

Congressional Briefing  
Wednesday, September 23, 2020 • 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.  
***Bringing the Power of Social Work to Schools***

Sponsored by  
Congressional Research Institute for Social Work and Policy (CRISP)  
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)  
SSWN (School Social Work Network)  
School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA)  
American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW)  
Center for Social Development and Clark-Fox Policy Institute  
at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis

In response to numerous act of police aggression, too often resulting in the deaths of unarmed Black citizens, there has been a call for social workers to be more engaged in the responsibility for public safety. Most recently, several cities and localities have elected to remove police from public schools and replace them with social workers and other service providers. This briefing will discuss these issues in light of *H.R. 7848—Counseling Not Criminalization in Schools Act*—a bill recently introduced by Reps. Ayanna Pressley and Ilhan Omar in the House of Representatives. Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Chris Murphy introduced a companion bill—S.4360—in the Senate. The focus will be on the benefits social workers can bring to schools.

This briefing is not a debate about whether police officers should be in schools. It is a fact-finding forum to discuss how best to provide for the safety and educational achievement of students in the nation’s public schools in light of calls to remove police from public schools. We are particularly concerned about the impact having police in schools has on Black and Latino students. What are the benefits of having more social workers in schools?

We hope that the information and ideas expressed in this forum will inform that debate. Ultimately decisions about school safety and academic achievement will be made at the local level because school systems and populations vary widely across the country and there are few, if any, one-size fits all policy solutions for social problems. However, Congress can influence those decisions through federal legislation.

## Our Panelists



**Judith Browne Dianis** is the executive director of the Advancement Project, a nonprofit organization devoted to supporting multi-racial organizations' efforts to dismantle structural racism by providing legal, policy, strategic campaign and communications support. Dianis has been with the Advancement Project since its inception in 1999. A graduate of Columbia University School of Law, she was the Managing Attorney in the Washington, DC office of the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund. Dianis authored groundbreaking education reports including: *Opportunities Suspended and Derailed: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track*, detailing the unnecessary criminalization of students by their schools. The Advancement Project National Office's work with grassroots partners significantly helped decrease student suspensions and arrests in Denver, Baltimore and school districts throughout Florida. Dianis helped start Advancement Project's Voter Protection program during the election debacle in Florida in 2000, representing the NAACP and has partnered with grassroots and national organizations to combat voter suppression efforts.



**Mo Canady** is the executive director of the National Association of School Resource Officers, a nonprofit organization founded in 1991 for school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators and school security and/or safety professionals who work as partners to protect schools and their students, faculty and staff members. Mo Canady holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Jacksonville State University and is a former Lieutenant with the City of Hoover Police Department in Hoover, Alabama. He retired from the Hoover Police Department in 2011 after a 25-year career. The last twelve years of his career were spent as the supervisor of the School Services Division. He was appointed as an instructor for the National Association of School Resource Officers in 2001 and a NASRO board member in 2005. He is a past President of the Alabama Association of School Resource Officers. Canady co-authored the national report; *"To Protect and Educate – The School Resource Officer and the Prevention of Violence in Schools"* and recently testified on the matter of school safety before the United States House Committee on Education and the Workforce.



**Dr. Ron Avi Astor** is the Marjorie Crump Professor of Social Welfare at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs with a joint appointment in the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. His work focuses on the physical, social-organizational and cultural contexts of schools in relation to bullying and school violence. More than 200 scholarly manuscripts have been published from the finding of his studies during the past 20 years. His most recent book is *Bullying, School Violence and Climate in Evolving Contexts: Culture, Organization and Time*. He recently co-authored a national study and policy brief on the basic needs of students in schools during the Covid-19 pandemic that was featured

by CNN. Astor's work has won numerous international research awards. Astor is a fellow of APA, AERA, and SSWR, and an elected member of both the National Academy of Education and American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare.



**Sandra D. Shephard** is a Board Member for Prince George's County Public Schools. Shephard served as a teacher's assistant for the AmeriCorps program and was promoted to the Prince George's County Managing Director in 2017 because of her outstanding commitment to the organization's mission with youth and families. As Managing Director, Mrs. Shephard managed a \$2.5 million budget and programs that provide the workforce opportunities, emergency housing, AmeriCorps Program and educational programs that offer after-school and summer programming serving over 1,100 youth annually. The one-time services included 3,500 community members through food banks and community service events. A Prince George's Community College alum, Shephard earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and a Minor in Sociology from the University of Maryland Baltimore County and received her Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Maryland in May 2020. She is currently participating in the Leadership Prince George's County Program.