

# THE LAKE AND PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT

101 Jensen Drive  
King Salmon, AK 99613  
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1617 S Industrial Way #1  
Palmer, AK 99645  
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To: Board of Education  
Lake and Peninsula School District

September 18, 2023

From: Marjorie Waggoner  
Special Education Director (Contractor)

Re: Special Education Report

## **Getting Started School Year 23/24!**

We are happy to welcome these new (to LPSD) teachers to our special education team. Steve Byers has joined us to provide services to the Kokhanok students. Steve has been a special education teacher for many years. I had the opportunity to work with Steve during my time overseeing special education for Juneau School District. Rick Rohlman is the interim special education teacher in Nondalton while Jeff Hagen is on medical leave. He comes to us with wide experience in the field of education. Paula Butler is teaching elementary and special education in Perryville. She has the expertise that a long career in education brings. We welcome these new team members and look forward to a fulfilling year.

Every start of a new school year, the special education teachers have the extra challenge of completing the required paperwork and meetings to accept or amend the IEPs of students who are transferring to LPSD from other Alaska school districts. They also are required to conduct evaluations and meet with IEP teams to determine special education eligibility under Alaska sped law for students transferring to LPSD that received sped services in another state prior to transfer. The required paperwork and meetings must be completed by October 2<sup>nd</sup> this year in order for the new students to be included in LPSD's fall count as special education students.

## **Disproportionality Report**

On May 5, 2023 the district received the annual Disproportionality Analysis from DEED. In past years LPSD has been found to be disproportionate in the identification of Alaska Native and American Indian students in the area of Speech Impairment. This includes expressive and receptive language as well as articulation. Last year we did not have any areas found to be

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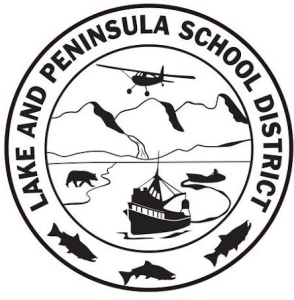
disproportionate. Unfortunately, despite our efforts to refer students for speech/language evaluations only after interventions are provided for a reasonable period of time, the report from the State this year found LPSD to have significant disproportionality in the identification of Alaska Native and American Indian students in the area of Speech Impairment. A District committee will be convened to do a required self-assessment and to develop a plan to reduce the number of referrals through regular education interventions and adhering to the practice of determining whether the student exhibits a language difference or a language disability.

## **Professional Development and Training**

I met with the new-to-district special education teachers in August before they headed out for their new adventures. We reviewed the nuts and bolts of LPSD special education paperwork and procedures as well as discussing the logistics particular to teaching special education in our villages. All LPSD sped teachers and I met by Zoom during the inservice days in August to discuss various relevant topics: related services, the new Q-interactive assessment application, changes in Infant Learning Programs timelines for transition from ILP to LPSD, the ramifications of disproportionality, preparations for count date, and serving students who have intensive needs. We will continue our PD activities during the inservice held in October. We plan to hold sessions for regular education teachers to include topics such as: the basics of special education, best practices for supporting students on IEPs in the regular classroom (including accommodations and modifications), using the skills of our paraeducators to best support our students, and speech/language interventions for the regular classroom.

## **Special Education Directors' Training**

The annual fall special education directors' training with the DEED special education team will be held October 11-13 in Anchorage. This is a wonderful opportunity for directors to network and sharpen skills in special education administration. A highlight will be a presentation by Ann M. Alexander, Ph.D., Esq. who will provide an overview of the special education administrative complaints that have been filed during the past year, as well as trends in the "hot topics" of special education that keep directors on their toes.



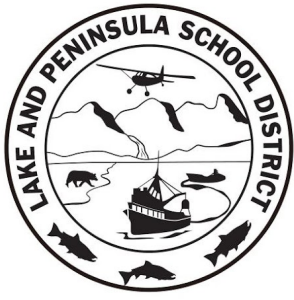
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