Assalaamu alaiqum wa rahmat Allah wabarakatu,

What a tremendous accomplishment! We are celebrating 30 YEARS of Islamic education in America through Aqsa School. In 1986, there was no such thing as a recognized full-time Islamic school in the state of Illinois. The most a child could attend was a weekend school program, and even those were newly formed and lacked structure and curriculum. But there were visionaries who believed our community needed a quality, full-time Islamic school that could provide the best of traditional, educational curriculum along with a comprehensive Islamic studies and religion curriculum. The goal was to lay the groundwork, not only for academic success, but also for identity building. And thus AQSA School was born.

Fast forward 30 years and the vision has been realized. Hundreds of Chicagoland Muslim- American families have believed in the mission and witnessed first hand their children benefit from the academic excellence and robust Islamic studies, religion, and Arabic programming that Aqsa school prides itself on. Today, you and your children are part of a milestone moment; our school represents the best of Islam in America; high quality academics, a focus on excellent character and social and emotional growth and strong positive Islamic identity. Our students are leaders, competitive on the academic front and thriving in their faith and Muslim American identity. Our alumni are taking college campuses and their workplaces by storm, representing Islam well as intelligent, thoughtful youth with brains and heart.

This year, we should all feel proud. Proud as parents, proud as a school and proud as a community. What was once a vision of an earlier generation, stands today as an example of excellence in Islamic education for the nation and beyond. I thank everyone for their dedication and commitment to building and sustaining Aqsa School and I pray that Allah bless every student, teacher, parent and supporter who continues to make great learning and student growth possible.

Congratulations Aqsa Family!

Aqsa School Principal wins National Education Award

Aqsa School Principal, Ms. Tammie Ismail, was chosen as the recipient of the Education Excellence Award from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. The award is for private school educators who have demonstrated outstanding service to their schools and students through their innovative contributions aimed at driving student achievement.

“Alhamdulillah, I am honored to serve as the principal of this amazing school and I am truly proud of this accomplishment. This is also an achievement for Aqsa School to be highlighted nationally for being at the forefront of education. May Allah continue to bless our efforts and always keep us on the path of excellence for our students and community”.

To read more about the award http://learn.hmhco.com/2015EducationExcellenceWinners
Assalamu’alaikum Aqsa Families,

Insha’Allah this newsletter reaches you and your family in the best of health and iman.

Alhamdullilah, this 2015-2016 school year marks Aqsa School’s 30th year of providing young Muslims with a quality, college preparation education. Welcome to our new and returning Aqsa students and their families. We have just finished our first quarter and are excited about what the second quarter has to offer.

This year we have some new additions to our staff. As many of you know, I have been the Assistant Principal and Dean for the last few years. In order to focus more on the roles and responsibilities of the Assistant Principal, we have hired Ms. Assma Daifallah as our new Dean of Students. In our Junior High and High School, we welcome the following new teachers:

- Ms. Hazar Alkhawaja (Computers/Graphic Design)
- Ms. Rhonda Atallah (Physical Education/Science)
- Ms. Reem Eid (Math long-term substitute)
- Ms. Stacee Hartin and Ms. Dina Mahmoud (English)
- Ms. Azkar Hussein (Science)
- Ms. Hayat Msouty (History)
- Ms. Sameria Ramadan (JH computers/Multi-media)

In our elementary, we welcome:

- Ms. Lana Nouti-Abubaker (4th Grade)
- Ms. Saida Steele (Reading Specialist/elementary computers)

We are very happy to see many of our students this year participating in the many extracurricular clubs and committees that the school has to offer. We invite parents to try to make time to attend some of the upcoming sporting events or Speech/Debate competitions.

In addition to new staff, we will be incorporating some new on-line resources for our students in various grades. These on-line, academic programs will allow students to practice skills in school and at home.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to educate your children. We encourage our parents to contact us with any suggestions, comments or concerns.
Dear Parents, Students and Community,

As you are likely aware, I officially began serving as the Dean of Students at Aqsa School on October 19, 2015. I am very excited about working at Aqsa School this school year and using this time to learn more about the school, and the community. I have worked at Lane Tech College Prep as a Social Science and Foreign Language teacher for the past four years. I completed my undergrad degree at Saint Xavier University. I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education Social Sciences, and a minor in International Studies. I am currently working on my Master's degree in Higher Administration, and will complete my Master’s degree in April 2016.

