

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

ALA Eagle Families,

It was an amazing first week at ALA-GN 7-12! I told my wife it was the most fun I've had in the 5 years I've been part of ALA! I thoroughly enjoyed meeting and getting to know so many of your children... they're incredibly kind young people!

Heading into week two, I wanted to pass along some helpful information to you.

First, your children really are exceptional! I saw so many acts of kindness this week on campus... holding doors for others, making compliments, picking up trash, helping new students find their way around, seeking out the lonely... it was a great week!

At our first assembly Friday, I spoke to your children about "being KIND, showing EMPATHY, trying to INSPIRE, and the need to CONNECT... which will create a powerful NETWORK of friends." I love this "kind culture" that the students are embracing!

Second, our traffic inflow/outflow has improved drastically from day one! One area of concern I need your help with is the student drop off/pick up areas. Please remember that students may only be dropped off/picked up at the rear (west side) of the main HS building across from the tennis courts. We do this to keep your students SAFE. With over a thousand cars converging on our relatively small campus in a short 20-25 minute span, our morning and afternoon traffic have all the ingredients of a very dangerous situation.

When you combine that with several hundred young/inexperienced drivers operating in tight spaces; hundreds of distracted students crossing through traffic as they hurry to get home; and even a fairly large number of adult drivers who are distracted with texting or phone calls as they come through the parking lots, the RISKS of an accident are HIGH. The ONLY way we can keep your children SAFE is to lock arms with you and be vigilant... and follow the guidelines for drop off/pick up. PLEASE HELP us by ensuring you do not drop off/pick up students anywhere other than at the designated pick up point.

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Third, we've had many students and families requesting schedule changes to accommodate a preferred lunch period. Please help your student understand that changing a lunch period isn't as simple as just moving the student's lunch period. Lunch periods are set by the academic class the student has before lunch. So, adjusting lunch means adjusting classes; and adjusting classes creates impacts that ripple to other students. For this reason, we cannot approve changes to student lunch periods.

Fourth, I've been impressed with the positive feedback on our enforcement of the dress code. As a staff, we've worked exceptionally hard to train to the standards and we're committed to enforcing the standards consistently. Some of the frequent violations of the dress code are: wrong colors, shirts not tucked for boys, boys didn't wear a belt, girls' shorts or skirts are thigh length (they should be no shorter than an inch above the knee)... but, for the most part, we're doing very well. Also, boys must wear their hair "off the ears, off the collar and out of their face." Please take a moment with your student and review ALA's Uniform Dress Code Policy in our [7-12 Student Handbook](#) and let's not allow our dress and grooming standards get in the way of "the best educational experience."

Fifth, I've also appreciated how the students are supporting the administration's enforcement of the "no cell phone" policy. As a reminder, cell phones should remain off from 8:15 am-2:55 pm or during the school day if we're having early release. In other words, students may use cell phones before and after school, but may not have them out during lunch or at any other time during the day. The biggest challenge for some has been using cell phones during lunch. I spent considerable time this week visiting with many of your children encouraging them to "talk to one another... to make friends... and to experience conversation" as opposed to putting their heads down and staring at their phones. Not a single student argued with me when I asked them to turn off their phone and engage in conversation. In fact, it was fun showing some of them how to start a conversation and how to make a friend.

In support of this policy, ALA GN Student Government and the Fine Arts Department are sponsoring a Parent Night with Collin Kartchner, this coming Tuesday, August 13, 2019, from 7pm-8:30 pm in our ALA GN Auditorium (for tickets:

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/collin-kartchner-savethekids-tickets-68209148399>). Collin is a Youth Advocate, Social Media Activist, TEDx speaker, and dad. He has started a campaign to #SavetheKids from social media and screen addiction's negative affect on mental and emotional health. His message has resonated with the masses, as he has since spoken to 100,000+ youth and adults across the country. Collin is on a crusade to help educate parents on the damage social media and 24/7 access to peer culture will have on their child's mental health. His goal is to help teens rise above social media comparison, negativity, cyberbullying, and the stress of being perfect.

Finally, I know you have a choice when it comes to educating your children. I want to thank you all for trusting us with your children. My staff and I are 100% committed to supporting your family by "providing the best educational experience to as many students as possible in a moral and wholesome environment." If we don't live up to your expectations, please let me know. I'm motivated by the positive and kind energy that emanates from your children... it's a great day to be at ALA... and tomorrow will be even better!

Kindest Regards,
Brent McArthur