

September 18, 2017/ 27 Dhu'l-Hajjah, 1438

As salam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2017-18 school year. MashaAllah, we commence this school year with celebrations as Omar Bin Al-Khattab has made great progress. We have grown in numbers from 460 students last year to 520 expected this year. The growth in students is reflective of OBK's overall achievements. According to the Ministry of Education, Alberta Education's Accountability Result Survey 2017 – OBK has achieved '**excellent**' in all its categories when compared to all school in Alberta (see attachment). The categories are:

- a. Safe and Caring School
- b. Student Learning Opportunities
- c. Student Learning Achievement (K-9)
- d. Preparation for Lifelong Learning
- e. World of Work and Citizenship
- f. Parental Involvement
- g. Continuous Improvement.

As staff of OBK, our vision is for OBK to be an Islamic School that *not only* teaches our students about Quran and Hadith but facilitate our students to be practicing Muslims – proud of their identity both as Muslims and Canadians. We want to instill the value of hard work, striving for their best and being grateful for the blessing of Allah (SWT) upon each and every one of us.

Schools are successful because of the effort of staff, students and the buy in and support from parents. Through shared vision, we can continue to make OBK a successful school where students are happy coming to school and learning and parents are content sending their children here.

We begin this academic year with certain goals and priorities so all of us have common goals that we work towards accomplishing this year, InshaAllah.

- ✓ **Ensure our students are safe and cared for in school;**
- ✓ **Enabling students to become better Muslims and servant leaders in the community:**
- ✓ **Continue our focus in literacy through support in**
 - **Reading with comprehension**
 - **Developing vocabulary through *Words their Way***
 - **Initiate a new writing program – *Writing Pathways* for all students**
- ✓ **Ensure students develop stronger sense of numeracy through mental math;**
- ✓ **Enhance sense of school spirit through participation in sports through school soccer team; and**
- ✓ **Continue teaching students to be charitable through volunteer initiatives.**

Over the summer holidays, with support from the Islamic team, we were able to revise the Islamic studies outcomes. We were finding that our students are *learning about Islam* but not necessarily know what or *how a good Muslim should be*. The Islamic outcomes focus on five cross-cutting themes that run from Kindergarten to grade 9. The themes are as follows:

- i. Believing**
- ii. Praying**
- iii. Living an Islamic life**
- iv. Living as one Ummah**
- v. Celebrating**

The curriculum also includes *Surah, Dua'a and Nasheed* related to their grade level. This will shortly be posted on the school website for your reference.

Every year the school concentrates on Islamic themes which we focus on during our morning assemblies. Last year, we discussed the ten close companions of the prophets – five male and five females where the students learnt about their lives and the role they played in Islam. InshaAllah, this year we will be introducing the four main prophets (PBUH), their lives and teachings, the books they brought and their leadership styles. The Prophets are:

- i. Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH)**
- ii. Prophet Musa (PBUH)**
- iii. Prophet Issa (PBUH)**
- iv. Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)**

We have Islamize the '*Leader in Me*' program through which we will be teaching our students servant leadership and looking at the habits through the Islamic lens. The leadership program will be available on our website.

While developing these initiatives, we kept asking ourselves, what are we missing? How do we teach our students to live Islam? How do we ensure that they practice what they learn? How can they be proud of being Muslims in today's world? How can they be contributing citizens of the world? The school will be working towards developing a '*tarbiyah*' plan with support from the student and school councils. We will align our students' awards program with not only recognizing students for achievements in academics but for demonstrating skills and knowledge they learned about being practicing Muslims.

This is my third year as Principal of OBK and each year as the students, I learn so much. Our Prophet (PBUH) said that each day of our life has to be different to the previous day and surely my days are – Alhamdulillah. Often you have heard me say that being Principal is not a job for me but *ibadah*. In Islam, the *niyyah* is the key and it is guaranteed that those you have the right *niyyah*, Allah (SWT) will guide, protect and lead them to success. Parent support can take many forms i.e. volunteering at school council, baking for the bake sale, greeting our staff with a smile to building shoe racks for the students. Please join us with your support and encouragement in ensuring e that OBK remains on its journey to success and achieves great things this year and in the years to come- Ameen.