

Teaching Arabic in Our Schools: Globalizing Education for Chicago's Next Generation

By Brian T. Edwards, Roseanna Ander, Sarah Herda

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Executive summary

To enhance Chicago's reputation as a global city, create opportunities for young Chicagoans, and set an example for other US cities on how to inspire a diverse generation of children to become globally aware, tolerant, and educated in other cultures, access to Arabic language instruction for students in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) needs to be significantly expanded. This initiative would symbolize Chicago's vision for the global citizenship of our next generation, bring together students from diverse populations, and be an important step in preparing Chicago's youth for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Currently, seven elementary schools and five high schools in CPS offer Arabic as a world language, reaching a total of 3,127 students. While this is an impressive number, it is less than 1 percent of the 400,000 students in the CPS system. In some cases, particularly in high schools, a full curriculum in Arabic is offered, while in elementary schools Arabic instruction tends to be limited to an hour or two per week. While several schools where Arabic is offered include students of Arab heritage, for most of the 3,127 students Arabic is an entirely new language.

We propose a plan to triple the number of public schools teaching Arabic over the next five years to reach 10,000 students in primary and secondary levels and to double that number again in the following

decade. Overall, the goal is to reach 20,000 students, or 5 percent of total CPS enrollment across all socioeconomic groups and throughout the entire city.

By doing so Chicago will establish itself as a national leader in globally minded public education and set a standard other cities will seek to follow. Moreover, Chicago will make a resounding statement about the promise of the next generation of Chicagoans and promote dialogue over distrust as we work together to address the challenges future generations will confront.

The success of the city's initiative to develop a Mandarin Chinese program 11 years ago is a model for expanding the teaching of Arabic. Both languages are listed as critical languages by the US Department of State.¹ The US Defense Department's Defense Language Institute lists both as Category Four in difficulty, among the five most difficult languages for English-speakers to master.² A 2015 Modern Language Association (MLA) report notes that both languages have seen a dramatic rise in popularity since 1998,³ while competency in either language offers similar benefits to job seekers in the financial, political, academic, and military sectors, among others. Indeed, the combination of an enhanced Arabic program and the city's already strong Mandarin program will establish Chicago's reputation in teaching critical world languages to our youth.

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Why should Arabic be taught in our schools?

Chicago Public Schools should substantially increase the teaching of Arabic for three reasons: the educational benefits of teaching complex languages to K-12 students; the future economic and career benefits to children who learn a major world language that is not often mastered by Americans; and the ability to use cultural education and communication to increase young people's understanding of the Arab world, which may improve both geopolitics and domestic tensions in the future.

Studying world languages is good for cognitive development. Studies have shown repeatedly that learning a second language increases critical thinking skills, creativity, and mental flexibility in young children. Students who learn second languages outscore their peers in verbal and math sections of standardized tests.⁴ For example, elementary school students have been shown to score significantly higher in math and language arts after 90 minutes per week of world language study for one semester.⁵

The benefits continue into high school. Results from the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) show that students who had studied a second language for four or more years outscored other students on the verbal and math portions of the test.⁶ Graduating high school seniors with two or more years of world language study showed significant superiority on achievement tests in English when compared with students who did not study a second language.⁷

Educators have evidence, therefore, that language learning has a positive impact on children in general, and teaching students any language offers students cognitive benefits.

So why Arabic?

With 300 million speakers, Arabic is the fifth most spoken language in the world.⁸ Arabic is spoken in 60 countries, a number second only to English. It is one of six languages of the United Nations, and it is the official or co-official language of 24 nations. As the formal language of Islam, it also plays a prominent role in the lives of 1.5 billion Muslims today. While only a minority of Muslims are Arab—estimates range from 12 to 25 percent—classical Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and most non-Arab Muslims study it or at least encounter it through their religion. Arabic is also the

ninth most common language spoken in the United States, according to US Census Bureau statistics.

A solid understanding of the Arabic language can bring with it invaluable opportunities for students preparing to join the workforce. The US Department of State labels Arabic a "critical needs language," indicating a lack of available speakers to perform necessary services, and substantial preference in the federal hiring process is given to candidates with proficiency in critical languages. Once attained, Arabic fluency can offer individuals invaluable access to careers in business, diplomacy, journalism, public policy, defense, engineering, health care, and numerous other competitive, valuable fields. Learning Arabic in Chicago Public Schools is a good investment for students' future employment.

Despite its advantage for job seekers, Arabic is massively understudied in the United States.⁹ The geopolitical focus on the Middle East has had an effect on student interest in Arabic, to be sure. In the decade and a half since September 11, 2001, Arabic instruction has increased significantly at the college level. Between 1998 and 2002, Arabic enrollments doubled; they tripled between 2002 and 2009, making Arabic the fastest-growing language of study in US universities and the eighth most taught. But the numbers are still depressed. The MLA's most recent report gives a portrait of college language learning over the past decade. With 32,286 students in 2013, Arabic enrollments nationwide are barely above Latin (27,192), less than half of Italian (71,285), and a third of German (86,700).¹⁰ The MLA surveys college world language enrollment every four years. In the most recent reporting period, it showed a significant drop in overall language enrollments, with 2013 numbers down 6.7 percent from 2009. So while Arabic enrollments are six times what they were in 1998, they are far from sufficient.

