Alternative Learning Program Review

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Purpose

A review of Alternative Education Programming (ALP) was undertaken in the 2023 - 2024 school year to identify successes and to recommend actions to strengthen ALP in Sunrise School Division.

"I feel noticed, appreciated, loved, safe and heard. I feel like I'm going places and feel proud and happy."

Process

- A review of program history and current model guidelines

- Staffing history

- Input from stakeholders

  - Students

  - Families

  - School teams

"I finally got to experience what it felt like to just be. To have thoughtful conversations and to be understood and valued by those who had authority over me."
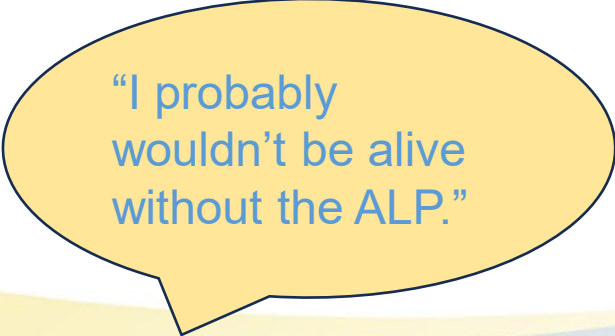
Sections

- Purpose

- Process

- Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations

- Actions Completed

- Program Status – Pg 5

- Stakeholder Data

  - Students – Pg 9

  - Guardians - 17

  - School Teams - 18

- Findings and Recommendations - 22

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Key Findings

1. The budget for rent is meeting existing needs but may not in the future considering rent increases.
2. The current description of ALP model does not align with current practices regarding attendance and entry points.
3. Attendance and credit documentation practices vary between sites. This inconsistency is a barrier to documenting credit attainment and accurate attendance related to ALP.
4. EAs supporting ALP could benefit from PD specific to their roles.
5. ALP students are very satisfied with programming available.
6. Parents interviewed were very satisfied with ALP.
7. Food security and the importance of food was a recurring finding.

Key Findings

8. Meeting needs (belonging, freedom, fun, safety, mastery, generosity), flexibility, and differentiated instruction and assessment were the most frequently identified factors contributing to success. This is aligned with the student barriers identified by school teams.
9. Students and staff identified a need for access to a wider range of courses, including remote options.
10. Collaboration between ALP staff in the school division could benefit all programs.
11. Technology plays an important role and is currently sufficient to provide appropriate programming.
12. Whitemouth school EA staffing is difficult to manage at a .25 FTE

"I probably wouldn't be alive without the ALP."

Recommendations

1. Revise the ALP Model section of the Student Services Manual to address attendance and entry point content.

2. Establish consistent attendance procedures that align with Sunrise Attendance Procedures (JDA).
3. Consistently document credit attainment specific to ALPs on an annual basis.
4. Ensure that ALP programs are included in universal nutrition program.
5. Direct schools to determine ways to increase access to courses offered.

"Being offered food without a second thought, it's expensive at this day and age, to be given it freely is deeply touching to me."

Recommendations

6. Determine if purchasing of ALP space at some sites is viable.
7. Identify PD specific to ALP EAs.
8. Support collaboration between ALPs with sub costs and technology.
9. Share resources between programs to maximize the range of courses available to students and identify a budget to support student enrollment in existing remote learning options.
10. Assess the technology renewal schedule for ALPs.
11. Staff Whitemouth School with an additional 0.25 EA to bring the total to 0.5 FTE EA for ALP
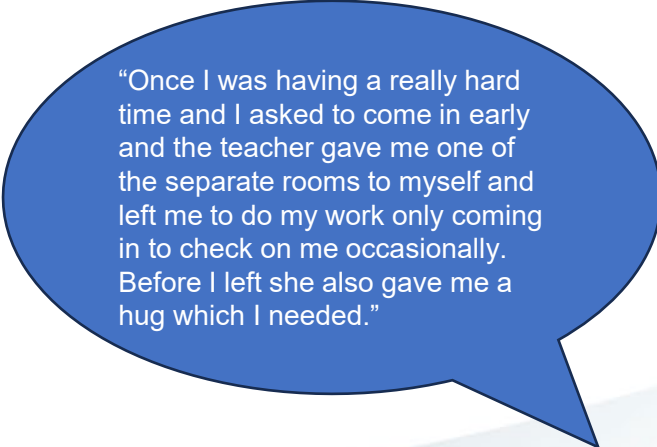
Actions Completed