Inshallah, I plan on working with the students to promote the best manners. Our students, have the best manners because they are raised by caring parents. Jabir (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "The dearest and nearest among you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be one who is the best of you in manners" [At-Tirmidhi].

وعن جابر رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "إن من أحبكم إلي، وأقربكم منى مجلساً يوم القيامة أحسنكم أخلاقاً،"

(رواه الترمذي وقال: حديث حسن)

Although the 2015-2016 school year has officially has begun and I am joining the school now, I would like to get to know each and every one of you throughout the rest of the school year. I am looking forward to serving Aqsa School and getting to know you better.
In Regards to School Uniforms:

With the upcoming school year approaching, please make sure that you visit Schoolbelles in Bridgeview and purchase or place an order for your child’s uniform. Delaying the purchase of a uniform may result in your child having to wait an extended period of time to have it delivered. All students in grades 6-12 should be in complete uniform every day. If your child is out of uniform for a specific reason, you must send a note with your child, otherwise, she will receive a demerit.

Concerning Student Attendance/Absences:

The new school year will also bring some additions to our school handbook. Please be aware that parents of students that are excessively tardy or absent during the semester will be required to meet with the Dean of Students to discuss the issue.

Please make every effort to make sure your school on time and make arrangements in tor/dentist visits to be scheduled after weekends, if possible.

Drop off and Pick-up:

In addition, drop off and pick-up for students for the 2015-2016 school year will change slightly.

Elementary students should be dropped off at the west side doors where they will be greeted by a member of the Aqsa staff. Students should not be dropped off prior to 8:05am as teacher supervision begins at that time.

Junior high and high school students may enter through either the front doors or the west side doors. The east side doors are not to be used for drop off or pick up.

Dismissal:

Dismissal will remain the same for all grades. Elementary will be dismissed from the front lobby and junior high and high school from the west side doors only.
December is coming to an end and the preschoolers are flourishing. We are learning many new and exciting things. We just finish surat Al-Falaq and we are starting surat Al Kawther. Our preschoolers have memorized four surahs and their meanings so far. In Islamic studies, preschoolers are learning how to make wudu and perform salah. In English and Arabic, preschoolers enjoyed making different projects for every letter. The theme for this month is winter. The students have been working on many projects for winter such snowman and snowflakes. Ms. Huda

**Kindergarten Corner**

**Ms.Ibrahim**

**Reading & Vocabulary**
Starting this month, students will bring home the reading envelope for homework with comprehension questions every week!

**Reading Envelope**
Starting this month, students will bring home the reading envelope for homework with comprehension questions every week!

**Phonics**
Students started to blend letters to form words. We started on the -at family. We also learned the /th/ dia-

**Language Arts: Story of the week:**

Last week we read the story *Little Panda* where we compared and contrasted the cub and the adult panda. This week we will read the story *See How it Grows*. We will work on cause and effect. We will use a graphic organizer to help organize our thoughts.

**Vocabulary words this week:**
twins, crawl, children, newborn, walk, babies

**Our sight words this week:**
are, Then, with that

**Our sight words next week:**
as, his, of, and

Every three weeks we have an author study! We read the author's books and discuss the writing style and illustrations.

**Science**
This week we will be starting chapter 3. We will be focusing on animals that live on land and on water.

**Social Studies**
We will be focusing on different types of land. Students saw video of different types of landforms, and we discussed their differences.
First Grade News

Mashallah, the first graders have adjusted well to the routines and rhythms of the school day, as the first quarter of school comes to an end. In math, we have been working on addition and subtraction. We can define the word sum and difference. We have also been working on our speed and accuracy when adding and subtracting single digit numbers. In science, we identified different plant parts (stems, leaves, flowers, seeds, etc.) that we eat. The students observed a wheat grain and discovered that it is a seed, which is ground and turned into flour and then bread. In social studies, we discussed rules and how they are important for our safety. We also looked at maps and used map keys to find routes on neighborhood maps. Ask your child to identify a symbol the next time you go out!

