

School Social Worker: Content Knowledge (0211)

Test at a Glance

Test Name	School Social Worker: Content Knowledge		
Test Code	0211		
Time	2 hours		
Number of Questions	100		
Format	Multiple-choice questions		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Questions
	I. Social Work Ethics, Values, and Establishing Professional Boundaries	10	10%
	II. Program Development and Management Skills	10	10%
	III. Direct School Social Work Practice Skills	20	20%
	IV. Theories of Human Behavior and Development	10	10%
	V. Models of School Social Work Practice	10	10%
	VI. Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Interaction	15	15%
	VII. Characteristics of Pupil Populations	15	15%
	VIII. Public Education, Legislation, Case Law, and Due Process	10	10%

About This Test

The School Social Worker test is designed for those who have completed university-level programs in social work, including courses in school social work and who plan to become school social workers in public schools.

The 100 multiple-choice questions measure the knowledge and skills required of entry-level school social workers and are set in the context of five job dimensions:

- relationship with and services to students and families
- relationship with and services to teachers and school staff

- services to other school personnel
- administrative and professional tasks
- prevention, advocacy, and interagency collaboration

The content areas include ethics, program development and management, direct school social work practice skills, human behavior and development, models of school social work practice, interdisciplinary and collaborative interaction, characteristics of pupil populations, and legal issues.

The test is aligned with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Standards.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

Topics Covered

Representative descriptions of topics covered in each category are provided below.

I. Social Work Ethics, Values, and Establishing Professional Boundaries

- Integrity and personal conduct as a social worker
- Privacy of the client's interests
- Privacy rights of students and families according to the Buckley Amendment
- Confidentiality of information
- Commitment to the employing institution
- Establishing professional boundaries
- Ethical responsibilities to colleagues
- Maintaining proficiency in professional practice
- Mission of the social work profession
- NASW Code of Ethics

II. Program Development and Management Skills

- Needs assessment
- Planning
- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Evaluation

III. Direct School Social Work Practice Skills

- Assessment
- Diagnosis
- Intervention
- Establishing casework priorities

- Monitoring
- Termination
- Evaluation
- Casework with individuals
- Advocacy
- Collaboration
- Mediation
- Education
- Group work
- Family intervention
- Case management
- Case recording or record keeping
- NASW Standards

IV. Theories of Human Behavior and Development

- Human growth and development
- Learning theory
- Systems theory
- Communications theory
- Social learning theory
- Behavioral theory
- Resiliency theory

V. Models of School Social Work Practice

- School-community-pupil relations model
- Clinical model
- Social interaction model
- School-change model

VI. Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Interaction

- Interdisciplinary teamwork
- Collaborating and consulting with school personnel
- Collaborating and coordinating with community agencies
- Climate and culture of the educational system

VII. Characteristics of Pupil Populations

- Racial and ethnic groups
- Gay and lesbian students
- English-language learners
- Students with disabilities
- Adolescent parents and teenage pregnancy
- Homeless students
- Abused and neglected students
- Substance abuse
- Truants
- Dropouts and underachievers
- Delinquency, behavior problems, violence, and gangs
- Divorce and separation
- Suicide
- Physical health problems
- Peer problems
- Mental health issues

VIII. Public Education, Legislation, Case Law, and Due Process

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Handicapped Persons' Rights Under Federal Law
- PL 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act
- PL 99-457, Education of the Handicapped Amendments of 1986 (Early Intervention Programs for Infants and Toddlers)
- Due process procedures under case law
- PL 93-380, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment) (1974)
- Policies regarding student discipline, suspension, expulsion, and zero tolerance
- PL 100-77, Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act
- PL 100-297, School Improvement Act of 1987 (Hawkins-Stafford ESEA Amendments)
- PL 100-485, Family Support Act (1988)
- PL 101-476, The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA])
- PL 101-336, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1990)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Act
- Civil Rights Act
- No Child Left Behind Act