1. Revise the ALP Model section of the Student Services Manual.(June 30)

2. ALP teacher collaboration: Microsoft Team created, and documents being shared. Approval to request sub costs for visiting other locations.
3. ICT has been collaborating with ALP teachers and school administrators to determine attendance code and course code challenges. This will be completed in the 2024-25 school year.
4. Whitemouth School has been provided with an additional 0.25 FTE EA for the 2024-25 school year.

Current Program Status

- The model has been stable and successful.
- It has been adapted at each site to fit unique needs
- Sunrise has skilled, passionate, caring staff working very hard to meet the needs of at-risk students.
- The budget is sufficient.
- Rent and technology will need to be monitored.

"I feel successful and safe. I also feel as if I am part of a family."

"Once I was having a really hard time and I asked to come in early and the teacher gave me one of the separate rooms to myself and left me to do my work only coming in to check on me occasionally. Before I left she also gave me a hug which I needed."

Student Feedback

- CHOICE, CHOICE, CHOICE, FLEXIBILITY!
- I can choose what to work on, independence.
- Working at my own pace.
- Fewer people, _quiet,_ I can focus, less distractions.
- Welcoming environment, I feel loved.
- Learning that we are all different, have our own strengths and challenges, and can connect with each other.

"I wouldn't be able to go to school if it wasn't for ALP."

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Student Feedback – Future Plans?

- 22- Post Secondary College / University (Business, Fine Arts, Veterinary, Welding, Esthetician, Culinary, Graphics/Game Design, Psychologist, Engineering)
- 7 - Not sure, graduate High School
- 5 – Military
- 2 - Real estate
- 1 - Be a parent
- K-9 Search and Rescue
- Rodeo
- Entrepreneur
- Baking and art
- Stock Market
- Blue collar worker

Guardian Feedback

- Anxiety Support
- School solutions are best first step
- The right mix
- Community stigma
- Path back to regular classes

School Teams - Feedback What leads to success?

- Meeting basic needs – food
- Hope, believing they can achieve goals
- Flexible planning
- Student voice
- Talents/strengths
- *A*chievable, *R*elevant Goals
- Teach them where they are at

Belonging
A sense of community, loving others, and being

Mastery
Competence in many areas;cognitive, physical, social, and spiritual. Having self-control, responsibility, striving to achievepersonal goals rather than superiority.

Independence
Making one's own decisions and being resonsible for failure or success, setting one's own goals, disciplining one's self.

Generosity
Looking forward to being able to contribute to others, be able to give cherished things to others.

"ALP has taught me that you can accept everyone even if you don't like them."

"I should do what I want to do and that I shouldn't let anyone tell me I'm any different from anyone else for going to an alternative program because I'm not that different from anyone else, I just needed a different surrounding."

"I probably wouldn't be alive without the ALP."

"I feel successful and safe. I also feel as if I am part of a family."

"Once I was having a really hard time and I asked to come in early and the teacher gave me one of the separate rooms to myself and left me to do my work only coming in to check on me occasionally. Before I left she also gave me a hug which I needed."

"I feel free, calm, I feel accepted and heard. I feel valued within the program."

"I was able to be incredibly productive in the room which made me very proud of myself."

"My birthday, everyone sang happy birthday."

"Being able to keep my job."

"I feel understood & accepted & not expected to be the perfect student."

"I finally got to experience what it felt like to just be. To have thoughtful conversations and to be understood and valued by those who had authority over me."

"Seen, understood and listened to."

"I feel noticed, appreciated, loved, safe and heard. I feel like I'm going places and feel proud and happy."

"During a particularly challenging day in the Alternative Education program, I was overwhelmed by intense anxiety, causing my legs to collapse. After alerting my parent, they arrived promptly, but I was still immobilized. Fortunately, the teachers and students provided me with the support I needed to reach my parent's car. This incident highlighted the program's exceptional organization, empathy, and supportiveness."

"Being offered food without a second thought, it's expensive at this day and age, to be given it freely is deeply touching to me."

Questions?