The College Board is expected to soon develop an Advanced Placement exam in Arabic. The College Board introduced new AP exams in both Mandarin Chinese language and culture and Japanese language and culture in 2007. With some leading private schools now offering Arabic and Arabic programs on the college level expanding, it appears that Arabic instruction on the high school level will enjoy an expanded role soon.

Chicago should get in front of this trend and set an example for the rest of the country. Chicago is a

city identified with higher education. Among major US metropolitan areas, only Chicago and Boston can boast two of the top 15 national research universities according to *US News and World Report* rankings.¹¹ Chicago's two, Northwestern University and The University of Chicago, both boast highly regarded programs in Middle East and North African Studies. In addition, the University of Illinois at Chicago, itself a nationally recognized public research university, offers a "cluster" of courses in Middle East and Muslim Societies, and both DePaul and Loyola universities offer minors in Arabic. Chicago should capitalize on these resources and its reputation in higher education and take a bold step.

Expanding Arabic instruction on the K-12 level offers an opportunity to encourage and forge partnerships between Chicago's public secondary schools and its great universities. By increasing the base of credentialed teachers of Arabic and linking the existing programs in Arabic in CPS with the programs at area institutions of higher education, we have the potential to rethink the way American students are taught this challenging language.

Language as a window to understanding

In addition to the economic and career benefits of learning Arabic, there are compelling social reasons to produce a cohort of young Chicagoans with a more intimate understanding of Arab culture. Open and unchecked prejudice against Arabs and, by loose association, Muslims, both Arab and non-Arab, is increasingly prevalent in US cities. Hate crimes toward Muslims are five times more common today than they were prior to 2001.¹² Although Muslims make up only about 1 percent of the US population, according to FBI reports, 14 percent of religious-based hate crimes target Muslims.¹³

Greater cross-cultural understanding is not only a moral imperative—it will help advance peace. Learning languages is not a cure for hate, but as teachers of world languages have long maintained, language is a window into understanding other cultures.

With Arabic, this is especially dramatic. Arabic is not only a beautiful and complex language, but its sentence structure is entirely different and the relationship between words incredibly rich. The trilateral root system common to Arabic and Hebrew yields huge

families of interrelated words that are fundamentally different from English etymologies.¹⁴

In other words, Arabic—like all languages—is a system and an incredibly ornate system at that. To understand some of how that system works—and with real study to be able to function within it—is not only good for the brain, but it helps students understand another world view.

The widely noted tendency toward monolingualism in the United States among those whose first language is English is surprising given the diversity of languages used among communities in America. According to the Census Bureau, more than 300 languages are spoken in this country, more than half of them native North American languages.¹⁵ In 2010, 20.6 percent of US households reported speaking a language other than English at home, a dramatic increase from 30 years earlier when only 11 percent of households in the United States reported the same. Chicago's multilingualism is reflected in the daily newspapers published in Polish and Spanish and the weeklies published in Lithuanian and Japanese, among others.¹⁶ We live alongside each other with a great diversity of languages, traditions, and heritages. Educators in Illinois have recognized this. In 2013 Illinois was the third state to adopt the Seal of Biliteracy program, which promotes linguistic fluency and cultural literacy by empowering schools to certify the abilities of bilingual students. We hope to build on this initiative.

Why Chicago?

Chicago has a number of overlapping Arab communities, representing the city's long tradition of receiving new immigrants to America. Current estimates show that the city holds anywhere between 50,000 and 170,000 ethnically Arab residents.¹⁷ And Chicago already has a foundation in the field of Arabic instruction at both the university and secondary levels. This asset makes it an especially attractive location for a concerted effort to expand Arabic language instruction in the public schools.

Young people in Chicago need to understand what it means to be global citizens and what it means for Chicago to be a global city. Urban youth in Chicago have shown that they can participate on the international stage. Last year four students from Lindblom Academy became the first Americans to participate in a prestigious Arabic-language debate competition in

Qatar. Subsequently, Mayor Rahm Emanuel showed his commitment to supporting existing programs and building new ones in Arabic language instruction for students in CPS in a letter, writing: “We can provide no better foundation for our children’s success and our city’s future than the critical investments we are making in world language and cultural education programs like the Center for Arabic Language and Culture.... Chicago Public Schools currently enroll over 3,000 students in Arabic programs at five high schools and seven elementary schools. This is a great start, but we have much room to grow.”¹⁸

Now is the time to capitalize on this commitment and allow the city of Chicago to spearhead a national trend to bring Arabic language instruction to K-12 students. Such a move would increase opportunities for Chicago’s youth and minority populations in addition to underscoring Chicago’s identity as a global city.

In what follows we outline the important achievements that educational leaders have already accomplished in establishing Arabic programs in CPS. We then compare this experience to Mandarin Chinese programs, take a brief look at the status of Arabic teaching in other major US cities, and propose a mechanism for substantial growth.

