

Date: January 17, 2025

To: LPSD School Board

From: Kacy Lou Leyba

Regarding: January Student Services Report

It is so good to be back in the office after a rejuvenating winter break. Our team's December was chock-full of meetings, activities, and continued travel, beginning with Elisabeth and my trip to Florida December 6th-8th for the annual National School-Based Mental Health Conference. This opportunity helped provided vital professional development on the topics of suicide prevention, facilitating holistic wellness in schools, and universal screening. We are in the process of implementing a universal mental health and post-secondary plan screener (the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or SDQ) for students in grades 6 through 12 across the district. Our screening window for the fall was open November 13th - December 20th, and we had 19 of the 49 students whose guardians gave consent for the screener, participate. We are hoping to increase participation numbers throughout our second screening window for the school year in February. (If you are interested in learning more about the SDQ, you can find a copy of the survey on our Student Services website [here](#).) While there are many aims of this survey, an important part of its role is allowing students to self-identify for services with our team, as our traditional referral process has been staff driven and we recognize not all students feel comfortable reaching out to their classroom teacher in a time of crisis. Over time, this survey will also help provide us with data regarding social / emotional learning trends and school climate at our various sites. I am continuing to lean into research and resources that will help better equip our team to handle mental health emergencies that may also become evident throughout the implementation of such a universal screener.

Elisabeth's case load continued to grow last semester and throughout the beginning of this semester, as has my gratitude for the ability to have a social-worker in training in our district! She and I stay incredibly busy meeting with students, families, community members, and staff in order to ensure our kiddos are well equipped to handle their academic and personal journeys. We are grateful to have Patty McCasland not only as our BBRCTE Career Guide this year, but also as our school counseling intern this semester as she continues her own graduate course work through St. Bonaventure University.

The semester is shaping up to be busy as we all prepare for advanced course enrollment with students, National Honor Society applications, SNAP Meet, BBRCTE intensives, in-service presentations, and more! On the topic of the SNAP Meet, if you know of someone who you think would be a good fit to be a presenter at this year's Post-Secondary Options Fair in April, please don't hesitate to send them my way, as I am continuing to expand the selection of careers our students have the opportunity to explore throughout SNAP.

Thank you for all that you do to continue to advocate for LPSD students and communities! We are lucky to have such an active and engaged school board.

For the kids,

Kacy Lou Leyba