



Universal Learning Academy

**PROMOTING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, LEADERSHIP
& CULTURAL DIVERSITY!**



Vol. 6, No. 1

November 2009

The Superintendent's Message

Dear Parents, Students & Community Members,

Greetings & Peace be upon you All!!!

What an exciting school year it has been so far!!! The academy is buzzing with activities, and the energy and enthusiasm of our students and staff is so refreshing and definitely contagious. As you read thru this newsletter, you will feel proud of our students and their accomplishments, ranging from academic successes to community service & extracurricular activities. Our dedicated staff continues to work tirelessly to maximize instruction and to help our students meet the state and national academic standards.

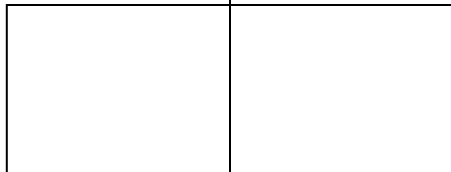
At Universal Learning Academy, we are constantly working to achieve new academic goals and to reach new milestones. However, throughout the years, one goal has remained our top priority; and that goal is providing our students with a healthy and safe environment, that will optimize their learning experiment. Our parent student handbook has been developed with this purpose in mind, and is constantly reevaluated to keep up with our students' needs. I encourage all of you to read the parent student handbook to become well rounded with the academy's policies and procedures.

In the last few years, we have shifted to a data driven school system; which allows us to better monitor our students' progress, and to accurately asses the needs of our student population. As new data becomes available, the school administration will continue to keep you informed, and will assist you in interpreting and understanding the data. Additionally, I urge all parents to take advantage of our parent portal website that allows you to track your child's progress from the convenience of your home at your own time.

Thank you for being our partner in education, and for working with us to provide our students with a life changing learning experience.

Best wishes for Adha Mubarak and Happy Thanksgiving to all of you.

Truly,
Mrs. Nawal Hamadeh
Founder, Superintendent & CEO



The Principal's Message

It is hard to believe that it is Universal Learning Academy's 6th year in operation. From a modest start of six classrooms, 13 staff members and 145 students to 20 classrooms, over 50 staff members and over 470 students. We now operate from 2 sites at both George St (1st-5th) and Ann Arbor Tr (PreK-Kg).

This year, we have added much needed new services by hiring additional staff members; a counselor, a Reading Specialist, a Social Worker and a full time Resource Room Teacher. We have

also enhanced our curriculum resources with many new materials in the areas of Reading and Writing. We continue to monitor implementation of these materials to insure higher academic achievement levels by our students.

We are positive that with your continued support, our dedicated and highly qualified staff, and hard working students will make this year full of accomplishments in all performance areas, specially in areas of academic achievement.

Once again thank you for supporting us in providing your children with high quality education.

Dr. Halim Ahmed
Principal

CLASSROOM NEWS

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten is doing a fantastic job with alphabet letters, letter sounds, and sight words, and some students have even mastered the basics of reading! We have also been practicing our counting skills, tying shoes, and number recognition. Kindergarteners are doing great with sight words. In fact, 75 percent of our students scored a 90% or higher on our recent test!

We are proud of how far the students have come this quarter with being independent workers! Students can't seem to get enough of Centers, and

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have become truly engaged in their own learning. They are enjoying the opportunity to be responsible thinkers.

During the second quarter we will continue to work on counting, the alphabet, sight words, leveled reading, and personal responsibility. We will also be starting some new units, such as Community Helpers, and will be focusing more on writing skills.

Please note that students should be trying to sound things out and write on their own! In Kindergarten, we focus on inventive spelling, so the words **DO NOT** have to be spelled correctly. Students will be stronger readers and writers if they are given the opportunities to think things through themselves.

