Las Vegas Academy of the Arts

Request for Information Response

Nevada Department of Education as Provided by

SB 515, Section 23

Social worker or other licensed mental health professional

December 14, 2015

To:

Victoria Blakeney
Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment
Nevada Department of Education
700 E. Fifth St.
Carson City, NV 89701
(775) 687-9130
vblakeney@doe.nv.gov

Dr. Tammy Malich
Assistant Superintendent
Education Services Division

CCSD Contact:
Brian Adams, Coordinator
Office of Student Adjudication
Education Services Division
(702)799-0761

SECTION II
NARRATIVE

Las Vegas Academy of the Arts

Las Vegas Academy of the Arts (LVA) was established with the objective of integrating rigorous academics with the Liberal, Performing and Visual Arts. Over 2,200 applications are submitted annually for approximately 450 open seats. Students must audition for a major emphasis and pass a district academic review, which requires a 2.0 GPA eligibility for enrollment. More than 20% of the student population is drawn from at-risk zoned schools. LVA is often a sanctuary for students who have been bullied due to sexual preference, color, gender and love of the arts. The school's count day enrollment for the 2015-16 was 1,703 students with 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 9.1% Asian, 26.5% Hispanic, 7% Black/African American, 47.2% Caucasian, 1.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 8.7% Multi-Racial. Additionally, approximately 35.1% of these students qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL), 1.5% have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 2.3% have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The graduation rate for 2014-15 was 97%.

The social worker/mental health professional will provide support to students, staff, parents, and community members at Las Vegas Academy (LVA). Specific services for students include assisting students in understanding and accepting self and others, developing intervention strategies to increase academic success, helping students develop appropriate social interaction skills, providing crisis intervention, and teaching conflict resolution and anger management. Once enrolled at LVA, students are expected to maintain an overall 2.0 GPA as well as a 2.0 GPA in their chosen area of study. If students fail to maintain the minimum GPA, they are placed on a probationary status. By the end of the school year, students may forfeit their enrollment at LVA if they are unable to improve their academic performance. In addition to probationary status, student performance is monitored on a quarterly basis. If students are unable to pass their courses, they are not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities in their major and throughout the school. LVA's focus on student achievement and the commitment to rehearsal and performance time outside of school hours often leads to higher stress levels, increasing the psychological and emotional distress experienced by our students. Part of the nature of our school, students are highly competitive in their course of study, striving to be the top performer. Some students come to LVA having been the top of their class academically and being among the most talented in their previous schools. When students are not able to be the best, they struggle with feelings of inadequacy that they are unfamiliar with

having to handle. The social worker could assist students with improving their resiliency skills. We have seventy-one students on file with a psychology/social disorder and ten students with a 504 Plan have an anxiety disorder. Additional, the counseling department completes an average of one suicide protocol per week, with many of these students being repeat attempts. These students often need additional outside services that the social worker would be able to refer families to. Specific services for parents/families include alleviating family stress to enable their child to function more effectively in school and community, assisting parents in accessing and utilizing school and community resources, providing parents access to programs available to children with special needs, and working with parents to facilitate their support in their child's adjustment to school. Specific services for school personnel include assessing students with mental health concerns, assisting teachers with behavior management, developing staff training programs, educating staff with essential information to better understand factors (cultural, societal, economic, familial, health, etc.) affecting a student's performance and behavior, and providing direct support to staff. The social worker would be able to assist the counseling department monitor high-risk students who have been identified with high anxiety levels, past suicide protocols and who have been referred to the counseling department for further intervention from a student's teachers. Specific services to promote community involvement include advocating for new and improved community/school services to meet the needs of students and families and assisting schools to receive adequate support from social and mental health agencies, helping the system respond effectively to each student's needs, and obtaining and coordinating community resources to meet students' needs. Specific services to promote district initiatives include assisting in development and implementation of programs for identified children with behavioral, social, and/or emotional needs; developing and training on alternative programs and strategies for drop-outs, truants, delinquents, and excessively disruptive students; identification and monitoring of students who are victims of child abuse and/or neglect; providing case management for students and families requiring multiple resources; and providing consultation regarding related Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), mental health standards, and district/school policies and procedures.

The proposed social worker/mental health professional at Las Vegas Academy (LVA) will assist with all aforementioned initiatives, as well as work alongside the counselor(s), attend and participate in staff meetings, professional development sessions and trainings. The person selected for this position will conduct home visits and meet with families regularly, contribute knowledge, skills, and techniques in the areas of mental health and human behavior to parents and school team members. This position will provide assistance to

school administration with ensuring compliance with Senate Bill 504 by counseling students involved in bullying allegations, both the targets as well as the bullies, as well as providing guidance and training on positive school climate strategies. It will be expected that he/she will work with LVA's Success Center, developing and facilitating weekly support groups to provide students with coping strategies and assist students to overcome difficulties impacting school performance, academic and behavioral. He/she will develop and implement parent support groups and activities that promote parent involvement/engagement, working with the counseling department to plan and promote parent information nights. Identify challenges in a child's living situation (home, school, and community) that may affect the child's adjustment, performance, and attendance in the educational setting. Identify, mobilize, and coordinate school and community resources to enable students to learn as effectively as possible in the educational setting. Plan, conduct, and participate in educational workshops and presentations while serving as a member of school teams and provide information related to planning for the educational needs of children.