investigation.

B. A child who is habitually absent and/or tardy.

C. A mother's request for clothing for her child.

D. Consultation only with teacher and principal regarding mutual planning in exploring a non-reader's difficulties in school.

E. A child who chronically interferes with learning and teaching, violates school rules, and threatens the safety of self and others.

9. Listed below are the same cases listed in number 8. Which of the five case situations do you see as most in need of social work skills?

A. A family requesting a free lunch investigation.

B. A child who is habitually absent and/or tardy.

C. A mother's request for clothing for her child.
D. Consultation only with teacher and principal regarding mutual planning in exploring a non-reader's difficulties in school.

E. A child who chronically interferes with learning and teaching, violates school rules, and threatens the safety of self and others.

10. Which one of the roles listed below do you consider to be the primary function of the school social worker?

A. The dispensing of such aid as clothing and/or investigating requests for free lunches.

B. Helping to get chronically poor attenders in school and to keep them there.

C. The understanding and treatment of the emotional and social difficulties which interfere with adjustment in school.

11. For what reason do you think the school social worker is in the school setting?
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles and Periodicals


Bulletins


Pamphlets


Reports


Unpublished Materials


