

**Fort Worth Independent School District
Intervention Specialist**

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Funding Sources:

The Department of Intervention Services is subsidized 100% from Fort Worth ISD funding.

Project Cost and Budget Narrative:

In 2017-2018 Fort Worth ISD budget reflects \$4,982,325 was allocated for Social Work Services. In the 2018-2019 Adopted Budget by the School Board there was an increase to \$5,282,264.

Project Description:

While school should be considered the focus of a child's life, very often various events impact a child's ability to achieve success in the classroom. Therefore, in an effort to support Fort Worth ISD students during challenging times, Intervention Services are available to serve students who are experiencing difficulties either on or off school campus. Intervention Specialists work collaboratively with students to develop healthy coping strategies and solutions impacting student performance and overall functioning. Ensuring students are provided with the coping skills and strategies to eliminate some of the obstacles or barriers keeping them out of the classroom. Intervention Services help students return to a healthy level of functioning both in life and the classroom.

Staffing Pattern:

The staffing pattern for the Intervention Services Department is as follow:

- Assistant Superintendent (1)
- Director of Intervention Services (1)
- Intervention Specialists (69)

Population Served:

The population served by the Intervention Services Department ranges from Pre-K through 12th Grade with a minimum of one dedicated Intervention Specialist per Secondary Campus (middle and high school). High school campuses identified with a greater need and higher population have two Intervention Specialists. Elementary schools are also provided support from the Intervention Specialist as well as the District's Discipline Alternative Education Placement campuses and Specialty Campuses.

Project Origination:

The Intervention Services Department was initially called Because We Care and was implemented in Fort Worth ISD schools in the mid 1980's and focused on the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other substance abuse. The Because We Care counselors would gradually evolve into the position of Intervention Specialist. Originally money from the Safe & Drug Free Schools Act provided the funding for the Because We Care program. To date, FWISD funds 100% of the Intervention Services Department.

Issues Addressed:

Some of the issues addressed by the Intervention Specialist on a daily basis are as follows:

- Stress management
- Trauma response team
- Dealing with emotions and anxiety

- Crisis response and interventions
- Suicidal ideation
- Addressing behavior and decision-making skills (i.e. Peer conflicts & bullying situations)

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives:

Desired measurable outcomes are:

- Cultivating young adults to become our next generation of community leaders & community members
- Foster personal growth and increase their levels of confidence

Strategies and/or Interventions of the Project:

Strategies implemented by Intervention Specialist are:

- Crisis intervention
- Home visits
- Development of student support plans
- Peer mediation
- Restorative practices
- Social skills instruction
- Life skills instruction
- Leadership development
- Consultation referrals to community resources
- Transitional support for returning students
- Staff development
- Participation on various campus bases teams

Results (Outcomes and Achievements):

The results are as follows:

- Struggling students return to class with the ability to function in the classroom
- Improved attendance
- Improved grades
- Fewer disciplinary infractions
- Graduation

Project Timeline:

In view of the significant positive outcomes established by the Intervention Specialist, administrators have recognized and valued the work of this department and have determined the program will continue to grow and serve all Fort Worth ISD children.

Outcomes Related to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and/or Graduation Rates:

The outcomes related to school completion and dropout prevention will be evident in decreasing the dropout rate and increasing the graduation rate. This will occur after the students are returned to the classroom better able to function which will lead to improved attendance, improved grades and fewer disciplinary referrals.

Special Conditions, Expertise, and/or Skills Required to Carry Out Project:

The Intervention Specialist staff is comprised of state licensed mental health professionals with training and experience in the areas of social work, marriage and family therapy, prevention and chemical dependency. All staff are licensed and/or certified in their areas of expertise. Each Intervention Specialist works closely with school personnel as a valued member of each campus' team.

Current Status of Project:

Currently the Intervention Services Department's traditional Intervention Specialists provide services to students when referred by their teacher, counselor, parent, friend, self or other school staff; the department has also hired case managers to manage a caseload of 10-15 students, allowing them to provide a higher level of support to achieve maximum positive outcomes for students with high needs.

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant:

My role as a Stay-In-School Coordinator is mainly to identify the obstacles and barriers which are keeping students out of the classroom and coming up with a plan to ensure the students are adhering to the Compulsory Attendance Laws and District Attendance Policy in an effort to avoid court action. In my capacity as a Stay-In-School Coordinator I work collaboratively with the Intervention Specialists to assist families with any and all resources to remove the obstructions keeping them out of the classrooms.

Lessons Learned:

One of the most important lessons learned is that collaborating with the Intervention Specialist and other school staff members allows for new creative ideas to be pursued in an effort to make sure the students feel safe enough to confide in us to help them resolve their concerns and decrease their level of anxiety. It is also very valuable to establish a good working relationship with the student's family by gaining their trust and demonstrating that the student's success is the ultimate goal.

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:

My advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners would be to strongly look into implementing a Multidisciplinary Student Support Program that includes an Intervention Services Department if they do not currently have one in their school district. The services provided by the Interventionist are invaluable to the student, community, school and their families.