Sandra Thompson ES

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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Nevada Department of Education
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SECTION II
NARRATIVE

Sandra Thompson Elementary School

Thompson ES is a large elementary school facing increasing challenges addressing the achievement gap. Currently, 60% of our population of 797 students is from one of the minority ethnic groups: 24% Hispanic, 5% Asian, 18% Black /African American and 13% Multi-Racial. Based on last year's accountability report, 37% of our students qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL). While traditionally our overall school achievement indicators are strong, we are increasingly faced with more academic and behavioral concerns, disproportionately impacting our minority students. For example, 67% of all grade 5 African-American students are failing one or more subjects or receiving a D in one or more subjects. This compares to 17% of Caucasian 5th grade students failing or at risk of failing. Our demographics and needs have changed significantly over the past several years, starting from when the local economy suffered until now. Our neighborhood was hit hard during the housing crisis, and as a result we now have more transiency (about 30%) and lower income families struggling to earn a living and provide care for their children.

We have increasing number of students who have faced or are facing some type of trauma. An increasing and significant number of underserved minority students with a history of limited academic success, leading to an increase in the achievement gap. The student population is facing increasing challenges with appropriate social interactions in a productive way. In addition, our teachers need support with appropriate management and interventions for students with challenging academic and social situations. The teachers lack the expertise to bridge the gap between our diverse student population and the teacher's background and training. Our parents are increasingly unsure of how to best support their student's academic and social success. Parents lack the knowledge necessary to access and use school and community resources. Lastly, we have students struggling to deal with drug and alcohol issues within their families.

We envision the role of the school Social Worker to encompass the following:

Assist parents with accessing outside services when the school-based programs do not meet students' needs.
Home visits to assist parents with obtaining the knowledge and skills to help their student
Behavioral observations

One on one counseling for students with severe behavioral or mental needs
Parent support group and training
Support with SB504
Develop a systematic bully awareness and anti-bully program and develop measures to determine its effectiveness
Develop and coordinate a plan that provides teachers with the knowledge and expertise necessary to connect with underserved students in an effort to improve those students' academic success