



550-7th Street – Room 130
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Newsletter

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Brett Hancock,
District Principal of
Learning Alternatives

March 2019

LEARNING ALTERNATIVES

The School Newsletter will also be available to students and parents on-line on the Learning Alternatives website.
If you do not have access to a computer, there will be paper copies available at either school sites for you or your child to pick up.

PRINCIPAL COMMENTS:

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Even though February was the shortest calendar month of the year, that also included three snow days and two Pro D Days, the Learning Alternatives family packed a lot of rich learning into the time we shared together. Some of the innovative learning opportunities included a gold medal victory at the Skills Canada BC Regional Competition, a three-day trip to Whistler, Military Fitness Training and much, much more.

March will be another short month with two weeks of Spring Break for all staff and students. We encourage all of our students to make sure that they are aware what is required to complete each of their courses. Cohort teachers will be doing regular progress checks and all subject area teachers are always willing to support every student in their course. Parents are encouraged to contact the subject area teachers with any specific questions that you may have. There will be another ongoing communication of student learning coming home on Friday, April 5.

Our staff had 2 rich days of professional learning during the February 25 and 26 Professional Development Days. Feb 25 had all Nanaimo Ladysmith Public School teachers learning about Trauma Informed Practice at Dover Bay Secondary School. Feb 26 was a school based Pro D that had each of our Learning Alternatives staff complete a

UBC Course on Bringing Mental Health to Schools.

We as a staff continue to use the Circle of Courage to help provide four universal growth needs of all children: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. Please know that I can always be reached by email at bhancock@sd68.bc.ca to help answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,
Brett Hancock



IMPORTANT DATES

March 4	PAC @ Barsby in room 124 @ 5pm
March 6	Archery for both sites @ Woodlands
March 6	Early Dismissal @ 12pm both sites
March 7	Button Blanket Project
March 8	Capture the Flag
March 11	Work Safe BC Presentation
March 15	Last Day Before Spring Break
March 18-29	Spring Break
April 1	First Day Back After Spring Break

April 5 Communication of Student Learning
April 8 & 10 Grad Photos @ Barsby

SKILLS CANADA CHAMPIONS

Team ABOUT from Learning Alternatives won the BC Regional Skills Canada Bridge Building Competition. Coach Chad Jobe led our team of Breanna Heslop, Nathan Heslop and Alex Coolen as they dismantled the competition of 150 other students from schools up and down Vancouver Island. Congratulations to each of you and thanks for representing our school with such class. Next up provincials.



The Gold Medalists with the best bridge on the Island!

PAC

Our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) support a wide range of educational opportunities for Learning Alternatives students. All parents and guardians are welcome to attend meetings. Please know that no commitment is required. Hope to see you on Monday, March 4 at 5:00pm in room 124 at John Barsby Secondary School.



LEARNING ALTERNATIVES WEBSITE

Here is the link to our website that includes podcasts, schedules of what is happening at each site, graduation information, program descriptions and much more:

<https://la.schools.sd68.bc.ca/>

GRAD CLASS OF 2019

The Learning Alternatives Graduation Ceremony will take place at Vancouver Island University Theatre on Tuesday, June 11 at 1:00pm. Right now, we have 50 students that are on pace to graduate this school year! Each graduate will be allowed to bring five guests to the ceremony. Families that think they need more than five tickets, please contact Chad or Trevor.

Graduation photos will be taking place on April 8 and 10 at John Barsby. Students that are in a position to graduate will have the cost of the photo shoot covered. This will give them access to two digital copies that can be used to share with friends and families online or be taken into a photo center for affordable copies.



Learning Alternatives Grad Class of 2018.

THE WHISTLER OLYMPIC EXPERIENCE

By: Lacey Daly

In early February, we took eight students on a fieldtrip to Whistler, one of the most beautiful locations in BC. Our goal, in creating the Whistler experience, was to expose our students to experiences that would support them to move to a growth mindset. Each element of this trip was thoughtfully planned with the motivation being to give our students as many experiential learning opportunities as possible.

We started the trip with a visit to the Fairmont Chateau Whistler. The Fairmont staff graciously rolled out the red carpet for our students and gave us a complete tour of the hotel including the backend behind-the-scenes perspective. Later, we were presented with an abundance of snacks and hot chocolate to enjoy while the Director of the Fairmont Human Resources department presented us with all of the job benefits and opportunities available to our students. We all felt very special and left inspired and full.



