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A PROGRAM OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

by

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A practicum submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

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The members of the Committee approve the practicum of
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ABSTRACT

A PROGRAM OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

School social work is in a state of flux. Traditional casework services in the schools, as the only function of the school social worker, is becoming less viable.

The study of Assumption school and area points out some problem areas, as well as strengths. In view of these problems and strengths, a broadened school social work program is discussed. The program centers around prevention, treatment, and research. A basic principle upon which all is based is a team approach of social work, school, and community. The discussion leads to the community school concept, which is currently seen as one of the more viable approaches to alleviating social problems.

INTRODUCTION

The area of self-esteem, self-identity, respect for oneself and others, are areas in which education and social work can aid each other. With good mental health a goal for both professions, it would seem wise to join forces in a cooperative effort to reach more children more effectively.

School social work has a unique place in the educative process. The skills it uses to help people use their own potentials are an asset to any curriculum. The skills of teaching are an asset to social work in helping people overcome some of their problems. The two professions should join hands in an effort to better help people. (9)

In order for the two professions to work more effectively together, the school, its structure, the children, their parents, and the area must be studied. From the data that is gathered a unified school program could be initiated. The school social work program would be an essential part of this total school program. It is to be stressed that this program should be and remain very flexible. Needs and communities change, and a program should be flexible enough so that people can receive the appropriate services for their changing needs.

School social work began in the early 1900's (1909-1910 in Boston and New York). It has been a growing service since then. By the 1950's most school districts had social workers in their schools. Due to limited budgets, limited personnel, and recently the fight to keep the schools open, the Catholic school system has not been able to take advantage of the services of social work.

This is not to say that the need for specialized services in the schools has not been recognized. (35) On the contrary, many principals and teachers have tried to find ways of getting these services. Many schools do

refer children and parents to social service agencies, but lack of time of teacher or principal has usually meant no follow-up.

With the advent of the poverty program and other sources of Federal funding, some schools, especially those in poverty areas, have been able to use this money to purchase these special services. In Portland, four schools have used Title I funds to purchase social work help. Other parishes have felt the need for social work help but do not have the extra funds to do so. Among the religious that staff the schools, there is not a qualified religious MSW, to whom a lesser salary could be paid. (This would be in keeping with the vow of poverty religious take.) With the foregoing in mind, I have set about the task to see how a religious with an MSW could function in the Catholic school system. To do this I will use one school as a focus school and see how a social worker could operate in that school.

Section I of this paper, Review of the Literature, deals with the history of school social work as found in the literature of the decades. In the literature of the 60's and 70's the newer trends and innovations are investigated to see where these programs could apply to this school.

Section II is a study of the focus school. Census data, philosophy of the school, teaching personnel, children and their families, and the finances are studied in an effort to assess what the current situation is.

Section III is the proposed school social work program. The program has three basic components, prevention, treatment, and evaluative research. These three parts are seen as essential to any school social work program.

S E C T I O N I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review has been confined to significant articles that focus upon the program aspects of school social work. Methods of school social work, per se, are not included, but can be inferred from the function or role of the social worker. This is not an exhaustive review. It is organized in a chronological manner so that the development within school social work can more easily be seen.

School social work began in Boston and New York in 1909-1910. The Settlement Houses became concerned that the teachers should understand the homes their students came from. (1) They, therefore, initiated contacts with the schools. This movement became known as the Visiting Teacher Movement. Most of the first visiting teachers were former teachers who had some training in social work.

As social work became more professional and developed more specialized skills and knowledge, the visiting teacher also became more specialized. When the impact of psychoanalysis hit social work in the 1930's, the thrust of the visiting teacher changed also. She was no longer from the Settlement House, did have an education in social work, usually with an MSW, and had skill in the casework method.

During this time (roughly from 1930-1960) the function of the school social worker became more confined to the area of casework. The literature in this era talks mainly of the social worker's function in the school as being caseworker. There have been gradual and evolutionary changes in school social work practice. Since its beginning it has gone through explaining the community to the teacher, helping individual children and their families adjust to the school system, dealing with attendance problems,

consultation and collaboration with school personnel, to helping the school and community achieve better relations, to active intervention in community problem: solving with work as change agent or advocate.

In the 1940's, the main thrust of the school social worker was to help individual children and their families. Louise Veo (38), Ruth Smalley (36), Florence Poole (26), Mildred Sikkema (33), and Samuel Goldberg (14) all emphasise that the function of the school social worker was to work with the individual child, his parents and the teacher. The work with the child and parents was to help the child overcome his personal problems so that he could get more out of school. (36) The goal in working with the teacher and other school personnel was to orient the teacher to the concepts of child development, mental health, and social work. (14, 36, 38, 43) There was mention in most articles that social workers must also understand the school and be able to relate their practice to the school's "in a dynamic and effective manner." (26, p. 456) At this time the visiting teacher's name was changed to school social worker.

