The Florida Association of School Social Workers (FASSW) promotes the profession of school social work and enhances the professional growth and development of school social workers throughout the State of Florida to meet the needs of all children. Founded in 1942, FASSW is the oldest professional school social work organization in the United States.

**Mental Health Services in Schools**

Increase school-based access to mental health services that will promote and enhance school safety, school completion rates, learning and suicide prevention services. School social workers (SSW) are clinically trained mental health (MH) professionals who provide services to address parent concerns and focus on using a holistic approach with each child. FASSW supports and advocates for:

* Funding to hire SSW to provide mental health services.
* Use of district employed SSW in the delivery of mental health interventions.
* Expanding Medicaid school-based services to be inclusive of all students.
* SSW with a temporary certification is provided supervision by a certified SSW.
* Personnel who provide direct MH services are supervised by a qualified MH professional.

**School Safety**

School Safety should include the physical, psychological, and emotional safety of students. SSW are trained to provide services focused on prevention, early identification, and intervention. FASSW supports and advocates for:

* Legislation that assists school districts to hire and retain qualified school mental health professionals, including school social workers, school psychologists, and school counselors.
* Legislation which focuses on supporting student safety and well-being through evidence-based practices, education, prevention, assessment, early intervention, resilience, and retention.

**Advocacy**

Advocate for inclusivity, access to, and equitable distribution of resources. Legislation, policies, and practices should positively impact human rights and address injustices. School social workers bring attention to the issues of inadequate or unfair policies and resources that require transformational change. FASSW supports and advocates for:

* Legislative action that supports the rights of all students’ well-being and effective functioning, such as education, social services, housing, along with affordable and accessible healthcare.
* Legislation that will reduce health and achievement gaps for our most vulnerable students.
* Legislation that discourages over-representation of minority students in special education classes, out-of-school suspension and expulsion rates, and their under-representation in gifted, honors, and college level classes.

**School Social Workers Professional Equity**

School social workers are Florida certified educators whose professional roles enhance the learning process within the classroom and school environment. FASSW supports and advocates for:

* Legislative initiatives that support the inclusion of all certified Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP), including school social workers, in education statutes for the purpose of allowing them participation in incentive and merit pay programs currently afforded only to classroom teachers (e.g., Florida Teachers Classroom Supply Assistance Program, school improvement incentives, bonus payments).