



5 Year Strategic Plan 2011-2016

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Mission

Pillars Academy is a private Islamic school established by the Orange County Islamic Foundation in the year 2000. The Academy's focus is to provide a holistic approach to education by addressing the spiritual, academic, social, and emotional needs of a child. The curriculum stresses excellence in core academic subjects and in Islamic studies taught by caring and qualified teachers. Our students belong to a community of faith, including parents and teachers, which strengthen their identity as Muslims. The students are encouraged to be leaders and to strive to improve themselves, their families, their communities, and their environment.

Vision

Pillars Academy graduates are well rounded individuals who excel in core academics and possess skills to read, write, and speak not just English, but also Arabic as it is the language of the Quran. They emerge as God conscious leaders who seek the pleasure of their Creator through service to humanity.

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Preface

This Strategic Plan is a consequence of the recently established Education Committee at OCIF. Its purpose is to establish a clear direction for the educational objectives of OCIF so that high value programs are developed and effectively marketed to the community.

A Strategic Planning Committee composed of school parents, teachers, administrators, OCIF Board members, and other community members from all walks of life and varying ages, headed by Ms. Negva Osgur of the Merit Center, joined hands over a period of two months to come up with this plan.

The primary focus of this effort was to revitalize “AlRidah Academy”. During its 11 years of operation the school has succeeded in building a reputation of providing quality education within a friendly and caring environment, with a low teacher to student ratio. All teachers are credentialed, and the school is accredited by NAEYC and WASC.

Two main components emerged as a result of this strategic planning that will be added to the school’s existing qualities: 1) Establishing a program that emphasizes Leadership and 2) Emphasizing the teaching of

the Arabic language. The Strategic Planning Committee also took the bold move of changing the name of the school to Pillars Academy.

The committee established a new Mission and Vision for Pillars Academy, which are presented in this booklet, along with the 5 year Strategic Plan. This should rally the support of the community for the stated goals and objectives.

The Strategic Planning process also identified areas, such as Governance, in which synergies exist between Pillars Academy and the various educational programs offered by OCIF. Similar plans will be developed for each of these programs.

The establishment of detailed policies and procedures should enhance the ability of OCIF to more effectively serve the educational needs of its constituents.

The Education Committee,
Orange County Islamic Foundation.

I. School Culture

Goals

To create a school culture of honesty, appreciation, respect, collaboration, and continuous reflection of practices inspired by the Islamic faith.

To instill in students a love of learning through innovative teaching practices, and skills that promote leadership.

Objectives

- Teach students to take on leadership roles through implementing a standards based social curriculum and inviting motivational speakers
- Collect ongoing surveys to gauge and respond to community needs and concerns
- Focus on Islamic etiquette and manners
- Enlist the support of parents to promote community building, and support the development of the “whole” child
- Establish a student government body

II. Excellence in Islamic Studies

Goal

Pillars Academy will strive to provide excellent Islamic Education by teaching students to embody Islam. The Quran will be used as a source of divine knowledge that must be read, understood, committed to memory, and most importantly applied to daily life. This will be accomplished most effectively by adopting a pilot bilingual Arabic Program.

Objectives

- Research the latest language acquisition methods based on standards to facilitate the bilingual program goal
- Adopt curriculum that best represents application of developmentally appropriate concepts to students as well as effective methods of reading and understanding the Quran
- Focus on reading and writing in Arabic as well conversational Arabic language skills
- Teach values based on monthly Islamic themes learned through Quranic verses, storytelling, Seerah, and Hadith, and the implementation of these themes in daily life

III. Highest Academic Standards

Goals

Pillars Academy will stress Ihsan or excellence in core subjects which include Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies based on holistic approach to education.

The school will offer opportunities for the whole development of the child through programs such as Physical education, art, music, and other extracurricular activities, while integrating the Arabic language in the process.

Objectives

- Facilitate research based concepts of intrinsic motivation and the " why" of learning (to seek knowledge is a form of worship) in order to create engaged and motivated learners
- Utilize ongoing assessments in order to gage student learning
- Implement ongoing Professional Development in order to provide differentiated teaching methods and use a variety of modalities to teach

- Ensure that the developed curriculum creates and nurtures critical thinking skills in students
- Incorporate Islamic Knowledge into core subjects where relevant
- Update current curriculum in all core subjects: Math, Language Arts, Social Studies and Science
- Integrate learning through play in preschool to kindergarten
- Develop educational resources for teachers and student
- Foster a love of learning through innovative curriculum that uses expeditionary or experiential means of teaching

IV. Excellent Faculty

Goal

To recruit and train individuals who possess professional and personal attributes to support the Vision and Mission of the school.

Objectives

- Hire teachers who possess credentials and certifications in the areas in which they will instruct
- Provide ongoing professional training opportunities to further develop these skills, and build awareness of current trends in education
- Provide teachers with support from counselors in the community so that they can better serve the needs of a multi-cultural student body
- Provide teachers and administrative staff with clear job descriptions, methods of evaluation, and professional growth opportunities

V. Governance

Goal

The Education Committee of OCIF will be the governing body of Pillars Academy. Its members will commit to devoting their time, skills and resources to the sound governance of the school. The structure of the committee is designed to enable committee members to lend support to Pillars Academy mission and vision.