Toward the end of the 40's and into the 50's the emphasis in the literature was still on casework. However, there was more mention of consultation. (13, 19, 24, 34) There was also more awareness of the fact that social workers and teachers needed to know more about each other's profession in order that there could be a closer working relationship. (9, 19, 24, 33) Martin E. Danzig (9) offered an approach that would help to bridge this gap. He recognized that although both education and social work served the same child, this fact did not seem to be thought of as important by the other profession. Danzig puts forth the idea of much closer collaboration between social agency and school so that better services

could be given each individual child. (9 p. 349) His idea of the Community School would put social work in closer touch with education and vice versa. He does caution that this community school must not become too big and become divorced from the grass roots of the community it serves. (9 p. 352)

Other authors speak of a team relationship of all those working in the school - principal, teacher, nurse, special service personnel including the social worker. (19,33) During this period of time, some mention is made of group work as being an effective method in the school. (20) There was constant emphasis of the continuing need to explain the function of social work to school personnel so that they could come to use it more effectively. (18, 24)

Mildred Sikkema in her study of School Social Work Practice in Twelve Communities in 1953, (34) asked other school personnel what they saw was the school social worker's function in the school. The four main areas or functions of the school social worker as seen by other school personnel are: 1.) Service to individual children, 2.) Service to parents, 3.) Relations with the community, especially the social service resources, and 4.) Help to teachers, principals, and other school personnel in understanding child behavior. (34 p. 14-16) (This is the first of two surveys that was found in the literature. No other type of research was found.)

In the 1960's there is a different mood. The literature reflects the discontent with the "establishment", the growing awareness of the effects of poverty and deprivation upon individuals, and the widening gap of the "establishment" to deal effectively, creatively and sometimes justly with these groups of people. There is emphasis on research (23), and a demand that there be radical changes in the structure of the school and social

agency so that people can be more effectively and justly served.

The early 60's showed a refinement of function of casework, group work, consultation, and some emphasis on liason between school and community agencies. (10,22,31,39) In a workshop given by the Portland Public Schools, Social Work Service, in 1961, (27) it was emphasized that casework, group work and consultation should help children adjust to the school and help him become motivated to learn. Thus early and proper identification of children with problems is a necessity and efforts then should go into teaching the teacher how to recognize these children early, so that help could be given before the problem becomes fully cemented in the person. (27)

Arlien Johnson, in School Social Work: Its Contribution to Professional Education in 1962, (21) emphasized casework, group work, collaboration and consultation. However, she also emphasizes prevention and community relations. (These were spoken of in the literature only minimally or not at all.) She also mentions that the school social worker should work toward changes within the school that are conducive to good mental health. (21 p. 126)

In the later part of the 60's there is a growing dissatisfaction with school social work and its effectiveness. In the literature there is a growing awareness that present day problems are trying to be solved with yesterday's approaches. (1, 22) Lela B. Costain (1 p. 144-166) in "What Direction for School Social Work: Review of a Study in School Social Work" concludes: "1.) The definition of school social work, as revealed by the study, reflects the school social work literature of the 1940's and 1950's; it shows little or no general response to the concern expressed in both education and social work literature of the 1960's in relation to the learning problems of many unsuccessful school children and youth, the

underlying conditions in the school, neighborhood, and community which contribute to their difficulties, or new approaches to use in the delivery of services to them.

"2.) The definition is a static one which largely ignores the most pressing problems of the school population, the underlying conditions that produce these problems, and the relationship of the school and its operation to those of other social institutions in the community.

"3.) The definition commits its professional personnel to use up its resources in providing a limited range of social work services, without sufficient attention to the most pressing problems of school children and youth, problems which would lend themselves to experimentation in design of services and staffing patterns.

"4.) School social workers were reluctant to delegate many of the tasks which they regarded as important in school social work; this finding is a logical outgrowth of the definition of school social work which they evolved." (1 p. 149-150)

Consultation is highly emphasized in the later 60's. (1,4,8, 32)
This method is seen as a most necessary part of any school social worker's skills. However, most consultation is thought of in terms of helping school personnel deal with and understand children and their problems. ' 4, 32)
Other authors envision consultation on a wider basis, not only about individual children and their problems, but also about the effects of social conditions, i.e. poverty and racism, or school structure and how it affects children, and other mental health issues. (1 p. 3-27 & 118-126, 28) There is increased mention of the fact that social workers must become integrated into the staff of the schools, "The most effective school social work programs

are those in which school social workers have perceived the school as a social institution in which all personnel, principal, teachers, and special service personnel, including social work, are working together to affect positively the intellectual, social, and emotional well-being of the school child. This calls for a high degree of communication among the various school personnel." (1 p. 118-126)

Robert Bruce Williams (42) in his paper, "The Helping Professions: Problems Only?" asks, "to what extent does contemporary practice give imaginative consideration to prevention as well as restorative aspects?"

