



550-7th Street – Room 130
Nanaimo, BC V9R 3Z2

Newsletter

#morethanschool

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Brett Hancock,
District Principal of
Learning Alternatives

March 2020

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.

BRETT'S COMMENTS

Dear Learning Alternatives Family,

During the month of February and the first week of March, I was able to experience and brag about our student success. It is an honour to watch our students show off their academic, music, athletic, artistic, environmental and trades ability. One recent highlight was spending a Friday night at NDSS gym with my lovely wife Ricki and our two littles. We were thrilled to cheer on one of our Learning Alternatives students, Qwammi Robinson, as he entertained a packed gym. Watching our students now find success inside the classroom and in the community, helps remind me, I am where my heart wants to be. This month's newsletter will focus on the voice of our amazing students and why they believe that they are having success.

As many of you know, we do not currently have any athletic teams that compete in the BC School Sports competitions. Our student athletes need to connect with their catchment area school to play school sports. With basketball season coming to a close, we had two of our grade 12 ABOUT students finding success on the court during the past few months. Will "The Thrill" Underhay helped support the Wellington Wildcats to a Cinderella season that ended a little earlier than we had hoped. Superstar Qwammi Robinson filled high school gyms around the province as he led NDSS to a third place finish in 4A Island Championships. Qwammi was named first

team all star at the Island Championships. He was also the favourite player of our three-year-old son, McLeay and our one-year-old daughter, Mavie Lou.

Will, Qwammi and Shayla Athey have been coaching basketball at Georgia Avenue and Chase River Elementary. They give up their lunch hour to travel to the schools and coach once a week. It is such a treat to see this type of generosity from our graduating class of 2020. I would like to also acknowledge and thank our teachers Clay Aitken and Matt Kuzminski for helping support them with this.



Your proud principal,
Brett

IMPORTANT DATES IN MARCH

March 3	-Woodlands SBT @ 8:15am
March 4	-Barsby SBT @ 8:15am -Staff Meeting @ NCC @ 1-3pm -PAC @ 6pm RSVP to Brett
March 6	-Off Site Activity: Beach Estate Park (All Programs Welcome to Attend)
March 10	-Woodlands SBT @ 8:15am -DJ All Good Presentation @ 10am @ Woodlands (All Programs Welcome to Attend)
March 11	-Barsby SBT @ 8:15am
March 13	-Last School Day before Spring Break
March 14-29	-Spring Break
March 30	-First Day Back From Spring Break

STUDENTS FROM TAKE A HIKE

Staff in the Take a Hike Program asked each of the students “Why Learning Alternatives?” Here is the response:

Most students said they were not excited when they were told they had to come to Learning Alternatives. They felt like they had no choice when they arrived. Moreover, they felt as though they were being sent away from their friends to attend a school they had no attachment to. However, students quickly realized that Learning Alternatives was different from their old school, and this was a good thing.

Students now had a voice and a choice in their learning and they could move at their own pace. There was no more anxiety about falling behind or missing a lesson and being lost. Not only did students enjoy the pace of the school, they also felt that there was more of a community. They said it was more chill, more relaxed, and more comfortable.

Students repeatedly said that they felt that the staff cared about them and their wellbeing. Staff made them feel like they belonged. Because staff cared, they were checking in on students. Staff called or texted to see how they were doing when they are not here. Staff’s first question never

revolved around missing course content, but rather around the students’ needs.

Students felt they can be open with staff and ask for support without feeling as if they are judged, staff meet students where they are at and work together to provide the best program for the student, rather than try to get the student to conform to a program. Overall, it came down to attachment, every student asked, could identify multiple staff members who they believe wanted them to succeed and care about them as individuals. Every student asked said they would recommend Learning Alternatives to a friend or sibling.



INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS FROM SENIOR LEARNING ALTERNATIVES

Trevor McIntyre interviews Hailey Clevette

What is the biggest difference between your school experience now and before coming to Learning Alternatives?

I get more help. I feel much more comfortable being able to ask questions. I really appreciate the adjusted schedule and I like being able to move around because I am unable to sit in classes for long periods, so I just would not go.

What do you like most about our school?

The flexibility (hours / schedule). Schoolwork is much more independent, less forced group scenarios. In the past, I often took a little longer to

complete my schoolwork and it made me feel uncomfortable. At LA, I can follow my own plan and feel supported in taking steps towards being successful.

What is one thing you want people to know about our school?

That it is not a school for 'skids'. All of my friends think that and I hate that. I have friends who will not come here because of the stereotype in the community. There is an assumption that nothing is done here, but that is not the truth. It is the opposite.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I would like to travel and I need to prepare to move out by the time I am 19. I would like to work for a local hairdresser and build a client base.

You are about to enroll in the CTC program through VIU. Why do you feel that other students should take this opportunity as well?

Why wouldn't you? You get the course paid for (a good portion of it) and you can do it locally. If you are unsure of what to do after high school, there are so many different options. I had no plan last year and knew I needed to figure out my future. I reached a point where I knew that I needed to develop a game plan for my future. No one on my mom's side has ever graduated from high school and very few on my dad's side, so I am the first one to really have a set plan to graduate high school and find a career and I want to accomplish something big.



Lacey Daly interviews Elayne Einfeld

What is the biggest difference between your school experience now and before coming to Learning Alternatives?

The biggest different between my experience in mainstream and attending Learning Alternatives is the personalized support I now get. My life can be complicated, and this school does not make me feel bad about it.

What do you like most about our school?

The teachers are great, and the smaller class size has helped my so much.

What is one thing you want people to know about our school?

The people here are the best! I feel supported by all my teachers and I know if I am having a bad day there is always someone to talk to. I feel like I have control over my courses, and I know there are a lot of people to help me if I need it.

Where do you see in five years?

I see myself working to my career in dog training. I will be living in my own house with a big yard. I'm excited to see what life has in store for me.

You just experienced the Mindset Reset field trip to Whistler, what do you feel is the biggest change you feel after having been on the trip?

Before the trip I felt like my life was basic... after the trip, I felt I had a renewed outlook on life. My vision for my future changed and I realized that I could do much more with my life than just stay doing the same thing.

