



IQRA ISLAMIC SCHOOL

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PRESS RELEASE

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IQRA Receives the Prestigious School Recognition Award from the School Leadership Centre @ UBC

IQRA Islamic School recognized for an extraordinary innovation

IQRA Islamic School has been presented with a \$3000 School Recognition Award from the School Leadership Centre at the University of British Columbia. The award recognizes “extraordinary work and innovation in improving student learning.”

Mark Edwards, Executive Director of the School Leadership Centre congratulates IQRA. “We acknowledge your school’s compelling combination of previous success, self-analysis, innovation, planning, and collaboration, all dedicated to advancing the learning processes of your students.”

“The School Recognition Award,” writes Edwards, “shows extraordinary commitment to the learning of students. It depicts a high degree of curiosity and intellectual rigour applied by teachers, principals and districts to the challenges of making authentic improvement in student learning.”

“The evident capacity of these schools to research their own practices and to demonstrate for themselves the efficacy of their innovations we consider an important trend that we hope will continue to flourish in these schools and in others that would learn from their work,” **he continues. “Our intention is to make your exemplary leadership accessible to other schools across the province.”**

On the School Leadership Centre website, www.slc.educ.ubc.ca, IQRA is acclaimed for “its improvement of student learning in a variety of domains, and for its plan to improve student learning of English and Arabic through transferring first language skills and abilities to these second languages.”

IQRA hopes to use the reward to help students maintain and strengthen their first language. Strong first language skills can be more easily transferred to a second or third language such as Arabic or English. Current research suggests that students can master a second language more quickly if their first language literacy is strong.

Initially, teachers and parents at IQRA will be introduced to the benefits of first language maintenance and the transferring of basic skills. On a basic level, if children understand that a word in their first language can be represented in writing, they will grasp this concept more quickly when learning a second language. The same is true for more advanced language skills.

Toward this end, much of the grant will go towards the purchase of diglot picture books for IQRA. These books contain the same text written in two different languages. One language will be English while the other could be any of the sixteen different languages that are represented by IQRA's student population.

The books will be used as English resources in the classrooms and those that contain Arabic will supplement IQRA's Arabic program. As well, students will be encouraged to borrow the diglot books and read them with their parents in their first language.

Parents who feel unable to assist with English or Arabic homework will be free to teach their children in their mother tongue. Older students at IQRA will also lead language clubs, reading in their first language to primary students.

Overall, the School Recognition Award will do much to enhance language skills, family ties, and cultural identities at IQRA. **It is a significant step for an Islamic school to take the lead in this essential aspect of a child's education.**

In addition to IQRA, only one other independent school received the award out of the 348 private schools in the entire province. **Altogether, only 61 of more than 2000 BC schools were recognized.** The funding for this award is provided by the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Education.

The awards are to be announced by the Minister of Education, and the local MLA has also been informed of IQRA's accomplishment.

IQRA Islamic School is located in the Guildford area of Surrey. IQRA is housed in a historic school building next to a nature park and surrounded by large, green fields and colourful playgrounds. Currently, over three hundred students attend primary, intermediate, and middle school classes. IQRA also hosts an excellent Arabic, Qur'an, and Islamic Studies Program from kindergarten through grade eight. **IQRA will add its first grade nine class in the fall of 2006, in shaa Allah.**

Local media is invited to contact the School Leadership Centre and IQRA Islamic School for further information on the award and the program it will support, respectively.

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