(42 p. 24) He outlines a reorientation for professional practice:

- "1.) Renewed emphasis upon prevention in the formal training program of all disciplines concerned.
- 2.) Expansion of pupil personnel and health services in the school in order that more attention can be given to mental health and preventative measures.
- 3.) Special focus upon all children in the early school years with a comprehensive view of emotional, physical, interpersonal, and intellectual progress.
- 4.) Utilization of therapeutic mental health practices to the extent that personnel, physical plant, recreational facilities, and curricula are all harmoniously orchestrated in terms of the interests, needs, and capacities of every single child.
- 5.) A sound public relation program.
- 6.) Provision of accessibility of service to the whole school population including those who do not have 'problems' in the usual definition of the term.
- 7.) Attention must be given to the specially gifted child.
- 8.) Consideration of the total social spectrum, from ghetto to split-level suburbia.
- 9.) Cooperative research with public health personnel regarding problems that impinge upon the welfare of the community.
- 10.) Coordination of the efforts of social agencies - public and private-

in establishing and maintaining the therapeutic community." (42 p. 26-27)

In the 70's the trends toward consultation on a broader basis, prevention, work with the community, and new innovative approaches to school social work are seen. Friedman talks of structured family-oriented therapy (12), Wheeler of using the school lunch hour for group work (41), Prunty of using the community to effect change within the school (31), and Wadsworth in using a preventive-corrective approach in an elementary school (40). Norma Radin also emphasized prevention with low-income families as a needed approach for school social workers (29). This approach took the form of parent-education programs. The focus of these programs was on education not treatment and were conducted by a social worker. There were various results. One result was that information from lower class families was communicated to the school. (29 p. 193)

Gottlieb proposes that the school social worker should become a change agent and develop skills in this area (16 p. 15). "Thus prepared, the school social worker can move toward effecting systemic changes that encourages good learning experiences, not merely among the students but within the school's total environment." (16 p. 21)

In January 1972, the Oregon Chapter NASW School Social Work Service, defined and outlined the role of school social workers. "The school Social worker is a member of the school staff and is directly responsible to the principal of the school in which he serves. His professional training is in the field of social work. As a member of the school interdisciplinary team, his/her primary responsibility is to provide a social work service to those children whose in-school behavior interferes with their learning, social, and/or emotional adjustment. The school social worker functions

more effectively when there is close cooperation between school personnel, children, parents and community, and is the coordinating and referral agent of the school to health, welfare and recreational agencies." (25)

The function of the school social worker is to: "1.) Work with individual children whose personal, social or emotional adjustment interferes with their ability to make use of the services of the school. 2.) Work with parents as part of the helping process to the child. 3.) Consult and collaborate with other school personnel. 4.) Coordinate services within the school and with the community agencies and referral services to the children and their families needing help. 5.) Point out unmet needs." (25) (This definition seems also to place itself in the 40's and 50's era as the survey of Costain points out. (1 p. 144-166). "A broader perspective of school social work is needed, and no one is putting blinders on school social workers except the school social workers themselves." (29 p.197))

In summary, school social work was begun by concerned Settlement Houses to interpret the community to the school, evolved during the years to a casework focus exclusively. Today there is a challenge to make school social work service viable in this era. There is emphasis being placed on social work consultation on a broad scale, more work with the community, more emphasis on prevention, and the social worker as being a change agent within the school system to change those parts of the system that are irrelevant or harmful to children. There is some talk of research, but very little actually being done. There are reports in the literature, of innovative programs that are being tried, and these could be helpful in assuring that more children receive the services they need.

SECTION II

STUDY OF THE SCHOOL

BRIEF HISTORY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The first Catholic school was established in Philadelphia in 1782.

(6) In 1791 the First Amendment was adopted as part of the American Constitution establishing the separation of Church and State. (6) In 1829 the First Provisional Council of Baltimore (Catholic) adopted the policy of parochial schools to serve the influx of Irish immigrants and to teach the Catholic doctrine to its children. (6) In 1884 the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore (Catholic) ordered that there be a parochial school in every parish and that parents are bound to send their children to these schools. (6) In 1925 the right of parochial schools to exist was upheld by the United States Supreme Court. (6)

Since that time, parochial schools continued to grow and in 1949 there were almost 11,000 Catholic schools of all categories, with an enrollment of nearly 3,000,000 pupils. (30) In 1966 there were 12,800 Catholic schools of all categories, 10,000 elementary schools, 2,500 High Schools, 300 colleges and universities, and more than 6,000,000 students. (17) In 1971 there were 8,978 elementary schools, 1,851 high schools with 4,684,183 students. (NEA figures)

In 1966 Andrew Greeley and Peter Rossi, social scientists, took a survey of American Catholic Education. (17) The major findings are that, 1.) "...nothing in our data indicates that Catholics need feel ashamed of the academic prowess of their schools." (17 p.197) 2.) "The recent suggestions in popular journals that Catholics are restless and dissatisfied with situations within their schools gets little support from the tables in this chapter.....(However) criticisms are growing stronger," (17 p.205) 3.) "There is a direct relationship between social class and sending one's

children to Catholic schools, at least for marriages where both partners are Catholic." (The higher the social class, the more apt one will be to send one's children to Catholic schools.) (17 p.221) A similar situation has existed in Portland, and the statistics are also similar. Currently there are 28 elementary schools serving one parish, and four elementary schools serving two or more parishes.

