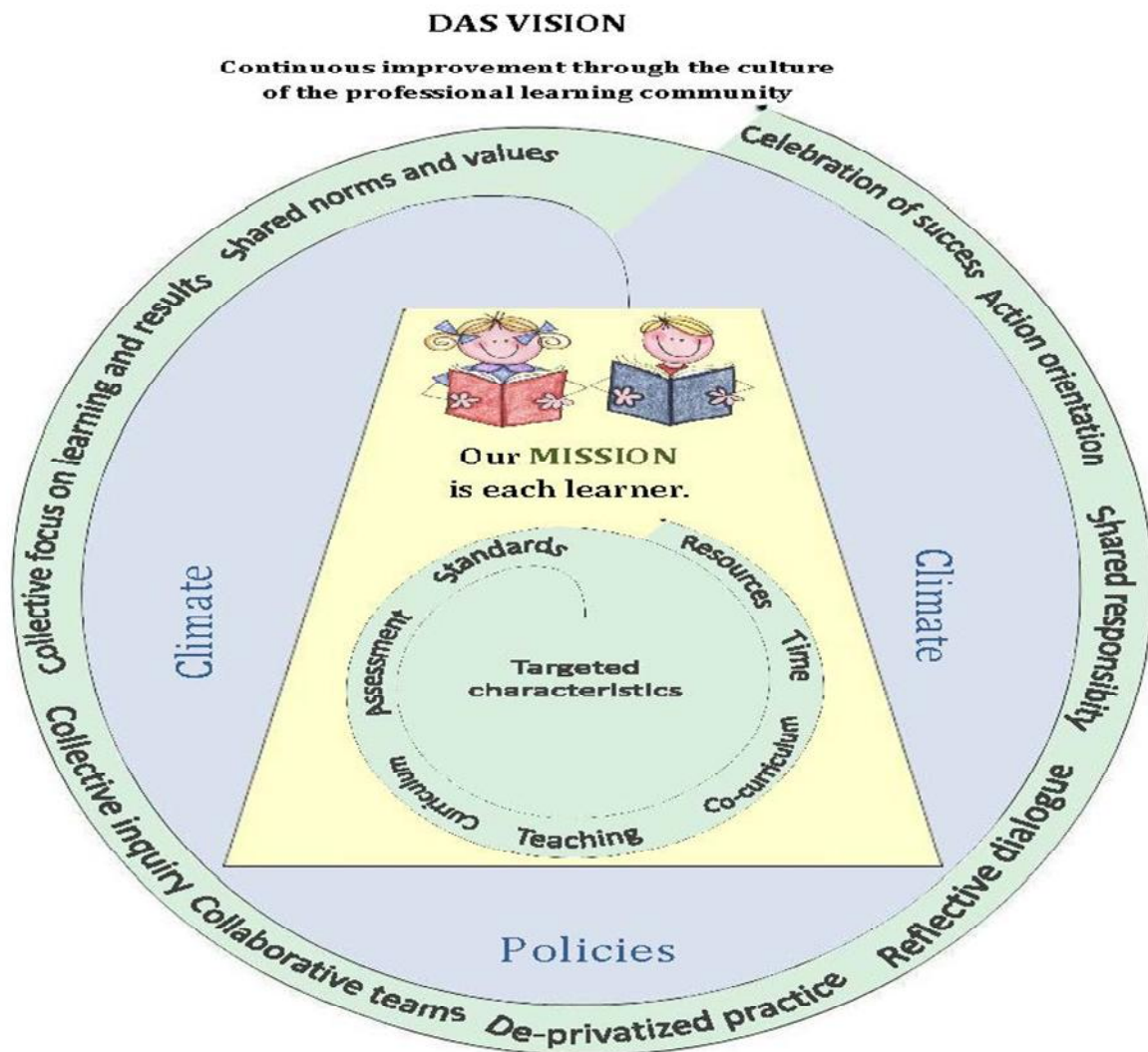

**WHAT DO DHAHRAN
AHLIYYA SCHOOLS
(DAS) DO TO ENSURE
CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT?**

30 March 2011

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF DHAHRAN AHLIYYA SCHOOLS (DAS)?

Dhahran Ahliyya Schools is a not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1977 for the purpose of providing the best possible education to its students. It is approved by the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia and accredited by the North Central Association Council for Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI). Committed to continuous progress toward this goal, it has learned through the years to respect the complex interrelationships among many factors which influence the process of development. Some of these factors are represented in the figure below and are explained in the subsequent pages. In the DAS experience, each part of this figure is essential; a gap in any of these influences the entire process. Therefore, improvement efforts must somehow involve all the parts at once.



At the center of the figure is our **Mission** which is to develop each child in all his aspects – academic, moral, psychological, social, artistic – and all his intelligences.

First: To develop the potential of each student, based on the sacred principles of Islam, to become a thinking person who loves to learn, cares for others, and interacts positively with the changing world, in order to be successful in life and contribute to the development of society.

