



The Grapevine

Alberni District Secondary School
September 16, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome back to another school year. The staff at ADSS has been working very hard to ensure that all students have a timetable that works for them and that all students are receiving appropriate supports to allow them to achieve graduation from grade 12. This is an on-going process for all students because we're always fine-tuning the plan as individual students' circumstances change. However, the process of developing student timetables starts in earnest in May and is finalized right about now. Currently, counsellors are addressing concerns for students who have changed their minds about particular courses over the summer.

Enrollment, at this point is still somewhat "fluid", but that is usually the case in a secondary school as large as this one. Currently, the enrollment stands at a total of 1,252. This is 324 (grade 9), 324 (grade 10), 291 (grade 11), 302 (grade 12), and 11 (returning students). This total is down 12 from September, 2009 at this time, but up over projected enrollment.

Our first week of school has been very smooth. Students have been superb! Staff has worked very hard throughout the summer and during the week just prior to school to make it the success that it has been. Thank you to everyone for working together so well!

Financial Constraints

As you are aware, the government has had a shortfall in the provincial budget and districts throughout the province have had to find ways to cut costs. In our district, that total amounts to approximately \$900,000.

The Board of School Trustees announced the cutbacks that have been proposed to the Ministry of Education. At ADSS all extra curricular fieldtrips have been put on hold for now. We have had a reduction in secretarial time, a reduction in teaching time over and above last year's allocation, and a reduction to the learning resources budget. Additionally, we have decided this year to forego the usual Open House barbeque because of its cost, and instead, start at 6:00 pm, after the normal dinner hour. In the end we will work through the challenges and our students will continue to experience a high quality, engaging, and competitive educational experience.

This year we will continue to need a strong PAC to advocate for our students and I encourage you to come to the meetings and to support the school in any way you can. Our next meeting for the PAC is Wednesday, September 16th at 7:00 pm in the staffroom.

Grade 9 Immunizations

Grade 9 students have received immunization information and consent forms. Please read the enclosed information and return the signed consents to the office as soon as possible. If you have any questions regarding immunizations, please contact the Health Unit at 250 724-1281.

Immunizations are scheduled the morning of September 28th and 30th.

H1N1 Virus Precautions

Provincial Exam Results

Textbooks

Most students have been issued their textbooks at this point. Grade 9 students are issued the entire year's books and so, are responsible for a lot of books at once. Please note that when books are returned to the bookroom it is expected that they will be returned in a condition to permit them to be re-issued to another student. If this is not the case, the student will be charged for the textbook replacement.

It is convenient to collect the student activity fee during the first week of school in TAG. However, if a student is unable to pay the \$30 fee at this time, they are asked to speak with one of the Vice-principals and arrange for a deferral.

ADSS Is a Scent-free School

Because of the issue of allergies for many staff and students, we ask that staff and students refrain from wear strong scents to school. Perfume allergy is one of the most frequent types of contact allergy, especially in children with eczema. It only takes one person entering a building wearing a scented product to affect the air quality. This is because scented products can drift throughout an entire area wherever takes them.

There is some interesting research available on the effects of scents on learning. If you would like more information, I'd be happy to share it with you.

ADSS Anaphylaxis Plan

We have had an enrollment this year of a student who is acutely allergic to nuts. To reduce the risk of exposure to peanut/nut products, a leading cause of food related allergic reactions and fatalities:

- We ask that students not bring peanut butter or products containing nuts (e.g. Trail mix, cookies, granola bars) in the ingredients, to school for lunch or snacks
- The breakfast program and the cafeteria menu will not serve such products
- We ask that students wash hands before arriving at school if nut products are eaten at home
- We expect a "no-sharing" policy for food allergic children

If a student mistakenly brings a nut product to school they will be asked to remain in a designated area to consume that product followed by proper hand washing and clean-up procedures.

Do You Want to Own Your Own Home in Port Alberni?

If you live and work in the Alberni Valley, have stable income from employment and are willing to volunteer 500 hours of sweat equity, Habitat Mid-Vancouver Island may be for you!