In Reading, we just concluded our unit on animals. We studied various animals, wild and tame. We learned how animals help people and how we can help them as well. The students engaged in many interesting and enriching centers about birds, baby animals, and habitats. We also made our animal safari books with pictures and captions we wrote ourselves. In spelling, we covered all the short vowel sounds and initial and final blends. In writing, we have been journaling daily and have mastered writing complete sentences that begin with capitals and end with periods. The first graders had their first writer’s workshop. We brainstormed ideas and topics for a personal narrative, composed our rough drafts, edited, proofread and then published our final drafts. Be sure to check out your child’s final draft on the class bulletin board! In addition to this, as mock hajj drew near the first graders put on a great performance about the value of hajj and reenacted the pilgrimage ritual of the Sa’iy from Mount Safaa to Marwa. We also had the most enjoyable Eid field trip to Enchanted Castle.

Second Grade News

Quarter 1 flew by in 2nd grade! We have done so many fun and educational activities this quarter. In reading, we have read many stories focusing on comprehension and different phonics skills. Students have been working on their writing skills throughout the quarter. With this, they were able to develop a narrative essay using different steps of the writing process. Students have been engaging in many hands-on activities in math. They have been enhancing their skills in addition and subtraction using tens. Students have also been working with representing numbers in different forms. In social studies, students had the opportunity to learn about the community they live in and relate it back to their own experiences. In science, students learned about plants and how they grow. We have created a plant book to show everything we have learned in chapter 1 of our science unit. We had the opportunity to collect leaves from outside and use them in our plant books! Second graders also participated in many fun activities during the quarter. We had a successful Mock Hajj program where students presented information based on the Safa and Marwa. We took a fun field trip to Enchanted Castle! Students also donated money and dressed in pink for breast cancer awareness month. I look forward to what is to come in Quarter 2!
Third Grade Update

Asslamu alyakum,
This quarter has been great! We have mastered all our procedures alhamdullah. This quarter in math we reviewed addition and subtraction. We also wrapped up our first unit on multiplication and division. Be on the lookout for measurement in the upcoming weeks. In reading, we will begin our novel study on *Freckle Juice*. In science, we learned about the life cycles of different organisms. In social studies we have been learning about different communities and geography. Inshallah, we will continue this great journey all throughout second quarter.

Fourth Grade Corner

Asslamu Alaikum Parents/Gaurdians,

We have been very busy workers in fourth grade Abubaker Airways! Students took on a very challenging way of thinking in Math this year with our new Eureka Math curriculum and are coming to have a very solid understanding of Place Value. We have reviewed many skills in Reading; students really enjoyed creating timelines of important events in their lives and travel brochures of the places around the world they would like to visit! We also continue to practice reading comprehension daily with our morning reading passages. We finished up our chapter on Energy in Science, and are beginning to discuss Forces and Motion. Students are also very excited about their Science Fair projects! They have already started by choosing their topics!

Students have had many specials outside of the classroom as well! Gym, Computers, and Library are some of the other activities students engage in throughout the week. We also have Character Building once per week with our social worker, Ms. Layla Khair, and Junior Achievement with one of our very own parent volunteers, Ms. Sandy Ayesh!

Students have come to make the classroom their own throughout the first quarter; we continue to practice the routines and procedures throughout the day. Each day we have a Student of the Day who is the helper for the day. This student gets the special privilege of feeding our betta fish that students have named Sapphire!

Thank you for all that you do to help your child grow and succeed!
The fifth grade class devoted the month of October studying Native Americans. Students were assigned a tribe to research and then present their findings to the class. This year was special because students created slides on our classroom Chromebooks. Students worked tirelessly making sure their slides included important information about their tribe such as: traditions, types of shelter, art, influential leaders, and region in which they lived. Some of the Natives we learned about were the Seminole, Oneida, and Tillamook.

Island of the Blue Dolphins was our novel study this quarter. Karana, the main character, battles against hunger, the ocean, wild dogs, and treacherous Aleuts. Yet she also discovers the value of friendship and man’s responsibility to protect wild creatures. This novel was a great extension to our Native American unit. Here are some reflections from the class about the novel.