What is Chicago already doing?

Chicago Public Schools already boasts a small but thriving Arabic program. During the 2014–15 school year, more than 3,000 students studied Arabic in a dozen schools in the system. The programs vary in curriculum as well as in enrollment. Barely a dozen students participate in the smallest program, while the largest has over 500 students. World language instruction is often portrayed as the purview of the privileged, and yet Chicago’s Arabic programs reach diverse communities. The schools where Arabic is offered currently are spread across the north and west sides of the city; more than half the student body at each school is low income, with figures ranging from 51.2 percent to 97.4 percent. All but one school has a majority Hispanic or African American population (see figures 1, 2, and 3).

Native speakers of Arabic—children with one or more Arabic-speaking parents—are the second-largest population of Chicago students who are English-language learners. With 1,500 children who report Arabic as the primary language spoken at home, Arabic is more common in Chicago than Cantonese

or Polish as a “heritage” language, or home language that is not English. Not all of these students participate in Arabic programs. (The data does not track this yet.) Most are in programs geared to teaching them English (see figure 4). But their presence allows for future two-way immersion programs that may provide a bridge between Arabic learners and Arab diaspora populations. As two-way immersion programs in Spanish have demonstrated, teaching heritage learners alongside children whose first language—and whose parents’ first language—is English can foster rich learning environments.

The 3,127 CPS students learning Arabic are taught by 14 full-time and two part-time teachers. One elementary teacher reaches as many as 600 students; the average is 500 students per elementary program. Full-time high school teachers engage an average of 100 students in the classroom per term. According to the Illinois State Board of Education, teachers may be licensed to teach in a particular subject and then receive an “endorsement” to teach Arabic as a second subject. While in the past programs relied on credentialed teachers who were not native speakers, currently all 16 Arabic instructors in CPS are native Arabic speakers who received such endorsements.

One of the city’s most valuable assets to support instruction in the Arabic language is the Center for Arabic Language and Culture, a nonprofit organization partnered with the Chicago Community Trust, the Arts and Business Council of Chicago, CPS, the University of Chicago, and the Qatar Foundation. The center is housed in Lindblom Math and Science Academy, which hosts the largest of CPS’s high school Arabic programs and in fact the largest for-credit, nonheritage Arabic language program in the country.¹⁹ The center was described by Mayor Emanuel in 2014 as “the nation’s leader in Arabic and cultural instruction.” The center’s mission is to expand Arabic instruction in K-12 schools across the city through such services as creating curricular materials, offering professional development for teachers, and hosting cultural events.

The center made headlines in 2014 when it brought a group of Chicago students to participate in the Qatar Debate World Championship, an Arabic-language competition in Doha, Qatar. Four students from Lindblom represented the United States. The students from Chicago were among the few non-native speakers present.²⁰ They discussed complicated topics in Arabic, including government surveillance of social