Objectives

- Establish the structural guidelines for the Education Committee, so that it can effectively support Pillars Academy
- Recruit community members to serve on the Education Committee who bring a broad range of skills and experience to the group. Encourage wider community participation by providing opportunities for people to serve on permanent and ad-hoc sub-committees
- Maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect while fulfilling the responsibilities of governance. Individually and collectively work towards attaining

the stated goals and objectives of the school's
Mission Statement and Strategic Plan

- Ensure sound governance by establishing standards of professionalism within the Education Committee, as well as developing strategies for the continuity of its efforts. This includes methods for recruiting and replacing committee members, and providing them with the training and support to maximize their contribution

VI. Marketing

Goals

The Marketing Committee serves as a driving force in creating awareness of Pillars Academy in the marketplace, by strengthening the Pillars Academy brand, sustaining parent/student relationships, and enhancing enrollment, satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, the Marketing Committee endeavors to collaborate with OCIF board members to enrich the value of the various educational services offered and to clearly promote value propositions to current and prospective parents and community members.

Objectives

- Promote awareness of our school across communities – both local and national.
- Increase enrollment
- Increase retention rate of existing student body.
- Strengthen Pillars Academy's messaging & branding to support the mission of Pillars Academy throughout print collateral, website, social media, and advertising.

- Inform the Muslim community and parents alike of the benefits of maintaining our local Islamic schools by tying in the “ROI” (return on investment). This will encourage them to invest in these schools.

VII. Stability

Goal

Achieve stability by I) adopting clear written policies & procedures for students and staff II) promoting community involvement and expanding the reach III) Increasing donations, IV) increasing student enrolment and student retention in Pillars Academy.

Objectives

- Ensure that WASC and NAEYC accreditation requirements are being met
- Create a collaborative atmosphere at Pillars Academy that builds the community by involving as many individuals as possible
- Reach out to the Muslim community in the area who might not attend prayers on regular basis, or only rarely attend prayers
 - Families that are new to the area
 - Muslims new to Islam
- Raise funds to stabilize and cover the school's budgetary shortfalls. Place events in the school

calendar at the beginning of each school year with committees assigned.

- Raise friends to introduce possible donors to the school and to establish close relationships to be strengthened over time.
- Develop donors for planned giving through their trusts and estate towards building an endowment fund for Pillars Academy.
- Promote the leadership curriculum by spearheading unique events to be introduced to the Mission Viejo community at large ie teaching awards, science project acknowledgement, recycling, gardening competition, and community leadership award.
- Establish and offer scholarships to capable students to be awarded by an independent third party.
- Expand the OCIF existing database. Collect data from current OCIF, and follow up to get the available database from social networks.

VIII. Physical Growth

Goals

To provide a quality building for the school and its related facilities. Increase safety, handicap accessibility, and better use of space by a) identifying underutilized areas or b) by acquiring or leasing other nearby property.

Objectives

- a. Identify underutilized areas
 - Utilize as a playground the area consisting of a stretch of grass located next to the Montessori School.
 - Explore the use of the adjacent park and its facilities just across the street for physical education and other sports needs
 - Utilize the OCIF Multipurpose room and the prayer area for school activities such as music, sports, martial arts, and other programs
 - Expand upper prayer hall area to include a library, and for conducting classes add

an elevator to the building that will help meet the requirements for handicap accessibility.

- Evaluate enclosing the rear exterior staircase in order to create a single point of access that improves the connectivity between the lower level and upper level of the school while isolating OCIF
- For safety purposes add a concrete, or steel barrier near the curb to protect the lower level classrooms

b) Explore expanding beyond the existing school:

- Research local public or private schools buildings for possible sites of relocation.

Strategic Planning Committee

Ali Rizvi- Community Member
Amanda Shreim- Community Member
Anna Ravelo- Pillars Academy Teacher
Asmaa Aly- OCIF Administration
Assil Alsharifi- Pillars Academy Teacher
Ayesha Ali- Pillars Academy Parent, Marketing Committee
Adita Arya- Pillars Academy Director
Bashir Khan-Community Member
Faieza Hadi- Pillars Academy Teacher
Farhan Mahmoud- Community Member
Farid El Kasm-OCIF Board Member
Heba Asker- Community Member, Saturday School Teacher
Iman Seirafi- Community Member
Imran Rafiq- Pillars Academy Parent
Imrana Iqbal- Community Member
Jihan Assaf- OCIF Board Member
Maryam Kazi- OCIF Education Committee
Mohamed Dibas- Community Member
Mohannad Malas- OCIF Board and Education Committee Member
Mubashera Chaudhry- OCIF Education Committee
Muhammad Khilji-Community Member
Nada Alhamawi- Pillars Academy Teacher
Nafisa Husain- OCIF Education Committee
Necva Ozgur- Merit Center CEO
Neira Zolota- Pillars Academy Teacher
Sahar Ali- Pillars Academy Administrator
Salam Ali-Community Member, Marketing Committee
Sumair Mahmood- OCIF Education Committee
Sumaya Abdulquadir-Pillars Academy Parent, OCIF Administration
Summar Yamout- Pillars Academy Parent, Pillars Academy Teacher
Yasser Barakat- OCIF Board Member
Yassir Fazaga- OCIF Resident Imam
Zara Haider-Community Member
Zubeda Kazi- Preschool Director, Pillars Academy Teacher

2011-2012 OCIF Education Committee

Mohannad Malas

Nafisa Husain

Metra Azar-Salem

Mubashera Chaudhry

Maryam Kazi

Sameer Mohiuddin

**Pillars Academy is accredited by
the Western Association of Schools
and Colleges (WASC) and the
National Association for the
Education of Young Children
(NAEYC).**

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