Sample Test Questions

The sample questions that follow illustrate the types of questions in the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. A school social worker is conducting an assessment of a student and is unable to observe the student in multiple environments. What is the social worker's next best choice for assessing the student's level of adaptive behavior?
 - (A) Observing the student in different play activities at school
 - (B) Interviewing the student, the student's parents, and the student's teachers
 - (C) Testing the student using a projective instrument
 - (D) Developing a genogram of the student's family relationships
2. A school social worker can correctly explain to a parents' group that the right to a free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities was guaranteed for the first time with the enactment of
 - (A) PL 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act
 - (B) PL 99-457, Early Intervention Programs for Infants and Toddlers
 - (C) PL 100-77, Homeless Assistance Act
 - (D) PL 100-297, School Improvement Act (Hawkins-Stafford ESEA Amendments)
3. In developing a school-wide educational program on sexual abuse, the first and most important goal of the school social worker is to help students
 - (A) disclose to their teachers any attempted sexual abuse they have experienced
 - (B) become aware of sexual abuse in order to protect themselves
 - (C) become more assertive of their legal rights with respect to their parents
 - (D) develop strategies to evade adult abusers
4. While visiting a parent to discuss a teacher's concerns about an older child's adjustment, the school social worker observes the parent's critical and punitive interactions with her 3½-year-old child. Aware of the older child's withdrawn behavior and lack of confidence in her abilities, the social worker recalls Eric Erikson's stages of social-emotional development in children. Which statement best describes the Eriksonian concept of initiative versus guilt?
 - (A) Guilt-ridden children have a very difficult time forming attachments to others.
 - (B) Children who are treated harshly and inconsistently can become confused and incompetent.
 - (C) Parental values exert a powerful effect on children and should be carefully defined.
 - (D) A sense of competence rather than guilt develops when assertiveness is allowed.
5. In many school districts, the school social worker is a member of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team. Which of the following would be most useful for the school social worker to have?
 - (A) Written communication skills, including typing and use of computers
 - (B) Problem-solving abilities and consensus-building skills
 - (C) The ability to communicate instructional strategies
 - (D) The ability to initiate new school policy
6. A number of teachers in school are referring students with relatively minor problems for social work services. Which of the following is the best and most cost-effective response for the school social worker to make in this situation?
 - (A) Conducting an in-service program for teachers that discusses appropriate referrals and an overview of the role of the social worker in the school
 - (B) Issuing an administrative memorandum describing appropriate referrals
 - (C) Continuing to accept every referral and prioritizing them, thus delaying some cases
 - (D) Talking with each teacher who has recently made a referral about the types of referrals being made and the appropriateness of each

7. In separate interviews with the school social worker, Henry's teacher and his mother describe the 9-year-old boy as having a history of severe behavior problems, including making threats to teachers and family members. After conducting these interviews, the school social worker should decide that the most appropriate next step is to
- (A) refer the student to a family court
 - (B) refer the family to a child-welfare agency for voluntary foster care placement
 - (C) interview the student in order to gain a better understanding of his problems
 - (D) place the student in a school-based group for boys who are acting out
8. A planning and placement team has determined that a fourth-grade student needs special education services. The evaluation results indicate that the student exhibits appropriate interpersonal behavior, is of average intellectual ability, but is not achieving commensurate with this ability level, particularly in mathematics and reading. The disability designation of the student is likely to be
- (A) mentally retarded
 - (B) developmentally delayed
 - (C) specific learning disability
 - (D) multihandicapped
9. In an IEP meeting, documentation is presented to parents to support the team's recommendation that their daughter be placed in a class for children who are emotionally disturbed. The school social worker provides answers to the parents' questions concerning the team's recommendation. Although they acknowledge that they are aware of their daughter's difficulties, they seem reluctant to make a decision, and they express their concern about the effects of the placement on their other children and the family in general. The social worker notices their hesitancy and efforts to put off the placement. In terms of systems theory, the team's recommendations may be viewed by the parents as which of the following?
- (A) Negative feedback
 - (B) A potential source of disequilibrium
 - (C) Subsystem alliances
 - (D) Linear analysis
10. Which of the following is a school social work model under which social workers operate primarily by casework methods?
- (A) School-community-pupil relations
 - (B) Clinical
 - (C) Social interaction
 - (D) School change
11. Throughout the school year, the school social worker has worked with a group of five students on a weekly basis. They are preparing for summer break, which will occur in a few months. The social worker will most likely use which of the following processes to bring things to a close?
- (A) Termination
 - (B) Conclusion
 - (C) Transition
 - (D) Consultation
12. In an interview, a student says to the school social worker, "Do you promise never to tell my parents anything that I share with you?" The social worker's most appropriate response should be which of the following?
- (A) "Yes, I will promise you that anything shared in confidence will never be revealed to your parents."
 - (B) "I cannot honor such a request because I am obliged to serve your parents as well as you."
 - (C) "I will keep everything confidential, except if I suspect that you or someone else will be or have been harmed or abused."
 - (D) "I would never violate your confidence."
13. A high school policy requires that students be dropped from classes after ten absences, except for medical absences. The school social worker is unable to convince the school that the special circumstances of pregnant students warrant review of the attendance policy. Several parents of pregnant students have complained to the district about this policy because there is a very high dropout rate. The social worker requests that a task force be formed to examine this issue. This is an example of utilizing which of the following social work skills?
- (A) Networking
 - (B) Collaboration
 - (C) Linking
 - (D) Advocacy

