

March 27, 2026

Dear Members of the School Board,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent decision not to approve the contract for the current student services position.

I want to begin by emphasizing how truly incredible she has been in this role. I have seen firsthand the level of dedication and care she brings to our students. I also know personally that when she is needed in one of the villages, she makes every effort to fly there as soon as possible. That level of commitment is rare, and it is something our communities benefit from greatly. A change in her location will not change that dedication, and this move may not even be permanent.

I do understand the Board's concern about having someone locally available for our children. The point was raised that a person in this role should be able to see a student on the street and recognize if they may need support, even something as basic as food. While I appreciate that perspective, the reality is that a person can only physically be present in one village at a time, unless the district wants to pay for them to visit different schools every week, no one in this position will see our students in person that often but you all might in your community and you could let her know so she can organize resources for that student. Team work! Her willingness and ability to travel between schools quickly as needed is what has allowed her to serve multiple communities effectively, and that capacity is unlikely to change.

I also want to acknowledge that I fully understand, and to a degree agree with, the importance of having people who work for LPSD live within our communities. There is real value in that local presence and connection. However, I do not believe residency should take priority over qualifications and proven effectiveness. I also do not think hiring someone local means students in villages outside of where the new hire lives will see this person any more than they saw the person currently in the position. Our students deserve the most capable and dedicated professionals available, and choosing a less qualified individual solely based on location does not serve their best interests especially when our current hire can be around and available as much as she always has been.

Additionally, there is no guarantee that hiring locally, or hiring someone willing to relocate, will lead to increased student enrollment or stronger community engagement. These outcomes cannot be required or ensured. Similarly, we cannot assume that an employee living in the community will significantly contribute to local businesses. For example, an individual may still choose to purchase groceries, fuel, and other necessities from Anchorage, which would provide little to no direct economic benefit to our local businesses. Our focus should be on our students, not the local economy and it shouldn't play a factor in who we hire, qualifications should matter most. If the board is concerned about shrinking population, they should reach out to the local entities and the borough to help brainstorm how to bring people into our communities.

I also believe it is very important that the Board carefully consider and value the input of our superintendent regarding this position. She works directly with this individual and has firsthand

knowledge of her performance, dedication, and impact on our students. That perspective is critical. The superintendent is in her role because she has the experience and judgment to make informed decisions for our district, and that judgment should be trusted and given significant weight in decisions like this.

It is also important to recognize that the current student services hire has already established trusted relationships with many current LPSD students. Removing her from this role takes away a familiar, safe, and dependable presence in their lives. I do not understand how replacing a trusted and well-known individual with a local stranger is a better option, especially when that new person will likely see the students just as often as she already does. Our current hire is well known in all our villages, a new hire will be a new face in many of our communities. Continuity and trust matter deeply in positions like this, and those connections cannot be quickly or easily replaced.

I also want to express my concern with how the decision process was handled. It was troubling to hear that multiple contracts were at risk of being declined because of concerns with just one. That approach does not reflect sound or balanced decision-making, especially when these roles directly impact the well-being of our students. I was thankful to see that the first vote failed and a new plan set in place. That could have been a calamity.

On a personal note, I cannot overstate the positive impact she has had on my own son. Her support has been incredibly helpful, and I truly believe he would not be where he is academically today without her involvement. I know that if she is forced to leave it will be a great loss for my son, an LPSD student and for many others as well.

Finally, I must address the concern about reliance on Zoom meetings. Given the geographic realities of where we live, virtual communication is an unavoidable part of this role. I believe that is why the Board itself meets over Zoom. Regardless of who fills the position, they will need to rely on Zoom and similar tools to serve students across multiple locations. Singling this out as a concern in this case does not seem reasonable or consistent with the nature of the job. And let's be honest- zoom with two people goes much smoother than zoom with 15 people.

I respectfully ask the Board to reconsider this decision with these points in mind. Our students deserve continuity, experience, and proven dedication, qualities that she has demonstrated time and time again. If you chose to change the LPSD hiring regulations, please do that going forward, not to one of our current team members, the loss is too great to our kids.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Alison Fowler