Variety School

Request for Information Response

Nevada Department of Education as Provided by

SB 515, Section 23

Social worker or other licensed mental health professional

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To:

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SECTION II
NARRATIVE

Variety School

Variety School is one of the most unique and diverse populations in the Clark County School District. The campus population is 100% special education and every student has a behavioral intervention plan. The students range in age from 6 – 22 years old. There are 162 students currently enrolled at Variety School. Many of the students are in foster care, residential placement, or juvenile detention centers. Variety School has the highest number of behaviorally challenged students, with the lowest cognitive abilities, in the entire district. Many of the students also face very difficult living conditions which include group homes, residential treatment facilities, homelessness, and single parent homes.

Demographically, Variety School houses: 34% African American, 31% White, .17% Hispanic, .10% two or more races, .05% Asian, .03% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific, and .006% American Indian or Alaskan Native. The male to female population is 80% male to 20% female. During the 2015 – 2016 school year, Variety School has had 2,785 unverified absences, 348 suspensions, and 54 juvenile detention enrollments.

The transiency rate for the elementary campus is 47.60% and the transiency rate for the secondary campus is 41.20%. There have been 17 cases of bullying, 40 incidences of violence to staff, and 18 incidences of violence to other students. In January, 2016, Variety School will become a Title 1 campus. Due to severe behavioral concerns of all students at Variety, students experience limited exposure to grade level Nevada Academic Content Standards which produces academic performance concerns.

The student population receives specially designed and differentiated instruction 100% of their school day, driven by the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Specific services provided by the social worker/mental health professional will include providing strategies for anger management, behavioral, and social/emotional concerns. Since 100% of the population has behavioral and cognitive deficits, a social worker is needed to work with all community stakeholders: students, staff, parents, and outside community transitional partners. The social worker will help to develop staff training opportunities and help educate individuals and stakeholders to the unique needs of the students. Specifically, needs could encompass the following: counseling (which could include anger, grief, sexual, pregnancy, group home placement, homeless, and facilitating appropriate social interactions),

development of treatment plans, outside agency service liaison, bullying, and re-entry plans for transitioning back to campus from psychiatric facilities and or juvenile hall. Further, the social worker would be a great asset to promote the highest performing level of achievement for ethnic/racial subgroups in reading and math. Facilitation would be most effective in the community-based instructional activities for students that have deficits in social and functional skills. Due to the severe behavioral challenges at Variety School, 100% of staff must be CPI trained in order to maintain the safety of students and staff.

In order to meet the needs of the diverse populations, the social worker would specifically deal with mental health issues, crisis prevention, suicide ideation, self-injurious behaviors, threats to staff/peers, physical altercations, Legal 2000s, elopements, bullying, and destruction of property. The social worker would provide instruction on basic living and survival skills in an environment in which parental support is, at best, minimal. For example, students are unable to understand the dangers present in society that are adverse to their well-being. The social worker would provide another crisis intervention team member, as every day there are numerous incidences that need specific, professional mental health interventions. Due to our limited numbers of auxiliary staff, a social worker will add a much needed piece in order to combine services such as medical, clothing, hygiene, food, transportation, and other services. Variety School has a tremendous need for psychologically-based counseling, which a school counselor cannot provide.