Virgin Valley ES

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

Virgin Valley Elementary School

Virgin Valley Elementary School is a rural elementary school with over 700 students. Virgin Valley ES is the largest rural elementary school in the Clark County School District. Of the 700+ students 47.54% are Caucasian, 44.49% are Hispanic, 4.06% are of two or more races, 1.59% are Asian and 1.59% are Black. Special populations include an ELL population of 25.80% and Free and reduced lunch population of 65.65%. The site houses 3 Special Education Resource Rooms an Early Childhood Autism (KIDS) program, a primary/intermediate Autism program and a self-contained unit for students with a diversity of disabilities. There are also students who are deaf/hard of hearing and some with speech services. Many of the students with special needs do not have appropriate services, supports or units due to our rural location. Students do not have access to a campus for deaf/hard of hearing and there is not a classroom to support students with emotional or behavioral disabilities. The current counselor supports 2 school campuses with a total of over 1200 students. The rural setting lacks access to Boys and Girls Clubs, social services, soup kitchens and other food, housing or clothing services. Medical, especially pediatric specialists, cannot be accessed without traveling a distance of 80 or more miles, making it difficult or impossible for some families to gain diagnosis, assistance or treatments. The local mental health clinic has a waiting list of up to 6 months and even when services are provided they are usually on an every other month basis. Weekly visits are not viable with the caseloads in Mesquite. Since 2008 Virgin Valley ES has seen an increase of families that have become homeless and move in with extended family members. The number of students being raised in foster homes and by grandparents or other extended family has continued to rise at Virgin Valley ES.

The social worker/mental health professional will provide support to students, staff, parents and community members at Virgin Valley ES. Student supports will include assistance and guidance in implementing strategies to improve social interactions, study and learning skills and habits, conflict resolution, anger management, grief counseling and coping skills during family conflict and divorce. Parents and families would be provided with services in improving the climate in their homes and decreasing stress. They would also be provided ideas and additional supports to improve the home/school connection and improve the academic status of their children. Additional support would be provided for the parents of students with special needs that are unable to access medical, psychological and emotional support that is

needed to maintain the care for their high needs children. Specific supports and services for school personnel would include assistance in accessing supports for students with mental health or behavioral issues, strategies to better understand and address the needs of the students and training in behavior management techniques that allow students to focus in the classroom and attain grade level skills.

The proposed social worker/mental health professional at Virgin Valley ES will assist with all initiatives and services previously cited, as well as working alongside of the school counselor, attending school meetings, trainings and sessions and providing assistance to students, parents and the staff.
The social worker would assist the staff in working with families and students, utilizing support and resources that can increase academic and behavioral success as well as address mental health needs.

A social worker is needed and would be utilized as a Home-School-Community Liaison to conduct home visits to assess care needs of the families and provide information and referrals to outside agencies for assistance. This may include providing information about local food pantries, assisting with social services benefits, providing referrals to domestic violence shelters or coordinating services with the child. Direct services such as individual/group mental health services, and social and emotional learning are all services that could be implemented. Additionally, the school social worker could provide education on a variety of important biological, psychological and social topics, including health and wellness, bullying, substance abuse and violence prevention. In-school workshops or after-school programs to help educate students on topics such as self-esteem, depression and anxiety, cultural diversity and awareness or stress and anger management would be addressed by the proposed social worker. The education would be extended to other school personnel on similar topics to help them understand and assist their students. The social worker would be utilized to collaborate with the school counselor for behavioral training and support, student support groups, classroom and grade level programs and projects. The social worker/mental health professional would be utilized to implement trainings as deemed appropriate. With the implementation of Senate Bill 504 and the expected response and counseling involved in bullying, the social worker could be utilized to assist with the process and support provided for resolution of reported bullying.