You must:

- Have lived in Port Alberni for a year as of application date
- Be a family with dependents
- Be willing to partner with Habitat for Humanity by investing 500 hours of your time and agreeing to an open selection process
- Have a demonstrated need for improved living conditions
- Fit income requirements

There's no down payment and an interest-free mortgage. The advantage of an interest-free mortgage is a saving of over \$100,000 over the life of a \$225,000 mortgage. If you are looking for a first-time house purchase, let our volunteer community help out. All applicants should attend a meeting at Echo Field House (near Wood Elementary School) on October 14, 2009, at 7:00 pm.

For further information, contact Dan at 250-723-8282 or e-mail to: dan@avhabitat.net.

Assessment Policy

As part of the school's initiative to be consistent and proactive, students have been made aware of the ADSS Assessment Policy. Specific aspects of this policy apply to particular curricular departments, but overall we have defined to help students a set of principles. Along with these principles, each course will have a course overview available to students and parents by the Open House on September 18.

Guiding Principles:

1. The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning.
2. The criteria for assessment and evaluation will be clearly communicated to the students.
3. Assessment should be criterion-referenced.
4. Assessments clearly describe the expectations to students *before* the learning so that they know what they need to do to meet the learning outcome.
5. It is important for students to complete their assignments on time so that teachers can provide timely feedback.

Alberni District Secondary School Code of Conduct 2008-2009

School Mission Statement:

At ADSS it is our mission to provide every opportunity for our students to be successful in all endeavours and to help create citizens of a world that we cannot yet fully envision.

I. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a basic framework and common expectations for ADSS. The guidelines reflect the new provincial standards for “Code of Conduct”, as stated below:

School boards and schools are entrusted through the School Act with authority to establish codes of conduct. While recognizing the autonomy of these bodies and acknowledging the efforts they have already undertaken to ensure school climates are as positive as possible, the provincial standards described below are provided to assist them in developing consistent and coherent policies and practices in their communities. Although most schools have codes of conduct in place, it is expected that all British Columbia schools will revisit existing codes and/or develop new codes of conduct reflecting the provincial standards. (Safe, Caring and Orderly Guide, page 15)

II. Code of Conduct: Key Elements

Process

School staff, parents, and students provided input through an on-line survey and a variety of meetings. School staff, the Parent Advisory Committee and the SPC have reviewed the current code of conduct to meet the Ministry requirement of page 15 of A Guide for Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools.

Communication

The Code of Conduct is reviewed with students at assemblies; in regular school classes; and the individual students in a counseling setting as required. The Code of Conduct is printed in the school agenda and also posted on the school’s website.

Implementation

Behavioural expectations outlined in our Code of Conduct are consistently taught and promoted. Responses to unacceptable behaviour are based on consistently on school & district policies, and are appropriate to the context.

Monitoring

Conduct is continuously monitored to ensure codes reflect current and emerging situations and are contributing to school safety.

Alignment

ADSS’s Code of Conduct will be based on our Charter of Responsibilities and Rights. (see page 2)

Standards

- A. Statement of Purpose - to establish and maintain a safe, caring, and orderly environment for purposeful learning.
- B. Conduct Expectations – expectations are based on the Charter of Responsibilities written below.

Where in the World Are They Now?

It is my hope that this will become a regular feature of each Grapevine. In this section I want to highlight one or more ADSS graduates and what they are up to at this point in their lives. If you know of someone who has graduated from ADSS that wouldn’t mind having their story shared with our readers, please feel free to contact me with the information.

Cell Phone Policy

Because of the intrusive nature of cell phones in the classroom environment, we've had to ask our students to restrict their use to out-of-class time. That means that if we see or hear cell phones during class time, they are confiscated for the remainder of the school day. For repeat offenders, cell phones will be confiscated for longer periods of time or returned directly to parents.

If you have an urgent need to contact your child during class time, please call the main office switchboard at 250-723-6251 and ask that your child be brought to the telephone.

Important Upcoming Dates

- September 16 – PAC Meeting, 7:00 pm, staffroom
- September 24 - School Photo Day
- September 25 – Curriculum Implementation Day, no school for students
- September 26 – Terry Fox Run
- September 26 – Band Bottle Drive
- September 30 – Open House, 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm

Please contact me at 723-6251, extension 222, if you have questions or concerns about this newsletter.

Mike Ruttan,
Principal