Since 1965 many schools have closed, for financial reasons, or lack of support among the parents, or both. In Portland, this has been the case with a number of schools. Remaining schools have begun looking for alternatives in Catholic education. Eleven South East parishes have been discussing consolidation, or a middle school proposal. This would mean that instead of the ten schools in this area (three of which are scheduled to close), all the parishes would support four schools - two schools of grades one to four, two schools of grades five to eight. Other alternatives were also proposed, but none as yet have been adopted.

The inner city schools of Portland are also studying innovative ways to meet the needs of their area. Through Title I funds, four parishes have acquired social work and other special services. The team ministry concept is being explored in a number of these parishes and is working well in at least one. Most of the other parishes are taking time to gather facts about their parish, their school, the needs of their area in an effort to deal more realistically with the problems of their area.

The archdiocese of Portland conducted an in depth study of the educational needs of the archdiocese in 1968-69, from which archdiocesan guidelines were drawn up for further action in Catholic education.

STUDY OF THE SCHOOL

1970 U.S. CENSUS DATA

Assumption parish comprises three census tracts. (7) There are 3,439 families in this area, of which 533 belong to Assumption parish, and 93 have children in the school. It is principally a residential and small business area, but it also encompasses some of the heavy industrial area, especially where the two rivers converge. The following general characteristics were taken from the 1970 U.S. Census.

Race: The area is 6% Black (75 people), a smaller percentage of other minorities and at least 90% white.

Sex: The Male-female ratio is about even, but there are a few more women - 6,149 males of all ages, 6,656 females of all ages.

Families: There are 3,439 families. Of these, 2,937 have both husband and wife in the home. There are 86 families with other male head, and 416 with female head only.

Marital Status: Of the 10,529 people over 14 years of age, 1,924 are single, 6,219 are married, 178 are separated, 771 are widowed, and 613 are divorced.

Housing: There are 4,545 housing units which are occupied all year round. Of these 2,732 are owned, 1,633 are rented. The median price of the owned units is \$11,600. The median rent is \$112. There are 113 units lacking some or all plumbing facilities and 75 lack complete kitchen facilities. The median number of rooms per unit is 4.7, with 2.5 persons per household. Two thirds of the houses were built in 1939 or earlier, the other one third were built since then with only about 1/59 being built since 1969. One third were occupied since 1968 by

the current owner or renter. The rest have been occupied equally in 1965, 1960, 1950 and 1949 or earlier.

Schooling: There are 3,197 children of school age (including college). Of these, 68 attend nursery school, 54 attending a public nursery school. 191 are in Kindergarten, and 181 are in a public Kindergarten. 1,794 attend elementary school, 1,597 attending the public school. 902 currently attend high school, and 864 of these attend the public high school. 242 attend college.

Of the 6,922 persons over age twenty-five, 85 have had no school, 166 have had one to four years of school, 549 have had five to seven years of school, 1,178 have had eight years of school, 1,808 have had three years of high school, 2,460 have graduated from high school, 484 have had one to three years of college, and 385 have had four or more years of college. The median years of school completed is 11.4. The per cent that have graduated from high school is 44.76%.

Income: The median income is \$8,527. 9.43% of all families are below the poverty threshold. Of those below the poverty threshold, 39.6% are on Public Assistance. (The poverty threshold in 1969 for a non-farm family of four is \$3,743). Wages and salary are the biggest source of income, with self-employment next, and Social Security and Public Assistance the next.

Employment: Of the 3,295 males over sixteen years of age in the labor force, 2,966 are employed, 10.4% are unemployed. Of the 677 males ages sixteen to twenty-one, 364 are not in school, 150 have not graduated from high school and 55 are unemployed and not in the labor force.

Of the 4,725 females over sixteen years of age, 2,065 or 40.6% are in the labor force. Of those in the labor force, 7.2% are

unemployed.

Type of Occupation: Clerical, craftsman, foreman, service workers comprise the largest types of occupations for this area. At least one half of all workers are in these occupations. Of those in industry, one half are in manufacturing with retail trades the next.

THE GOSSELIN STUDY

The Gosselin Study, a self-study of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (who staff Assumption school), was conducted in 1970, and studied Assumption parish and school. The study was concerned with assessment of attitudes and needs. It was divided into three main parts: I.) A look at the milieu, II.) Assessing the needs of the area, III.) Recommendations for the next three to five years.

Part I. A look at the milieu.

The milieu was broken down into six categories; religious, social, cultural, economic, recreational, and political. These categories were studied to obtain general attitudes, which were drawn from impressions gained by those who were working in the parish.