FIGURE 1

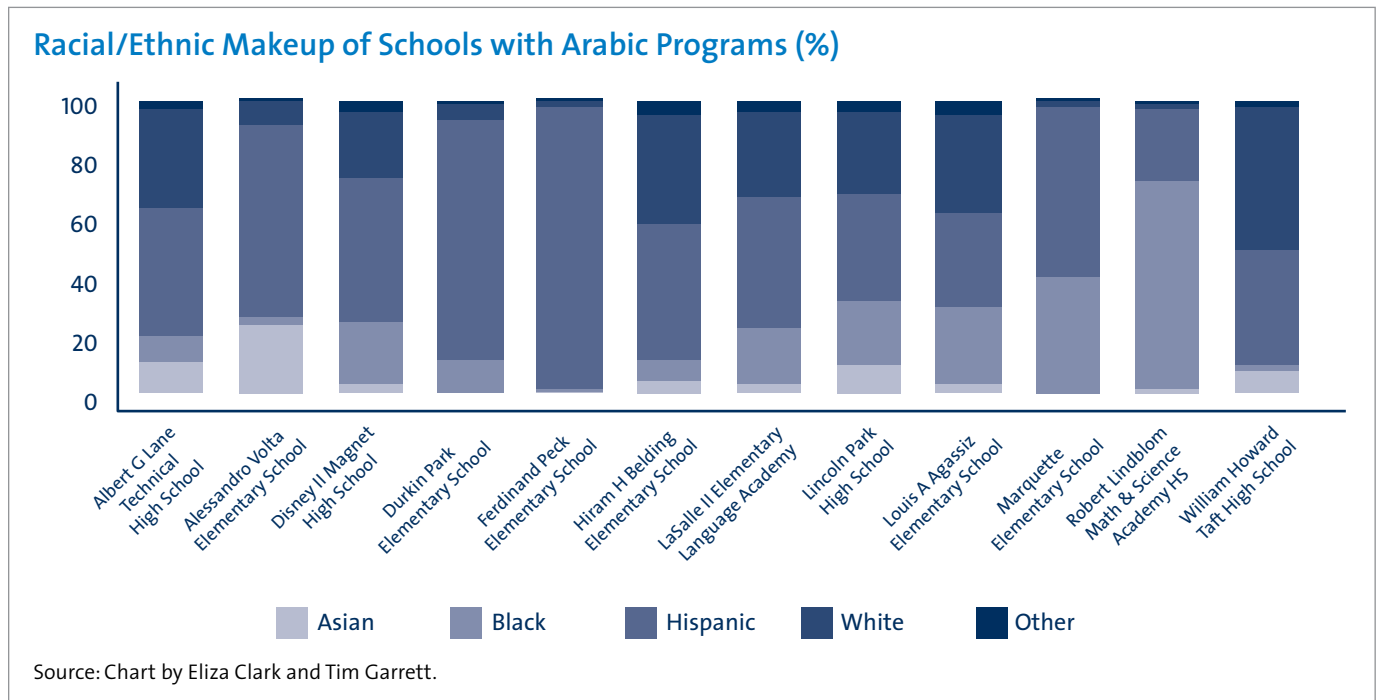


FIGURE 2

