

P.O. Box 197
Port Alsworth, AK 99653

The Lake and Peninsula School District
P.O. Box 498
King Salmon, AK 99613

December 11, 2023

Dear LPSD School Board:

My name is Jordan Alsworth and I am a freshman at Tanalian School, and I have gone to school here for ten years. My purpose of writing this letter is to inform you of the need for education on the effects of substances on teens and high schoolers.

The problem in our school district is that there is no program educating the students about what substances such as drugs and alcohol do to the body and brain. Taking drugs and doing alcohol affect your ability to learn. They interfere with the neurotransmitters, which are chemicals that help your brain communicate with the body. When they get blocked, the brain isn't as able to tell what is happening with your body (Think Twice). These things aren't taught in the Lake and Peninsula School District (LPSD) schools, so students don't know what the effects are.

I have seen the effects that drugs and alcohol have not only on family but on friends as well. Growing up in LPSD, I was never educated on the effects of substances. I did not know what negative effects could take place if I took substances. I have seen family members and friends partake in substances. I have also seen people not able to participate in sports because of drug or alcohol usage. As the coach for the Tanalian Lynx volleyball team, Glen Alsworth, said, "I have seen a number of times where kids have lost opportunities because of a drug or alcohol addiction." There are consequences to doing substances, but there are a lot of kids who still decide to do them, even though it may mean that there is a chance of them getting kicked off a sport's team.

My solution to this problem is to have a program in the LPSD schools to educate students on the effects of drugs and substances. I took a survey of the students and teachers in LPSD, and one of the students commented, "The effects of smoking and taking substances should really be taught more in school... they should talk about what happens to your body and all the illnesses and symptoms that will take place". Students need to be educated on what can happen when participating in substances, and I think that the school can help in that by having a program educating them.

Research shows that it is more likely for people who abuse the use of substances to drop out of school than those who do not. In fact, one third of school dropouts admit that using substances was a big part of their decision for dropping out of school (Alcohol Affects). Not only are substances bad for your health, they affect your education as well. The brain doesn't fully develop until the age of 25, and in the years before that, it is very sensitive and drinking alcohol and doing drugs can mess with the brain's wiring, and affect how teens perceive information. Teens need to be educated on how negatively these choices can affect them.

Some may say that adding a program educating teens about the effects of substances won't do anything because teens don't take those things seriously. I think that many times kids don't listen to adults, but having the education and knowledge may make some kids think twice about what they are putting into their bodies. The school counselor, Kacy Leyba, works with kids in LPSD who have an addiction or are partaking in alcohol or drugs. She says, "A lot of our students live in homes where people are utilizing and using drugs and alcohol." Seeing how it affects family members, it has made them more aware of the issue. Teens need the education of the effects of substances, and adding a program in school may help the problem by addressing it.

Having a program educating kids on the effects of substances would be very beneficial and should be considered heavily. This would educate students on the effects of substances. They've been told many times "don't do drugs", but then never get the why. Educating teens on the effects of substances could help them think twice before they choose to consume alcohol or vape or do illegal drugs. This is a very important subject that should be taught in LPSD's schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jordan Alsworth". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Jordan Alsworth

Works Cited

How Does Drugs Affect Your High School Grades. "Just Think Twice,

<https://www.justthinktwice.gov/how-does-drug-use-affect-your-high-school-grades#:~:text=Research%20shows%20that%20there%20is,for%20dropping%20out%20of%20school>

How Alcohol Affects Your Body. "Better Health Channel," Department of Health, State

Government of Victoria, Australia, 2021

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/how-alcohol-affects-your-body#the-short-term-effects-of-alcohol>