Second: To participate in the development of education in the Arab World.

Our targets for our students are explained in the **Targeted Characteristics** which show that the character and personality of the child is fully as important as his academic achievement.

DAS students will learn to become:

1. Principled, faithful Muslims
 - A. Faithful: Possess strong faith in the principles and values of our sacred Islamic religion, which are also the values of humanity, and that is reflected in their words and deeds.
 - B. Principled: Demonstrate a deep understanding of the lifelong principles and guidelines, applying them consistently in life.
2. Thinking persons who love learning and interact positively with the changing world
 - A. Aware: Keep up-to-date about current events and matters of importance locally and internationally
 - B. Thinking: Possess and apply habits of mind and thinking skills in making decisions and solving complex problems
 - C. Inquiring: Enjoy a sense of curiosity and love of learning throughout life, possess the skills needed to continue learning and research new ideas in a manner that is constructive and valuable
 - D. Reflective: Think about own learning and work in depth, analyzing own points of strengths and weaknesses in a constructive manner.
3. Open-minded persons who care about others
 - A. Caring: Demonstrate caring and empathy towards others and their feelings as well as a strong sense of personal commitment to take action in the service of the future of our world
 - B. Open-minded: Appreciate differences in individuals, showing respect for different races, cultures and religions; refuse extremism and racism.
4. Successful people who contribute to the development of society
 - A. Effective: Demonstrate life skills, applying them consistently in life
 - B. Communicative: Demonstrate a high level of ability to express ideas, feelings and information with confidence, in English, in Arabic and through other means of expression.
 - C. Balanced: Know the importance of balance between the mind and body for personal health and maintain this balance in life
 - D. Risk-taking: Approach the unknown without anxiety, having the confidence and self-reliance to take on new roles and deal with new ideas and strategies; demonstrate courage and readiness to stand firm in defense of own beliefs
 - E. Collaborating: Take a positive view of matters and of persons and possess the skills and habits of cooperation with others for effective teamwork to accomplish joint objectives
 - F. Loyal: Possess deep feelings of belong and loyalty to their school, country, nation, and world

With this broad view of the school's Mission, we understand that the process of moving toward it and toward our Targeted Characteristics is very complex. We also understand that everything that happens in a school is part of the teaching process. The key to all progress, we have learned, is having a positive climate in the school. It must be a peaceful place where children and adults are happy to spend their time – a place where they feel accepted, respected, and supported no matter who they are. Without this positive climate in which there is a balance between satisfaction and productivity, no other efforts will be successful.

Within that positive climate, we can work on our instructional program. To be effective, we must plan and carefully coordinate our standards, assessment, curriculum, co-curricular program, the time allocated to all the parts, and the resources available. DAS efforts to improve our instructional program are discussed in more detail below.

On a larger scale, however, to actually instill our Targeted Characteristics, it is essential that everyone in the school is committed to the same **Vision** and to continuous progress toward fulfillment of our Mission.

We strive to be a pioneering learning community that fosters collaboration, persists in continuous inquiry and development, and utilizes current research and technology in the service of improving student learning.

In order to ensure continuous progress, DAS has worked on several fronts, the most important of which are explained below. However, we know that no matter what else we do to improve the education we offer our students, the most important elements in the process are the quality, stability and continuous collective reflection of the teachers, staff and leadership.

WHAT IS THE DAS STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

Since our motto is that “every year we will be better than the year before”, it is essential that we have a clear **Strategy** for ensuring progress.

The DAS strategy for continuous improvement is to fulfill the Schools’ mission through living the principles of a professional learning community. This strategy requires involvement of all employees in the schools in an ongoing program of professional development that enables them to participate in a process of continuous analysis and evaluation of data about the results of our work, the development of better systems, methods, and teaching materials and the addition of new programs for our students.

In order to be effective, this strategy requires that parents and students be involved in the improvement process whenever possible.

This strategy has been guiding DAS right from its first year and has helped provide the answers to the question, “What does DAS do to ensure continuous progress?”

1. Makes careful selection of faculty and staff

Teachers are usually selected for work at DAS by a committee formed of educational leaders according to a certain approach that aims at identifying the personal qualities, attitudes, views, and educational competency of the applicant. The final approval of an applicant for a position is made in light of the committee's evaluation of the interview, performance on written test in the subject matter and, whenever possible, classroom demonstration.

2. Continuously undertakes new efforts to maintain a positive climate and environment

A. Cares for faculty and staff

Realizing the importance of providing the psychological and physical comfort for its employees, DAS has provided them with the following:

- Competitive salaries and benefits, reduced fees for the children in the school, and interest-free loans
- Opportunities for professional growth and involvement in decision making for their area of work

B. Elects Positive Climate Committee

In each school (girls and boys) this committee, made up of representatives chosen by each team, meets every 1-2 weeks with the principals. Each committee is responsible to identify needs and undertake projects to maintain and/or improve school climate.

