

KAS

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Letter from the Superintendent, Dr. Robert Beck

Dear Parents,

Over the past weeks there have been several enjoyable and meaningful activities on the campus designed to celebrate student success. The visible celebration of success is sign of a quality school. It is understood by educators that such recognition events “breed” interest in success. When children see their peers receive awards, and they see them publicly applauded for their success and for trying to improve, students become interested in achieving at even higher levels. Success and effort recognition celebrations then become more a matter of creating interest in self-growth, not a matter of creating more competitions with others. A balanced approach to recognizing student achievement and effort builds a school culture of interest in healthy self-improvement.

Examples of success and effort recognition programs at KAS in the last couple of weeks have included: the High School/Middle School Awards Assembly (teachers nomi-

excellence in academics, citizenship, character, care for their community); Swimathon Awards; Elementary School Assembly weekly mathematics question “winners”; and,

tion contest. Some might think these activities are not particularly meaningful or important when it comes to recognition of achievement and effort. However, if you ask children about the meaning and importance of these celebrations, they will tell you they are important. They will tell you they are happy their friends, or they, have been recognized for trying and for succeeding.

KAS is a caring and nurturing school. It is a school with high standards. The combination of setting high standards, of supporting and nurturing students as they grow, learn and make efforts to succeed and improve is why KAS is a successful school. It is why KAS is loved and respected by its students.

I wish you a pleasant evening and weekend.

Letter from the Middle/High School Principal, Susan Boutros

Dear Parents, Students and Friends,

At Khartoum American School, not one day passes by without our teachers and administration thinking about how to improve student learning and the school in general. Administration and teachers strive to be a Professional Learning Community (PLC).

Research has shown that PLCs are very effective and help schools achieve high standards. A PLC is an infrastructure or a way of working together that results in continuous school improvement. PLCs are based on the premise that through collaboration, professionals achieve more than they could alone (DuFour & Eaker).

Through participation in PLCs, teachers enhance their leadership capacity while they work as members of ongoing, high-performing, collaborative teams that focus on improving student learning (Rentfro). A major focus of PLCs is on professional learning in which teachers work and learn together as they continually evaluate the effectiveness of their practices and the needs, interests, and skills of their students (McREL).

At KAS we often have meetings as a faculty or in divisions, committees and teams that are focused on continuous improvement and student learning. Teachers share experiences, observe each other, and discuss teaching methodologies. The main aim is to actively engage teachers in a PLC, which will increase their professional knowledge and enhance student learning.

Have a relaxing weekend, knowing that your child's education is in the hands of teachers that share a strong personal and professional commitment to helping students succeed.

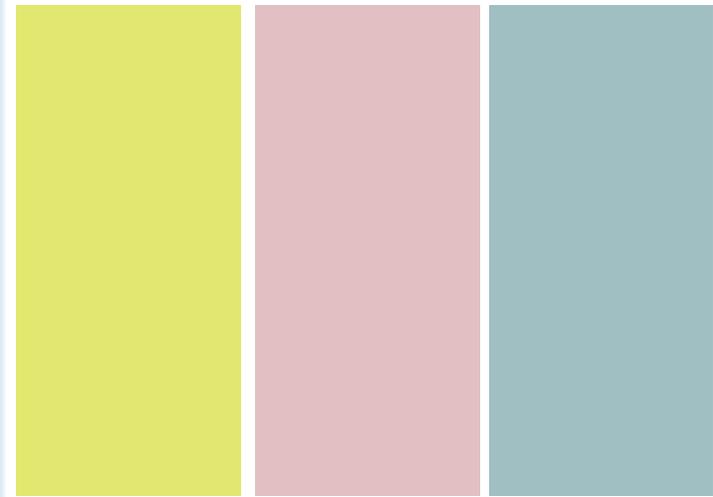
Letter from the Early Childhood Center & Elementary School Principal, Phil Centers

Dear Parents and Community Members,

We often hear about “student performance.” Indeed, this is one of the most widely used terms in education today. But what does it actually mean? How is it to be used as an indicator of student well-being and student success in school and in life? I would like to indicate a direction we can take in answering these questions, particularly in contrast to the idea of student friendliness that I wrote about last week.

The word “performance” in English obviously has several meanings, and the most common usage, that of a dramatic or musical presentation by a “performing” artist or group of artists, is clearly not meant when used in the term “student performance.” The meaning of the word “performance” in this term comes from the business world, where “performance” means how well a person or department or division or company has done with regard to the competition, or with regard to internal goals set by the organization.

While goal setting and competition are often helpful tools to spur achievement in the business world, they have quite limited usefulness in spurring achievement in the realm of education, simply because the educational process is profoundly different than the competitive business model used in many parts of the world today. In fact, one of the biggest challenges facing education in our time is the imposing of this business model on the educational realm. The reasons for such an imposition are complex and beyond the scope of an article like this. But they are important to understand.





Last week's solutions:

Elem: Hanging on to Monkey Bars

MS/HS: Keep Calm and Swim On

Teachers: Casual Thursday