Recommendation: Provide additional student and family support services across schools (social workers and substance abuse counselors)

Advisory Team: Principals
Advisory Team Chair: NA

Total Cost Impact Estimate: $274,890 (six positions @ $45,815/position)
Number of Fiscal Years Required to Fulfill Strategy: Two years (FY 2017 and FY 2018)

Description (Program and/or Position Description):
Both high schools are seeing the effects of substance abuse by students. When students become involved with alcohol and drugs, they are more likely to exhibit behaviors that are disruptive to the school environment as well as experience diminished academic success. Having trained substance abuse counselors in both schools will enable schools to work with the students to address their issues. With the loss of student assistance counselors three years ago, there are currently no personnel in our schools trained or licensed to work in this area of counseling.

The addition of social workers in the elementary and high schools will allow for increased home visits that are essential in building a bridge from home to school and school to home. Nashua is seeing an increase in families that are in crisis due to mental health issues, substance abuse, and financial strain. Social workers will be able to work directly with the families to provide them with strategies to become more successful in parenting and supporting the schools in educating their children. The social workers will also be able to work with families that are experiencing homelessness, lack of resources, and connect families to community agencies that can address the needs of the family. Currently, elementary guidance counselors are able to make only limited home visits when families are in crisis, and even this limited response detracts from their ability to work in our classrooms on preventative measures like conflict resolution.

Justification and Impact on Student Achievement:
Ultimately, the goal of having substance abuse counselors and more social workers is to create a classroom environment that is more conducive to learning. Currently, the needs of the families of Nashua are far too great for the current guidance staff to address and enable students to focus effectively on their academics.

Budget Request

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<th>Item</th>
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<td>High School Substance Abuse Counselors (2 FTE)</td>
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