



TO: Dr. Joel D. Boyd, Superintendent

FROM: Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer
Latifah Phillips, Chief Equity and Engagement Officer

DATE: May 13, 2020

RE: Report on Mental Health Supports

The following report is in response to the motion by Jackie Doherty:

Motion to get a report from the administration that outlines the structures in place to support the mental health needs of our students. The report should include the roles of the Student Support Specialists and Social Workers, as well as address the delivery and oversight of mental health supports across the District.

Below please find a narrative response to the first part of the motion, including structures in place to support the mental health needs of our students as well as delivery and oversight. Attached please also find the job descriptions that relate to the roles of District Support Specialist and Social Worker as requested within the second part of the motion. We would like to thank Ingrid Markman, Lowell Public School Safety Coordinator, for providing much of the information contained within this report.

Lowell Public Schools Mental Health Supports:

The District currently has 43 social workers. There are 29 building based social workers and 14 special education social workers. Between them they service all of the school buildings in Lowell. The social workers provide direct support for the mental health needs of our students across the District. Social workers maintain communication and partnership with the community agencies that our students most frequently interface with such as Lowell Community Health Center, Greater Lowell Pediatrics, Lahey Crisis, Department of Children and Families, etc. In the past, one social worker was assigned to the central office and functioned as a “District Social Worker” to provide support and professional development to school-based social workers. During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the central office social worker position was eliminated and the incumbent assumed the new grant-funded position of Safety Coordinator. A Social Emotional Learning Coordinator was hired at the end of January 2020. The SEL Coordinator position will support social workers within the district moving forward.

The building based social workers generally provide:

- Crisis assessment and management
- Individual and group treatment
- In-Class SEL lessons (i.e. - Second Step, Open Circle)
- Case management (referrals to and ongoing communication with community services)
- Parent outreach and consultation
- Teacher consultation and support
- Schoolwide special projects/programming (SEL, Attendance, Community Service)
- Administrative duties (Teacher Assistance Teams, 504s, SPED Mtgs., Committees, Coverage)
- Professional development for staff and education for parents.

The SPED Social Workers generally provide:

- Assessment of students in need of mental health/social skills supports
- Social Histories as assigned by Special Education team
- Functional behavioral assessments as assigned by Special Education team
- Provide on-going SW services as listed on a student's Individual Educational Plans (group or individual treatment)
- Case management of students on their caseload
- Parent outreach and consultation
- Staff consultation and support
- Team and building based meetings.

Mental Health Supports Across the District:

1. **Clinical Supervision of Social Workers:** Up until this year the District Social Worker provided ongoing clinical supervision to the social work staff. This included regular meetings with the newer social workers, group supervision with the more established social workers and ongoing consultation. With the loss of the central office Social Worker position in March 2019, the Safety Coordinator -who previously served as the "District Social Worker" - was leveraged to continue to support the needs of school-based social workers.

2. **Crisis Intervention Response Teams:** The social work staff is broken into 6 groups with 2 leaders (Ingrid Markman and Kristin Kirby) who are available to respond to a major crisis in one of our schools. This includes the death of a student/staff, or other major critical event. Each group is scheduled to be on call seven weeks out of the year. Upon arrival at a building, the leader provides support to the administration, and the remaining social workers provide counseling for the students and staff.

3. **Mental Health Professional Development:** The former District Social Worker (now the Safety Coordinator) has provided ongoing professional development for all LPS clinical staff (Social Workers, Psychologists, Guidance, BCBAs). Most of these staff are required to earn credits each year to maintain their DESE/State licenses. The LPS professional development provides those credits. Keeping it in the District allows LPS to focus on mental health areas that apply to the specific needs of Lowell students. Professional development coordination relating to mental health will be transitioned to the Social Emotional Learning Coordinator.

4. **Building Support and Special Projects:** The District Support Specialists provide support and consultation to school leaders around elevated parent conflicts. This support

includes meeting with parents, staff or students, providing mediation where needed and resolution of the issue. In July of 2019, the Chief Schools Officer position was designated to take the lead on these school-based issues.

Mental Health Supports During Covid-19:

As the teaching staff has gone through tremendous changes in order to educate our students on-line, the social work staff has as well. The social work staff has developed strategies using on-line platforms to assess and intervene as needed with our students/parents. Initially this meant tracking students who were not engaging, making sure families had the resources they needed, and checking on student's mental health. At this time, the social workers have developed more routine functions such as groups for students and parents, regular check-ins with fragile students, making referrals and attending meetings.

Through a DESE Mental Health Access Grant, the Safety Coordinator, who is a licensed social worker, has recently provided a Mental Health Professional Development 5-part webinar series for teachers, a webinar program for parents and additional professional development for the LPS clinical staff. In addition, using grant funds the Social Emotional Learning Coordinator and District Support Specialists are working to put together mental health kits for middle school students that can be used now and, in the fall, when we return.

District Support Specialist

Job Posting Information

Posting ID: POS20190612000002 **Posting Start Date:** 6/11/2019
Name: District Support Specialist **Posting End Date:** 6/24/2019
Location: Central Office, Lowell Public Schools
Overview:

GENERAL SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The District Support Specialist will serve as support staff to the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services.

It is the responsibility of the District Support Specialist, under the guidance of the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services to help implement the Student Support Services goals for the district that ensure that school environments are conducive to a quality education for all students.

