Having a robust social work membership is essential in allowing the National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter (NASW-NC) to carry out statewide advocacy and representation that impacts the entire social work profession. Being a member of NASW provides social workers with a voice at the table on advocacy issues at the state and federal levels!

Here are a few things NASW and NASW-NC have been advocating for related to school social work in 2018-2019 because of our NASW membership:

**NASW-NC’s Focus on School Social Work**

NASW-NC is committed to continuing our work with partners around the state to advance advocacy efforts which will ensure more school social workers are hired and that students in every school district have access to school social workers.

NASW-NC’s efforts to advance issues related to school social workers include leadership on various stakeholder groups including the North Carolina Task Force on Safer Schools, the North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force, the North Carolina School Mental Health Initiative, and the Child Advocacy Network. Our advocacy efforts at the North Carolina General Assembly continue as we seek to increase the number of school social workers around the state and increase pay for school social workers- including restoring masters pay for school employees.

Legislators have jumped at the opportunity to offer solutions as instances of school-based violence increase across the country and as North Carolina schools receive repeated threats. While the legislature only funded a one-year grant for school systems to apply for to hire support staff like social workers during the 2018 short session, we continued to advocate for the needs of school social workers across the state during the 2019 legislative session which began in January! The legislature passed:

**House Bill 377 Teacher Step Act:** This bill ensures teachers, instructional support personnel, and assistant principals receive salary increases based on years of experience. Employees will move up the current salary scale this fall. Teachers with one to fifteen years’ experience will see a $1,000 annual raise. The bill was signed into law on November 8, 2019.

**House Bill 75 School Safety Funds, Programs, and Reports:** This bill appropriates funds for school safety, requires an annual report on school resource officers, establishes certain school safety grants programs, requires the development of a recommended school mental health crisis response program, and requires annual reports on school mental health support personnel. This bill was signed into law on
September 18, 2019. Since the legislature has yet to agree on a statewide budget, this bill was passed as a mini budget.

House Bill 613 Essential Services for Homeless Youth: The bill allows for unaccompanied homeless youth to receive behavioral health services, as well as optometry and dentistry services, without a legal guardian present. North Carolina public schools identified 2,650 unaccompanied homeless youth enrolled in school in the 2016-17 school year. The bill allows for documentation of homeless status from a school social worker as well as several others listed in the bill to be acceptable for the youth to receive services. **NASW-NC worked with Representative Susan Fisher from Buncombe County to get this legislation introduced based on conversations with access to care for school social workers.** The bill passed the House and we will work to advance the bill through the Senate in the 2020 short session.

For the last four years, NASW-NC has worked hard to advocate for a statewide **school social work consultant** position at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI). NASW-NC staff and members have met with staff at the North Carolina Board of Education and the North Carolina Public Instruction many times to help make this happen. We met with State Superintendent Mark Johnson to discuss the role of school social workers and bringing this position back to his Department. We were thrilled that DPI announced this position in May! Hiring for the position is continuing but has been delayed due to not having a statewide budget in place.

**National Advocacy Efforts**

NASW represents social workers on a variety of advocacy efforts at the National level. These efforts include direct lobbying to our members of Congress and participation in social work-related coalitions.

With an increase in school violence incidents happening across the country, NASW has compiled resources for school social workers. Visit [www.socialworkers.org/practice/school-social-work/school-social-work-tools/school-safety-resources](http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/school-social-work/school-social-work-tools/school-safety-resources) to find these!

**NASW-NC is the ONLY social work association with a full-time lobbyist at the legislature advocating on behalf of School Social Workers.**

THANK YOU to those of you who are NASW members. Your membership means we can have your back by providing you with many specific and direct member benefits, but it also means we can have the back of the entire profession in North Carolina. Please maintain your membership so that we can continue and expand our work. There is so much to do.

*Respectfully, Kay Castillo, BSW, NASW-NC Director of Advocacy, Policy and Legislation and Registered Lobbyist*

Visit [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org) to join today!

**Questions about what NASW-NC can do for you?**

Contact Seth Maid, MSW at [membership.naswnc@socialworkers.org](mailto:membership.naswnc@socialworkers.org) or 919-828-9650