

**Summary report of the  
Al Durrah International School  
Pastoral Care Professional Development Workshop**

**Integrating Learning  
into Student Leadership, Events and Activities  
for 2019-2020**

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Sharjah, UAE

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# About Pastoral Care at Al Durrah International School

## 1.0 Background.

Beginning its first year with the school's revised quality assurance-based mandate in 2016, the governing board approved to voluntarily self-ascribe the governance and learning standards of Al Durrah International School [ADIS] on the guidelines jointly established by Dubai's KHDA and NEASC's newly emerging ACE accreditation standards. See the QA Review Proposal ADIS Sept 2016.

As a framework for quality education, the ADIS intent was stated to be one of the first private schools outside of KHDA and ADEK to meet the new national standards expected to be in place over the next two years and to obtain New England Association of Schools and Colleges [NEASC] "ACE" accreditation as a result of this process.

Through adherence to the NEASC ACE 5 Foundation Standards and 10 Learning Principles, ACE seeks to "transform" schools rather than "improve" schools which historically has been viewed with moderate results and slow progress.

This learning transformation must extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom, and extend throughout the school's learning environment. Rather than through written documentation of plans, assessments and meeting minutes, ACE prioritizes observation of learning and the "impact of learning on the learner".

In summary, NEASC ACE schools must:

- 1) **Meet the NEASC ACE Standards for Quality School Systems.** School districts demonstrate adherence to the five NEASC ACE standards and 10 Learning Principles which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.
- 2) **Engage in continuous improvement.** Schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose that the school district is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their learning, school and district effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).
- 3) **Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** Schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, schools host an external quality assurance review team as determined by the final ACE policy guidelines. The team evaluates the school's adherence to the NEASC ACE standards, assesses the efficacy of the school's transformation process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the school district improve. The overall aim is to help school districts and their schools maximize student learning outcomes and improve organizational effectiveness

## **Where we are**

ADIS has successfully completed the first two of three ACE assessment visits required to obtain accreditation: the Foundations Visit and the Learning Principles Visit. The Learning Principles' Visit is actually an 'audit' of the school's implementation status of the 5 Foundations, and to assess its readiness to being the Learning Principles self-study phase.

**The area of most concern to NEASC ACE, the 3<sup>rd</sup> visit, is an intensive visit to review the school's one-year self-study report and to assess its implementation status of the 10 Learning Principles. It is this 3<sup>rd</sup> area that NEASC has expressed its concern over school senior leadership and academic core staff understanding of the transformational shifts in learning that ACE aims to assess.**

## **The importance of pastoral care – total student well-being:**

During the first ACE visit, Mr. Peter Mott explicitly asked Mr. Mark, given the importance of pastoral and guidance care, "How are you going to convince us that as the sole guidance counselor that you can tend to the well-being of all your students? You and I both know that you can't do it alone...". It was then shared with Mr. Peter that ADIS was in the process of implementing a US Guidance Team model, where Section Heads, the PE teachers, section supervisors, social workers, nurse, SEN coordinator and the parents' counselor, headed by the Guidance Counselor, would form a pastoral care committee that would coordinate the well-being of students and report regularly to the Principal and Senior Leadership Team. This approach had already been shared with the MOE's Unified National Inspections Team.

Several members of the Unified National Inspections Team and Mr. Peter expressed concern over several school staff in this key area that had poor to little English language skills and related performance concerns. Mr. Peter was assured that training was ongoing and that within year's end, the school was prepared to "make the hard decisions" necessary to ensure that we would have trained or experienced staff, with the English language proficiency level required to support the pastoral care program and learning transformation we are committed to.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> ACE visit, the same concerns were expressed by the team leader, Mr. Tim and Ms. Zena. Both visitors noted that the ADIS pastoral care's "Developmental Assets" approach could have significant transformational impact depending on the training and methods of implementation.

Again, English language and understanding of pastoral care concepts among a few of the key staff in this critical area was discussed. However, Mr. Tim stated he felt confident, after his meeting with Mr. Basel, that the board was aware of these weaknesses in various teaching and learning areas throughout the school, and that the school leaders were prepared "to make the hard decisions" to ensure that those staff that have been provided opportunities to improve but not done so, would be replaced by those who already have the qualifications and experience to support our move forward. Mr. Tim noted that Mr. Basel stated that a proposed "Master teacher" salary scale was being reviewed to facilitate the school's ability to recruit teachers at a higher quality and experience level.

## **2.0 The Pastoral Care Professional Development day unwrapped:**

### **Defining Pastoral Care**

ADIS Pastoral Care is policy and practices fully integrated throughout the learning community to effectively meet the developmental and social well-being and learning needs of students and staff, and to encourage student voice, choice and empowerment.

