Core Values of the Alpha II Community

Alpha II's core pillars are Self-Direction and Community Based on Consensus.

Self-Direction

Learning is meaningful

Value: Students (mentees) learn best when what they are learning is meaningful to them and they have been centrally involved in deciding what and how to learn.

Practice: Students (mentees), in communication with teachers (mentors) determine what and how they would like to learn.

Freedom provided

Value: Alpha II provides freedom to choose by providing a rich range of learning opportunities for students (mentees) to engage them and enthusiastically supports students (mentees) in designing their own learning activities.

Practice: Students (mentees), in consultation with teachers (mentors), are encouraged to actively seek out materials, equipment, information and learning experiences to support their learning plans and goals as well as to expand their horizons.

Responsibility supported

Value: Students (mentees) are enthusiastically supported to be responsible for their learning within an atmosphere of non-coercion.

Practice: Teachers are mentors rather than directors. They support students (mentees) by encouraging them to take responsibility for pursuing a wide and deep exploration of their interests.

No standardized expectations

Value: Students (mentees) learn in unique ways; no predetermined or standardized expectations are placed on students (mentees).

Practice: Students (mentees) record their own learning when and how they deem appropriate in personal portfolios.

No predetermined schedules

Value: When and where the student (mentee) learns is determined by the student (mentee) based on their interests and resources available, not by a predetermined, standardized schedule.

Practice: Flexible attendance of students (mentees) participating in off-site learning and personal programs (such as Co-Op and Dual Credit, community support, and community involvement) means that consistent communication between parents and mentors is essential to maintain student (mentee) safety.

Feedback not evaluation

Value: Teachers (mentors) provide students (mentees) with feedback rather than evaluations.

Practice: Feedback happens at student (mentee)-parent/guardian-teacher (mentor) conferences where interests and personal goals are discussed. Notes taken at the conference are for the student (mentee) to add to their portfolio if they so choose. Grades, tests and report cards are not part of the Alpha II school culture or philosophy.

Community Based on Consensus

Inclusive of all

Value: Alpha II strives to create a positive environment inclusive of all.

Practice: Everyone at Alpha II is encouraged to listen carefully to others' points of view and, when making shared school-related decisions, find a time and place to do what each person values.

Voices added together

Value: The school is run as a Community based on consensus where consensus mean each person's voice is added together in developing that consensus. Voting and majority rule are not featured. The aim of decision making and conflict resolution is finding win/win solutions for shared resources.

Practice: Significant decisions about the school are decided by a consensus method permitting everyone to be heard on each issue at monthly Community Meetings. These meetings are attended by administrators, teachers (mentors), students (mentees) and parents/guardians. Local classroom decisions are made by a consensus of all points of view at weekly student (mentee)-teacher (mentor) meetings.

Respect for abilities

Value: Respecting each person's ability to self-direct their learning and adding their point of view to the consensus are necessary in fostering a learning environment that permits students (mentees) to feel safe and encouraged to learn.

Practice: Everyone involved in Alpha II (students (mentees), administrators, teachers (mentors), parents/guardians, volunteers) is encouraged to listen carefully, attentively and supportively to what others say. Disagreements are resolved through a conflict resolution process including teachers (mentors) but initiated by students (mentees).   This process engages each person involved in the conflict to provide their point of view and then, together, finding a time and place for all proposed outcomes to be realized.