

Our nation's schools need social workers now more than ever. It doesn't matter whether the schools are in richer or poorer neighbors or cities, suburbs, or rural America.

School social workers help children overcome challenges in life to get the best education that they can. And they give teachers and parents the skills they need to better communicate and bond with children of all ages.

Our nation is grappling with violence in schools and rising suicide rates. Social workers in schools can help address these issues.

School social workers work in preventing school violence. They are trained to understand risk factors and warning signs of violent behaviors. They are knowledgeable in classroom management and behavior intervention and can assist teachers and school personnel in identifying concerning behaviors of students and developing supportive intervention plans.

And social workers are experts in research-based school discipline policy development that can increase school connectedness and decrease incidents of school violence.

States such as Colorado are taking solid steps toward hiring more school social workers. But the sad reality is that many schools fail to follow National Association of Social Workers (NASW) recommendation that there be at least one social worker per 250 students in schools or one per 50 if the school has intensive needs.

The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) and NASW have launched a "Back to School with Social Workers" campaign this year to raise awareness about the benefits that social workers bring to school.

We urge you to find out more about social workers in your local schools, support them and urge your boards of education to make sure there are enough social workers to meet the needs of your students. The futures of our children are at stake.