C. Strives to be clear about policies, and implements them consistently

The Directors' Committee (Principals, Directors of Curriculum and Professional Development, Directors of Business Office, General Directors, Deputy Presidents) meets twice each week by conference telephone to approve and coordinate progress and activities, to identify the need for policies and to collaborate to write them. After completion, these policies are signed and placed on the DAS intranet where they are available for all to see and follow. For example, in 2010, new, stronger policies were announced in regard to daily attendance and punctuality of students and faculty. They are being applied even though many families and faculty members object. In addition, a new policy regarding grading and reporting was written by the Directors' Committee in connection with the Supervisors' Committees of the two sides. This policy required more than fifty hours of meetings. It was then announced to parents and explained to teachers and students.

D. Strives to maintain good relations between children and adults, among the students, and among the faculty and staff members

DAS helps teachers learn how to create a positive and productive climate in school and classroom through using strategies that reinforce student self-esteem, treat both student and teacher with dignity and teach students to be responsible for their own behaviors.

The Student Council plays a great role in fostering, strengthening and enhancing the positive relations amongst students and also between students and the school administration. Similarly, it works at maintaining a positive climate among faculty and staff members by dealing with problems at the team level and through its Positive Climate Committee which is formed of representatives of all teams and meets regularly with the principals of the schools.

E. Provides opportunities, encouragement, and support to each child, regardless of national, regional, tribal or religious origins, and regardless of the child's academic record, appearance, or individual strengths or weaknesses

Discrimination against any social groupings is not permitted in the school and, when identified, is addressed. Further, all students are required to participate in many activities and events, and are encouraged to try themselves in new situations, whether or not they seem to be naturally talented or ready for the challenge.

F. Communicates with graduates

DAS seeks to strengthen the relations among graduates in order to help them develop a supportive network for themselves. It also works to maintain the graduates' ties with the School in order to gain from their suggestions regarding its improvement. For this purpose, DAS has specified a part of its website for graduates, holds an annual reunion, and invites graduates to attend the graduation ceremony which is held each year. It also invites them to volunteer in a variety of ways so current DAS students can benefit from their experience.

3. Strives toward becoming a Professional Learning Community

DAS strives to become a professional learning community, which is characterized by the following eight attributes.

A. Shared norms and values

All employees were involved in the process of writing the school's Mission, Vision, Targeted Characteristics and other statements of norms and values. Further, they meet weekly in their teams to agree on changes they will make in their programs or in the way they work together.

B. Collaborative teams

- **Takes a team approach to leadership of the school**

DAS management is based on the principles of collaborative leadership; thus, there is a committee of directors for determining policies, regulations and procedures, a committee for professional development, a committee for the educational supervision; a committee for developing a positive climate at DAS; academic teams; teacher support groups; and other task forces formed to deal with specific issues. Major decisions such as those that affect the implementation of work, school plan, or employment are taken at the appropriate level with input from as many people affected by the decisions as possible.

- **Organizes teachers into teams**

In order to get the most benefit possible from the educational process for both, the student and the teacher, our school has organized the teachers into teams, each of which shares a cluster of classrooms and is headed by a full time educational supervisor. In the pre-school and elementary level, teams are organized on the basis of grade levels that teachers teach. As to the intermediate and secondary levels, there is a team for teachers of the scientific subjects and another for teachers of the humanities (Arabic, religion, and social studies). There is also a team for English teachers who work in various levels and another for teachers of special subjects (art, physical education, library skills, computer, etc.).

This mode of organization has many benefits; for example, it enhances communication, collaboration, friendly relations, coordination, sharing of experiences and planning among members of the team. It also ensures educational and developmental support for the teacher through the educational supervisor who works with that team and meets regularly with its members for consultation, joint planning and personal support for change. Moreover, the team and its cluster provide an identity for the student with regard to the various dimensions of the educational process.

C. Collective focus on learning and results

In addition to the Targeted Characteristics which serve as goals for both students and teachers, DAS has set and published standards for student learning, for teaching, and for evaluating its program. These are explained in more detail below.

D. Collective reflective inquiry

DAS teams collect data and study it to make decisions about how to improve. Whereas we try to collect data about all aspects of the school, this collective reflection is especially important in relation to the academic program. DAS is using a growing number of standardized tests and other forms of data to help teachers and teams evaluate the progress of their students. While the amount of data is still insufficient, its use has been found to be powerful in stimulating change.

Monthly meetings are held in which all persons or all leaders working with a particular cluster meet to look at results, identify problems and work together to find solutions. In addition, each team put an annual objective and then collaborates to fulfill it. At the end of each year, they work together to write a report, evaluate their progress and agree on their team objectives for the following year.

In 2007, it began sending members of its faculty to be trained in action research which they are now using to research DAS and find the areas of strength and weakness in order to make decisions about changes that are needed.