I would recommend it to a friend because it’s a very good book. The author gives a lot of details so that you can picture it in your mind. – Zaina

I think it’s a great book. I would recommend it to a friend because it is detailed and thorough. It started off calmly, and then got better. – Mahmoud

I think this book had good themes such as bravery and never giving up. Karana was brave for a 12 year old. – Maddy

I think that Karana is very brave, bold, and daring. She stood up to the wild dogs. Karana jumped off the ship just to stay with her brother. – Khaled

I liked Island because once you read the first page you are attached to the book and you can’t put it down. I think it was an amazing story and can’t wait for the next. – Sara

I liked this book because it is interesting and educational. I learned that you are capable of doing things yourself. – Safia

I think Karana is brave for surviving alone on the island for 18 years. – Janna

I would recommend this book because it is about survival. – Maryam

My favorite part was when Rontu died and she found his son and made him her pet. – Amira

I think this is a book about bravery, courage and friendship that is all shown through a character in the book named Karana. I think what Karana did was incredible for her age. – Laila
Fifth Grade Continued

Girls Can Do Anything MATH and SCIENCE Conference

On October 23, Maryam Altaeh, Zaina Abdullah, Laila Abdelaal, Maddy Arouri, Amira Froukh, and Sara Elhrisse attended a conference for fifth grade girls, at Moraine Valley. They participated in inquiry-based learning stations, listened to the journey of a mapmaker, and met high school students who think math and science are fun! These women use S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering, and math) to solve problems and help people.

Congratulations from The Aqsa Family

Hajjat at Aqsa: Hajj Mabroor, to Ms. Mona, Ms. Samira and Ms. Rasheed who all embarked on the blessed journey to Makkah and Madinah for their successful completion of the fifth pillar of Islam, the Hajj pilgrimage. We all pray that Allah accept your Hajj and reward you for your struggles and worship with a purified heart as if you were just born. AMEEN.

NEW ADDITIONS: Aqsa adds 3 new baby boys to the family

Congratulations to Ms. Haleama Hasan and Ms. Tammie Ismail on the birth of their newborns. Also, Ms. Mersch on the birth of her first grandchild.

Ms. Hasan and the Mohammad family welcomed baby Rayaan on July 31st weighing 8lbs 1oz.

Ms. Ismail had baby Ibrahim days after curriculum night. The Abedelal family welcomed their newborn on September 15th weighing 8lbs and 7ozs and 21 inches long.

Rounding off our baby news is the birth of Cason Elias, Ms. Mersch’s first grandson, who was born November 1st, weighing in at 8lbs and 18.5 inches.

MABROOK TO ALL THREE families. We pray that Allah bless these baby boys and make them from the salaheen. Ameen!
Celebrate Life Through Literature!

November 2nd-January 14th

Competitions among classes:

Raise the Most Money: Students in their English classes will raise money for Read-a-thon by getting sponsors and donating their change. The class who raises $100 dollars will receive a Movie Day. The class who exceeds $100 dollars and raises the most money will receive a complimentary ice cream bar on the day of their movie.

Due: Thursday, January 14th

Most Pages Read Contest: The Class that reads the most pages will be given a Pizza Party. You can only count pages read after you have passed the given assessment for the book. You can only count books you read during Read-a-thon. You can count the books you read as a class during Read-a-thon along with your independent books and any extra credit books you have read. Individual awards will be given to the students who read the most books. Last day to take extra credit book tests: Due Thursday, January 14th

Mini-Contests: Each contest is worth up to 10 extra credit points depending upon quality of work. No late work will be accepted. Winners of each contest will receive an award at the Read-a-thon Assembly.

Make a new book cover (Design a book cover for a book that gave you joy and helped you celebrate life! Make sure the front cover is an original design that illustrates your love for this book. Make sure the back provides a thoughtful and thorough paragraph about how this book filled you with happiness and a thrill for life. Make sure your cover has a spine.) Due: Thursday, November 19th

Poem Recitation: Due Thursday, December 10th (See teacher for poem)
Create your own tree poster. On a half-size poster board, create a tree of your own design and imagination. Include somewhere on your poster a quotation about the joy of life! Due: Thursday, January 7th

Attach an inspirational quotation about the importance of reading or how to live a fulfilling life to a piece of candy, gum, cupcake, lollipop (no peanut items), pencil, pen, handmade friendship bracelets, handmade drawings/cards, sticker, shell, etc. for each member of your class and teacher. Pass it out any time during Read-a-thon! (Let your teacher know when you will be bringing your items.)

Mandatory Read-a-thon Assignments

Mandatory Reading and Testing:

Every student must read at least three independent reading novels from the books given to them by their teacher and take an assessment test on them on the following dates: First Novel: For Junior High: Esperanza Rising—Wednesday, November 11, For High School: Monday, November 23; Second Novel: Monday, December 14; Third Novel: Monday, January 11

Note: You must take your objective test on the test day or your consequence may include mandatory after-school reading session/a call home to your parents. You cannot fall behind on your reading!