Religious: There is a core of vitally interested and active people in the parish. This 20-30% are on most of the parish commissions as well as helping out at school. (These parents comprise roughly 80% of the school population.) There is some move to involve others, but it has not generated much response. Most of the people support the parish with donations each week, and most do attend weekly Mass. The changes in the Church were hard for the people to accept, but did not lead to revolt. There is little lay initiative, but leadership qualities seem to be lying dormant waiting to be tapped.

Social and Recreational: This seems to be a rather closed society that is hard for newcomers to get into. There is a generosity of the people toward the poor of the parish, and much is given to help poor families. Recreation is centered in this area. Not many use the downtown facilities for recreation or even shopping. In the parish, there is

scouting, little league, and CYO sports. Many of the men go hunting and fishing. One third of the children are from one parent families and an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ are from families where at least one parent has remarried.

Cultural: (Cultural here means the arts, theater, symphony, etc.) Very few of the residents partake of the cultural events offered downtown.

Economic: This area could be classified as blue-collar and some managerial occupations. A majority of both husband and wife are working. Many people find credit easy and tend to overspend. There is some poverty due to mismanagement of money. There is an increase of families on ADC in the last two years, due mainly to the low-cost public housing being built in the area.

Political: The political temper seems to be indifference. There has been no organized voice for the north area, and many feel "what's the use, the north end always gets the raw deal."

Part II. Assessing the needs of the area.

The current needs were listed under six headings: physical, social, spiritual, psychological, professional, and cultural (again meaning the arts, theater etc.). There are some resources in the area to meet some of these needs - public welfare and health programs, YMCA and YWCA community building, FISH, loaves and fishes, meals-on-wheels, Portland parks and Recreation, 4-C day care - but there does not seem to be an effective program to get the people to the services or the services to the people.

Physical: There is poverty in this area, and with the low-cost housing there may be more. However, most of the families would be above the poverty line. Some of the poverty may stem from mismanagement of money rather

than lack of it.

Social: There is a need to help the people become more open to newcomers.

This is especially important with the influx of low-cost housing units. On the parish level there is a need for the parishoners to get to know one another.

Spiritual: There is a need for continuing adult education, which would include explaining the changes in the Church, and a continuing formation of conscience and values. There is a need for more vital religious education program for those children attending public school.

Psychological: Some of the children are disturbed because of their home situations. Help is not readily available and the teachers voice their need for help in teaching these children. The IQ of the majority of the children is in the normal range, yet many cannot or do not keep up in school. There are many who are two years below grade level in all subjects and a few get through school with a second or third grade reading ability.

Professional: There is a need for social work help, remedial reading, head start and pre-school programs. There are a few kindergartens and some day care facilities. However, more work in the homes before school is needed to acquaint the children with learning, before they start school. There is a need to tap the local leadership qualities of those in the parish.

Cultural: There is a need seen for a broader exposure to the arts. With more exposure there may be a deeper appreciation for the arts with the hope of enriching the people.

Part III. Recommendations for the next three to five years.

The recommendations flowing from this study were that the plant should be enlarged and updated, that the teachers be experienced and want to teach here, that social work help be secured, that more full-time teacher aide help be found, that a remedial reading program be started, that a PE program be started, that there be a full-time secretary, and that there be more work done in adult education.

STUDY OF THE SCHOOL ITSELF

Assumption school is an eight grade Catholic elementary school, located in the St. Johns area of North Portland. The official boundaries are the railroad tracks on the East, Willamette River on the South, the Columbia River on the North, and where the two rivers join forms the Western boundary.

The school was founded in 1910. The original 3-story building is still used by two grades, and the downstairs hall is used for assemblies, music and PE. Another one level building with six classrooms, staff room (doubles as health room), principal's office and secretary's office was built in 1956. There seems to be a continual maintenance problem on both buildings. (Maintenance here means keeping the buildings heated, the machines fixed, windows and doors in good repair, etc.)

The school is financed through tuition, money made by the parent's club, and parish funds. Each full-time religious teacher is paid \$2700 per year and each full-time lay teacher is paid \$5500 per year. Insurance benefits are paid for each teacher that wants it. Milk is sold to the children at 3¢ per $\frac{1}{2}$ pint, once a month the mothers sponsor a hot dog day at 25¢ per lunch. Otherwise all the children bring their lunch.

The financial picture of the school is tied to the parish finances. There is no clear-cut detailing of school income and expenses nor is the parish set up in this manner. A financial board of lay parishoners is being formed and one of their tasks will be to delineate income and expenses and work out a parish budget. The school would then submit a budget to this body for funds to run the school. In some months the parish is unable to meet all its obligations, but there is no clear picture of finances at

this time.* There is Title II monies for library books.

