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### **Mill Valley School District Answers the Call for Mental Health Support**

On March 1, 2022, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond declared an urgent need to recruit mental health clinicians, and unveiled a bill that, if passed, could help to secure 10,000 clinicians in the state. The bill would provide grants of \$25,000 to aspiring counselors who commit to serving two years in communities of need. "Supporting the academic recovery of our students is a top priority, but there is nothing more urgent than addressing the social emotional needs of California students," Thurmond said, "we are dealing with ongoing challenges in the state's ability to provide a sufficient number of counselors to support student mental health needs."

Mill Valley School District Superintendent Dr. Kimberly Berman stated that this is encouraging news for Districts across the state and expressed how challenging it has been to recruit qualified staff for these positions.

"Here at Mill Valley, we recognized last spring that it was vital that we hire additional staff to ensure that each of our five elementary schools would have a dedicated full-time counselor to support our students. During the extensive search to fill the position, our recruitment team reached out across the nation, and we are very grateful that we filled the final opening in late January. We are also extremely proud and grateful to say that we are currently providing the middle school students with three grade level specific full-time counselors plus a special education and education intervention specialist. We recognize that this very targeted approach to student support is proving immensely beneficial to our entire student body."

Now that Mill Valley School District's counseling team is fully staffed, the exploration of a Wellness Program in the district is underway. Counseling staff will be working with a consultant to plan first steps, solicit input from staff, students, and families, and to determine local needs and areas for improvement.