ADIS Pastoral Care can be summed up in the single phrase – “total well-being”.

### **3.0 Foundation training for the core ADIS pastoral care staff:**

Members of the Pastoral Care Committee: Section Heads, supervisors, PE teachers, social workers, SEN coordinator, activities coordinator, facilities coordinator, nurse, and parents counselor.

Co-facilitated by the Guidance Counselor, Mr. Mark, and the Head of Academics, Ms. Rashnah, the first professional development training and workshop for the pastoral care committee members was conducted on 25 June 2019 as a full day, experiential learning experience, with both large group interaction and smaller focus group engagement.

### **The workshop program was designed to enable participants to:**

- Develop a clearer understanding of your pastoral care role
- Identify pastoral care impacts, and to practice how to ‘unpack’ the outputs and inputs
- Develop skills, knowledge and understanding of working with diverse individuals and groups
- Generate a proposed calendar of activities for ADIS 2019-2020 Pastoral care for “ADIS student total well-being”

**For the sole purpose of reference during the training, in addition to the 40 Developmental Assets that the pastoral care committee previously studied, the ACE Ten Learning Principles cited below were provided to the workshop members:**

#### **LEARNER ENGAGEMENT & AUTONOMY**

Learners are engaged with and inspired by their learning. They have autonomy over their learning and make informed choices, supported by teachers acting as coaches and mentors.

#### **LEARNING GOALS**

Learners demonstrate understandings, competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and values that will allow them to become responsible and successful citizens.

**DIMENSIONS OF  
LEARNING**

Learning encompasses creative, moral, social, experiential and entrepreneurial dimensions.

**ASSESSMENT FOR, OF,  
AND AS LEARNING**

Assessment measures the effect of learning on the learner. Assessment for, of and as learning includes qualitative as well as quantitative criteria.

**LEARNING  
PERSPECTIVES**

Meaningful learning is extended when learners explore the unfamiliar, consider a range of perspectives, and take informed risks. Mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning.

**RESEARCH &  
REFLECTION ON  
LEARNING**

Research, reflection, and future design-oriented thinking are valued and acted upon by the community of learners.

**INCLUSIVENESS OF  
LEARNING**

The learning community embraces a culture of inclusiveness.

**LEARNING SPACE &  
TIME**

The design of learning spaces and the structuring of learning time are driven and shaped by the learning community's intended learning Impacts.

**GOVERNANCE &  
LEADERSHIP FOR  
LEARNING**

Governance, leadership, and management support, embody, and promote the organization's intended learning Impacts, norms and values.

**LEARNING COMMUNITY**

Respectful, healthy, ethical relationships and interactions create a true sense of community. Communication is honest and transparent. Community values are clearly stated, actively lived, and define a distinct, sustained identity.

## 4.0 WORKSHOP SUMMARY REVIEW

The workshop had several components:

1. Intercultural communication simulation, conducted as an ‘icebreaker’
  - a. The Tag Game: provoke participants to identify non-verbal communication behavior when students, staff, and others move from one new environment into another, Participants discussed their motivations for engaging in certain types of behavior based on the subconscious intention to reduce stress that naturally occurs when entering a classroom, canteen, program activity, school, or any new activity or environment for the first time. This heightened the participant’s awareness of their own choices and behavior and will help be more mindful of the experiences and needs of both their students and their colleagues.
2. Large group presentation and discussion:
  - a. Knowing first ourselves: participants engaged in a presentation and were able to define who we are as school, where we aim to go, how we aim to get there: Unpacking our Mission, Vision and core values (refer to powerpoint presentation)
  - b. Knowing who are students are: participants were presented an overview of our demographics of families in transit; research on the educational selection motivators differentiated by countries throughout MENA and south Asian region, as well as the career options and opportunities being sought by our students. (refer to powerpoint presentation):  
**What do we mean by ‘Pastoral Care’?: research on the latest developments in pastoral care was presented indicating the role of PE, physical activity and integrated experiential learning impact on increased academic performance.**
3. Focus small group break-out sessions:

Break out Session 1 - Identifying a ‘Pastoral Care Impact’:

**The following were identified and defined as Pastoral care impacts by the workshop participants:**

- **The learning community embraces a culture of inclusiveness**
- **Learners are engaged and inspired by their learning**
- **Relationships within the learning community are based on ethics and respect**
- **Transitions between classes and activities within the hallways and campus occur safely and efficiently**
- **Teachers and staff are role models of healthy life styles**
- **Students engage in innovative and creative mentoring programs within and outside of the school**
- **Staff and students sense they are part of a team**
- **Staff and students use critical thinking and higher order skills that cross disciplines in their daily work and learning experiences**
- **Students are confident independent learners**
- **Students are involved in the school community and emotionally attached to the school**
- **Students are engaged and take responsibility for their learning and decision making regarding their goals**

## Break out Session 2: Student Activities: Developmental Assets and Curriculum Integration

In this session, the participants self-selected one or more of the pastoral care impacts identified in the first break-out session, then attempted to ‘unpack the impacts’, by identifying the various programs, plans, activities (outcomes), and then the resources and actions needed (inputs) to produce the outputs that effect the impacts. (see Workshop resource file ‘Identifying a Pastoral Care impact’).

