

OUTREACH ALTERNATE SCHOOL

OVERVIEW AND INFORMATION

Outreach Alternate Secondary, located in the annex at Maple Ridge Secondary School, is a district-wide alternate program for academically capable 16-19 year olds taking grade 10, 11 and 12 classes. Our population consists of students from throughout the district who have fallen behind in their schooling largely due to past attendance problems and who now find themselves motivated to complete their high school education. Our program is set up to help students overcome the things that prevented their success in mainstream school: addiction issues, poverty issues, anxiety/depression/mental health concerns, school work avoidance, deaths of loved ones, work commitments, sleeping disorders, teen pregnancy, being overwhelmed by 8 courses and 8 teachers, etc..

OAS operates on a trimester system and is the only high school in the district not on a linear timetable. Real classes are taught and students choose from courses that are offered specifically to meet the needs of the student population term-by-term. Each student is on their own schedule, choosing the classes they need, at times that fits their life. Classes are two hours in length, starting as early as 10:30am and running as late as 6:30pm. Outreach accepts new students during three intake periods per year and advertises in local newspapers and places information posters in local community centers, youth centers and other high schools.

Outreach offers many opportunities for success. While students are held accountable for their attendance, and may be asked to re-enroll in future terms for classes after too many absences, they are able to make up for any missed work during our tutorial times. These run daily and total almost 20 hours per week and include separate-setting time with our Education Assistant. Since all assignments are to be completed at school, Outreach students realize that in order to succeed they must attend and produce work. This structure works well for those who would otherwise procrastinate. In instances where students are not successful in completing a course, our three-term system allows students to retake courses within the same year.

Students write entrance autobiographies and are interviewed, identifying the things that have held them up in the past, and with the help of OAS staff, make plans for how they can be successful in the future. Further, students meet one-on-one with staff three times during the school year, planning their timetables and taking stock: identifying both successes and struggles, planning their journey towards graduation – the ultimate goal for all students in Outreach, whether on the traditional graduation track or on the BC Adult Graduation Diploma Program. Students truly take control and responsibility for their learning at Outreach Alternate Secondary.

Outreach is also special because students feel part of a real community. Caring relationships are fostered in a place with fewer teacher contacts than a traditional school and where students naturally feel a sense of kinship – all students come to our school on their own from throughout the district and beyond, all with their own pasts and “baggage” and all with the goal of graduation.

This sense of community is further developed in many other ways. Students and staff alike come together daily in the lounge/games room before and after their classes. The sharing of food is also a big component that brings us all closer. In addition to always having food stored for those who come to school hungry, we have regular barbecues, a Christmas feast, have trays of food brought over from the cafeteria regularly and bake bread in our Outreach kitchen. For those who connect well with animals, we have “Lucky” our therapy dog on site daily.

Many students have frequent contact with our Aboriginal Support Teacher and Aboriginal Support Worker as well as with our Youth Care Worker. The Youth Care Worker is also involved in the integrated case management of our students and acts as a liaison with various programs and agencies, including: Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre; Iron Horse Safe House; Youth Mental Health; Ministry of Children and Family Development, setting up such things as Youth Agreements and Independent living; and Community Counseling, setting up both individual and family counseling. Students also have regular access to counseling through Outreach and through Alouette Addictions Services.

Outreach staff are also involved with the annual NET lunch program fundraiser for hungry students, helping to organize the event and even performing in the staff band that evening. Outreach staff also help PLEA Community Services to organize the annual “Putting on the Glitz” event, in turn helping out our graduating students in need of formal attire for their special day.

New parents and parents-to-be are supported in Outreach through the fantastic Pregnant and Parenting Program, jointly run by School District #42 and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. In addition to learning more about raising a family, these students are given tremendous support – our teacher and our MCFD/SD42 Youth Care Worker arrange for students to: be transported to/from school and community agencies; receive needed baby items from the community; have regular access to a Health Nurse; receive donations and Christmas Hampers from the local Food Bank and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Christmas Hamper Society; and connect with Cythera Transition House Society for sexual, physical and emotional abuse counselling and to join the Parenting Dinner Program. These students also meet for a regular support group, where they are joined and mentored by former Outreach grads who were once themselves members of our Parenting Program.

Outreach students also learn about and connect with the larger local community through our Planning 10 classes and our Physical Education Program. As part of Planning 10, students go

through an 8-session Personal Accountability and Achievement Program with help from the Ridge Meadows Youth and Justice Advocacy Association. Our PE classes are held at the public Maple Ridge Leisure Centre, with students choosing whether they want to take part in an aerobics class, play a sport in the gymnasium, use the cardio or weight training equipment or go for a swim.

STAFF

Teachers: Carson Power, Mark Tulip, Tara Tait (Mon/Wed),
..... Kim Clarke (Tues/Thurs)
Counsellors: Sacha Page, Mike Wade, Tiffany Kusnezov
Education Assistant: Nicole Haylow-Power
Youth Care Worker: Gehrig Merritt

Parenting Program

Youth Care Worker: Christine Ahern
Parenting Teacher: Lara Cooley

Aboriginal Ed Support

Worker: Kathleen Williamson
Aboriginal Ed Teacher: . Scott Ormiston

Administrator:..... Tricia McCuaig
Custodian:..... Craig Noa

TERM SCHEDULE

Term 1: September to early December
Term 2: December to Spring Break
Term 3: Post Spring Break to June

TUTORIAL TIMES

Monday-Thursday 11:30-12:30 with Carson
Monday-Thursday 11:45-2:39 with Nicole
Tuesday & Thursday 2:30-4:30 with Mark

COUNSELLING TIMES

Counsellors are available anytime for Outreach Students.
Wednesday afternoons Outreach students are given PRIORITY.
Drug and Alcohol Counselling services are available Thursdays.