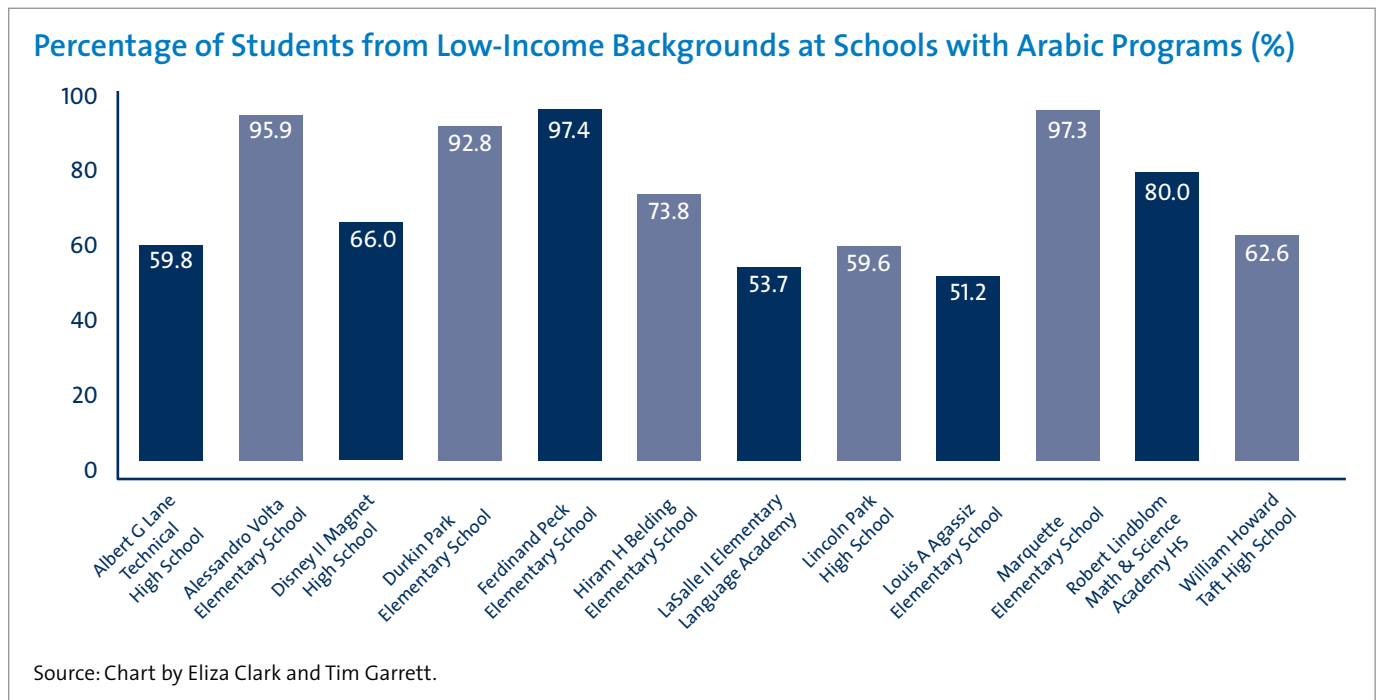
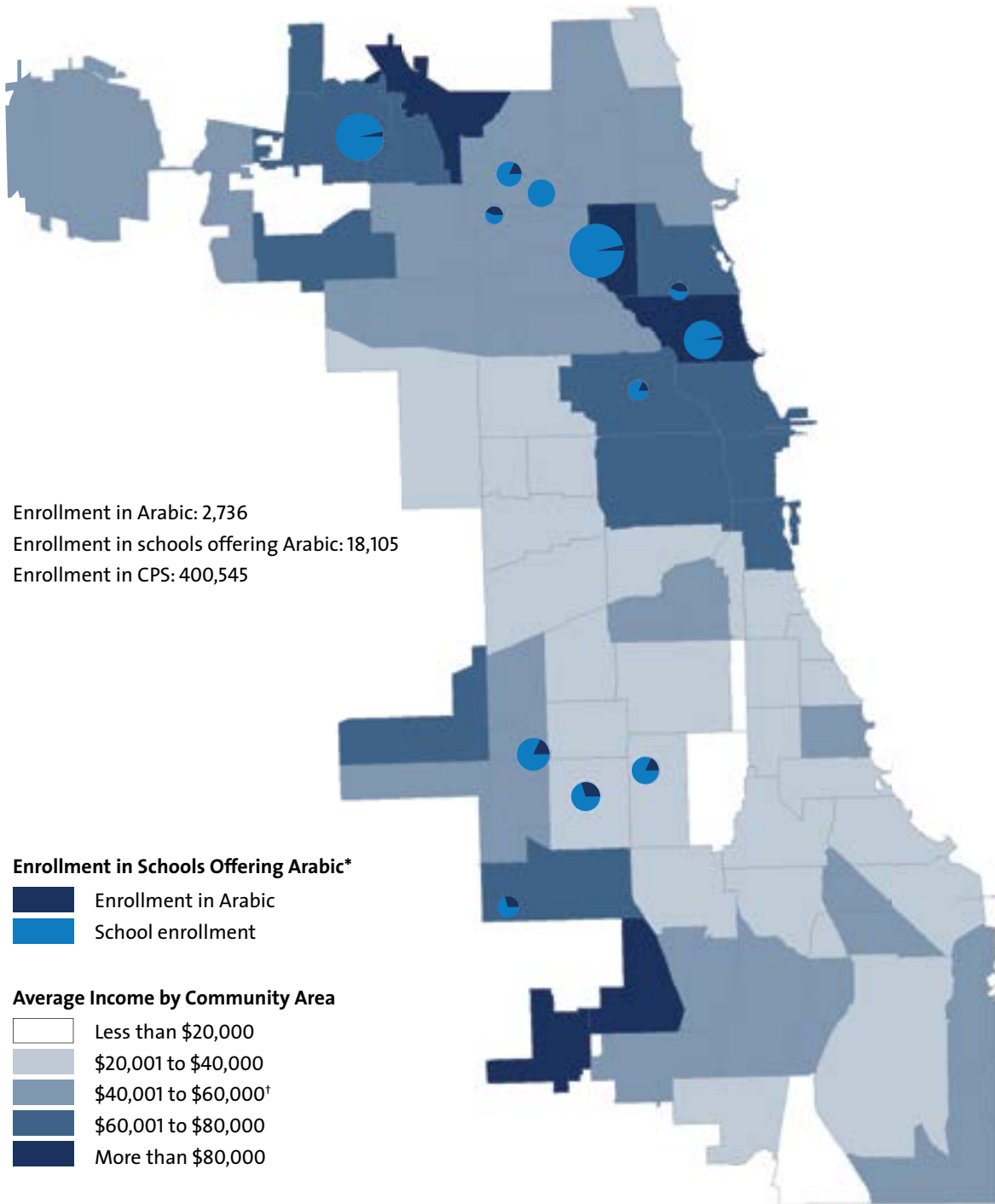


