

**Date:** March 8, 2024

**To:** LPSD School Board

**From:** Kacy Lou Leyba

**Regarding:** February Counseling Report

The spring energy is alive and well within the LPSD counseling department! We are wrapping up our 8 week Kids2Careers planning unit via Zoom in conjunction with the Alaska Commission of Post-Secondary Education for our 6th through 12th graders. We have also continued the momentum with our Pre-K through 5th grade social emotional learning lessons on Zoom throughout each week. It has been so fun getting to meet so many “littles” throughout our district this year!

As we look toward the SNAP Meet, I have continued to solidify presenters for the Post-Secondary Options Fair and am excited to announce that so far we have 26 folks planning to join us from various apprenticeship, college, and career-path programs! We are working to ensure the ASVAB and ACT are available to interested students during the SNAP Meet; we also just completed a cycle of ACT arranged testing in Port Alsworth last month and are gearing up to offer the SAT to interested seniors in early April.

National Honor Society applications went out to 8 eligible students at the end of February and will be due back to the selection team on March 27th. I am currently looking to secure an LPSD alum National Honor Society member to be our NHS Ceremony Speaker on the night of prom. If you happen to know someone whom you would like to nominate for this honor, I would love to speak with you!

Our partnership with BBRCTE continues to be one that supports both our students, and our counseling team. We are excited to send up to 27 of our high school students to the third BBRCTE Intensive Week at the end of March. On a related note, I am also personally beaming with pride for Courtney Boskofsky of Chignik Lake who shadowed me for her BBRCTE / Educators’ Rising competition project in student support services, and *placed third in the state as an 8th grader!* In other BBRCTE news, Patty McCasland was able to visit Port Alsworth during the 5-man basketball tournament in February after the Perryville jamboree was rescheduled. She continues to support my position by meeting with juniors and seniors across the district to discuss their plans for after graduation, as well as helping students to complete scholarship applications and FAFSAs. She is such an asset to our team!

I attempted to travel to Newhalen in early February, but was turned back by bad weather. While I certainly missed engaging our students there, my heart was filled up after successfully joining our Mix-3 student athletes and the local community in Igiugig at this week’s basketball jamboree. It is a true honor to continue to walk alongside our students in their moments of victory and through some of the more difficult chapters in their lives.

In the realm of strategic planning for the school counseling department, our team met with principals in an attempt to roll out a new universal social-emotional / mental health screener (The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or SDQ) for our district’s secondary students. I am grateful for the support of our administrative team in this endeavor, but personally learned a lot about how implementing this screener outside of basketball season could increase student engagement, as we have had very low student-response thus far. As a team, we are hoping to implement this screener twice annually and will take our lessons learned back to the drawing board to see how we can increase student engagement for the fall.

As we look toward next year, I also received training in the “Bounce Back for Classrooms” social emotional learning curriculum, which I believe will be a strong and culturally fortifying option to add to our classroom lesson repertoire. We are also looking into a possible grant-funded partnership with the Alaska Association of School Boards for a trauma-engaged schools curriculum which could strongly benefit students and staff.

I have signed my contract to return in FY25 at my current .75 standing and couldn't be more excited about the future of the LPSD counseling department and our interactions with the district as a whole.

Thank you for all of your support of our kiddos and communities!

For the kids,  
Kacy Lou Leyba