E. Shared responsibility for children

- **Provides a safe and healthy setting for all and encourages the development of positive habits that will continue for life**

Only healthy food is served at the DAS canteen. Planning and practices for fire drills have always been carried out regularly in order to ensure preparedness of students, faculty and staff in case of a disaster.

- **Communicates with parents of students**

Since regular communication between DAS and its students and parents is so important for motivating and improving the educational process, our school has developed and implemented an annual plan that includes:

- I. A special meeting for the parents of new students in the first week of the school year.
- II. A general meeting for parents of all students in the second or third week of school.
- III. A published schedule of times when parents can contact teachers without previous appointments.
- IV. Specially organized meetings for mothers of male students in all levels according to an announced time table in the fourth week of school.
- V. Individual parent – teacher conferences once each semester.
- VI. Additional individual parent – teacher conferences upon request of either party.
- VII. A special meeting for the parents and students of grades 8 and 9 in the second semester of the school year to introduce the new American Diploma program and the Muqararat Program.
- VIII. A special meeting for the parents of under achievers held in the 2nd or 3rd week of the 2nd semester.
- IX. Involvement of parents in the continuous follow-up of students' behavior and achievement.
- X. Establishment of an interactive website through which the two sides can communicate (currently under construction).

- XI. Access for parents and students to the DAS Moodle account to ensure two-way communication will also provide continuity of learning at a distance despite epidemics or other disasters. (To start in 2011)
- XII. Issue of a weekly newsletter on paper and on the website. Also, communication with parents via email and SMS when needed.
- XIII. Conducting of seminars and delivery of educational lectures and training on subjects related to parenting, student learning and development.
- XIV. Recreational events attended by students, parents, and teachers.

F. De-privatized practice

As part of their professional development plan, teachers meet regularly in their teaching teams and also in Support Groups for learning specific strategies. In these meetings, they discuss plans, units, student work, successes and failures in order to help each other help the children. They also visit each others' classes. Further, the role of the supervisor includes extensive work as a personal coach – joint planning of lessons, observing in the classroom, giving feedback, and discussing ways to bring about improvement. This is all explained in detail in the Plan for Continuous Progress in Learning (PCPL) which is on the DAS Intranet.

G. Action orientation

The result of all the reflection and learning must be action. Without clear action, the rest of the elements are useless. As part of the teacher evaluation process, teachers are asked to explain the actions they have taken to solve problems that have been identified. On a group basis, supervisors and teams are expected to make decisions about actions that must be taken and principals and other directors are supposed to take action for the school as a whole.