FIGURE 3

Arabic Enrollment in Chicago Public Schools



* The size of the symbol is proportional to the size of the school.

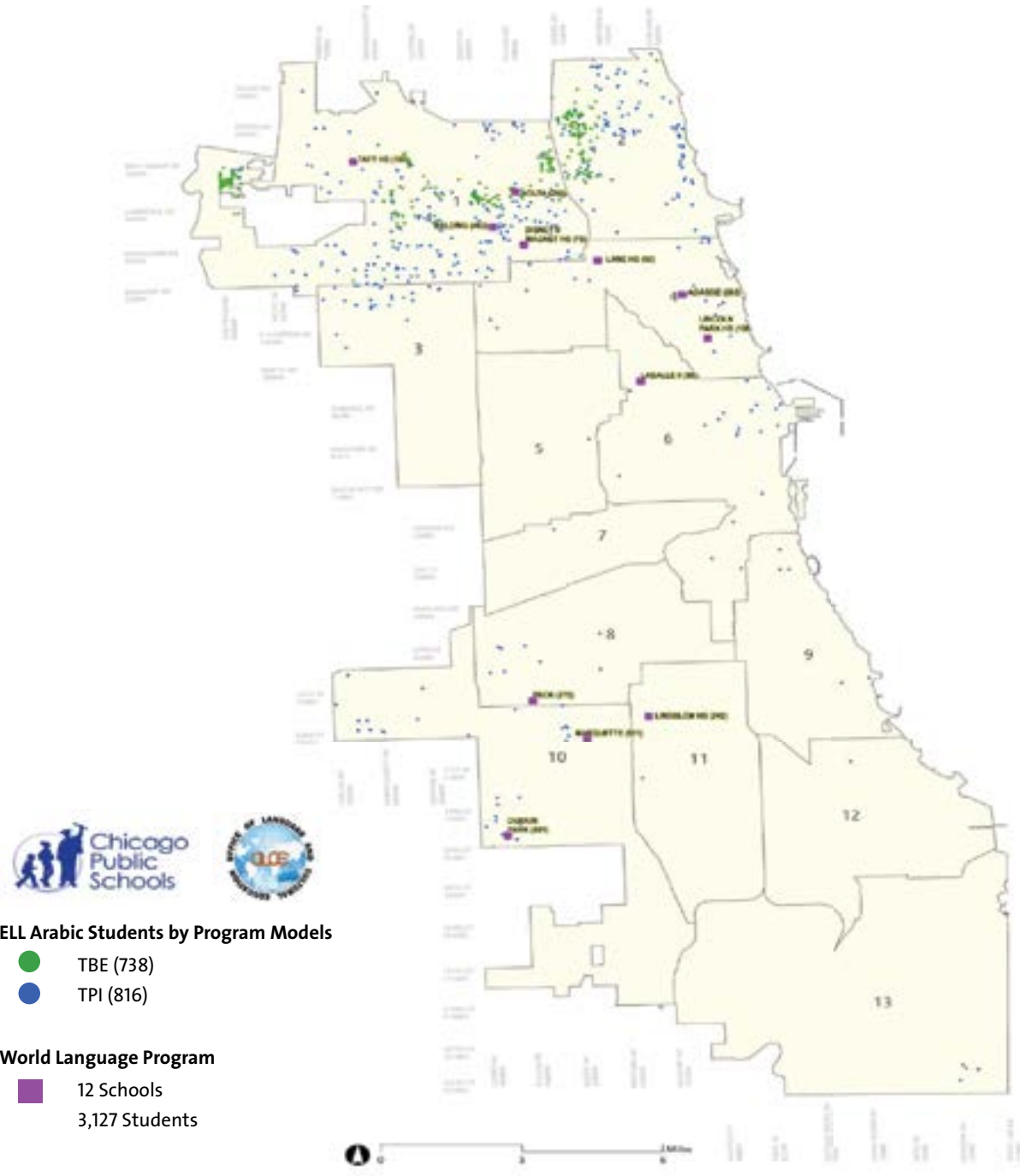
† The national median income in 2010 was 51,144.

Source: US Census ACS 2006-10; Chicago Public Schools, City of Chicago. Chart by Michael Rosenbaum.

FIGURE 4

Arabic-Speaking Students in CPS

District-run schools in CPS are organized into 13 geographic networks, which provide administrative support, strategic direction, and leadership development to the schools within each network. Overall, 1,554 Chicago Public Schools students reported that Arabic is the primary language used in their homes. Seven hundred thirty-eight of these are enrolled in Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs (students who are not proficient in English receive instruction in their native language alongside English language instruction with the goal of moving to all-English instruction). Eight hundred sixteen students are in Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) programs, which are predominantly taught in English. The pink squares mark the 12 schools in which Arabic programs are located. Note that the 1,554 Arabic-speaking students are not necessarily among the 3,127 students enrolled in Arabic programs.



Source: Chicago Public Schools, Office of Language and Cultural Education. Used by permission.

media. Their visit enjoyed wide coverage, including a front-page article in the *Chicago Tribune*.²¹ The students involved described it as a transformational experience. As one of them, Katrina, said, “The experience really broke a lot of the stereotypes and misconceptions I had. I thought a lot of the people wouldn’t accept us, but they were really friendly and interested in our culture. One boy from Syria told us he was really honored that we were out there, but really, I was the one that was honored.”²²

In March 2015 the center led a second delegation of CPS students to Qatar to debate, further demonstrating Chicago’s commitment to global understanding through Arabic language study. In the last year the group grew from the four Lindblom students to eight students from Lindblom and Lincoln Park High School.

The Center for Arabic Language and Culture is not the only organization actively promoting Arabic education in metropolitan Chicago. The Program in Middle East and North African Studies (MENA) at Northwestern University in Evanston and the Center for Middle East Studies (CMES) at the University of Chicago both actively engage with elementary and secondary schools in their vicinity. Both programs have staff who coordinate public outreach and engagement and have already demonstrated a commitment to expanding knowledge of Arabic language and culture in Chicago and providing a number of invaluable resources if a major initiative is launched to expand Arabic instruction across the city. Chicago’s CMES pledged in a successful 2014 grant application that they “will support professional and curriculum development for K-12 Arabic teachers, including formal teacher preparation programs, [in addition to supporting] Seal of Biliteracy program development to award formal certification in Arabic proficiency to graduating CPS high school students.”²³ Northwestern’s MENA program has a vibrant outreach program that works with area schools and public libraries and is prepared to develop a route to provide teaching credentials for new Arabic teachers via an initiative with the university’s School of Education and Social Policy.

What are other US cities doing?

Teaching Arabic in public schools has gained momentum over the last 20 years, but efforts are still small, and in many cities it is considered controversial.

Virginia, Utah, Michigan, and a handful of other states have been offering Arabic since 2010 in selected public schools. But it is perhaps more useful to compare the Arabic program in Chicago to those in similarly large, ethnically diverse cities such as Los Angeles and New York.