The following events and activities were identified as key outputs that aim to effect one or more of the desired impacts, each aligned with one or more of the 40 developmental assets:

### Sports day – each term

Self-esteem  
Peaceful conflict resolution  
Personal power  
Sense of purpose  
Positive peer influence  
Achievement motivation

### ADIS Student Council meet up with another US School Student Council (January)

Interpersonal competence  
Planning and decision-making  
Youth as Resources  
Positive Peer influence  
Personal empowerment

### Culture Day (2<sup>nd</sup> term, January, class assignments – 3<sup>rd</sup> term, April, Event Hall)

Learning own culture  
Learning acceptance of other cultures  
Cultural competency  
Caring School climate  
Equality and social justice  
Learning engagement

### Community Learning Trips (various industries, handicrafts, social services, etc) (monthly)

Community values  
Service to others  
Achievement motivation  
Planning and decision-making

### Scout Activities, Grade 3 -11

Family support  
Caring Neighborhood  
Community values  
Service to others

Adult role models  
Positive Peer influence  
High expectations  
Achievement motivation  
Self esteem  
Sense of purpose  
Interpersonal competence

**Wild Life Sanctuary – Grade 3 and 4, before end of 1<sup>st</sup> semester**

Creative activities  
Caring  
Learning engagement  
Alignment with curriculum to be determined by academic lead staff

**Family Sports Day (September)**

Family support  
Positive family communication  
Parent involvement in schooling  
Safety  
Creative activities  
Self-regulation  
Self-esteem

**Business Day and Global Day as separate day events in February**

Positive family communication  
Caring school environment  
Community values  
Children as resources  
Positive peer influence  
Creative activities  
Learning engagement  
Personal power  
Planning and decision-making  
Sense of purpose  
Positive view of personal future

**Internal (Intramural) Football tournament, Grades 3-12, break times**

Caring school climate  
Safety  
School boundaries  
Positive peer influence  
Self regulation  
Self-esteem  
Interpersonal competence



**Health Week – classes, hallways and event hall (April)**

**Caring School climate**

**Children as resources**

**Safety**

**Learning engagement**

**Resistance skills**

**Parents Meeting – KG – November and January**

**Family support**

**Positive family communication**

**Caring school climate**

**School boundaries**

**Parent involvement in schooling**

**KG Water Day (April 16, 2020)**

**Safety**

**Learning engagement**

**Service to others**

**Creative activities**

**Time at home**

**Personal power**

**Self esteem**

**PE break time activities**

**Caring school climate**

**Community values**

**Safety**

**School boundaries**

**Positive peer influence**

**Creative activities**

**Learning engagement**

**Bonding to the school**

**Peaceful conflict resolution**

**Interpersonal competence**

## 5.0 Workshop learning summary

The pastoral care staff expressed the following understanding and commitment to the ACE Learning Principles, and then completed a SWOT analysis, which is attached as Appendix :

- To keep up-to-date with new methods and technology to provide continued quality education in order to create rapport between all stakeholders (teachers, parents, learners, staff)
- To emphasize on autonomy and personal growth for students
- To produce well-rounded and self-confident learners which in turn ensures a bright future
- To provide life-long tools for every aspect of education and life
- To help learners realize their talents and guide them to become successful global

## **APPENDIX I**

### **PASTORAL CARE SWOT ANALYSIS**

#### **STRENGTHS**

- A diverse staff and student demographics
- Friendly environment
- Openess to learning
- Governing board vision and support
- Diversity of skills among staff and students
- External networks
- A commitment to self-assessment against NEASC ACE accreditation standards

#### **WEAKNESSES**

- Space issues
- Communication issues
- Challenging environment
- Idle gossip
- Need for more appreciation

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Geographical location of the school
- ACE self-study process
- Curriculum integration throughout the school
- US and UAE university partnerships
- ADIS as a model school
- Strategic alliances with national institutions

#### **THREATS**

- Uncertainty or fear of the unknown
- Meeting the needs of diverse families
- Staff morale
- Staff turnover, staff attrition including Experienced staff leaving for better conditions to other industries
- Demographics
- Technology changes that effects the future growth and productivity