

INNOVATIONS

The Sheikh Zayed Private Academy for Girls

September 2017

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents,

Very quickly the month of September has passed and the students at The Sheikh Zayed Private Academy for Girls are well engaged in their learning. I would like to thank all families for supporting the learning of their children. Education is the greatest gift you can give to empower them in their future.

This academic year we have welcomed almost 100 additional students to our school. Welcome to our new families, and welcome back to our existing ones. I have had the great pleasure to address almost all students in their weekly assemblies. What has struck me as I am new to the school, is the grace and respect shown by the students. They have been very well behaved and cooperative with their teachers. These qualities are exemplary! I am very proud to be a part of this community.

Last week we held a Back to School / Meet the Teacher night. Thank you to the families who attended and spoke with the teachers. Showing interest in your child's education, and modelling to them the importance of supporting what they are doing is key to developing a well-rounded child. We look forward to seeing more parents involved in our upcoming events.

Learning is well underway. Teachers have been working diligently to prepare stimulating and challenging lessons for your children. We have been engaging in ongoing professional development in the areas of our school Mission, Vision, & Values, Student Achievement, Record Keeping, iPad training, and more. Some of the main foci we will engage in this year as professional educators include Leadership Training for over 30 staff members, IELTS certification for our non-native English speaking staff, and alignment of our existing Personal Socio/Emotional program to the Ministry of Education's new mandate of Moral Education.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing support, and will be inviting you to attend a 'Coffee with the Principal' morning. Please stay tuned for the date and time which will be announced soon. I look forward to meeting many more parents and discussing your child's education.

Sincerely,

Ms. Janet DesJardins

Principal

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NEWS FROM ELEMENTARY

Innovation can be defined as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements. It is accomplished through more effective processes, models, and use of current research. As the global market changes the needs of students shift with it. To keep up with students' needs it's important for schools to constantly look for innovative opportunities to maximize student learning; SZPAG has planned for a lot of innovational change this year and look forward to sharing those with you through these publications as well as our teacher communication.

For the upcoming 2017-18 school year, SZPAG in conjunction with SZPAB, have made some important changes in our homework practices. We have designed a homework policy that includes thoughtful use of a student's at home time and incorporates practice of both English and Arabic within a time-frame that suits the needs of each grade level student. Research shows that when students practice reading and fluency of math facts in elementary there is more of effect than every student completing the same worksheet. This creates an opportunity for each student to practice at their pace and level of understanding. We have created several avenues for that practice like Raz kids, Mathletics, and many others. Please be on the look-out for student log-ins for the chosen programs for each grade level. We are asking for students to use very small amounts of time using a device but will absolutely encourage the use of actual books as well.

We are also anticipating the start of our 1 to 1 ipad use for grades 3-5 starting in January. This does not exclude the younger students, as they will have the use of our ipad carts. As we get closer to that time more information will go home. If you have already purchased your student ipad through the school, thank you very much! One notable detail will be that if your child leaves the school, as in our transfers to/from the Boys' School, the ipad will go with them.

Thank you for all your support and encouragement for this school year; we look forward to seeing you for Progress Meetings on October 23rd and 24th.

Ms. Tracie Hamilton

Head of Elementary



Attendance Bear

Welcome back everyone to a brand new school year with lots of exciting learning ahead for your children.

We are now in our fourth week of term and focusing on building a strong commitment from our children and families to attain a high attendance target of 95% for the year. To do this we need your help – we need children to attend class daily and be on time. Regular and timely attendance is an important aspect for your child's learning and success at our school and one of the ways we encourage this is by having an attendance certificate and bear for the class with the best record for the previous week. This award is presented at assembly and is a matter of huge excitement for the children, hoping that the bear will visit their class for the week.

We have three bears, one for KG 1 and 2, one for Grade 1 and 2, and one for Grades 3- 5. These bears celebrate collective success and are enjoyed for the week in your child's class. We encourage children to help their mums and dads by getting up on time, having their school bags prepared and ready for the day and by getting to their class before the start time of 8.00am. We hope the attendance bear visits your child's class soon



NEWS FROM SECONDARY

Dear Parents and students,

We are delighted to welcome our students, new and existing, to the Academy this year. We hope you all had a lovely summer and Eid celebration and are ready for a new term of achievement and excellence.