During Read-a-thon, you may read extra books from the extra credit reading list designated for your grade only and take an assessment test on them and receive extra credit. All extra credit book tests must be taken no later than Tuesday, January 19 (All extra credit tests must be taken after school during your teacher’s office hours.)

Mandatory Activities

SSR (Silent Sustained Reading) Fridays: For this activity, you must bring a novel to class every Friday during Read-a-thon. Silent Sustained Reading will last for 20 minutes or longer. During this time, you must be silent and reading the entire time. This is a great opportunity for you to relax, enjoy a great book and catch up on your reading in order to ace the independent novel objective tests.

Letters about Literature Writing Contest: Write a letter to an author explaining how a book you have read by them changed your life or view of the world. Write a persuasive letter stating your opinion and supporting that opinion with specific details. A letter is less formal than an essay or research paper. Write honestly and in your own voice, as if you were having a conversation with the author. Those are the best letters to read and the most fun to write! Keep in mind these two tips:
Read-a-thon continued

-**Correspond, don’t compliment!** Your letter should inform rather than flatter the author. All FAN letters should be eliminated!

-**Do not summarize the book’s plot!** The author wrote the book and knows what happened. What the author doesn't know is how the book affected you and why it did so. Only you can explain that unique relationship you experienced while reading the book.

**First Rough Draft Due:** Wednesday, November 4  
**Second Rough Draft Due:** Monday, November 16  
**Final Essay Due:** Tuesday, November 24

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**Mandatory Character Party**

On Thursday, January 21st, we will have our Read-a-thon Assembly. On this day, awards will be given to the various contest winners.

For this assembly, our theme will be based on the following: **Celebrate Life Through Books!** You will come to this party dressed as an emotion of life. For inspiration you can think of the Disney movie, *Inside Out* in which each character was a different emotion: Joy, Sadness, Fear, Anger, etc. Remember the lesson from the movie--every person needs a range of emotions to have a complete life. Sometimes you need sadness to bring out the joy. Or you need anger to fight for what is right, etc. Please make sure your outfit is Islamically appropriate. Coming dressed in a costume is worth 5 points.

You must create a nametag to wear with your costume. This name tag will contain an original 10 line poem illustrating how your emotion contributes to the celebration of life! Allow your mind to explore the joys of your imagination! Make sure you turn your nametag into your teacher at the end of the day. **10 points**

On the day of the assembly, you may come to school dressed in your outfit with a closed abaya over it. Awards will be given for the best dressed in each grade.

During this assembly, lunch will be served. Each grade will be responsible for bringing in potluck items for their grade to share. Pizza will be provided by the school.

For entertainment, during the meal, you will be required to discuss literature. After lunch, we will watch Aqsa School’s Play. Next, we will break for prayer, then we will have dessert and begin our Read-a-thon Awards’ Assembly. Positive participation at the assembly is worth **15 points**.

Students in each grade are responsible for bringing the following items to school on Thursday, January 21st. The bringing of these items is worth **20 points**. Note: Do Not Bring Any Items with Peanuts.
English Corner

Ms. Joudeh’s classes and clubs!

Junior High students found their hidden talents as they worked on a novel by the same name. Students identified individual traits of characters and wrote about what makes these characters, and each individual student special in their own way.

English I Honors just completed their first murder mystery! They worked diligently and collected evidence in the form of annotations to solve the case of Justice vs. Revenge.

American Literature is taking an in-depth look as to how and why drama and plays depend so much on scenery, lighting, costumes, and dialogue.

British Literature students are asking how an animal farm could be compared to government and revolutions. The answer lies in satire and allegory!

Debate Club competed in their first invitational on October 24th at Fenwick High School. We came away with loads of experience, a new perspective on controversial issues, and some amazing wins. Good job to the following students and good luck at the next meet November 14th: LD: Nada Khatib, Yasmeen Lowe, Sahar Murrar, and Hannah Shaban. PF: Miriam Ellayan & Amani Khatib, Lilia Abushaban & Ahlam Khatib, and Yasmin Abutaa.

Student Council has been very busy planning events for the entire school year beginning with the Eid Filed Trip. In the works are a relaxing Pajama Day, Finals Free-Bees, Spirit Week, and a spiritual Qiyam.

Ms. Mahmoud’s Writing and English Classes

Salam Alaikum!