Arabic was first taught in a California public high school in 2008, at Bell High School in Los Angeles. The Qatar Foundation International, one of the few organizations providing funding for Arabic education in the United States and whose website says it is dedicated to “connecting cultures and advancing global leadership through education,”²⁴ currently funds Arabic programs in three schools in Los Angeles: Alexander Hamilton High School, Bell High School, and Granada Hills Charter High School.

According to its website, the Qatar Foundation funds 19 schools in cities across the United States, including the three in Los Angeles, four schools in Portland, Oregon, two in Boston, two in New York City, two in Washington, DC, and two in Pflugerville, Texas, in conjunction with the Arabic Flagship Program at University of Texas at Austin.²⁵ In 2013 a group of 32 high school students from Los Angeles and Portland traveled to Doha on a language and culture trip.

New York has flirted with the idea of introducing Arabic programming into the public school system. The Arab-American Family Support Center, a non-profit in New York, helped fund a new Arabic public school in Brooklyn in 2007, but the middle school was controversial and underwent frequent changes in leadership. It has since shifted away from the dual-language curriculum it originally planned.²⁶ In 2012 a public elementary school in northern Manhattan (PS 368 in Hamilton Heights) became the first school in the city to require all 200 students to study Arabic or Chinese. The principal defended her choice, saying, “It means they can spin the globe and decide where they want to work and live.”²⁷ She added that it would help the school obtain a prestigious international baccalaureate standing and boost students’ future career trajectories because Arabic has been identified as a critical needs language. A parent at the school was quoted in a *New York Post* article in 2012: “This makes the world smaller for the kids. It develops their confidence.”²⁸ The Qatar Foundation also currently funds Arabic programs in two high schools in Brooklyn, the most populous borough of New York City, where there are substantial Arab populations.

Mandarin Chinese in Chicago Public Schools

Over a decade ago, Chicago launched a major initiative to expand Chinese education in the public schools. The effort brought results for the students and prestige for the city. Chicago's Chinese language education program is now internationally acclaimed.²⁹ The work done over the last 11 years to introduce Chinese programming in the Chicago Public Schools provides an example of how Arabic instruction can be successfully expanded.

The current Chinese language program at CPS has its roots in a pioneer program launched in 1999, including three schools and only 12 students.³⁰ The actual push to expand Chinese instruction in the city is said to have begun on January 22, 2004, when Bob Davis, then manager of World Languages and International Studies at CPS, happened upon Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley during a Chinese New Year celebration.³¹ When the two men met the next day, Davis proposed a dramatic effort to expand the existing Chinese instruction program, and Daley agreed to support him. The mayor secured funding through national and international sources and was able to tap into a valuable source of teachers and teaching material through collaboration with Han Zheng, mayor of Shanghai, one of Chicago's sister cities. With these resources and Mayor Daley's support, in 2006 Davis founded the Chicago Confucius Institute, housed in Walter Payton College Preparatory High School on the city's north side.³²

Chicago's Confucius Institute went on to become the center for a major effort to expand Chinese instruction across the city, garnering national and international recognition for its accomplishments. No single event better illustrates the prestige Chicago accrued from this initiative than the Chinese premier Hu Jintao's visit to Chicago in 2011. Hu Jintao had made a formal state visit to Washington, DC, and extended his US trip to visit Chicago, the only other American city on his itinerary. While in Chicago, he visited the Confucius Institute at Payton High School and met with students there in a widely publicized event. In the words of Mayor Daley, Hu's visit was a "Big, big, big, big, big deal."³³

Hu Jintao's visit cemented Chicago's role, in the words of China's *People's Daily*, as "America's leader in teaching [the] Chinese language,"³⁴ a reputation

which continues to endure. Chicago's Chinese K-12 instruction program was the first such initiative to be launched by a major American city and is currently one of the largest in the country, reaching over 10,000 students across 16 high schools and 21 elementary schools.³⁵

How success in Mandarin will help efforts in Arabic instruction

Chicago's success establishing a Chinese instruction program can be attributed to three major factors: grants and funding from national and international sources, access to teachers and teaching material through Chicago's sister-city program with Shanghai,³⁶ and the mayor's support. A similar Arabic initiative stands to benefit just as much from all three. The federal government already offers numerous grants to promote education on Middle Eastern language and culture, best represented in the recent establishment of the Christopher Stevens Initiative, a new funding program to facilitate communication between students in the United States and the Middle East. Chicago also currently enjoys sister-city status with two great Arab cities—Casablanca, Morocco, and Amman, Jordan. With Northwestern University's presence in Doha, Qatar, where the university has its third campus after Evanston and Chicago, a third major Arab city has notable ties to Chicago.

It is critical to recognize that a decade after Davis oversaw Chicago's expansion of Chinese instruction, no major American city has yet launched a similar initiative to promote Arabic teaching. The myriad benefits that were offered by the expansion of Chinese instruction are again available and as of yet unclaimed. Chicago already enjoys the infrastructure and experience of having implemented a successful world-language initiative in its school system. As such, it is uniquely situated to seize this opportunity.