The Kindergarten Team:

**Ms. Deeb (KA), Ms. Shuayto (KB),
Ms. Alghaiti (KC) and Ms. Blazo (KD)**

FIRST GRADE

In the first grade classrooms, students have successfully completed the first marking period. Way to go! These past two months first graders have worked on English, Phonics, Math, Spelling, Science, and Social Studies. We have reviewed many items from Kindergarten and have started learning new concepts as well. Within each category students have completed homework assignments, tests, and class work. In Science students learned about animals and their habitats. Students also learned about weather. This will carry over into the second marking period. In Math, students have been tested on three chapters since the beginning of the year. Students learned about addition, number order, subtraction and are beginning to learn about data and graphs in the second marking period. In phonics, students went over beginning and ending sounds. For the next quarter students will be learning about short and long vowel sounds. In English/ Language Arts students learned and will continue to learn about sentence structure and use what they have learned about sentences structure to start writing their own stories.

In reading, students were divided according to their DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) level. At the end of Quarter 1, students were tested and given a new DRA level according to their progress. .

The First Grade Team:

**Mrs. Griffin (1A), Mrs. Simmerer (1B),
Ms. Abraham (1C), Ms. Campbell (1D)**

SECOND GRADE

Hello everyone and welcome to the new school year! Second graders are off to a busy and exciting start. We have learned about States of Matter in science. In social studies, we are studying about Native American history. In math, we are participating in our new program- "Karate Math" to help students learn their basic math facts. We are continuously building up our reading skills through reading groups and strategies. Writing skills are improving as well through compositions on a daily basis. We have a lot to look forward to, such as graphing in math, the water cycle in science, and explorers and settlers of North America in social studies. Thank you so much for all your help with our October field trip to the New Lawns Sod Farm. The students had a great time. The first Scantron testing cycle was done in the second week of November. Students worked hard to do their best on this first form of standardized testing! We have enjoyed working with all the parents and will anticipate your help in improving the achievement of our students!

The Second Grade Team

Mrs. Fenton 2C, Ms. Gogue 2A, Mrs. Muhsin 2B ☺

THIRD GRADE

Ms. Rains', Ms. Khan's & Ms. Wolstencroft's 3rd grade students are working very hard in all subject areas. We started the school year learning test-taking strategies and getting ready to take the MEAP Test. Now that our standardized tests have been completed, we are well on our way to developing great Reading, Writing, and Mathematics skills that will help to prepare the students for fourth grade!

In Language Arts, we are currently reading with our reading groups several times a week, and using Genre in a Binder to improve our reading comprehension and writing skills. Proficient Reading and Writing skills are necessary to be successful in all subject areas. It is extremely important in today's world that all students be proficient in Reading and in Writing.

We have worked hard in Mathematics to learn place value, rounding, estimation and ordering numbers. We have sharpened our addition skills, and are working on subtracting. While working in all Mathematics areas this year, students will be focusing a great deal on "word problems". It is important that students be able to apply what they learn in Math to a life-like setting. Also, all students must learn multiplication facts during the third grade year.

In Science we have learned about the life cycles of plants and animals. Students enjoyed

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watching their mealworm grow and develop. We have also studied the fall theme. In health we have learned about staying healthy.

In Social Studies we are studying the history of Michigan. We are also learning about Federal Holidays as they occur.

We look forward to a successful year with our third grade students!

The Third Grade Team:
Ms. Rains (3A) Ms. Khan (3B)
& Ms. Wolstecraft (3C)

FOURTH GRADE

The school year has started off great! So far all of our students in fourth grade are doing a wonderful job. Many students have already started to make progress and are working very hard! We are proud of all their hard work and hope you are too. If at any time you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call or set up a time when to talk. We are looking forward to the rest of the year and can already tell that it is going to be a very successful one.☺

This quarter we have been working hard in all academic areas. Students are learning how to work independently and socially within our classroom setting. Your child has also started building the strong foundation that is essential on his or her pathway of learning. Parent guidance, support, and involvement are fundamental in creating a successful student. We are positive that by continuing to work together, we can help your child become a confident learner.

As our school year continues, we plan to work hard academically and socially as we keep adapting to the classroom environment. We will work on math skills such as sorting and comparing data, reading skills like comprehension, and fluency. We are also working on planning some field trips for our second marking period.

Thank you for all of your parental support, and let's keep up the great work!

