

# Cracking language barriers

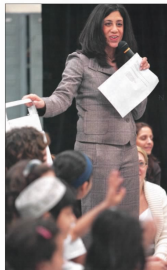


**Khadija Tetter** uses flashcards to help a classroom study numbers in the fourth-grade Arabic class at Amana Academy, a charter-area public Fulton County charter school in Roswell. The school offers 30 to 45 minutes of mandatory Arabic language instruction each day.



Kindergartners **Anthony Jones** (from left), **Gabriel Dizon** and **Nuri Omar** sing a song in Arabic about transportation during one of Amana Academy's weekly schoolwide community assemblies. Arabic is one of six official languages of the United Nations, and teaching it, Principal **Shereen Salam** says, provides one of the skills students need to become world leaders.

## School teaches Arabic, appreciation of diversity



Principal **Shereen Salam** plays a quiz show host for a game during the assembly. Salam is quick to point out that Amana Academy is not an Arab or Muslim school; she wants the school to appeal to mainstream students.

More photos of Amana Academy, Page F6

Photos and text  
by BOB ANDRES/ bandres@ajc.com

The Amana Academy, a tuition-free public Fulton County charter school in Roswell, is believed to be the only elementary school in Georgia to offer Arabic language studies.

Principal Shereen Salam wants to point out that Amana Academy is not an Arab or Muslim school. "A firm command of Arabic is only one of our mission statements," she said.

Salam wants the school to appeal to mainstream students. She believes that increasing children's diverse environment at a young age is the best way for them to understand and appreciate other cultures, and help to bridge cultural barriers.

The school uses the Georgia Elementary School Foreign Language Model for teaching the Arabic language, offering 30 to 45 minutes of mandatory Arabic language instruction each day.

Arabic is one of the six official languages of the United Nations, and teaching it, Salam says, provides one of the skills students need to become world leaders. According to recent estimates by the Los Angeles Times, Arabic is the fastest-growing second language of study at U.S. colleges and universities.

Another aspect of Amana's mission is to promote civic and environmental responsibility through real-world applications and community service projects. The school will receive a grant from the World Learning Foundation to help it bring in a specialist in successful citizenship training.

The school also works with the International Learning Outward Bound, using project-based learning "experiences" that incorporate reading, writing, math, science and social studies in hands-on eight- to 16-week projects.

At the end of each project, students report their findings and what they've learned to classmates and parents during weekly schoolwide community assemblies in the gym.

The school has an enrollment of 177 students this year and is on its way to 230 for next year. Several grade levels currently have waiting lists.

By Bob Andres in Roswell  
www.amanaacademy.org

AJC, April 5, 2006

Clipped By:



niki\_44840  
Mon, Jul 13, 2020