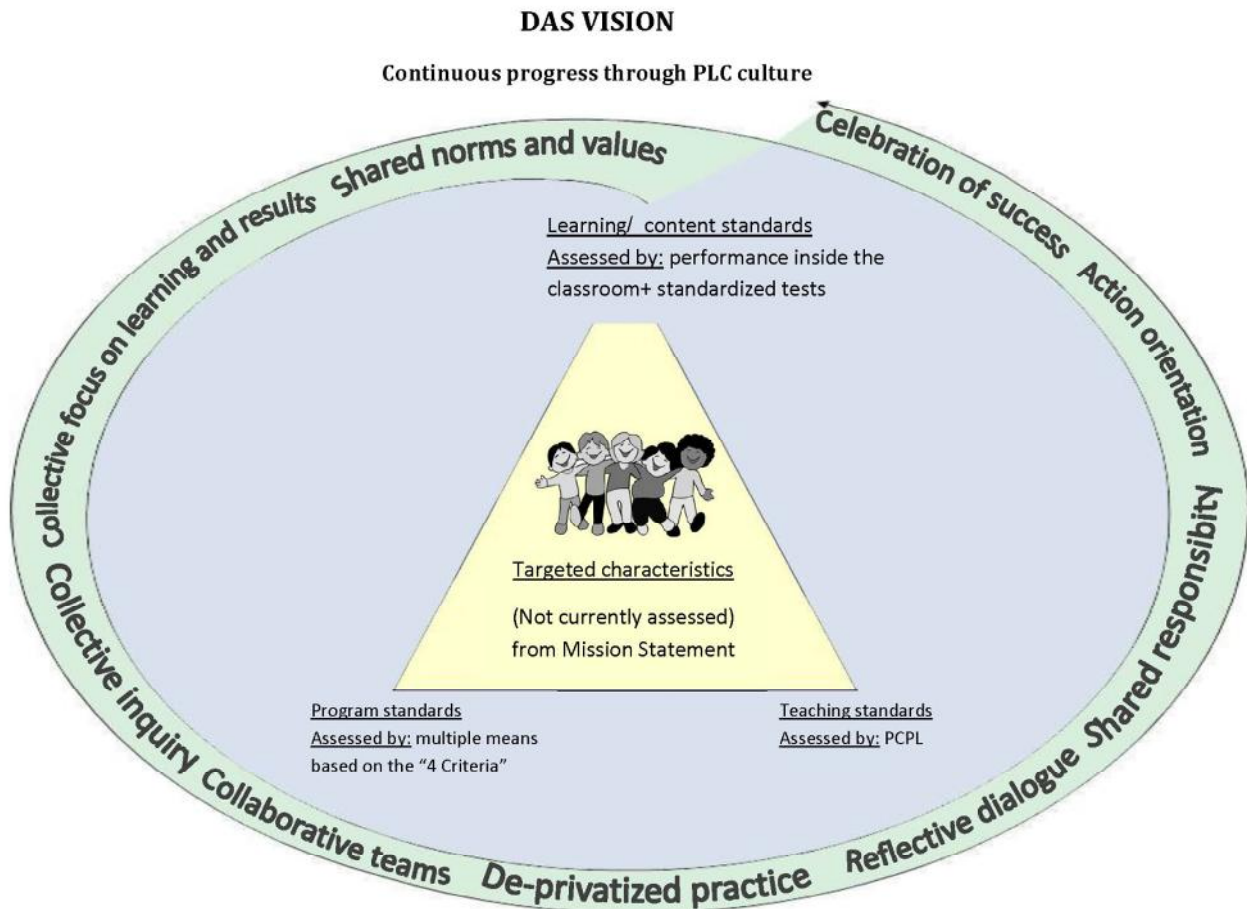
H. Celebration of success

A number of different kinds of awards are given publicly to students, reinforcing not only the top academic achievers but also those who tried harder, those who maintained their moderate levels, those who showed leadership and those who contributed in other ways. They also have the opportunity to show what they have learned or accomplished during club time at the recognition ceremonies at the end of each semester when they receive badges or certificates for their accomplishment of the expected activities. Teachers are also awarded as individuals and teams are invited to share their successes with all at a formal, annual event for faculty and staff called "Celebration of Progress."

Since the establishment of DAS in 1977, we have learned a lot about the processes involved in continually improving student learning and ensuring progress in our school, as a whole. Our observations about the process are parallel to the international literature on school reform.

Researchers tell us that improvement requires change and change requires learning and learning happens in a spiral. They remind us that there is no magic wand by which schools can make improvements happen quickly, or by which they can simply move directly from where they are to where they want to be. Like the constructivist process of all learning, the movement is never linear. The spiral of progress requires that the learners or the schools deal with the same issues multiple times. As they reflect on each experience, they gain deeper understanding and are gradually able to deal with similar issues with greater skill and effectiveness. We have seen this spiral clearly in the learning of our students, our teachers, our administrators, and ourselves as a whole school. Our progress, therefore, has been gradual but sustained by our development as a professional learning community.

4. Strives to become a standards-based school



DAS has developed standards for four different areas of accomplishment: personal principles and attitudes (Targeted Characteristics, shown above), learning (**DAS Content Standards**, available on the DAS Intranet), teaching (**Standards for Good Teaching at DAS**, available on the DAS Intranet) and program (**Four Criteria**, below). These standards give clarity to all about our aims and also

give ourselves a means to evaluate progress. We evaluate ourselves through a variety of means each year and then can use the resulting data for reflection and improvement.

An example is the program standards reflected in the “Four Criteria.” While we use many means to evaluate our programs, one important means is through a survey given each year to all students from grades 5 and above. The questionnaire was designed collaboratively by teachers and administration based on the following four criteria:

1. STUDENTS FEEL safe in the school, confident that they will be respected and not exposed to any kind of bullying - physical or emotional, from adults or fellow students.
2. STUDENTS FEEL that what they are studying is useful to them all the time and interesting to them at least 65% of the time.
3. STUDENTS FEEL that they are being asked to apply higher level thinking skills to their learning and that they are not being asked simply to memorize except in those few instances when it is absolutely necessary.
4. STUDENTS FEEL that they are able to succeed in doing the work assigned and are confident that if they have trouble they will be able to find assistance from teachers who will help them LEARN, not simply help them get good grades.

5. Designs and implements a system for continuous improvement which is imbedded in the classroom

DAS has now completed its third revision (1985, 1989 and 2007) of its Plan for Continuous Development in Learning (PCPL) which links its plans for professional development, employee performance assessment and evaluation, and compensation. Committees including all employment groups have been involved in the process of revising the plan and will be involved in evaluating its effectiveness.

A. Professional Development

Ever since it was founded in 1977, DAS has had an annual summer period of training and preparation in which all employees are present for 4 weeks before students return to start the new academic year. During this period, employees participate in a variety of courses, workshops, and committees designed to improve both the skills of the individuals and quality of the educational program. DAS also sends directors, educational supervisors, teachers, and others to international conferences when that is appropriate. Approximately 12% of the School’s budget goes to salaries and expenses that are involved with professional development activities.

