

## **News Release**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Gary Sabol  
360-618-6217

#### **Arlington's truancy board removes barriers to student success**

ARLINGTON- Arlington Public Schools' community truancy board was formed last spring and is providing educational options to keep students in school. Eleventh-grader Keinen LaRose attended Arlington High School (AHS) for ninth- and 10-grades. He felt like he was overwhelmed at AHS and started falling behind in his studies. He never felt like he could catch up and stopped going to school despite interventions from AHS. He missed more than 110 days of school over that two-year period. Under Washington state's truancy law, the school held conferences with LaRose and his family and the school eventually had to file a petition with the juvenile court.

"Since I missed so much school, I had to go to truancy court and I felt like a convict," said LaRose. "After the hearing, I decided I didn't want to drag my parents through that experience again."

Last spring, LaRose attended Arlington's newly formed community truancy board. This board is comprised of educators, administrators, mental health professionals and community members. The student and their family – with the support of the board members – come up with solutions to remove barriers to student attendance.

"I felt like they weren't trying to punish me and actually wanted me to succeed in school. They actually listened to me. They talked about educational options and gave me tools so I could be successful. I felt like I was offered a new start."

LaRose now attends Weston High School and has completely turned his life around. He feels the school is much more hands-on due to the smaller environment and he is working on making up his credits for graduation. LaRose would like to become a heavy machinery operator once he graduates.

His father also drives him to school every day which helps his attendance. In October, he received an award for perfect attendance. He said it was the first award he received since elementary school.

“I’m so proud of him right now and he’s proud of himself,” said his mother Cheyenna Costello. “The truancy board was a very positive experience for us.”

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