

Date: October 2, 2025

To: LPSD School Board

From: Kacy Lou Leyba

Regarding: October Student Services Report

It is sweet to be into the full rhythm of the school year now that the shortened weeks of September are behind us. Elisabeth, Patty, and I are continuing to balance our very busy schedules meeting with students of all grades and sites with program planning and our own professional development.

In September I had the opportunity to attend the School Safety & Wellness Conference in Anchorage. I didn't know exactly what to expect, but in just two days I received information about a suicide prevention and peer leadership program (Sources of Strength) and a Yupik-rooted social/emotional learning curriculum (Pulasaraq) that we have begun to dig into this month. I am still in the process of evaluating whether Sources of Strength would be financially viable for LPSD under our current mental health grant (and post-grant); I am excited to share more about this program as I gain more clarity in this regard, as it seems like it could be a phenomenal opportunity for our district's students, staff, and communities. On the topic of curriculum, we are also co-piloting a new culturally relevant social/emotional learning curriculum that has been put together by CHILD Alaska and Bristol Bay Borough School District. We are only on the second lesson of this curriculum, but thus far it seems to be a great fit for our schools.

At the end of last school year, our team established professional development priorities for FY26; Kasie Luke and Kacy Lou then established a professional development plan for our team that focuses on culturally-fortifying social/emotional learning instruction, better coaching students through grief and loss, and continuing to grow in our understanding of universal mental health screening. We are grateful for the ways the September inservice days provided us with time to begin to dig into these topics as a team and we look forward to continuing to do so throughout the fall as we look toward the National School Based Mental Health Conference in December.

On top of her student meetings, Elisabeth has been diligently investigating ways to increase student attendance rates in collaboration with site administrators. She has also been developing a family engagement plan for FY26 and will be hosting a family engagement night at Newhalen School on October 11th. We continue to have access to the Kicks4Kids program, which provides athletic shoes and snow boots to students in need. Elisabeth has been spearheading this initiative across the district as a means of positive family engagement as well.

Patty and I have been busy throughout September preparing for our fall post-secondary testing windows for sophomores, juniors, and seniors (PSAT throughout October, WorkKeys throughout November, and the ACT throughout December). We were able to offer the WorkKeys test for the first time last year at the SNAP Meet; it has been a revolutionary option for our career-interested students as it provides them with great data about their workplace readiness, strengths, and opportunities for growth, while also providing them with an industry certification that is accepted by AvTec and several big-time employers like Conoco-Phillips and Boeing. We are looking forward to seeing how this opportunity continues to open up post-secondary options for our students.

I began site visits in September and was very grateful to have the opportunity to connect with our student athletes from across the district and last weekend's regional cross country meet in Newhalen. The energy in the Newhalen gym on Saturday morning made me excited for all the jamborees and SNAP Meet goodness that is to come this year.