

Bloomfield Schools

Human Resources



Dr. Kimberly Mizell
Superintendent

March 4, 2024

Debbie Hernandez, Director, Human Resources, Bloomfield Schools

Bloomfield Schools Board

Subject: Proposal for Hiring Additional HR Specialist

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board,

I am writing to bring to your attention the critical need for an additional HR Specialist within our organization. The ever-evolving landscape of federal and state mandates, coupled with the increasing complexity of employee relations and the surge in lawsuits, has placed a substantial burden on our existing Human Resources team. To address these challenges effectively, we propose the immediate hiring of an additional HR Specialist.

Current Challenges:

- Increased Regulatory Compliance:** The constant changes in federal and state mandates demand a vigilant and proactive approach to ensure compliance. An additional HR Specialist will enable us to stay ahead of these changes and implement necessary policies and procedures promptly. With the enactment of HB 128 that passed on April 6, 2021, all NM K-12 schools must now conduct an ethical misconduct background check that involves former and current employers. This involves send each former and current employers a questionnaire and having these employers send it back to HR. HR must not track these and follow up to make sure we get these questionnaires back to HR. This can be a great undertaking when you are hiring 60+ employees for the new hiring year.
- Employee Relations and Lawsuits:** Over the past year, we have witnessed a 40% increase in employee relations issues and legal challenges. It is not in the lack of foresight that this is happening. HR departments throughout the state of New Mexico

are seeing an increase in ethical misbehavior from employees. The HR Director is in charge of investigating and working closely with the school attorney to present information to the Superintendent. These cases sometime end up having tort claims against the district, which in turn require many more hours of research, documentation and time. Approximately 90 days is dedicated in one legal case.

3. **Onboarding and Documentation:** The onboarding process is a critical touchpoint for new hires, and it plays a vital role in shaping their initial experience with our organization. An additional HR Specialist will streamline the onboarding process, ensuring a seamless transition for new employees, and will also be instrumental in the efficient generation of contracts and letters of intent.
4. **Employee Mental Wellbeing:** The recent increase in employee mental wellbeing concerns has had a noticeable impact on our work culture. To address this, we propose expanding our training programs to equip our staff with the necessary tools to support their mental health and well-being. The new HR Specialist can play a pivotal role in developing and implementing these training initiatives.

Benefits of Hiring an Additional HR Specialist:

1. **Enhanced Compliance:** A dedicated HR Specialist will ensure that our organization remains compliant with ever-changing federal and state regulations.
2. **Risk Mitigation:** Timely resolution of employee relations issues will significantly reduce the risk of lawsuits, protecting the organization from legal complications.
3. **Efficient Onboarding:** Streamlining the onboarding process will contribute to a positive employee experience and foster a culture of efficiency and professionalism.
4. **Improved Work Culture:** The new HR Specialist will be instrumental in developing and implementing training programs to support employee mental wellbeing, contributing to a healthier work culture.

Budget and Timeline:

We propose allocating resources for the new HR Specialist position in the upcoming budget cycle. The immediate recruitment process will commence upon approval, with the goal of having the new hire on board within March or April of 2024.

Conclusion:

The challenges presented by increased regulatory requirements, employee relations issues, and the impact on work culture necessitate a strategic response. The addition of an HR Specialist will not only address our current challenges but will also position our organization for continued success in the face of evolving HR landscapes. The new

position will allow the Human Resources Director to focus in creating a district employee handbook, create additional training needed to mitigate legal issues and to provide good customer service to the staff at Bloomfield Schools.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I am available to discuss this further and provide any additional information you may require.

Sincerely,

Debbie Hernandez
Director, Human Resources