B. Educational supervision and coaching

An essential part of the professional development program is the coaching and assistance provided by supervisors and facilitators. DAS has appointed distinguished teachers to leadership roles within their teams, some as permanent supervisors and others who work as facilitators for a period of two years and then go back to the classroom as full time teachers. The purpose of these positions is to ensure adequate support for teachers who are working to

develop their skills as well as their curricula and instructional materials. A variety of models of coaching are used, according to the particular requirements of the particular situation.

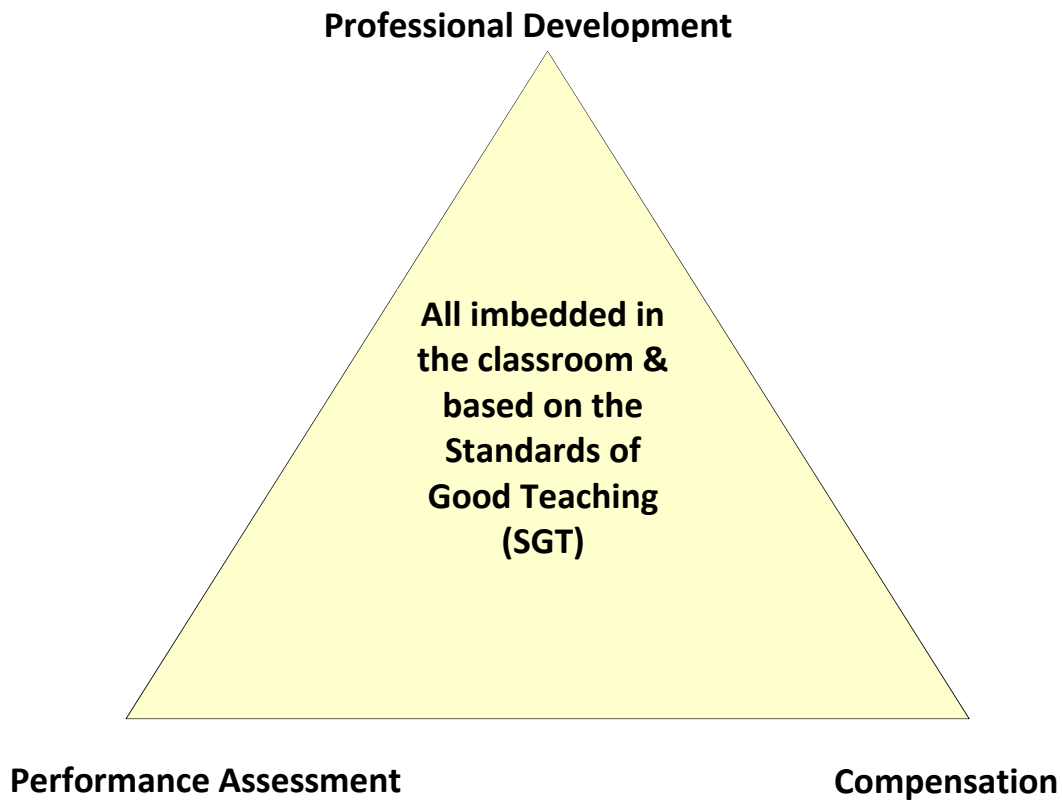
C. Performance Evaluation

Performance is evaluated according to published criteria (for teachers, the Standards of Good Teaching at DAS) and procedures that are based on current educational research. The focus of the process for the teacher is on his ability to identify and respond to the real needs of his students as well as his contribution to the development and success of his team.

D. Compensation

In the new plan, there are four ways an employee can increase his salary: through normal service increases as long as his work meets the normal expected levels; through demonstrating in his work with students and colleagues the appropriate application of new learning gained through the PCPL; through demonstrating on official examinations that he has reached a particular level of knowledge that is needed for his work at the school; and through earning a higher degree in education which is related to his field of work at the school.

PLAN for CONTINUOUS PROGRESS in LEARNING (PCPL)



WHAT DOES DAS DO TO ENRICH IT'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS?

Progress toward better educational programs has resulted from focus in three directions at the same time: quality of teaching and quality of curriculum, and amount of time provided for both. For each of these directions, DAS has established clear standards and works to continuously improve in fulfillment of the standards.

1. Quality of teaching

A. Introduces methodologies that increase student engagement

Our school has made use of its Standards of Good Teaching at DAS to train teachers and evaluate their work. Now the standards will also guide us in selecting new methodologies for focus. Since establishment of the school, we have sought to benefit from the findings and applications of contemporary educational research, gradually adapting and adopting best practices that are appropriate for our setting. It has focused on learner-centered strategies that activate the learner's role in the entire educational process, such as backward design, cooperative learning, debates, simulations, service learning, literature circles, extensive use of manipulatives and realia in the teaching of math and science, integrated thematic instruction, the writing process, the Big Six approach to student research, the use of technology in teaching and learning, and other. Teachers are trained and supported in the use of these methodologies through the program of professional development, described above and in the PCPL.