The primary focus of the District Support Specialist is to promote collaboration between the various student services in order to support the Superintendent’s goal of high level learning for all students. The District Support Specialist will seek and maintain initiatives that support a safe and respectful school climate, strong community and family partnerships, participatory goal setting, planning and problem solving takes place that will benefit and sustain student learning.

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES may include:

1. Assist and guide school personnel in:
 - a. The planning and writing of the Unified District Improvement Plan in collaboration with other central office staff to meet the guidelines of Massachusetts State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
 - b. The planning and supporting of innovative initiatives (ELE programs, alternative programs, extended time activities, community partnership programs, adult education programs, and guidance programs) that promote student achievement, foster school improvement, and support the integration of minority, non-minority children and students with disabilities.
 - c. The development and expansion of programs that promote a climate that develops and deepens the delivery of learning activities that encourage the academic growth of Lowell’s diverse student body, including Special Education and Section 504 services.
 - d. The planning, monitoring, and evaluating of various student support service programs to ensure that district goals and objectives are accomplished.
 - e. The planning, participating, facilitating, and presenting of staff development workshops to implement district programs and promote professional growth opportunities for teachers.

2. Serve as a resource person for the district and schools by:

- a. Attending and disseminating information regarding professional meetings, conferences, and seminars as well as providing quality district and school-wide models of effective professional development.
 - b. Providing resources to enhance district, programmatic and individual school efforts by establishing networking opportunities with state, regional and local agencies, consultants and program specialists.
 - c. Assisting the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services with the planning and development of activities that foster both student and teacher growth.
3. **Attend meetings with the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services** to review, discuss and make recommendations regarding the progress of various student support services programs.
 4. **To perform such other tasks** and assume responsibilities as the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services may deem appropriate.

Qualification: **REPORTS TO:** Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services

SALARY: As per LSAA contract

EFFECTIVE DATE OF EMPLOYMENT: start of the SY 19/20

REQUIREMENTS:

1. A master's degree in Education from an accredited college or university.
2. Licensure valid for service as a teacher or related service provider in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
3. Licensure valid for service or eligible to apply as a supervisor/director in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
4. A minimum of five years successful teaching or related service experience at the elementary or secondary school level within the Lowell Public Schools.
5. Experience in an administrative role in the Lowell Public Schools.
6. Ability to design, implement and support innovative programs to accomplish the Superintendent's goals linked to the goals of the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services.

Preference May Be Given To Applicants With:

1. Demonstrated ability to develop positive interpersonal relationships with staff members.
2. Demonstrated writing skills necessary to produce and assist with reports and program evaluations.
3. Demonstrated experience in designing, implementing, and conducting quality staff development opportunities.
4. Demonstrated ability in working effectively with parents.
5. Demonstrated knowledge of processes involved in 504 Accommodation plans and Special Education Process.
6. Demonstrated knowledge of Alternative Education programs and models.

Required Certificate(s):

(All listed items are required to qualify for this position.)

Additional/Optional Certificate(s):

(All listed items are optional and not required to qualify for this position.)

- Supervisor /Director 9-12
- Supervisor/ Director, 5-8
- Supervisor/ Director 1-6

Assignments

Hiring Manager: Robin Desmond

Hiring Manager View:

- View Applicants
- View Transfer Applicants
- View Qualified Candidates
- View Forwarded Candidates

HR Staff:

- Debbie Jarvis
- BillieJo Turner
- James hall

Email Group:

Salary and Benefit

Salary: Salary

Benefit: Standard Employee Benefit

Salary Range: per LSAA contract

Additional Questions

There are currently no additional questions.



SOCIAL WORKER

Kathryn P. Stoklosa Middle School
Lowell Public Schools
Lowell, Massachusetts

Job Details

Job ID: 3258474

Application Deadline: April 28, 2020

Posted : April 11, 2020

Starting Date: August 24, 2020

Job Description

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To perform casework service with individual students to correct those personal, social, or emotional adjustments to their education and social progress.
2. To complete home assessments as needed for Special Education Team Evaluations or Central Intake Team Evaluators.
3. To perform group therapy on a selective basis for students needing this format.
4. To perform casework service with parents as an integral part of the task of helping students: to increase the parents understanding, their constructive participation in resolving their child's problems, and their knowledge and use of appropriate resources available.
5. To consult and collaborate with other school personnel in gathering and giving information of a case, and in establishing and planning for respective roles in the modification of the student's behavior.

6. To supervise the referral of students to various out-of-school agencies as necessary.
7. To maintain case records and files.
8. To perform such other tasks as related to the objectives of the District and the Title One Program.
9. To perform other duties related to parent involvement as directed by the Principal

Effective Date of Employment: August 19, 2019

Position Type: Full-time

Positions Available: 1

- Job Category : Student Services > Social Worker

Equal Opportunity Employer

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Job Requirements

- Qualification: REPORTS TO: Principal SALARY: As per LSAA contract REQUIREMENTS: 1. A Master's of Social Work Degree from an accredited college or university (MSW). 2. Massachusetts Certification as School Social Worker or School Adjustment Counselor. 3. Massachusetts Licensure as Social Worker.
- At least 2 years of relevant experience preferred
- Master degree preferred
- Citizenship, residency or work visa required

Contact Information

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Lowell, Massachusetts 01854

Phone: (978) 275-6330

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