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Qatar Foundation International Awards Over \$100,000 to Arizona & Minnesota Schools to Strengthen Arabic Programs

New partnerships expand Qatar Foundation International's in-school Arabic language programs to 25 US schools across the country.

September XX, 2016, WASHINGTON, DC – Qatar Foundation International (QFI), has awarded two separate grants – **a total of \$179,374.22**– to the Minneapolis Public School District (MPS) and the Tucson Unified School District, in recognition of their bids to expand and establish in-school Arabic programs in Minneapolis, Minnesota and Tucson, Arizona.

Through a highly competitive process, QFI has awarded grants in the amount of **\$68,305.34** to MPS to support their Arabic programming during 2016-2017 and a grant worth **\$111,068.88** to Tucson Unified aimed at expanding their Arabic programs and existing partnership with QFI. This furthers QFI's mission to inspire meaningful connections to the Arab world through language education and cultural-exchange.

Minneapolis Public School is the only district that offers Arabic from an elementary level to a high school level in the Twin Cities. With the grant award, MPS will solidify the Arabic pathway from Lyndale Elementary School, Ramsey Middle School, to Washburn High School. The grant supports two teachers who will teach at the three schools, including funding for teacher salaries, International Baccalaureate program training, and cultural events.

"Minneapolis Public Schools believes in providing an urban education that prepares students to be global citizens," said Superintendent Ed Graff. "Thanks to this partnership, our students will have even more opportunities to learn important languages useful for both college and career."

The grant with Tucson Unified expands QFI programming in the state of Arizona. Growing from the in-school program at Cholla Magnet High School, Tucson Unified will establish an Arabic feeder program at three more schools: Wright Elementary School, Doolen Middle School, and Catalina High School. With the addition of these schools, a cadre of Arabic teachers will be formed to coordinate cultural activities and organize outreach efforts to increase enrollment in K-12 Arabic classes. Planned activities include Arabic Language and Culture Day, presentations to parents and students, and attending Tucson Unified events to promote Arabic language and culture.

“Tucson Unified is committed to offering a global education, and we are excited that this partnership allows us to expand opportunities for our students and our community to learn more about the world,” said Superintendent H.T. Sanchez.

QFI sees language as a vehicle to connect cultures, and has partnered with 25 K-12 schools across the United States, allowing students to gain a foothold in the Arabic language from a young age and gain 21st century skills applicable in a global market. Arabic is spoken by over [400](#) million people worldwide, is the fastest-growing second language in the United States, and has helped US students pursue careers in business, journalism, diplomacy, national security, and much more.

“QFI partners with school districts across the U.S. to advance Arabic language learning and the understanding of Arab culture to develop global competency and critical 21st century skills that young Americans need to compete globally,” said Maggie Mitchell Salem, QFI’s Executive Director. “We are excited to see these pivotal programs grow in Minneapolis and Tucson and to connect educators, learners and communities in the US, Canada, Brazil, UK and Qatar.”

The study of Arabic as a foreign language has risen in popularity and has seen a surge in American student interest over the past decade. Surveys conducted by the Modern Language Association ([MLA](#)) in 2006 and 2009 found that American student enrolment in Arabic language courses [grew by 126.5% from 2002 to 2006 and then again by another 46.3% between 2006 and 2009](#), making Arabic the fastest-growing area of foreign language study in the US. Despite this growing national interest, in-school programs have struggled to keep pace.

To learn more about QFI, or their Arabic advocacy campaign ISpeakArabic, which showcases the benefits of studying Arabic along with access to Arabic language resources, please visit [ISpeakArabic.com](#)

For a list of QFI’s Arabic school programs, please visit <http://qfi.org/programs/arabic-language-and-culture/partner-schools>

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About Qatar Foundation International

Qatar Foundation International (QFI), LLC, is a U.S.-based member of Qatar Foundation (QF). QFI is both a grant-making organization and a convener of thought leaders on issues related to global and international education, open education and education technologies as they intersect with the three core QFI programmatic areas: Arabic language and Arab culture, STE{A} M (STEM plus the Arts), and Youth Engagement.

QFI inspires meaningful connections to the Arab world by creating a global community of diverse learners and educators and connecting them through effective and collaborative learning environments —inside and outside the classroom.

Through our activities, QFI is committed to providing K-12 students in Qatar and the Americas with the intellectual, communicative, and cultural competencies that will enable them to be engaged global citizens.

Learn more at qfi.org