Mario C. and JoAnne Monaco 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:

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SECTION II
NARRATIVE

Mario C. and JoAnne Monaco Middle School

"Mario C. and JoAnne Monaco Middle School is eager to demonstrate dramatic improvement through the implementation of the Nevada Department of Education's Theory of Action Priorities. Monaco will primarily focus on two priorities: Tier 1 instruction aligned to standards and teacher professional learning communities that analyze and use data to strengthen instruction.

Monaco Middle School has a student transiency rate of 50% and has been designated a Victory School for the 2015-16 and 2017-18. 560 students are not proficient in English based on WIDA Assessment dated 11-30-15.Through the development of professional learning communities, teachers will analyze and use data to strengthen instruction. The learning strategist will work with teachers to establish effective PLC norms and expectations. English Language Arts and progress and achievement of our students to the coordination of the local director, Catherine Tully and to the OR/WS Project's philosophy of inclusiveness, caring, and meeting the needs of the "whole" child.

The list below describes efforts in the 2014-2015 school year.

- A qualitative staff and student perception survey regarding the Monaco school climate was conducted and tabulated with results presented to our school OR/WS Implementation Team by Catherine Tully. These survey results were then presented to site based administrators, teachers, and students. Next, students were questioned in person and asked to present their feelings, concerns, and questions to the ORWS staff. From all of these results, we were able to determine the location of our "hotspots" on campus to insure improved safety measures. We discovered that 70.2% of our students feel very proud of our school. It was also indicated that teachers overwhelmingly feel safe at our school.

- The school has successfully exceeded the SEOAC recommendations per the CCSD Superintendent. The positive school climate and culture has directly impacted the formation of other school partnerships and the level of engagement from these internal and external partnerships. Based on the OR/WS approach to assisting our school, a summative assessment of a qualitative survey administered to students and staff, we determined the following level of impact on student achievement.

Qualitative Data as Evidence of a Positive School Climate and Culture

- Positive student and teacher relationships were developed.
- Respect, dignity, and empathy between adults on campus are evident.
- Mindset and accountability of our adult staff is positive and moving in the right direction.
- External and internal stakeholder partnerships have increased threefold.
- Personal growth and student leadership is evident in school clubs and activities.
- Intrinsic student motivation and feelings of self-worth are increasing.
- Real world experiences/application within the broader learning community.
- Community and parent engagement is at 80 % participation through Monaco Mariachi program.

The unique aspect of the PEF's OR/WS Project is that they followed through on the intended plan, maintained a consistent four-year relationship that invited feedback, honest and courageous conversations, and provided additional resources when needed. This relationship has led to a trainer-of-trainers model, where principal Medina has had the opportunity to educate elementary, middle, and high school staff and principals on creating a climate of achievement in their respective schools at all three levels and demonstrate what can happen when this work is done with enthusiasm and fidelity.

A partnership between Monaco Middle School and the Operation Respect/Welcoming Schools Anti-Bullying Project, coordinated by The Public Education Foundation, has been going on since 2011. Monaco was involved in their "active" implementation phase during the 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014 school years. The initiative has been sustained at Monaco over the past school year and we have every confidence that the school will continue to move forward in the future. We, at Operation Respect, are so pleased that this highly successful partnership is being nominated for the Blue Ribbon School Award sponsored by The Clark County School District School-Community Partnership Program.
I am currently employed by The Public Education Foundation as a School Climate Improvement Specialist. I retired from the Clark County School District in December 2011 where I served for 24 years as an elementary teacher, school administrator, and grant writer. Prior to that, I worked in

the State of Kansas at a Special Purpose School for severely and profoundly mentally and physically handicapped children.

I have known Ms. Lisa Medina for an extended period of time, but have worked with her most extensively over the past three years through the Operation Respect/Welcoming Schools Pilot Project. This initiative is for the purpose of preventing and reducing bullying and building a school climate that respects and welcomes all types of students and families. Monaco Middle School, where Ms. Medina is the principal, was selected to be one of the original 11 schools to implement this comprehensive program in 2011-2012. The project requires a three-year implementation cycle, and Monaco has just completed their time. The school has done a phenomenal job of improving their school climate through resources provided by the project and the diligence and perseverance of an outstanding school leader.

Visiting the Monaco Middle School campus three years ago and today is quite a different experience. The school has transformed from where it was three years ago. It is apparent that students now see their school as a place where they are safe, valued, and feel a sense of belonging. The school encourages kindness and empathy, fosters respect, and honors diversity. Current educational research tells us and seasoned educators know – when the school climate is optimal, academic achievement improves.

