

Date: April 11, 2024
To: LPSD School Board
From: Kacy Lou Leyba
Regarding: March Counseling Report

As you know, we have had the privilege of having Denali Manning-Smith as our counseling intern this school year. On March 29th, Denali completed her required hours with us and finished her internship. We are grateful for all of the work Denali has done this school year to support our students and sad to see her time with LPSD draw to an end. With this transition, I have picked up the entire district's case load, and wow— does that make for a busy week! I currently have “standing meetings” (or lessons) with 34 students grades K-12 and have continued to teach weekly SEL for individual sites and district wide to PreK, K-2, and 3-5 via Zoom.

This spring, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education hosted three Postsecondary & Career Prep Panels for our students as we wrapped up their Kids2Careers curriculum with our secondary students. Volunteer panelists with varying backgrounds and careers spoke with our students about advice, their pathway to their career, and answered different questions our students had for them. Over the course of the panels we heard from a music teacher, engineer, nurse, environmental lawyer, among others. We are grateful for these panels as a way for students to explore different career opportunities, and I am personally very grateful for Denali and Patty's willingness to facilitate these Zoom panels as I was supporting LPSD students and families in other capacities.

I attempted to offer the SAT at Tanalian on April 9th, but was unable to do so due to technology complications that were beyond LPSD's control. I have since filed an irregularity report with CollegeBoard, along with another letter explaining the ways that the new PSAT / SAT testing software is incompatible with our district's needs. I'm hopeful that they might consider allowing us to return to the old paper and pencil way of testing next year, but that remains to be seen. I have one more student signed up for the ACT who will test at the SNAP Meet, and will be offering the ASVAB aptitude test to all LPSD sophomores and juniors on the Thursday of SNAP as well. I'm looking forward to the feedback this assessment will give our military-interested students, as well as our students who are still seeking out a post-secondary pathway for themselves.

March was honestly a month of hard conversations with several of our students, but I am grateful to have had the opportunity to walk alongside them through the darkness and help match them with the internal and external resources that can help them to be successful. Sadly the behavioral health clinician who I'd developed a great working relationship with, and had been able to refer many students to through Southcentral Foundation, left her position at the beginning of March. While this created a gap in broader referral-style mental healthcare for our students, I am grateful to have recently received word that SCF has found a new itinerant mental healthcare provider for the Lake region. I am looking forward to partnering with this new provider more in the coming weeks, and am continuing to seek out referral resources for our

non-SCF students and families. If you have any connections or insights into such resources, please let me know.

I'm looking forward to connecting with you all at the SNAP Meet! If you're available, I would love for you to join us at this year's Post-Secondary Options Fair Wednesday evening from 8:00 to 10:00 and Thursday morning from 9:00 to Noon. We currently have nearly 30 presenters joining us from over 20 entities all across Alaska, and even one from New Mexico! It is sure to be a great week!

Thank you for all that you do to continue to support student services and holistic education and wellness within LPSP.

For the kids, always—
Kacy Lou Leyba