Ms. Mahmoud’s 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students have been working diligently since the first day of school to develop their minds as critical thinkers. In their English classes they have worked towards strengthening their reading comprehension and analytical skills. In their Writing course, students have already brainstormed, written, revised, and published an Informative and Argumentative Essay. The skills that your daughter has acquired this quarter are aligned to the Common Core State Standards and are skills they need to be college and career ready.

Ms. Hartin’s Classes!

My English students have been hard at work reading classics from long ago like The Scarlet Letter and Pride and Prejudice. However, we have also dabbled with some modern pieces like The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle, Crucible, and Their Eyes Were Watching God. Every student, no matter what she is reading, has been assigned to a note-taking group or partner. These groups work together like a book club to help each other understand what is happening in the book and why. I enjoy eavesdropping on these groups and seeing the students in action. I have some deep thinkers in all my classes! For this new quarter I am especially looking forward to the garden my 6th graders and I are planting as we read the book The Secret Garden. If anyone has potted house plants you wish to donate for our project please bring them to the front office of the school with a note saying that they are for Mrs. Hartin’s garden. We would greatly appreciate your donations!

Drama Club is off to a roaring start this year! We have 14 faithful players in the club and have already begun rehearsing our production for the upcoming read-a-thon character party. We will be performing the play Stories Under the Big Top. It will be a grand circus adventure with fun for the whole family! Don’t miss it! Our show will be on January 21st!
Religion Dept

Dear parents,

Assalamu Alikum. I hope you and your family are in good health and the greatest of Iman.

Aqsa School has a new club for reciting Qur’an: "Attalyat". The purpose of the club is to perfect the students’ pronunciation of the Qur’an and read the Ayahs fluently; the Prophet (PBUH) said:

من قرأ حرفًا من كتاب الله فله حسنة، والحسنة بعشر أمثالها لا أقول (النم) حرف ولكن : ألف حرف ولام حرف، وميم حرف. (صحيح الجامع).

Rasulullah Sallallahu `alaihi wasallam said, "Whoever reads one letter of the Book of Allah is credited with one blessing and one blessing is equal to tenfold the like thereof in its reward. I do not say that (Alif Lam Meem) is one letter, but (Alif) is one letter, (Lam) is one letter, and (Meem) is one letter." (Tirmidhi)

"The best amongst you is the one who learns the Qur’an and teaches it."

It is also meant to increase the members’ remembrance of Allah (SWT) and instill in them the concept of reward regarding the Qur’an. It is in our tradition that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"يقال لصاحب القرآن: اقرأ وارتقت ورتلت كم كنت ترتل في الدنيا، فإن منزلتك عند آخر آية تقرؤها".

"The one who was devoted to the Qur’an will be told on the Day of Resurrection: 'Recite and ascend (in ranks) as you used to recite when you were in the world. Your rank will be at the last Ayah you recite.'"

The club is one year old, and alhamdulilah the members showed a good amount of progress. Last year the students finish reading Surat “Al Baqara”, and this year our goal is to finish Surat “Al Imran” and help the students with the Qur’an competition Surahs. We want all the students to benefit from this club and enhance their recitation fluency.

We meet every other week for one hour. During the meetings we read a certain number of ayahs and correct each student’s pronunciation. It is also a relaxing hour from the busy schedule of nowadays life!

If you see this club is suitable for your daughter, please encourage her to join.

Wa jazakum Allah khairan.

Laila Elamin
Religion department Chair
Attalyt Club Advisor

Curriculum Corner

We are excited to announce that we have developed a curriculum website that could be accessed from the main Aqsa School website at www.aqsa.edu. You could find the link under the drop down menu within the “Academics” tab. On the site, we will continue to update as we move ahead with curricular goals. Please visit the site as a way to continue to support your son/daughter. We have also been working on introducing “Skills Navigator” to our elementary/junior high staff. This is an online portal provided through our NWEA partner that will assist us in supporting our teachers determine the skills students need to continue working on as we continue to move in supporting each students’ individual growth needs. We were visited by a neighboring public school to learn more about Skills Navigator. Our curriculum coordinator is currently participating in the Curriculum Leadership Development Network to continue enhancing curricular support. Our Math Department is currently focused on creating performance task assessments within each test as a team effort. We are also working on Math Night for our families, which will be on November 20th. This year we are looking into integrating STEM stations into our Math Night. Please make sure to come out and join us.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact me at aakhras@aqsa.edu or 708-598-2700.
Ms. Valle’s Classes

In Chemistry we spent the first quarter exploring different ways to describe the world around us. Students practiced measuring different chemical and physical properties while solving real-world problems like testing for the presence of metals or drugs. They successfully designed procedures to separate mixtures and answer questions about substance purity. Most recently students replicated the results of famous past experiments that lead to the discovery of electrons, nuclei, and other parts of the atom.