The philosophy of the school is built upon the Catholic faith. The philosophy as set down by the teachers January 3, 1972, reflects this faith. "Each person is worthy of the respect and dignity as a child of God. Each child has the right to know the dogmas and proctices of the Catholic, Christian faith. Each child has the right to the knowledge and skills which will enable him/her to live a capable, responsible, Christian life. Learning should: be successful; involve the obtainable expectations of the teacher, student, and parents; be varied, involving many senses; develop individual talents; be recognized as a personal responsible, internal process; be fostered by the atmosphere of the school; be skill-oriented. A child has a right to the respect and consideration of the teachers and classmates in his learning process. A person's behavior should: reflect Christian attitudes; include respect for self, others, and authority; make life easy and happy for others; strive for internalization; be accountable; and have implemented school guidelines." This philosophy is the base from which the faculty work as well as a goal to strive toward.

The school enrolls between 150-200 children each year. In the school

* As of January 1973. Total parish debt \$62,000

Outstanding debt	\$35,700
Unpaid interest	5,700
Unpaid diocesean assessment	20,600

The parish focus this year is to reduce the debt by half, or as much as possible.

year 1971-72, there were eight teachers (3 lay, 5 religious) and one principal (religious). The school used the services of a school health nurse who came to the school once a month and was on call. Two children received speech therapy at a nearby public school. Eight high school students from Roosevelt High School helped in the school. There were mothers who volunteered to work in the library and others who gave time in a classroom as teacher aides. University of Portland students in education came once a week and took groups of children for twenty minutes for practice in teaching. (The children enjoyed this and looked forward to it.) The seventh and eighth grades did take shop, home ec and PE at one of the nearby public schools.

In the current year (1972-73) the setup is about the same with some changes. The faculty consists of five religious teachers, three lay teachers, one religious principal, one religious reading specialist, one half-time PE instructor (religious), one volunteer music teacher (religious), one Lay Jesuit volunteer who teaches math and science and helps with PE. (A Jesuit volunteer would be comparable to a VISTA volunteer, but is connected to the Church.) The mothers continue to volunteer for library work, the students from the University of Portland continue to come, and two students from Roosevelt High School continue to come. The seventh and eighth grades continue at the public school for shop and home ec.

In the faculty of 1971-72, five of the teachers were new to the school, two had been here one year previous, one had been here two years previous, the principal had been here four years previous. All had had at least one year teaching experience before this year. In the 1972-73 faculty, four teachers returned from last year, four are new to the school as is the

principal. Two of the faculty are in their first year of teaching. This is the principal's first year as principal. All of the faculty are young - in their 20's or 30's.

In the classroom the teacher's encounter students with normal intelligence, but who do not perform up to their capacity. Learning in most of the classrooms is individualized as much as possible, and learning by doing is stressed, as this seems to make the greatest impact on the children. There are discipline problems in each classroom, but these are with individual students and do not seem to affect the class as a whole. Many students in the upper grades, who are poor in academics, do not seem to care about formal learning. Rather they seem to thrive on activities of one kind or another. The Rivergate Career Education Project (federally funded) is in use with the seventh and eighth graders. Creativity is encouraged and many students respond to this encouragement. Generally, there seems to be poorer output among students as the years go by, so that by the time they are in the eighth grade many are one or two years below scholastic achievement for their grade level as rated by standardized tests.

Teaching techniques are very progressive, and ideas are put into effect as much as physical plant and personnel will allow. There is a growing dissatisfaction with the present curriculum, as it does not seem to fit these children. There is a beginning effort to write a curriculum for this school, so that learning may become a more meaningful experience.

A broadened link and communication with the community is seen as a need. In this area the teachers see the need of an extra person. The link with the community would also be the person to give individual treatment to children and families. This area has not been explored because of the

pressing needs in other areas directly related to classroom activities.

The 1972-73 faculty have all expressed an interest in working in Assumption, knowing the drawbacks as to physical plant and learning problems. The faculty are trying to understand and solve some of these problems. There is an awareness that others, including social workers, are needed so that changes can be made. Prevention is beginning to be explored, but so far nothing has been done in this area. There is awareness on the teacher's part that work must be done in the homes if school is to be a meaningful activity for the children. Many homes do not have reading material available, and some parents are unaware that this may negatively affect their children's motivation and output in school.

There is no lay school board, but there is an education commission of the parish. This commission coordinates all educational activities of the parish which includes the school, religious education for those children attending public school, and adult education. This commission has been operating for one year and is in the process of refining their rights and duties. The principal is automatically on this commission.

There is an active Parent's Club, who support the school with work and financial help. The club's executive board is consulted on matters of policy, although they have no official power in the making of policy.

Parent involvement in the school is high. Many mothers volunteer their time to work in the school, in the library, milk program, aides in the classroom, hot dog day, odd jobs around the school, and one volunteers as full-time secretary. Many of the fathers work to help maintain the school, painting, fixing broken windows, keeping the heating in good repair, fixing equipment, reroofing the roof etc. There is a core of parents very active

in the parents' club who raise funds for the school. There seem to be good support among all the parents for the school, and they work to keep it going. Not all the parents are so involved, but between 60-80% are so involved.

