

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

December 12, 2023

SUBJECT:

Consideration of Special Programs Proposal

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Due to an increasing number of students requiring evaluations, coupled with the modified school calendar, school psychologists are required to work outside of their normal 200-day work calendar in order to comply with Federal and State timelines related to IDEA evaluations.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The increase in the number of students requiring evaluations since COVID has placed a larger burden on school psychologists to meet timelines for evaluation completion. Evaluations must be performed within 60 calendar days. This requires psychologists to test and evaluate during break times.

The District has historically had difficulty recruiting and retaining a full staff of psychologists and currently has vacant positions. The District contracts for school psychology services, at high hourly rates, to fill gaps. Position vacancies further complicate matters and inhibit the District, with current staffing, to meet timelines.

The modified calendar has added new break times for 200-day employees. On the 2023 – 2024 work calendar, school psychologists began the year on July 11, 2023. “Off periods” include October 2 – 13; December 20 – January 2; and April 1 – 12, in addition to other holiday closures. Summer break begins June 7. Psychologists are scheduled to return to work for the 2024 – 2025 school year on July 8, 2024.

Evaluation timelines are not flexible to accommodate break periods. In order to meet requirements, we currently offer flex time (which means a psychologist takes off another scheduled workday) or pay extra duty for psychologists who volunteer their time. When no one volunteers to work during off-times and timelines still must be met, the District uses a contracted service, typically at \$85 - \$90 per hour, to complete the required tasks.

The Administration believes staffing psychologists for 12 months would help with timeline difficulties. This initial request is for the expansion of two existing psychologist positions, from 200 days to 12 months. The estimated cost for the remainder of this year is \$30,000 for salary and fringe. The Special Programs department will monitor and evaluate the benefits of the 12-month positions and consider any need to request expanding other existing positions to 12 months.

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the request to increase two existing psychologist positions to 12-month positions.

PREPARED BY:

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