



SCHOOL: Learning Alternatives

YEAR: 2024-2025

PRINCIPAL: Brett Hancock



OUR SCHOOL

Our school is a dynamic blend of forward-thinking education and personalized programming. We pride ourselves on individualized learning plans that focus on the students' strengths and use innovative strategies to help them progress in areas that need improvement. Our goal is to guide our students to discover personal success and help them become productive members of our community. We believe in authentic, meaningful experiences that connect our students to the natural world and inspire sustainable values and behaviours. The Circle of Courage is woven throughout all our programs. This model of youth development is based on the principles of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.

Students are referred to our school when all possible interventions have been exhausted at their catchment school. Once they arrive, Learning Alternatives staff offer social emotional supports to make sure that every student feels safe and supported. These supports are offered through counselling, cultural teachings, land-based learning, connection to community agencies, the ability to engage in social justice activities, and much more.

Food is a huge part of what makes Learning Alternatives. Together students and staff prepare a hot lunch every Monday-Thursday and a hot breakfast on Friday. This is a great way for students to earn credits for foods courses, but more importantly to feel a sense of belonging to the school family. The foods activities help provide employability skills. Having food security helps students make it into school each day.

OUR SCHOOL GOALS

Student and Employee Wellness
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Nurturing the mind, body, and spirit of our entire learning community.

Truth and Reconciliation
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To authentically integrate traditional Indigenous ways of knowing and being into all teaching and learning

Student Success
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Providing dignity, purpose, and options through caring relationships and personalized learning.



OUR CELEBRATION STORY

We make sure to celebrate student success every day! Attendance, attitude, academic course completions and so much more. This helps us all continue to improve each day. We love to let our students and parents know how proud we are to paddle alongside the students each day. The First Peoples Principles of Learning guide the learning that we offer. These principles and the Circle of Courage are held close to our hearts. Our staff believe that all learners can be successful. We believe what works for our Indigenous students, works for all students. With this mindset, we celebrated more Indigenous graduates than any other school in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) last year. It was the largest Learning Alternatives graduating class ever!

We are no longer a place where students feel like they have been sentenced to. Once connected to us, we help students improve their attendance and engagement with their learning. We have doubled in size over the last seven school years. Our school is a key reason for the highest ever graduation rates in NLPS (both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous). Our student voice lets us know what we are doing is working. We also listen to our students about what is not working and try to fix it. One of our stretching goals is to improve student transitions back to their catchment area school so they can cross the graduation stage with dignity, purpose, and options.

You will hear us use the words dignity, purpose and options and we believe wholeheartedly this is what we need to provide all our students. Here's what those words mean to the Learning Alternatives family:

Dignity – Students leave our programs knowing they have worked hard; knowing they have been challenged and found success. They know and believe they have accomplished difficult goals.

Purpose – Students leave our programs knowing who they are; they know what they have to offer in this world. They believe their contributions are important.

Options – Students leave our programs with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful beyond the walls of our school building. We work hard every day to improve the life chances of our youth and we never, ever give up on them.