



THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JOEL I. KLEIN, *Chancellor*

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHANCELLOR FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING
52 Chambers Street, Room 320 · New York, NY 10007

MEMORANDUM

October 4, 2004

TO: Regional CSE Chairpersons
School Social Workers Assigned to Assessment Activities
In Schools and at CSEs

FROM: Carmen Fariña
Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning

SUBJECT: Role Clarification of the Social Worker

As we begin the new school year, I would like to take the opportunity to clarify the role of the 572 School Social Workers assigned to assessment activities. The Department recognizes the important work performed by these personnel including their work as part of the IEP Team and providing intervention and prevention services.

Social Workers continue to be involved in conducting social histories and classroom observations for students initially referred for special education evaluation and act as a resource for parents as they begin the special education evaluation process. They may attend IEP meetings (EPCs or CSE Reviews) if they were involved in any aspect of the evaluation process.

School Social Workers also continue to provide counseling and participate in intervention/prevention activities for struggling students "at-risk" of referral to special education. We have made a high priority of maintaining students in the least restrictive environment and, when appropriate, maintaining them in their neighborhood schools where they can be surrounded and supported by the people who know them best. It is crucial that School Social Workers contribute greatly to this objective.

To maximize the expertise of School Social Workers, this year Social Workers will conduct social history updates and classroom observations of students referred for re-evaluations and triennial evaluations. These duties should be limited to a maximum of 5 hours per week, so that they are able to continue to fulfill their aforementioned primary roles. Social Workers may be particularly helpful in conducting social history updates for turning five children or complicated cases where guardianship is an issue.

The following is a summary of the key responsibilities of the Social Worker:

Key Responsibilities of the Social Worker

- Providing social histories
- Participating in IEP meetings as appropriate (social workers may participate in an EPC OR CSE Review meeting if he/she was involved in any aspect of the evaluation process)
- Conducting classroom observations
- Obtaining parental consent for evaluation, explaining due process rights to parents, determining guardianship and obtaining surrogates if needed
- Providing consultative & support services to students, parents, and school personnel
- Serving on school-level committees
- Providing ERSSA services, including counseling
- Other related duties

Thank you for your efforts and best wishes for a successful school year.

CF:jc

c: Joel I. Klein
Regional Superintendents
Lead Regional Administrators of Special Education
Linda Wernikoff