The staff at SZPAG were happy to see so many parents at the Meet the Wellbeing Team afternoon last week and look forward to further discussion at the upcoming parents' evenings on the 23rd and 24th of October – excellent opportunities for us all to support the girls with their endeavors.

This year is an exciting time for all students, with the chance to excel and develop as academics and as young adults. We look forward to helping all our students reach their full potential in a supportive, caring and challenging environment.

Once again, welcome back!

Sincerely,

Ms. Gayle Marshall

Head of Secondary

Positive Progression

I have only been in the UAE at SZPAG for just over a month, but I already love the atmosphere and the desire to achieve. Walking down the corridors and hearing the buzz of learning keeps a smile on my face and a spring in my step. I just know this is going to be a super year...

I suppose to some I represent change: change in teacher, change in classes, change in assessment...the list goes on. I would like to think I represent progression – the goal of every teacher at SZPAG. Having been a teacher for 17 years, I have been privileged to see students develop and become successful, happy young adults and I look forward to seeing more.

Still, a change needs to be understood for potential to be maximised. So, let me go through a few:

English Class Changes

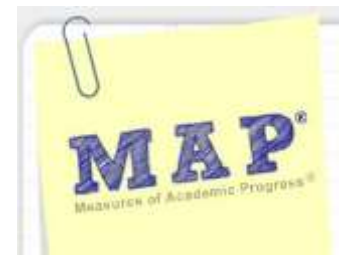
All students have sat a baseline English test; this produced data on reading comprehension, textual analysis and written skills (punctuation, grammar etc...) Using this data and any previous MAP scores, students were placed in the class that best allows them rapid progress. All classes will still be studying the same units of work and taking the same assessments. Should a student demonstrate through their work that they are no longer in the right class, they would then be moved – again, to facilitate their progress and enable access to a challenging curriculum.

Textual Analysis

PEELA has been introduced at all grade levels to support students and provide a framework.

MAP testing (or rather, 'Marvelous Acts of Progress' as I like to call them)

Taken every term, these external assessments will now form 20% of the termly and yearly grade for all MAP subjects.



Not all changes may be met with excitement (it can be difficult for us all to adjust) but I am confident that the excellent results they lead to will be met with positivity and joy. I have found the UAE to be a motivated and strong country that is on a journey of development and success and I am so pleased have been allowed to join with you all on this journey.

I look forward to working with staff, students and parents and the positive progression that will follow.

Warm wishes,

Miss Loretta Conway

Head of English and Curriculum Coordinator

عام دراسي جديد مثمر

أولياء الأمور الكرام

نهنكم ببدء العام الدراسي الجديد، متمنين لأبنائنا الطلبة النجاح الدائم، وأن يوفقهم الله إلى تحقيق آمالهم وطموحاتهم. لقد طرأ على الساحة التعليمية العديد من التغيرات سواء المتعلقة بالمناهج أو التقييم والتي تخدم مصلحة الطالب وتعد له لأخذ دوره في بناء وخدمة مجتمعه ووطنه.

لذا ومع بداية هذا العام، نرجو منكم مد جسور التواصل والتعاون معنا لدعم العملية التعليمية، ومشاركتنا في مسيرتنا التي لن تكفل بالنجاح دون تكاتف جهودنا معا.

إن التعليم لم يعد قاصرا على معلومات تحفظ، أو كتب تدرس، بل أصبح يتطلب إعداد جيل من الخريجين يتمتعون بقدرات ومهارات تؤهلهم للنجاح في الحياة والمساهمة في الاقتصاد والمجتمع. ويتيح لهم الفرصة لاستكشاف قدراتهم ومواهبهم والالتحاق بأرقى مؤسسات التعليم الجامعي داخل الدولة وخارجها. لذا فإن المناهج الجديدة تركز على بناء مهارات التفكير النقدي وتطوير مهارات العمل الجماعي والابتكار، وحل المشكلات باستخدام تكنولوجيا الاتصال والمعلومات من خلال منظومة تعليمية ثنائية اللغة.

ولضمان قيامنا بتوفير البيئة التعليمية المناسبة لأبنائنا الطلبة مع مراعاة احتياجاتهم على اختلاف مستوياتهم وقدراتهم، فإننا نرجو منكم التواصل المباشر معنا في حال كان لديكم أي استفسار، أو لاحظتم تحديات تواجه أبنائكم في العملية التعليمية.

أميرة صلاح

رئيسة القسم العربي

