Don E. Hayden ES

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

Don E. Hayden Elementary School

Don E. Hayden Elementary School is a mid-sized comprehensive elementary school with a myriad of challenges typically associated with transiency, low socioeconomic status, and language. Our enrollment for 2015-16 is 615 students with 4.88% Asian, 0.49% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 32.85% Hispanic, 34.31% Black/African American, 16.4% Caucasian, 1.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 8.12% Multi-Racial. Additionally, 70% of these students qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL), 13.5% have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 10.89%% have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). 60% of students pass state exams. Additionally, this school's population is mobile and students who are not learning English as a second language are learning academic language so they are successful in life and in school. Most notably is our deaf and hard of hearing population for the north end of town. Our deaf population often belongs to hearing families that are not able to communicate with them at home. Our students lack communication skills upon entering school and do not have anyone to communicate with when they leave school. For our students, they are isolated once they leave school due to communication gaps with those they love.

The social worker/mental health professional will provide support to students, staff, parents, and community members at Hayden. Specific services for students include assisting students in understanding and accepting other that are different from themselves as well as dealing with current circumstances. The social worker can support students with developing appropriate social interaction skills, teaching conflict resolution without violence, and anger management. The social worker will focus on teaching student problem solving skills for life and character development. There also must be a focus on basic study skills for increase academic success amid family crisis. Students will need coping skills when families are in crisis, and families and staff will need support with helping children to function more effectively in school regardless of current circumstances. Due to our current deaf and hard of hearing population, homeless population, students with autism and other special needs, and student receiving free lunch, families will need assistance seeking community resources for clothes, food, glasses, medical treatment and mental health services. Many parents are not sure about where to go to so their children acclimate to the school environment, fit in, or to get additional support to ensure success. We currently have a response to intervention team and teachers often struggle to help students with behavioral needs. 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 such as cultural, societal, economic, health, and the like, affecting students' performance and behavior, and providing direct support to staff to support students with these issues. Due to our recent increase in students receiving free lunch, staff is learning to relate to students who are not just like them and families whose backgrounds are different from theirs. A significant amount of training and support is needed for the staff to ensure the relationships, facts, and services are in place so we create a community with our student body and do not drive a wedge between those that we are unsure how to serve due to a lack of knowledge or commonality. Finally, with the extent of mental health issues among our student body many parents are crying out for help and we are unsure about where to direct them or how to help them. If specific services were on site families would be served and directed promptly and students would be served more rapidly. Children's behavioral, social, and/or emotional needs would be met and we would be able to more likely meet our school and district's goal to increase attendance to 96%, have 95% of students positively engaged in learning, and have all of our students with special needs on track to graduate.

If we had a social worker/mental health professional on site at Hayden (s)he would contribute significantly to each initiative above. We are a school with positive behavioral supports in place (PBIS). The social worker would work closely with the school counselor to make sure all school-wide positive behavioral goals are met. The social worker would attend and participate in leadership team meetings so the vison of the school is known and can be a focus for all families, student and community activities. I would make sure the social worker provided professional development to staff and training to community, students, and families in areas of need so we could all grow together. The person selected for this position will do on site parent trainings, 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 staff. The social worker will also work with children in need. Specifically, this position will provide the much assistance to the school principals 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, as a part of our PBIS. Similar to the counselor, the social worker would facilitate support groups and provide students with strategies to cope with and overcome difficulties impacting school performance, academic and behavioral, such as parental deployment, death, and divorce. We need the social worker to work with parent groups and develop activities that promote parent involvement/engagement. Currently there are various reasons why our

students come to school and struggle to learn: sleep deprivation, imprisoned parents, homelessness, isolation; we need a social worker to see those needs and teach to them- work with students to cope and grow so learning can take place as so many of our students are stuck at home while at school. Finally, due to transiency, we need a social worker who can help families new to the state and those who simply don't have the means to get needed resources access to community resources so their basic needs are met. I would use the social worker to coordinate community resources students can focus on learning while they are here and families are not simply trying to survive and can support learning at home.