B. Provides assistance in the case of learning difficulties through the Student Support Unit

After identifying students with learning difficulties in the basic skills of Arabic language, math, and English in pre-school and elementary levels, DAS provides them with an opportunity to receive additional help for 2-5 periods a week. This assistance is offered by professional teachers who are prepared specifically for this purpose.

2. Quality of the curriculum

A. Aims toward the highest academic standards

While DAS has always adapted the required curriculum to fit its stated objectives, its current change of status – from national program school to international program school – gives it far more flexibility. In 2009, faculty collaborated under the guidance of highly respected international consultants, to begin developing our new curricula for English math, physical education and art on the basis of the Delaware standards. In addition, they are looking at

adapting similar standards for Arabic. For social studies, teachers are making use of the AERO standards for courses in both English and Arabic. There are many challenges to actually meeting those standards but DAS is investing time and money in the training, teacher support, and instructional materials that can be expected to gradually bring about implementation of these high expectations.

B. Focuses on the learning of both Arabic and English

DAS plans its schedule and curricula to ensure that all students develop the capacity to learn, think, and work in both Arabic and English. Only at the secondary level can they choose to focus more on one language than the other. In order to sustain our students as they go back and forth between the two languages, we have greatly increased our emphasis on the learning of vocabulary in both languages. The learning of our newly certified literacy coaches is applied to both languages.

- **Develops the curriculum, making use of international research to develop subjects taught in both Arabic and English**

Whereas DAS has always worked to improve its curriculum, since being licensed to give an international program it has brought several international consultants to improve the curricula offered in both languages.

- **Encourages higher order thinking skills and avoid the use of rote memorization whenever possible**

The battle against rote memorization is difficult and requires careful attention to methods of teaching, of assessment, and of grading. We have made a lot of progress but are still working on it.

- **Implements standardized tests to evaluate progress, particularly in Arabic and English**

We started using a standardized test in Arabic at the elementary level in the year 2000. Since that time, we have found it extremely useful to give teachers another way to gauge the achievement of their students, identify those with special needs, and evaluate their program. Many changes have been made for individual students, teachers, and entire levels on the basis of the results of these tests. We have also tried several tests of English (particularly MAP, DRA) to help us improve our program and identify strengths and weaknesses of individuals.

3. Provides additional learning time

DAS provides additional time in our weekly schedule that exceeds what is formally required by the Ministry of Education. The use of this extra time varies from year to year but is summarized below.

Grade level	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-11	12
Percentage of extra time	43%	29%	14%	14%	33%

This extra time is used either to reinforce required subject matter or to provide additional programs, such as the examples seen below:

A. Literacy skills

Additional time for learning reading and writing in both English and Arabic is allotted, especially at the primary level, in keeping with the recommendations of international research. At higher levels, there are also supplementary reading programs to improve comprehension, fluency and love of reading.

B. English language

English is taught from pre-school through the end of the 12th grade. While it starts at 10% of the time in the earliest pre-school levels, the number of periods increases sharply, as children get older.

C. Library skills

All K-3 students spend at least one period per week in the library hearing stories and learning library skills.

D. Research process and informational problem solving

These skills are taught in both Arabic and English through the procedures and strategies described in The Big Six, set of books translated and published by DAS.

E. Computer

Students are introduced to computer and its uses from the first grade through regular classes, clubs, and through open-labs during recess.

F. Senior project

Major independent projects are required of all students in their last year before graduation and assessed through public presentations.

G. Additional periods

Other periods are added to specific subjects according to the needs of the subject or of particular classes in particular years

H. Purposeful field trips

Trips are planned for all levels

I. Physical fitness

Fitness is tested and worked on at all levels

J. Field days (Boys' School)

Once per semester, per each stage

K. Preparation for national and international tests

4. Continuously undertakes new efforts to improve academic programs

Below are a few recent examples.

A. Use of simulation to teach social studies

Having seen the effectiveness of Model United Nations for teaching awareness of world affairs, critical and creative thinking, interpersonal relations, and public speaking, we are now learning how to use a similar simulation to teach about the Arab world in 1st grade.

B. Use of Legos to teach physics

Having seen the effectiveness of the use of Legos in robotics, we are now learning how to use them in the teaching of physics in secondary classes.

C. Use of on-line courses

Courses have been offered to advanced students through the Stanford University Educational Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY). Even though the program is currently stopped for technical reasons, we hope to start again and make it possible for all students to take at least one on-line course for DAS credit before they graduate

D. Expanding use of standardized tests

Having seen the effectiveness of involving teachers in reflecting and re-planning on the basis of the results of standardized tests, we now plan to use a variety of these tests – usually one each year – to measure improvements particularly in English, Arabic, and math.

E. New plan for grading and reporting

Starting in the 2010-2011 school year, we have introduced a new plan for grading reporting which is more appropriate for a standards-based curriculum.