Our next stop was to the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, where we were welcomed with a traditional song and received a guided tour of the amazing Centre. Our students really enjoyed the cedar rope making and represented our school and community with grace. Our next adventure was the highlight of the trip and an experience our students will never forget. The Whistler Sliding Center opened their doors to us and allowed us to participate in both the Skeleton and the Bobsleigh. The staff were extremely friendly and informative, coaching our students every step of the way. Our students described it as the most adrenaline they have ever felt in their lives. The cherry on top of this incredible trip was a ride on the Peak2Peak Gondola to enjoy some sightseeing of both Whistler and Blackcomb mountains. The sun was shining bright and the perspective was amazing! In addition to an abundance of fun, our students said they felt very proud of themselves for stepping outside of their box and trying something new.



The students developed new friendships that they brought back to school and we have already seen the benefits of these deeper relationships. This trip would not have been possible without the financial support of BCAEA Student Activity Grant and ISPARC Healthy Living Grant. Thank you to our administration for supporting experiential learning with such enthusiasm. We look forward to exposing our students to more fieldtrips like this in the future.



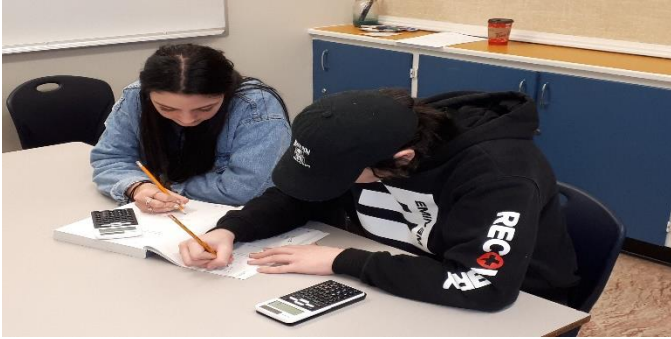
An experience that staff and students will cherish forever.

THE MATH CORNER

By Dhanook Singh

Math is a skill that challenges our students. We hope to move them from "no I can't" to "this is challenging". On Wednesday mornings, we have Focus on Math (FOM). Our goal is to build math skills so that students are able to pass the VIU Trades Math Assessment. This is a general assessment of math skills needed for any of the trades. The goal is to help build practical math skills.

We also have a group of four students taking on Math 11 Pre-Calculus. This big commitment requires these students to put in extra time and effort. Their goal is to get into an academic university program with a math focus.



MILITARY FITNESS TESTING

By: Julie Ludwinowski

On Wednesday, February 20th, 2019, a small “squad” of Indigenous students (Will, Leesa, Courtney, Blake) and I embarked on a mission to complete a scheduled “PFT - Physical Fitness test” as part of the application process for the Canadian Armed Forces - RAVEN Summer Employment Program. They flexed their muscles and sweated up a storm with various timed drills involving sand bags lifts, a 250lbs drag pull (or man down scenario) and weighted sprints. Although the timed drills can typically invoke a competitive nature among competitors, our students rose above the status quo and supported each other - Learning Alt style; when a student was struggling, students and staff did the drills again with the struggling student to boost and encourage that student to victory.

Petty Officer (PO), Jennifer Marcott, stated that “you need to know where your comfort zone ends and where you need to push yourself past that to make in the military”. She witnessed our students, not only pushing past their comfort zones, but actively supporting one another through empathic encouragement, courageous effort, and inclusive support of students in our Learning Alternative Squad and with other visiting recruits.

As their teacher, I was honoured to witness such determination and compassion demonstrated by our students. They were truly engaged in ‘walking in two worlds’ or “Syeyutsus” in Hul’qumi’num, as

they navigated the colonial military requirements while embracing their cultural traditional values of supporting family...our Learning Alt. Family. Bravo Zulu Students! Military lingo for “Good Job”.

What is the RAVEN Summer Employment Program?

This six week paid employment training program exposes students to life in the Canadian Forces while honouring culture. Student recruits will participate in a 3.5 day culture camp, in Nanoose Bay, where Elders and Cultural staff will teach Indigenous traditions within military service, common spiritual components unique to indigenous culture, and embrace the need for self-discipline and teamwork while implementing learning through an indigenous lens to ensure successful completion of the military training. Also, student recruits will embark on completing their mission of Basic Military Qualification (BMQ) training involving various aspects such as outdoor field craft, physical training, navigation skills, and military knowledge as well as a naval focus involving a day at sea onboard a naval ship to learn firefighting, flood containment and damage control.