14. A school social worker supervises and monitors a peer counseling program in a large high school. Which of the following are appropriate monitoring activities for the social worker in such a program?
- I. Maintaining statistics related to the number and frequency of contacts
 - II. Reviewing reports on interactions between the counselor and counselee for adherence to confidentiality guidelines
 - III. Making informational presentations to student groups regarding the program
 - IV. Advising the faculty members weekly about the program
- (A) I and II only
 - (B) I and IV only
 - (C) II and III only
 - (D) I, III, and IV only
15. The school social worker is serving on a committee to develop a school suspension policy. Which of the following statements most accurately reflects national research findings on school suspensions that the committee should consider?
- (A) The percentage of suspensions is disproportionately high for both male students and Black students.
 - (B) Suspensions are necessary to maintain order in the school.
 - (C) The vast majority of school suspensions are for dangerous and violent offenses.
 - (D) The use of and grounds for suspension are fairly uniform across school districts in the United States.
16. The school social worker is participating in an interdisciplinary school team meeting that is focused on reviewing a student's challenges in the classroom. The school social worker educates the team about the effects of poverty in the home to sensitize team members to how these stressors may be impacting the student. Which of the following values best represents the social worker's intervention?
- (A) Integrity
 - (B) Dignity and worth of the person
 - (C) Social justice
 - (D) Service
17. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 states that school districts must work toward a staff-to-student ratio of one school social worker to how many students?
- (A) 400
 - (B) 800
 - (C) 1,200
 - (D) 1,600
18. A school social worker receives a referral and assesses the organizations and communities of which the client is a part so as to facilitate broader changes on the client's behalf. This type of intervention would be considered
- (A) short-term
 - (B) micro
 - (C) mezzo
 - (D) macro

Answers

- 1.** The best answer is B. The goal of the school social worker's assessment is to develop as complete a picture as possible of the student's adaptability in relating to peers, teachers, and parents. Because direct observation of the student in various environments is not feasible, in this situation the next best approach is for the social worker to employ the techniques of good interviewing in order to gather pertinent information about the student in both the home and school environments from these key sources.
- 2.** The best answer is A. The right to a free and appropriate public education for children with disabilities was first guaranteed with the enactment of PL 94-142 in 1975.
- 3.** The best answer is B. Developing awareness is generally accepted as the logical first step in a primary prevention program. Before children can identify attempted sexual abuse, become more assertive of their legal rights, or develop evasive strategies, they must be made aware of what constitutes sexual abuse.
- 4.** The best answer is D. According to Erikson, children within the preschool period from 3 to 5 years who are given the freedom to initiate motor, language, and play activities will have their sense of initiative reinforced. On the other hand, children who are made to feel that these activities are undesirable develop a sense of guilt that may persist throughout later stages in life.
- 5.** The best answer is B. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires that the team members come to agreement on a program that will most effectively meet the educational needs of the individual student. Among the different disciplines represented on the team, the school social worker is generally the member who has been trained in resolving conflict and mediating differences of opinion.
- 6.** The best answer is A. Inappropriate referrals result when the referring source is not familiar with the role and services of the service provider. It is the service provider's responsibility to provide adequate definition of services and appropriate referral criteria and procedures to referral sources.
- 7.** The best answer is C. A social work assessment includes input from the student who is the focus of the evaluation. Direct interview of the student is essential. Any placement, referrals, or treatment plan would come after the assessment is complete.
- 8.** The best answer is C. The evaluation results are consistent with the definition of specific learning disability in Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations 300.541 (a & b), Criteria for determining the existence of specific learning disabilities, July 1, 1990.
- 9.** The best answer is B. After hearing the documentation and having their questions answered, the parents acknowledge their child's disability but are concerned about the impact the placement will have on the family system. In terms of system concepts, their decision for placement would upset the status quo (family identity) and disrupt their stability in systems concepts.
- 10.** The best answer is B. In the clinical model, school social workers work primarily with students and their families to address social and emotional needs via casework. The school-community-pupil relations model focuses on the interactions among the school, the community, and the student and is based in systems and social learning theories. The social interaction model concentrates on intervention with those systems interacting with the target system. The school change model focuses on modifying dysfunctional conditions in the school.
- 11.** The best answer is A. The goal of the school social worker is to help the students bring the group process to closure. Termination is the final stage of the helping process, which focuses specifically on helping clients obtain closure.
- 12.** The best answer is C. There are certain situations in which the school social worker may be legally required to inform or involve parents (threats of danger to self or others, suspected abuse, etc.).
- 13.** The best answer is D. Advocacy may be defined as making clients aware of their rights and helping them gain access to fair and adequate service.
- 14.** The best answer is A. Maintaining statistics and observing interactions are both monitoring activities, but making presentations and advising faculty members about the program are not.
- 15.** The best answer is A. National research studies indicate that Black and male students are suspended in numbers disproportionate to those of other groups. When developing new policies, it is the responsibility of the policy makers to anticipate barriers that may prevent the fair implementation of a policy. Although all of the responses may be true, only choice A provides actual research findings that can help policy makers address the issues of fairness and equity in their implementation plan.
- 16.** The best answer is C. Social workers challenge social injustice by promoting sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. The school social worker is educating the team professionals about the effects of poverty in the home and the potential subsequent impact on students' school performance. While other values are also involved, this intervention is based on the value of social justice.

17. The best answer is B. Section 5421 of the No Child Left Behind Act requires a ratio of one school social worker to 800 students.

18. The best answer is D. Macro interventions are made on the level of organizations, communities, and societies. Micro interventions are on the level of the individual and family. Mezzo interventions are on the level of agencies and small groups. Short-term refers to the length, rather than the scope, of the intervention.



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