



Superintendent Update

DERRY TOWNSHIP SD | JUNE 23 2021

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

BY DR. WINSLOW

In 2012 when I came to Derry Township as the new Middle School principal, I was surprised to learn that we did not have a school social worker for the district. It was only a matter of weeks into the school year that I noticed a gap between the school and families that was too big for our school counselors to effectively fill. The superintendent at the time asked what I saw as a need for our students and families and it was easy to immediately identify the role of school social worker. I was thrilled when he agreed, and it was very exciting to work with other administrators on our team to interview and hire Dr. Deidre Stalnecker. Dr. Stalnecker has been an invaluable asset to our community and has worked to build the social work program at Derry Township from the ground up. Since 2013, she has implemented a wide variety of services and programs that benefit our students.

She has worked to ensure that all students have a coat for the winter and a bed to sleep on at night. She rallies staff to support students within the schools and connects us to volunteer opportunities in the wider community as well. Dr. Stalnecker is often the main point of contact for a family in crisis. I have witnessed her help a family becoming homeless to transition into shelter housing, establishing their needs for student transportation, work transportation, and on top of all the other logistics, helping to re-home the family pets so that they did not need to have that one additional worry on their list.

Dr. Stalnecker works closely with COCOA packs, and regularly provides the staff with updates regarding our students and the level of need they are experiencing. For example, COCOA packs currently has 159 district families enrolled for services and provides over 400 packs for students from Derry and surrounding districts each week.

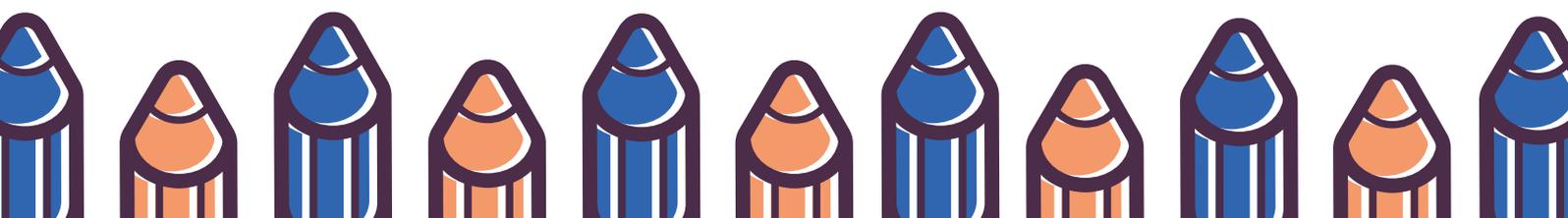
What exactly does a school social worker do? While this is not an exhaustive list, it illustrates some of the services that Dr. Stalnecker provides:

- Helps families navigate through complicated paperwork for services such as free or reduced internet, free and reduced lunch rates and other services that benefit students
- Helps families who have a truant student to create a sustainable plan for getting to school
- Works with students on a one-to-one basis for behavioral or mental health support
- Connects families to needed community services such as therapy/counseling, legal services, assistance programs, transportation, and food services
- Supports district work in Social Emotional Learning
- Provides crisis intervention to individual students or families
- Provides professional learning to the staff and the greater community on what poverty looks like in Derry Township and how it can impact students and families

- Conducts home visits; this year Dr. Stalnecker made 276 home visits. Some of these are weekly visits to deliver COCOA packs, while they also provide the opportunity to regularly check in on a family who may need additional support or resources

Essentially, Dr. Stalnecker works to mobilize family, school, and community resources to enable children to learn as effectively as possible in their educational programs.

Each June, Dr. Stalnecker reports out valuable data that she has tracked throughout the school year. Those data are provided for you on page 3 as a snapshot of district needs and interventions from the social work perspective. Dr. Stalnecker's diligent work with students and phenomenal relationship building skills with families helps to ensure that there are safety nets in place for our most vulnerable students, thus providing them the support and opportunities they need to stay engaged in their learning and on a forward trajectory for their educational goals.