The example of Mandarin Chinese in Chicago provides positive models for expanding Arabic. We propose to borrow from the best of these models, while expanding based on the first successful stage of Arabic instruction in Chicago.

Expanding Arabic instruction in Chicago

Moving from 3,000 CPS students to 10,000 students learning Arabic will mean an increase in Arabic teachers from 16 to 53, which poses challenges of teacher

training and funding. At a time when CPS has severe financial limitations, funding for these proposals will need to come from outside sources, including federal grants, philanthropic institutions, private donors, and the creative contributions of university programs to help train new teachers and provide pedagogical enrichment and liaisons to cultural events. We believe that with the support of foundations committed to public education, federal funding to establish a vibrant K-12 program in a critical needs language, and private donors committed to expanding Chicago's presence as a global city, these are manageable goals. We have had conversations and initial planning meetings with leaders at the highest levels within CPS, the Chicago Board of Education, and the Center for Arabic Language and Culture. We propose the following steps for expanding Arabic in our schools and the expansion of a network that will link CPS, universities, and nonprofit organizations. The pillars of the expansion are as follows:

- ▶ A new full-time staff position dedicated to Arabic in CPS's Office of Language and Cultural Education, World Languages section
 - More staff and funding are needed to coordinate between the Office of Language and Cultural Education at CPS, the Center for Arabic Language and Culture, the university partners (for example, Northwestern's Middle East and North African Studies Program and the University of Chicago's Center for Middle East Studies) and Arabic instructors in the schools.
 - Philanthropic dollars or a federal grant could fund a full-time staff position to enhance these connections and help steward the expansion.
- ▶ A pathway to credentialing new Arabic teachers and enhancing education for already credentialed teachers
 - Currently there are no routes for Chicago area undergraduate secondary teaching majors to earn licensure in Arabic language instruction. (DePaul offers a program for Master's level students.) Northwestern's MENA Program is developing a path for undergraduates committed to becoming new teachers to become credentialed in teaching Arabic and a second subject in collaboration with Northwestern's School of Education and Social Policy.

- Simultaneous development of additional enhancement courses for already-credentialed Illinois teachers seeking further education in Arabic or Middle East and North African Studies could be done in partnerships with the University of Chicago's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Northwestern, University of Illinois at Chicago, Loyola, and DePaul.
- ▶ A goal for Chicago students to obtaining a Seal of Biliteracy
 - In 2013 Illinois joined the Seal of Biliteracy program to recognize students who have studied and attained proficiency in English and another language by high school graduation. Nine states are currently in this national program, which "encourages students to pursue biliteracy, honors the skills our students attain, and can be evidence of skills that are attractive to future employers and college admissions offices." After passing language tests, students' bilingual abilities are certified on CPS transcripts.
- ▶ Goals and targets for federal and private funding
 - Teacher training could be funded through the US Department of Education Title II, Higher Education Act.
 - Private funding could be obtained through granting institutions with a focus on education, Arabic, or the humanities, including Qatar Foundation International.

Conclusion: Chicago as a global city

The future of our nation relies on educating a new generation of globally minded and globally engaged citizens. With 300 million native speakers, Arabic is a global language that Americans cannot afford to ignore. A decade and a half into a series of major conflicts in the Middle East, the United States is finding itself further entrenched in the Arab world with no easy end in sight. Trying to solve these conflicts with military might alone has cost us all dearly in dollars, lives, and our standing across the globe.

Chicago has before it an opportunity to take a step to lead our children along the path of understanding and engagement with the Arabic-speaking world. Chicago's leadership will also offer a special opportunity to students from among the city's most vulnerable

and disadvantaged, giving them access to opportunities too often only within reach of more affluent youth.

Let us invest in our youth and invest in the future of a United States that engages the world directly. As

a great power, the United States must learn to speak in the world's languages. As a great city, Chicago must take the lead into our global future.

The Emerging Leaders Program

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs' Emerging Leaders Program is a two-year program that draws the best and the brightest emerging leaders from across business, civic, government, and academic sectors in the Chicagoland area. The program provides the Emerging Leaders (ELs) with a deeper understanding of global issues and Chicago's place in a globalized world. ELs also develop a strong network of contacts with current civic and business leaders and, perhaps more importantly, with their Chicagoland peers, who are also grappling with global challenges. In short, they emerge better prepared to assume key leadership positions in this new era.

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Ivo Daalder

President, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs
June 2015

Author biographies

Roseanna Ander

Roseanna Ander is the founding executive director of the University of Chicago Crime Lab and the Urban Education Lab and serves as senior director for University of Chicago Urban Labs, launched in March 2015.

Brian T. Edwards

Brian T. Edwards is Crown Professor in Middle East Studies and professor of English and comparative literary studies at Northwestern University, where he is also founding director of the Program in Middle East and North African Studies.

Sarah Herda

Sarah Herda is the executive director of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts and artistic director of the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial—the largest global platform for contemporary architecture in North America, which will run from October 2015 to January 2016.

Endnotes

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