



# | SPOTLIGHT

## Together We Stand

**Dr. Larry Molacek, Superintendent** — Welcome to the 2019 – 2020 Spotlight. This quarterly newsletter is designed to keep our ALS family up to date about all the amazing things going on at ALS. I hope you find the information helpful and informative.

On November 8th and 9th the administrative team, along with ALS Board member Feda Al Khatib, attended a workshop in Bahrain dealing with child protection. Over the past several years, schools around the world have been receiving training on how to recognize and respond when school officials suspect child abuse is happening with one of their students.

In February 2019, ALS adopted a child protection policy and throughout the next several years we will be putting procedures in place to help ensure that every child at ALS is safe and protected. Parents will be invited to meetings to discuss child protection efforts at school, the community and online. This is a long-term program of conversation and information. Child abuse is not only physical but also emotional. Social media can also have a negative impact on the mental health of students and needs to be actively monitored by the family. Schools can only be effective when we are partners with the family in combating abuse.

Soon your child will be asked to sign an internet “acceptable use” document. This agreement will outline what is acceptable at school when using the internet. As a parent you may want to implement such a policy with your children at home. The internet can be an amazing tool, but it can also be used to hurt other people. Psychologists have identified a new term called the “Facebook Effect” which relates to the overuse and inappropriate use of the internet and social media. It is important that ALS works with parents and students to help identify abuse and work towards finding effective ways to handle these issues.



*\*Edited and produced by Nora B. AlYousef, Grade 11*

## Updates from the Girls' Campus

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**Ms. Huda Dodge, Girls' Principal & College Counselor** — There are many new faces around the Girls' campus this year, with 10 new staff members and a record 43 new students! Our focus for the year is to “Build Community” in all its forms – within the school, the city, the country, and the world.

We hope to see our students engaging in service, sharing experiences, and challenging themselves and each other in positive pursuits.

The year began with many exciting improvements: a beautifully redesigned prayer room, a new student welcome lunch, and a huge visiting “camel” for National Day! We appreciate the creative energy and cooperation from everyone in the community as we seek to create a safe and inviting environment for our girls.

Over the next few months, we look forward to supporting student initiatives in student government, service projects, and both local and international trips.

As models of life-long learning and constructive risk-taking, our faculty has opened themselves to feedback: through an anonymous student survey, and discussions with community members about assessments, homework, and the appropriate use of technology.

We continue to strive for improvements and always welcome your feedback and suggestions.

## Updates from the Boys' Campus

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**Mr. Aaron Kombol, Boys' Principal** — With the first 25% of the school year behind us, I look back at some of what we have accomplished so far this school year.

In terms of the campus, several landscaped areas were removed to give the boys additional space during break and lunchtime. Several foosball tables were added, along with our existing table tennis. Each day, during our breaks, all of the tables are busy and being used by the boys. I try my best to challenge the boys with a game of foosball several times a week, but I almost always come up on the losing end. In addition to the increased space, we have reinforced our new mascot, “Wolves,” by adding new banners and other artwork. ALS is now truly the home of the “Wolves,” as one of our banners says: “Welcome to the Den.” Over the summer, two additional porta-cabins were added for a new office and a new canteen.

In terms of curriculum, two new courses were added to the Boys' campus for Grade 11: Environmental Science and Societies, and Math Higher Level. Adding these classes certainly proved challenging in order to ensure the Grade 11 students have all the classes they require, but after some adjustments, we made it work.

Last but not least, Google Classroom was introduced to students and families in order to help increase our school-to-home communications. The rollout of Google actually began last February when staff was moved over to Gmail and GSuite for instructional needs. The first step in our rollout of Google Classroom was to provide ALS Gmail accounts to our students, followed by access to Google Classroom. Our last step was to invite parents to join Google Classroom to better monitor their sons' progress. Our teachers continue to use Google Classroom on a daily basis and I am very pleased with our results. I hope, as parents, you are finding this new tool valuable in working with your son.

In closing, thank you for your trust in ALS in educating your son. Thank you and Go Wolves!

## International Baccalaureate Updates

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**Ms. Tania Maana, DP Coordinator, Ms. Sherina Mohammad, MYP Coordinator, Ms. Haya Abdulrahim, PYP Coordinator**— Advanced Learning Schools was the first IB World School, offering all three of the IB’s programmes, in Riyadh. IB programmes aim to provide an education that enables students to make sense of the complexities of the world around them, and equipping them with the skills and dispositions needed for taking responsible action for the future.

The Primary Years, Middle Years and Diploma Programmes explore four foundational and interrelated elements:

1. International-mindedness
2. The IB learner profile
3. A broad, balanced, conceptual and connected curriculum
4. Approaches to teaching and learning

The IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) provides students from KG1 - Grade 5 with the knowledge, concepts, skills, personal attributes and the capacity to take action. Our students engage in a transdisciplinary, inquiry-based and student-centred education by exploring six themes that are relevant to the real world. Towards the end of their PYP journey, students celebrate their learning with the Exhibition, an experience that allows them to conduct an in- depth inquiry into real life issues or challenges, and present their research, investigation and resulting action to the whole school community.

The IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) is a five-year conceptually-based curriculum designed for students from 11 to 16 years old and is part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum. The IB MYP program engages students to develop both subject-specific and interdisciplinary understanding in eight core areas to become internationally minded global citizens and reflective, creative and critical learners. Service as action is an integral part of the program, which encourages students to be caring members of the community and their environment. In the final year, MYP5, students take on a culminating, independent learning project which encourages them to consolidate their learning, develop their Approaches to Learning (ATL) Skills and reflect on the outcomes of their Personal Project work. The program addressing learning diversity, with differentiated teaching and learning environments.

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) is a challenging two-year pre-university curriculum. It leads to a qualification (the IB diploma) that is widely recognized by the world’s leading universities. The curriculum contains six subject groups together with the DP core: creativity, activity, service (CAS); the extended essay (EE); and theory of knowledge (TOK). On July 2019, the IBDP exams results were issued and Abdulrahman A, one of our diploma candidates scored 40 out of a total of 45 points. On August 2019, the school received its five years’ programme evaluation report; and based on the positive findings, the IB has not identified any matters to be addressed.

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**Ms. Carmen Hill, K-3 & 4-5 Girls’ Principal** — At ALS we strive to create a balanced learning environment inside and outside of the classroom. We care about the well-being and safety of our students and we would not be able to do this without the support of our parent community.

Outside of the classroom we have had sessions around our monthly theme, “My Body is Mine,” in which students learned about good touches, bad touches and what to do when they feel uncomfortable. We had a tug-of-war house event in which we stressed having fun and learned how to deal with losing. During National Day celebrations, students learned about Saudi Arabia, shared different dishes and completed different activities, including: a thank you note to the soldiers protecting our land, taking care of our community, a palm tree craft and the changes in Saudi Arabia. We have had presenters from the Riyadh Metro project come speak to our students about the Metro and the students had the chance to ask questions. We have had two very successful Mom and Me and Dad and Me events with our Grade 2 and 3 classes. The Arabic department has launched “I Read in Arabic” to help strengthen Arabic reading and create a love for reading in their own language.

Our next theme is all about being kind and raising awareness about anti-bullying at ALS. We are eager to work on this with our students and cannot wait to spread a lot of kindness around the school and in our community. Please continue checking Class Dojo for school updates from your child’s teacher and myself.

## Creativity, Activity, and Service at ALS

**Mr. William Stansbury & Ms. Tiffani Nutter, CAS**

**Coordinators** — One student records himself learning to play the guitar, another student photographs he and his friends clearing trash from a polluted desert area, and yet another writes a personal essay about her pride in leading an event during Saudi National Day. These are just a few of the hundreds of reflections recorded by our Grade 11 and 12 students in their CAS exploration.

At Advanced Learning Schools students take their learning seriously inside and outside of the classroom. Nowhere can this learning be more clearly observed than in our Diploma Student's CAS Program. CAS (Creativity, Activity, and Service) is a core component of the IB Diploma Program as well as the ALS curriculum. Over a student's final two years at ALS they are expected to build a CAS portfolio which records the learning experiences they are engaged in outside of the classroom. Students have used instagram, blogs, Google docs and paper journals to document their experiences which are rich and varied. Because the ownership of the portfolio is in the hands of the student, each young man or woman creates a finished product which is completely unique to themselves. One student might document a hunting trip with his father. Another might share how she played a part in competing on the ALS volleyball team. Yet another might create a poem or write a short story to be published.

CAS highlights the IB profile's emphasis on being caring, balanced, and reflective. At the end of their time at ALS our desire is for students to look back at how they have lived through those two years and be proud of what they have done with their free time. The intention of the CAS program is not to add to the workload of an already busy IB student but to create an avenue whereby these students see the value of their experiences when they are not given direct assignments in their academic arenas. Columbia University professor Roberta Kang has provided evidence that the number one indicator of student success is their involvement in extra-curricular activities. This means that the more our students engage in rewarding experiences outside the classroom, the better they will do inside our school walls.

Perhaps the most important aspect of CAS is the emphasis on students cultivating their abilities as leaders. One young man is organizing a "technology fast" where his fellow students will agree to go without phones for an agreed upon period of time. A group of young women have recently planned an International Day of Tolerance. Others are leading a winter clothing drive. It is simply amazing what each of these young leaders is capable of. It is exciting to see the future leaders of our community at work while here at ALS!

**WHAT CAN YOU GET OUT OF COUNSELING?**

Felwa BinSultan  
School counselor  
Advanced Learning Schools

**WE CAN HELP YOU SHED LIGHT ON:**

**FEELINGS**  
**CHOICES**  
**EMOTIONS**  
**FAMILY**

**THOUGHTS**  
**FUTURE**  
**SCHOOL**  
**SKILLS**

**WE CAN HELP WITH A CURRENT CHALLENGE**

**OR SIMPLY SUPPORT YOU DURING THIS PROCESS OF GROWTH**

**THEREFORE PREVENTING A CHALLENGE FROM HAPPENING**

**WHY YOU SHOULDN'T HESITATE TO STOP BY**

**1 CONFIDENTIALITY**  
Meaning that your counselor upholds your upmost *privacy*.

**2 A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT**

**3 YOU DON'T HAVE TO FACE IT ALONE**



# 2019-2020: Semester One in Images



Saudi National Day, Girls' & K-3 Campus



# 2019-2020: Semester One in Images



Saudi National Day, K-3



# 2019-2020: Semester One in Images



Saudi National Day, K-3



Dad and Me, Grades 2 & 3



# 2019-2020: Semester One in Images



Dad and Me, Grades 2 & 3



Breast Cancer Awareness, Girls' Campus