

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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CIS to serve 17 Comal ISD schools in 2009-10

To meet the changing needs of its students, Comal Independent School District officials and the Communities In School (CIS) board of directors have agreed to shift the focus of CIS services to a case-load basis from a solely campus-based model.

“Special program funding is not keeping pace with our growth,” said Comal ISD’s executive director of special services Deb Mahone. “So we’re looking to prioritize and see where we can provide services to families that need it most while accommodating all of our students’ needs.”

CIS is a nationwide nonprofit that partners with school districts to provide full-time social work programs for students and families in need of some form of extracurricular aid. Services range from helping with behavioral issues to addressing low-income needs, ultimately striving to keep students from dropping out.

In 2008-09, CIS provided social programs to students in 15 of the 22 CISD campuses. Under the new agreement, 11 CIS employees will serve 17 of the 24 CISD schools in the 2009-10 school year.

The new agreement between Comal ISD and CIS states that seven CIS case managers will work full-time at campuses with the highest need. The other four case managers will be split between 10 campuses, serving two to four campuses each.

“Through this agreement, we will be able to serve our entire district,” Mahone said. “This new model is allowing us to prioritize our students by need and not by what school they attend. I’m really optimistic about it, and I believe it’s a great compromise for what both CIS and Comal ISD are trying to accomplish for the children we serve.”

Prevention specialists, who are funded by the Keystone Healthy Students/ Safe Schools Grant, will serve Smithson Valley and Spring Branch middle schools. The remaining five campuses will be serviced through prevention specialists, social workers, case managers, and additional school counselors.

“Taking into consideration the diverse needs of our families, limited funding and relatively new services, it’s important for us to prioritize and allocate all of our social services resources, including the Keystone Grant and district employees, accordingly with the needs of our students,” said Mahone.

The director of Communities in Schools of South Central Texas Chris Douglas said she and her team are eager to start the school year with the new arrangement in place.

“I’m very excited we have found a compromise that will continue to provide CIS services to the students who are most in need in Comal ISD,” she said. “I’m also pleased that this compromise continues to meet the needs of the district while achieving the goals of CIS.”

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