Thurman White Academy

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

Thurman White Academy

Thurman White Academy is a very diverse middle school facing numerous academic challenges typically associated with a transient population that is predominately of low socioeconomic status. As a school within a school magnet school, we have students from around the valley that come to our school to participate in the performing arts with a variety of backgrounds. The school's count day enrollment for 2015-16 was 1548 students with 0.6% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 5.6% Asian, 40.6% Hispanic,12.9% Black/African American, 30.7 % Caucasian, 1.6% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 7.75% Multi-Racial. Additionally, as of November 10, 2015, 1050 students qualified for Free/Reduced Lunch, approximately 68.8%. 8.8% have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 10.29% have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Additionally, this school's population is highly mobile, exhibiting a transiency rate of 20.7% in 2014-15. Our homeless student population is on the rise as well. The school currently has approximately 40 identified homeless students enrolled at Thurman White Academy and multiple families residing with other family members. In the past year, our school counselors have worked with numerous families for wrap around services to provide support for mental health issues including suicide protocols, self-harm, and family counseling.

The social worker/mental health professional will provide support to students, staff, parents, and community members at Thurman White MS. 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. For the first quarter approximately 15% of our students failed one or more classes, specifically there were 71 sixth grade, 85 seventh grade, and 74 eighth grade students. 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. Currently, TWA has three self-contained special education programs consisting of Social Emotional Children, Autism, and Severe Learning Disabled. There have been approximately 10 social worker referrals completed by the special education teachers to assist families with community resources. 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. So far this first quarter, we have had 4 students hospitalized for mental health issues and suicide ideation and 21 incidents involving self-harm/suicide ideation. 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. As a participant with HOPE funding we have implemented a mentoring program to assist students with behavior management techniques. Currently there are over 60 mentor students with intense needs ranging from anger management to social skills issues. Our special education social skills classes have approximately 50 students enrolled as well. 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 Thurman White Academy 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. As a PBIS pilot middle school, this person would assist with behavior intervention strategies to increase the effectiveness of the program and provide feedback for common area observations. 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.