Ruben P. Diaz ES

Request for Information Response

Nevada Department of Education as Provided by

SB 515, Section 23

Social worker or other licensed mental health professional

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To:

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SECTION II
NARRATIVE

Ruben P. Diaz Elementary School

Ruben P. Diaz Elementary School is a Title I, Focus school that provides a positive, safe environment for over 850 students to learn and achieve. Focus schools are designated based on achievement gap data. Focus schools are amongst the lowest performing 10% of schools in the State of Nevada based on gaps in achievement for students on an Individual Education Plan, students receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, and students who are English language learners. The demographics include 78% Hispanic, 14% African American and, 8% other students.

There are a number of students attending Diaz Elementary School who are listed as homeless. Ruben P. Diaz Elementary School has set the following goals: (1) Increase proficiency rates in reading from 49% to 58% proficient, and (2) Reduce the overall achievement gap percentage points between highest performing ethnic/racial and subgroups in both reading and mathematics. Because we are an elementary school, a social worker/mental health professional could intervene early with students, allowing for the greatest success.

Many of our families struggle financially, which leads to undue stress on children. Many of our children are from broken homes, and suffer from anxiety and lack of focus on academics. A transient population further complicates student outcomes. The social worker/mental health professional would work with our families through parent meetings, working with our students in small groups to help them understand how to better accept themselves and other and how to navigate being responsible for their actions and school work. The social worker/mental health professional would be able to lead small groups of students focusing on topics such as social interaction, conflict resolution, and anger management. Parents/families could be provided with resources to help them cope and work to maintain their family and independence. Many of our students/families would benefit from further counseling to learn to communicate with respect, support other family members, and manage their life. Parenting skills and strategies for achieving success in life can be learned by our families if a mental health professional can devote time and understanding to our community.

The social worker/mental health professional at Ruben P. Diaz Elementary School will work closely with the school counselor and the Community in Schools Liaison. This work includes visiting homes and working closely with

families. This person would work to assist with staff meetings, professional development for teachers, and family engagement. The person working in this capacity will visit students' homes and meet with parents and staff to discuss students' successes and students' struggles. In addition, this position will provide assistance by ensuring compliance with SB515 by counseling students involved in bullying allegations. Professional learning will also be provided to staff and students on positive behavior supports and school climate. Weekly small groups of students will work with the mental health professional to problem solve and make connections with other students who also need some additional support. The mental health professional will also identify, coordinate, and recruit community partners who are able to support all stakeholders, students, parents, and school staff.