F. Action research

Having sent two teams to TAMAM to learn to lead through action research, we now seek to expand the use of this and other tools to encourage reflectiveness and inspire change in practices based on teacher-led scientific research.

WHAT DOES DAS DO TO ENRICH IT'S CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS?

1. Works to instill a sense of responsibility, compassion and charity in students

DAS dedicates two periods each week from the normal school program for our clubs program for students from grades 3 and up. Each semester, each student chooses the program he will enter for these periods, selecting from a variety of activities and collaborative community service projects. Our purpose in this clubs program has been threefold: to develop students' interests and talents in fields outside their normal studies; to develop their collaborative, organizational and leadership skills; and to instill in them an awareness of issues and needs in society and of their ability to make a difference in making the world a better place. The community service groups have worked on a number of projects such as the following:

- A. Service to the handicapped in cooperation with the Society of the Handicapped in the Eastern Province.
- B. Service to children in orphanages in the area.
- C. Service to the aged in cooperation with the Home for the Aged.
- D. Foundation and operation of lending libraries for patients in local hospitals (Al-Mana Hospital and King Fahad University Hospital).
- E. Conservation of the environment (by planting trees, helping clean up beach areas, recycling paper, glass, and aluminum, and many other projects) in cooperation with the appropriate local authorities.
- F. Collaboration with charity associations in the area to assist needy families.
- G. Service to mosques for cleaning, beautifying or other activities.

2. Requires students to make presentations and speak publicly

DAS requires that all students speak publicly several times each year, starting with the first grade and earlier. They give presentations in their classrooms as a normal part of their instructional units, and also in assemblies, contests, shows, for visitors to the school, and a variety of other settings with small and large groups. As a result, most are comfortable giving speeches at Model United Nations, Global Issues Network and other international events. All students give their final presentations in the last year of secondary school when they present their Senior Projects in front of a panel of judges, parents, and other students.

3. Offers opportunities for students to try a wide range of kinds of activities and skills

The clubs program, offered during school time from elementary through secondary school, provides a variety of kinds of challenges and broadening experiences. Students are encouraged to take a different club each semester, especially in the years before secondary in order to discover new interests or develop new skills.

4. Challenges students to work at world class levels through participation in international competitions

Participation in robotics, science fairs, Model United Nations, Global Issues Network, gives DAS students an opportunity to interact with students from other countries. Through these contacts, they are able to gauge the level of their skills and understandings against world class standards. Both our students and our school have gained confidence as a result of the achievements of DAS students in these activities.

5. Increases awareness of global issues

Awareness of global issues among DAS students has increased as a result of several efforts: community service projects, the formulation of 10th grade social studies into a simulation of the Arab League (Model Arab League), provision of a one-semester course in global issues, voluntary participation in the Global Issues Network, and voluntary participation in the Model United Nations.

WHAT DOES DAS DO TO IMPLEMENT THE SECOND PART OF IT'S MISSION? – TRANSLATION, PUBLISHING AND TRAINING

The second part of the DAS Mission is to:

Contribute to the development of education in the Arab world.

For this purpose, DAS welcomes educators from other schools, especially from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, to visit and discuss multiple school issues.

In addition, our school prepares or translates books from English into Arabic to be used in training teachers, supervisors, other school leaders and also parents. We have now published more than 60 such books and others are being prepared for publishing so that other Arabic speaking

educators may benefit from them. (See the brochure or website of the Educational Book House for Publishing & Distributing). These books are very important to the development of DAS; they are also used both for in-service and pre-service teacher preparation at many schools and universities around the Arab world. In addition, we have begun to publish some books for children for use in helping them learn to read.

Further, DAS personnel have accepted invitations to offer training in schools and Ministry of Education departments in many parts of Saudi Arabia and also in other countries – Qatar, Bahrain, U.A.E., Oman, and Lebanon. Almost 5000 educators have participated in the various workshops which are designed to help them apply the ideas in our books to the real world of the schools in which they work.

WHAT KIND OF FACILITIES DOES DAS HAVE TO SUPPORT ITS PROGRAMS?

DAS leases from Saudi Aramco, a beautiful, purpose built building that it participated in designing. Its facilities include the following.

- A. Large classrooms, designed according to high standards
- B. Two libraries that contain around 90,000 books in English and Arabic for students at all ages, parents and educators inside and outside the school. The library is managed through use of the Symphony internet-based management system. It includes also access to the SIRS internet-based data base for schools
- C. Labs for computers, physics, chemistry, biology, and general science
- D. Industrial auto art (Boys' School), and home economics (Girls' School)
- E. Around 600 computers, most with high-speed access to internet, at least one in each classroom in addition to those in the seven labs
- F. Smartboards, available in all classrooms In 2011
- G. Multiple courts for basketball, volleyball, and tennis as well as a full sized soccer field and track
- H. A gymnasium for each school
- I. A theater that accommodates about 250 persons
- J. Home economics facilities in the Girls' School
- K. Art rooms in both schools

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