In order to describe Ms. Medina, the terms visionary, relationship-building, and instructional excellence come to mind. Below are a few observations and comments regarding this principal and her leadership-style. Her ability to visualize where she would like her school to be, despite current conditions is a priceless attribute for a leader.

Ms. Medina recognizes the importance of relationships. She consistently recognizes students and staff at her school for hard work, positive actions, and good character though various school programs.

She has great expertise in building on human capital and engaging staff through participatory management. She has built a cadre of dedicated professionals through treating all with respect and dignity; rewarding and recognizing exemplary teaching and duties "above and beyond"; requiring professional growth and collaborative interactions; and holding all staff accountable. Ms. Medina has an amazing amount of energy and she puts in many hours a day to ensure that her school is moving forward. She demands a lot of her staff, but they follow her example willingly and enthusiastically.

As principal, Ms. Medina has reached out into the community to form 32 different community/business partnerships with such organizations as the Latino Town Hall, Iglesia de Dios, the University of Nevada – Las Vegas, Teach for America, College of Southern Nevada, Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas Metro Police Department, National Security Technologies, Rotary Club, and North Vista Hospital. Mayor Goodman recently visited her campus and extended her heartfelt thanks for a wonderful morning and a "job well done".

Parents and families have been made to feel welcome and valued by being invited to serve on various school committees. A Parent Resource Center helps parents with computer access and with checking their students' grades via ParentLink. Academic Family Nights and Parent Advisory Committee Meetings are conducted monthly. A Student-Led Information Conference (SLIC) Night was implemented allowing students to talk to their parents about their school progress.

Ms. Medina is involved in every aspect of school programming and is a true instructional leader who researches and implements "best practices". She establishes goals, priorities, and strategies and moves seamlessly from the planning stage to the action phase, never failing to also reflect on what has been done to ensure a cycle of continuous improvement.

I heartily congratulate Ms. Medina for a "job well done". Students who attend Monaco Middle School are fortunate to have a dynamic administrator and teachers who have grown professionally and personally under her tutelage. Working together, a special place for living and learning has been created.

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She successfully reinforces Steven Covey's decision making with students and ensured that fairness and justice are secured as part of her behavioral expectation meetings held with students and their parents. Ms. Medina has successfully increased the overall identifications of African-American male students per the Clark County School District SEOAC recommendations.

Behavioral Data
2013-14 School Year
Ethnicity: African American
Suspensions 65
Expulsions 16
Behavior School 3
Ethnicity: Caucasian
Suspensions 18
Expulsions 2
Behavior School 4
Ethnicity: Hispanic
Suspensions 168
Expulsions 23
Behavior School 6

2013-14 School Year Total
Suspensions 258
Expulsions 42
Behavior School 14

2014-15 School Year
Ethnicity: African American
Suspensions 70
Expulsions 5
Behavior School 2
Ethnicity: Caucasian
Suspensions 10
Expulsions 1
Behavior School 0
Ethnicity: Hispanic
Suspensions 118
Expulsions 25
Behavior School 4

2014-15 School Year Total
Suspensions 203

Expulsions 31
Behavior School 6

The social worker/mental health professional will provide support to students, staff, parents, and community members at Monaco Middle School. Specific services for students include assisting students 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. Specific services for parents/families include alleviating family stress to enable their child to function more effectively in school and community, assisting parents in accessing and utilizing school and community resources, providing parents access to programs available to children with special needs, and working with parents to facilitate their support in their child's adjustment to school. 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. Specific services to promote community involvement include advocating for new and improved community/school services to meet the needs of students and families and assisting schools to receive adequate support from social and mental health agencies, helping the system respond effectively to each student's needs, and obtaining and coordinating community resources to meet students' needs. Specific services to promote district 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 Monaco Middle School will assist with all aforementioned initiatives, as well as work alongside the counselor(s), attend and participate in staff meetings, professional development sessions and trainings. The person selected for this position will conduct home visits and meet with families regularly, contribute knowledge, skills, and techniques in the areas of mental health and human behavior to parents and school team members. 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. He/she will develop and implement parent support groups and activities that promote parent involvement/engagement. 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. Identify, mobilize, and coordinate school and community resources to enable students to learn as effectively as possible in the educational setting. 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.