Jerome D. Mack MS

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:

Victoria Blakeney
Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment
Nevada Department of Education
700 E. Fifth St.
Carson City, NV 89701
(775) 687-9130
vblakeney@doe.nv.gov

Dr. Tammy Malich
Assistant Superintendent
Education Services Division

CCSD Contact:
Brian Adams, Coordinator
Office of Student Adjudication
Education Services Division
(702)799-0761

SECTION II
NARRATIVE

Jerome D. Mack Middle School

Mack Middle School is a middle school facing numerous academic challenges typically associated with high enrollment and a transient population that is predominately of low socioeconomic status. The school's count day enrollment for 2015-16 was 1,297 students with 0.38% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2.9% Asian, 74% Hispanic, 12.4% Black/African American, 7.5% Caucasian, .54% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 2.23% Multi-Racial. Additionally, 83% of these students qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL).

The social worker/mental health professional will provide support to students, staff, parents, and community members at Mack Middle School. Current initiatives at Mack Middle School include: 1. Secure student safety 2. Increase parental involvement 3. Record and progress student learning for 100% of students. The mental health expert/social worker would be key to these initiatives for many reasons.

Many students in our low SES population develop warped senses of self-worth and value and resort to drastic actions like "cutting" (self-harm), or drug abuse to cope with the stressors and anxieties of adolescence. Unfortunately for them, adult models with positive coping techniques are in low supply. One important function for this mental health expert would be to offer specific services for students include assisting them in understanding and accepting self and others, developing intervention strategies to increase academic success, helping students develop appropriate social interaction skills, providing crisis intervention, and teaching conflict resolution and anger management. By increasing coping skills, social interaction skills, and conflict resolution, the securing of student safety on a class by class basis becomes even more of a reality for each student at Mack Middle School.

The second initiative for MMS is to increase parental involvement. One way that the social worker can contribute to this goal is to introduce specific services for parents/families with the goal of alleviating family stress to enable their child to function more effectively in school and community. He/she could also assist parents in accessing and utilizing school and community resources, provide parents access to programs available to children with special needs, and work with parents to facilitate their support in their child's adjustment to school. Many parents at our school have the desire to increase their child's odds for success, but find it difficult to navigate the bureaucracy of

public resources. Having an experienced guide to assist with paperwork and deadlines could ease some of the anxieties that parents feel when dealing with these entities. It also gives our school another facet of connection with the community, as a hub of various ways to improve your child's chances of success.

Recording and progressing student learning for each and every student is the ultimate outcome of the aforementioned goals. By utilizing an expert mental health worker, we can provide another layer of support for teachers by offering: Specific services for school personnel include assessing students with mental health concerns, assisting teachers with behavior management, developing staff training programs, educating staff with 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 in the form of modeling and/or classroom visits.

In other ways, there would be specific services to promote district initiatives in addition to site specific initiatives include assisting in development and implementation of programs for identified children with behavioral, social, and/or emotional needs; developing and training on alternative programs and strategies for drop-outs, truants, delinquents, 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.

The proposed social worker/mental health professional at Mack Middle School will use his or her skills and talents to assist with Mack Middle School's number one initiative: progress student learning for each and every student. His/her target audience is students who are developing distorted mental paradigms that are barriers toward learning and effective social interaction. He/she will work alongside the counselors, attend and participate in staff meetings, and professional development sessions and trainings. The person selected for this position will contribute knowledge, skills, and techniques in the areas of mental health and human behavior to parents and staff members. He/she will also be the recipient of information from teachers, campus security, counselors, and special needs students' teachers' of record. So communication between various groups and overlapping support teams is imperative. This position will provide assistance to school administration with ensuring compliance with Senate Bill 504 by counseling students involved in bullying allegations, both the targets as well as the bullies, as well as providing guidance and training on positive school climate strategies. It will be expected

that he/she will develop and facilitate weekly support groups and provide students with strategies to cope with and overcome difficulties impacting school performance, academic and behavioral. The expert will also keep teachers and staff members abreast of the progress being made by students. He/she will also assist in creating individual behavior plans for students with behavioral needs. Increasing parental involvement is an initiative that Mack Middle School is stringently focused. He/she will be expected to develop and implement parent support groups and activities that promote parent involvement/engagement. The expert will both identify challenges in a child's living situation (home, school, and community) that may affect the child's adjustment, performance, and attendance in the educational setting, and lead training sessions for teachers to do the same. He/she will identify, mobilize, and coordinate school and community resources to enable students to learn as effectively as possible in the educational setting. He/she will also meet with parents in conferences of various natures (discipline/behavioral and academic), and introduce the families to these resources. Plan, conduct, and participate in educational workshops and presentations while serving as a member of school teams and provide information related to planning for the educational needs of children.