B. Mahlon Brown JHS

Request for Information Response

Nevada Department of Education as Provided by

SB 515, Section 23

Social worker or other licensed mental health professional

December 14, 2015

To:

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SECTION II
NARRATIVE

B. Mahlon Brown Junior High School

Brown Junior High School Academy of International Studies is a junior high facing numerous issues associated with the diverse population of the school. Current enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year is 1070 students with 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2.4% Asian, 30.1% Hispanic, 9.7% Black/African American, 47.4% Caucasian, 2.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 8% Multi-Racial. Additionally, 60.7% of these students qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL), 6.4% have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 17.8% have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Additionally, the school's population is highly mobile, exhibiting a transiency rate of 25.2% in the 2014-15 school year. There are currently 41 known homeless students enrolled at Brown JHS. The school is currently running a mentor program (funded through Hope 2) which services approximately 75 students with behavioral, educational, social and/or personal issues. Next year Brown's population will include magnet students from zoned schools, which will increase the population by about another 100 students.

The social worker/mental health professional will provide various supports to the population of Brown JHS including students, staff, parents and other community members. This might include assisting students with a variety of coping and self-management skills. Middle school is inherently transitional for many students; students often come ill-equipped to handle the rigors of not only the middle school curriculum, but also the developmental, social, and interpersonal aspects of this age. Having someone on staff, that will be able to focus their attention on helping students negotiate the middle school landscape, in all aspects, would be invaluable.

Furthermore, as a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP), the overarching school philosophy and curriculum require a focus on teaching students about self-management, responsibility, accountability, reflection, service, international-mindedness, and personal growth. A social worker/mental health professional could mesh seamlessly with the staff that is already devoted to supporting students in areas both in and out of the classroom. Specifically, the students at Brown JHS would see that support in the form of crisis intervention, fostering academic success, teaching self-management skills (which include dealing with anger, conflict, and personal issues).

Another area of support would be in aiding staff with addressing specific student concerns as they relate to student mental health issues, assisting with student behavior concerns, providing professional development assistance for staff that focuses on essential information to better understand factors (cultural, societal, economic, familial, health, etc.) affecting a student's performance and behavior, and providing direct support to staff. Beyond helping students, parents/families could utilize the mental health profession/social worker to assist with alleviating family stress to promote overall student success, assisting parents with accessing social programs and additional support services.

Lastly, the social worker/mental health professional would be able to promote district initiatives in both the developmental and implementation phases of programs for identified children with behavioral, social, and/or emotional needs; developing and training on alternative programs and strategies for attendance issues, delinquency and excessively disruptive students; identification and monitoring of students who are victims of child abuse and/or neglect; providing case management for students and families requiring multiple resources; and providing consultation regarding related Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), mental health standards, and district/school policies and procedures. Additionally, a mental health professional/social worker could serve as an advocate/liaison between Brown JHS and other departments, offices, and outside agencies.

The proposed social worker/mental health profession would support Brown JHS in all of the aforementioned areas and initiatives, as well as work in conjunction with the counselors, administration, instructional coaches and teachers to meet the needs of students that are identified as having a need. This individual would also attend and participate in professional development trainings, work sessions, staff meetings, and other student focused meetings. This person would be able to conduct home visits, meet regularly with families, attend Parent Action Committee (PAC) meetings, and serve as a valuable resource that could contribute skills, knowledge, strategies, and techniques in the areas of mental health and well-being. The social worker/mental health professional could also assist with ensuring compliance with all legally required protocols including Senate Bill 504 and suicide prevention. As situations such as these arise, students involved would be targeted for intervention by the social worker/mental health professional. It will be expected that he/she develop and facilitate formal programs, i.e. weekly meetings or support groups, which provide guidance and training that promote positive a safe and effective learning environment for all. That guidance and training would also incorporate teaching students coping skills, helping them overcome difficulties, and affect positive change academically and behaviorally. In addition, this

individual would develop, coordinate, and implement support groups for parent/guardians to promote family engagement, parent/guardian involvement, and guidance on how to address a variety of student issues at home. These issues could be related to attendance, academic performance, behavior, socio-economic status, and developmental concerns associated with middle school students. Finally, this person would identify and coordinate school and community resources to help in the creation and maintenance of the safest and most effective learning environment.