SUMMARY

In summary then, Assumption, a Catholic eight grade elementary school, is located in a borderline poverty area. It is low to middle income. Most of the people do work at unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and some managerial jobs. The people are rather closed to newcomers in the area, which may be a problem since a number of low-cost housing units are being built in the area. There are those on welfare, and emergencies do arise where families run out of food, clothes, or bedding. There are those who live from day-to-day with no opportunity to plan for the future. There are those with average incomes (\$9,000) with potential for leadership that has not been tapped. The people as a whole seem to support their parish and school, but there is a core of vitally interested persons who do most of the work.

Most children follow their parents' occupations, a majority finish high school, a small minority go on to college and a minority do not finish high school. There is political apathy in the area. As the children go through school there seems to be a decreasing relevance of school to their lives. This attitude seems also to the attitude of a number of parents. In some instances there is no encouragement by the parent to the child in his effort to make school a success.

The area is not organized to bring about change, and potential leaders have not been tapped so that the area could give itself more impetus to the long struggle for self-help on a community-wide basis.

The school has limitations as to physical plant, irrelevance of formal education to the lives of the children, poverty and disorganization and other ill of the area. It has strengths of support of the parents for their school, a core of potential leaders among the parents, willingness and interest of the faculty to serve in this school and parish.

S E C T I O N I I I

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

In the preceeding section, I discussed Assumption school, its strengths and weaknesses. Now it is my task to formulate a school social work program for this school, so that problems can be alleviated. Since there is only one social worker, her expertise must be used in the most effective manner possible. (2)

A school Social Work program will have to be an integral part of the total school program. The philosophy of the school, its structure and its community view must fit together to form a unified whole. The social work program would then be an essential part of this whole. The Community school concept may be the end effect if there is a school-social work-parish team approach. The school could be a focal point from which all other services are contacted.

GOALS

The universal goal of all helping professions is to help people cope with or adapt to life more adequately, and if possible to help people live life more fully. This is a rather on-going goal, one that can be reached with individuals, but never completed in general. Social work's goal is to work toward this general goal using the knowledge and skills of social work to accomplish these ends.

The long range goal of Assumption school is that "each child will acquire the knowledge and skills which will enable him/her to live a capable, responsible, Christian life." As social worker in the school, I could ascribe to this goal. (The meaning of the words capable, responsible, Christian will have to be discussed so that a consensus could be reached by the personnel of the school.) This goal is philosophical and meant as a guiding principle as well as a long range goal.

(The working goals of a school social worker will have to be long and short range. The long range goals can be rather philosophical and broad, as above, but the short range goals will have to be rather specific and researchable.)

METHODS

Team: An underlying basic assumption essential to this discussion is that the social worker and school personnel function as a team, giving to and taking from each other so that a more comprehensive, effective, humanizing program can operate. The team approach is seen as very necessary for this total effort to come about. As the program is in operation, the team could and should be expanded to include pastor and parish council. In fact, I think the program could not continue without bringing them into the team.

Methods: The problems can be tackled under three broad headings: prevention, treatment, research. Prevention would encompass such things as the organization and tapping of potential leaders, alleviating effects of broken homes and alcoholism on children in these homes so that they may become better adapting adults, making education more relevant to the children by working towards a greater participation of parents in school policy, putting more responsibility in the home for some basic education, and consultation and collaboration with teachers and other social service agencies. Treatment would be using casework and groupwork skills with individual children and their families, consultation with teachers, collaboration with teachers and other social service agencies, community organization work to bring about a better delivery system of services in the area, and perhaps a more organized political voice. Research would be a very necessary part of this program so that we could evaluate what we are doing, what is effective, and it may point toward where we should go in the future and how to go about it.

PREVENTION

Adult education within the parish would be one way to begin to alleviate the bad effects of broken homes, alcoholism, or other social problems on children. The social worker could offer parents concepts as to healthy self-esteem, dependence and independence in children, etc. In order to get to those parents who would benefit most, a program of door-to-door selling may be in order. This adult education need not be formalized, i.e. in a classroom with lecture and discussion, but could be more informal, i.e. a group of three to six mothers with alcoholic husbands meet in one of their homes to discuss problems they encounter. (29)

Another aspect of prevention would be to work with the children from these homes, on an in-school basis, to help them cope more effectively with the problems in their homes. This may especially be helpful to seventh and eighth grade students.

Consultation and collaboration with teachers and principal could enhance the preventative efforts and lead to total school focus on prevention. In fact the effort will fail if the school personnel are not behind the program. Contact and collaboration with other agencies in the area could reduce overlap of efforts and mean an expansion of resources to be used for this effort.

Practically speaking, this effort should at first center or zero in on one problem, i.e. homes of alcoholic parent(s), its effort and effects closely researched, and its methods evaluated before it is expanded to include other problems. Continual and concurrent research is a must if this program is to grow in effectiveness and the number reached.

