

Date: November 27, 2023

To: LPSD School Board

From: Denali Smith

Regarding: November Counseling Report

The month of November was incredibly busy for the counseling team. Patty McCasland was able to join Kacy Lou on site in Port Alsworth during the district's mixed-3 and mixed-6 volleyball meet. Together, they were able to meet with many of the juniors and seniors in an effort to help them in their post-secondary planning and goals. Patty and Kacy Lou were also able to build rapport with the many students, staff, and community members that attended.

Students were also busy this month as many of them attended another CTE intensive week. As counselors, we have seen many students return from these intensives not only with extra credits for graduation, but with increased confidence and skills. Many of these students have been more capable of formulating a postsecondary plan based on their experiences at CTE.

This month Kacy Lou is also implementing virtual social emotional learning (SEL) lessons to grades K-2 and 3-5 using the Everyday Speech curriculum. For those classes that are unable to attend Kacy Lou's weekly meetings, she and I will work together to provide the SEL instruction at times that work best for each site. The Everyday Speech curriculum follows the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework addressing the five core competencies of character development, self-management, empathy, social connections, and responsible decision-making. Kacy Lou and I have already found success using this curriculum both in one-on-one meetings and in classroom lessons.

Kacy Lou and I were also able to attend the Alaska School Counselor Association's annual conference this month. This conference was particularly helpful in providing information and resources for rural school counseling, restorative practices, and Brief Interventions for School Clinicians (BRISC). We have already begun to implement many of the key takeaways to improve our counseling practice.

As November comes to a close, we as a counseling team are especially grateful for a school district that supports its counselors in our efforts to help students apply academic achievement strategies, manage their emotions, develop interpersonal skills, and plan for postsecondary options. Kacy Lou, Patty McCasland, and I will continue to work together in these efforts. As always, please feel free to email me or Kacy Lou if you have any questions or concerns.

For the kids,

Denali