In addition to the activities described above, students in Chemistry Honors spent a fair amount of time investigating isotopes, modeling their structure, and calculating their masses. Students composed a short research paper on this topic in addition to class activities and labs. We just finished our second unit on atomic structure and are exploring the principles behind the organization of the periodic table, and learning about information encoded on it. Going forward, students will begin analyzing the bonds between different atoms.

AP Biology students have thus far examined life on a microscopic scale (the structures and properties of atoms and molecules that are essential for life) and the macroscopic scale (how energy, matter, and life interact throughout the biosphere). Along the way, students have gained valuable skills in designing controlled experiments, using microscopes, and following the Winkler Method protocol for measuring dissolved oxygen. They have answered questions like, “Why do yeast ferment molasses so well?” “What affects the rate of enzymatic activity?” and “How can productivity of an ecosystem change?” The rest of the semester our focus will shift toward exploring and explaining the magnificent diversity of life on our planet.

Ms. Ottman’s Classes

Life Science and Physical Science had a fun first Quarter. They went on a Science is Fun Cruise and explored questions like “What are invasive species?” and “Which body of water is more clean: Lake Michigan or the Chicago River?” Physical Science had a bridge competition using only 2 pieces of construction paper and tape. Some of the bridges held over 10lbs! Life Science class got to look at their own cheek cells, and can now name the cell organelles, along with their functions.

Biology class can also name the cell organelles and cell functions. They’ve also become experts on Macromolecules and even published a video on YouTube showing all that they learned.

All three classes are working on their Science Fair Project. Expect your child to start working on their project at home!

Math Dept

In Algebra II, we finished solving systems of linear equations. Students are working on applications of linear equations and inequalities. The Honors Algebra II class used the online software Desmos.com to create pictures using functions. In another project, they learned how to maximize profit by establishing a business plan.

In Pre-calculus, students worked all first quarter on algebra and functions prerequisites. We’ll be starting analyzing twelve basic functions soon.

In Honors Physics, we covered Kinematics in one dimension. We are currently learning two-dimensional Kinematics. The students were able to build model bridges and test them. During the 2nd quarter, students will be able to use Vernier and TI-Texas Instrument Technology to gather and analyze data.
Ms. Msouty’s History Classes

Asalaam Alaikum! My classes are digging deep into the amazing history of the world. In 6th grade, we just finished making cartouches with our names in hieroglyphics, and will be exploring what made Ancient Egypt such an amazing and successful civilization. We’re also studying African Civilizations in 7th grade, where the students are researching particular civilizations and their impact on African culture. We just started learning about the Middle Ages in 9th Grade, and the students will soon be conducting a research project that explores the age of chivalry and kings. We will also be comparing the Middle Ages to the Golden Age of Islam, which we just finished. In 8th grade, we just finished learning about the impact of European exploration on the Americas, and will now start determining the causes and effects of the Revolutionary War. 10th grade will be exploring the challenges of being a new nation, and will also be engaging in debate over the causes of the Civil War in the United States. These next few weeks will be packed with fascinating and interesting material, and I cannot wait to see how the students will engage in it!

Ms. Razvi’s Corner

During the first quarter of the year, all of our history classes have been working to improve on their historical thinking skills, which allow students to critically analyze and process information to form their own understanding of the past.

In A.P. U.S. History, we have been digging into the early period of the foundation of the United States government. Students have been working hard to improve on their writing skills, by attempting DBQs, or document based questions. DBQs ask students to look at 7 different sources and to be able to form a complete historical argument using them as evidence.

In Honors U.S. History, the students have also been targeting the early period until the Civil War. Honors students are building on their primary source analysis skills. They have looked at documents from the past, such as Abraham Lincoln’s letters and political cartoons in order to better understand people and the past.

In Islamic History, seniors have been learning about the development and expansion of Islam and the Muslim community from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to the Umayyad Empire. Students have been exploring the dilemmas that faced Muslim leaders during this period as Islam became a multi-cultural empire.