Prevention, at first, should begin with high-risk families, before given to the entire school population. A survey to determine high-risk families should be undertaken. When this is done the problem of what direction to go, what to offer these families, how to begin working with them, what do they really want can be tackled. The primary grades, K-3, seem the likely ones to begin with, so that deleterious home situations can be softened and more healthy patterns of family life substituted. It is perhaps here that the biggest amount of preventative time should be spent.

The organization and tapping of potential leaders will come about through strengthening the existing councils of the parish as well as beginning new ones. The parish council and its various commissions are beginning to assume more responsibility for the running of the parish. Support for this council should be wholehearted. The school would then operate from under this council. The school itself could begin a school board made up of parents, principal, and member from the parish council. This board should then begin to handle matters of policy for the school. The parents' club does not issue policy statements, but their support is needed for any policy to be enacted. In forming a school board, the Parents' Club is a good place to begin.

TREATMENT

Some students are currently recognized as needing treatment. There are also those students who would benefit from treatment, but have not as yet been recognized. A survey should be taken to acquire the specific number of children in need of some form of treatment. A closer diagnostic look at these specific children would then be the next step. This diagnostic look should include the severity of the problem, the length it has been with the child, time of onset, the causes of the problem, the strengths of the child and family to overcome it, and what kind of treatment would be of greatest service to this child. This may mean referring children and families to other appropriate treatment resources, treating some children myself, or helping other significant persons, parent or teacher, work with the child. Consultation and collaboration with parents, teachers, and principal would aid this process. Teachers would thus receive help to recognize and refer children with problems. Early recognition of children with problems is a good preventive measure as well as good treatment.

Working with other social service agencies on delivery of services could aid treatment of children in general as well as specifically. With good food and health care delivery systems some problems stemming from lack of proper nutrients or adequate health care could be eliminated. Energies then could be centered upon helping an individual use his potential to live a fuller life. A good rapport with other agencies also speeds up the referral process.

A greater political voice for this area could be tackled through the political leaders residing in this area, i.e. William McCoy, State legislator; Gladys McCoy, school board member; and others. This may serve to get the

people more active and also help on a better delivery system of services program for this area.

RESEARCH

A good evaluative research program must run concurrently with the preventative and treatment efforts. Research should help to point out what is working and why, what is not working and why. Research should be able to point out directions for future action. School social work has been hampered in its growth by lack of research. It is no use doing something that we think is working without testing to see that it is. That, it seems to me, is a waste of time, resources, and money, all of which seem to be rather scarce.

MISCELLANEOUS

Confidentiality and record keeping are two constant problems that must be discussed. What should go on a child's permanent record? (ORS 40:040 determines by law what must be included in this record.) What information can be shared among personnel of a school, especially those working with a specific child? What records should a school social worker keep? How long should these be kept? Who should have access to these records? What is the right of the parents and child in this regard? While a case is active records could be kept, but destroyed after a year or two of closing. These records should not go into the child's permanent record. Confidentiality should be discussed with each person so that their wishes in this regard could be done. If record keeping is to be minimal, secretarial help could also be minimal, and perhaps handled by the school secretary. (Research records would be of a different nature since they are usually not specific as to name, and a special research secretary may be needed.)

The social worker should have an office with a phone. However, Assumption school has no room available for this use. There is a convent and a rectory on the parish grounds, and some room may be found in one of these buildings. Creative use of space available should lead to overcoming this problem.

A school social worker should have an MSW. It is seen that those with BA or less could function under the supervision of an MSW to enhance the program. The use of indigenous personnel could be used in the preventative, treatment and research parts of the program. The MSW should be able to make this a team effort and draw upon the talents of each worker.

Salary should be commensurate with educational degree. In this instance,

however, the MSW is a religious and therefore would be paid the salary other religious receive -\$225 per month for twelve months. If the social worker were lay, a salary starting at \$10,000 per year should be paid.

SUMMARY

In summary, a school social work program should revolve around three aspects - prevention, treatment, research. Prevention should start with one problem and attack it. Treatment should run concurrently with prevention and research should be an aspect of both.

The discussion seems to be leading to the community school concept. This may be the end effect. A school is a good place to contact most people since all children must attend school. To open the school to more than formal classes may draw more parents into the life of the school and be a focal point from which all other services could be contacted.

CONCLUSION

The review of literature pointed up the challenge of school social work today. Casework as the only method of service in school social work is becoming less viable. The literature reports innovative programs being tried, but actual changes in practice are slow. The study of Assumption school is seen as the necessary first step to understand the problem before attacking it. In gathering data, both strengths and weaknesses were shown. The proposed school social work program is an attempt to fit the process to the problem. Prevention, treatment and research are seen as the three basic elements of this program. The team approach is the underlying assumption upon which the program is built.

As with any study, there are gaps in the data, and the program is rather general. However, it is a base upon which to start to give effective service to people. As research is done, a better program can be implemented and better service given.

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