The Fourth Grade Team
Ms. Hager, Mrs. Lindsay, Mrs. Bazzi, and
Mrs. Ingram

FIFTH GRADE

During the first quarter, the fifth graders worked very hard on preparing for the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). Students worked extremely hard in science (a new testing area)

as well as preparing for reading and mathematics. This quarter students were also assessed on DRA (a reading test) and Scantron. These results will be used to improve individual progress in the classroom.

Students learned a wealth of information in the various subject areas. In science, we learned about ecosystems and force and motion. We had the opportunity to attend the SOIL field trip to explore ecosystems further! Next, we will continue working on force and motion.

In social studies, we completed a unit study on Native Americans. We have started learning about explorers and will continue on into the second quarter.

In mathematics, students were dedicated to learning adding and subtracting fractions. The next quarter will focus on multiplication and division as well as decimals and fractions.

During reading we are focusing on reading comprehension. As we start reading groups, we will continue to focus on comprehension and fluency which are skills that will help with other areas. In writing, students worked very hard on creating personal narratives. Along with this, students worked with genre in a binder which helped students to understand different types of writing. We are currently working on writing mysteries. We will continue working on narrative writing. Please continue to encourage your student to complete homework and study for tests

The Fourth Grade Team:
Ms. Murray, Mrs. Doan, and Mrs. Abbas



Hello Everyone, Welcome to Arabic Language class!!!

Students in the Arabic class have been working as hard as a busy busing bee at learning how to speak and communicate with each other using the Arabic language. Meanwhile, our students are working rigidly at developing their Arabic writing and reading skills by doing different hands on activities such as; Arabic Posters and Arabian Carpets; as well as listening activities, such as CDs, DVDs, and educational songs. In addition to this, we have been implementing buddy reading, and group work. The students enjoy doing our Arabic centers, which enhance their abilities to use the techniques that they have been learning throughout the first marking period. Students will be working hard this coming marking period at mastering their conversational skills by doing dialogues in different subjects.

We the Arabic language teachers have been assisting students to progressively accept more responsibility for self-discipline, to increase self respect, to develop an appreciation of learning Arabic and to strive for excellence. We appreciate our parental support and hope to continue working with parents to enhance students' enjoyment of learning Arabic.

Arabic is fun and we will keep on learning more, more, and more Arabic!!



Music News:

POSSIBILITIES

Our music students have been working very hard preparing for a musical concert titled "Possibilities," by Theresa Jennings. "**Possibilities**" is a musical revue celebrating life and all the possibilities our children have for their futures. It explores dreams for the future, career choices, dealing with everyday life, and more – with a variety of educational music and narration. The concert is Thursday November 12th at 3:00pm in the ULA gym.

Not only have we been preparing for our concert but we have also been learning about many famous composers, different instruments, how to read and notate music, as well as learning to play the recorder. The year is off to a great start, and I am expecting some great things from all of your students!



Pre-K Corner

The pre-kindergartners are quickly adjusting to their new schedule and environment. The students and teachers are happy that school has finally started for them and they are getting right down to business. Our 4 and 5 year olds are learning how to write their names, learning their colors and shapes, and are constantly exploring math, science, and social studies concepts. They keep themselves busy with group time, daily Arabic, literacy centers and free centers, outside recess, naptime, library, and snacks! Every moment is a learning experience in Pre-K and they are having a blast learning together.

UNIVERSAL LEARNING ACADEMY

TWO BOARD MEMBER VACANCIES ANNOUNCEMENT 11/12/2009

The Board of Directors of the Universal Learning Academy has two vacancies for the Board of Directors. Interested candidates must be the age of 21 or over, must be a US Citizen, a resident of the State of Michigan, and has excellent communication skills in the English language skills, computer skills are a plus, committed to the Academy's vision and mission, must be able to attend Board meetings at least once a month, attend board training as required by the Authorizer, and may not have business interest or be employed at HES or the Academy.

Application time: November 12, 2009 – December 12, 2009

Term: Vacancy 1: As may be approved by the Authorizer or thru June 30, 2011
Vacancy 2: As may be approved by the Authorizer or thru June 30, 2013

To be considered, you must:

1. Complete a Board Member Application
2. Complete an Interview Process
3. Have a clear reference & Criminal Background Check

Parents & Community Members, who are interested, please contact the to obtain a Board Member Application and for more information.