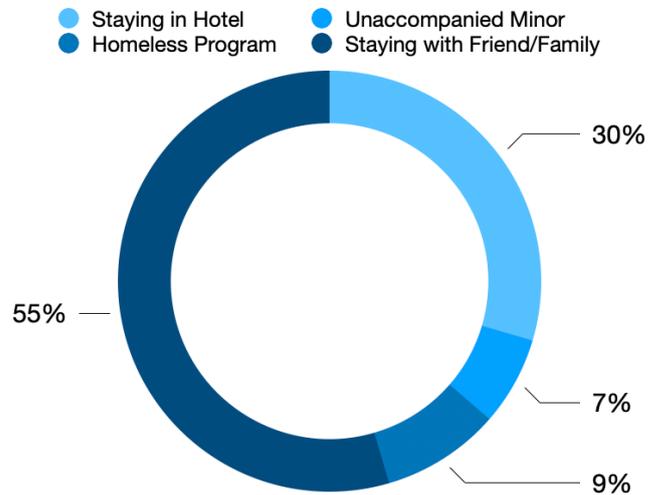


SOCIAL WORKER UPDATE

DR. DEE STALNECKER

McKinney-Vento Families

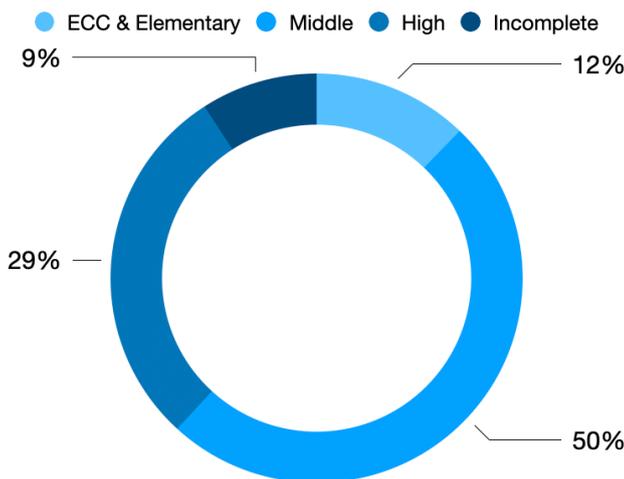
Derry Township School District identified 37 students as homeless this year. This is significantly higher than in years past. Although there was a moratorium on evictions due to non-payment of rent, families were still evicted due to loopholes or non-covid related reasons. Throughout this school year, 13 students were in hotels at least part of the school year, 3 were unaccompanied minors, 4 were in a program for persons experiencing homelessness. The remaining are living with other family/friends.



21 students will potentially begin next school year with a homeless status. 3 students graduated and 10 students are now living in permanent housing.

Student Attendance

Improvement Plan (SAIP)



This year we completed 131 SAIPs which is far more than we have done in previous years. Of those 131, 12 students moved or were otherwise not available to collect post-SAIP attendance data.

Throughout the school year we completed 16 SAIPs in the Early Childhood Center and Elementary School, 65 SAIPs in the Middle School and 38 SAIPs in the High School.

When parents were asked to attend a SAIP meeting, we had 51 parents attend and 67 parents decline. Of the 51 parents that attended, we saw 44 student attendance increase overall. With the parents that did not attend, 50 student's attendance still increased.

11 children and youth referrals were made for truancy. Four of those cases were immediately closed without assessment because it was too late in the school year to do take action (4/26). The other 7 cases had contact made with the family and were subsequently closed.

WHAT ARE WE READING AND LISTENING TO?



Think Again by Adam Grant: This book walks the reader through common mistakes in difficult conversations. Grant asserts that (regardless of chosen career) we take on the role of preacher, prosecutor or politician when trying to influence others, when what we really should be doing is acting like scientists.



Leading the Rebound by Nancy Frey & Douglas Fischer: Frey & Fischer tackle the basics of what leaders and teachers need to know as we come out of pandemic teaching. They emphasize the importance of student agency and school wide systems (future newsletter topics).

Work Life Podcast by Adam Grant: Grant tackles a variety of topics that can make work difficult. His interviews and insights are enlightening and entertaining. You can find Work Life in Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts.

The Bomber Mafia by Malcolm Gladwell: Audiobook - Gladwell has published this book in hardcover, but the audio version is completely enthralling with historical interviews, archival recordings, and first hand accounts of the role of bombing in WWII.

