

How can we promote the teaching of the Arabic language in our region or at our school?

Arabic, as a less commonly taught language that is unfamiliar to many, is often in need of special advocacy and support. This means communicating about the benefits of Arabic education with potential students, parents, school administrators, local Arabic-speaking community groups, and the wider community. Below are listed advocacy ideas and suggestions, along with anecdotes of successful strategies employed by existing Arabic programs.

Why is advocacy important?

Starting a new program

In places where an Arabic program does not exist, advocacy can include calling attention to the importance of world language instruction at the K-12 level, and specifically the importance of prioritizing the teaching of critical-need languages such as Arabic in strategic plans and budgets. This work should be with principals, school district officials, teachers, and even local university professors who may be able to offer support for a K-12 Arabic program.

Supporting an existing program

For existing Arabic programs, advocacy activities are essential to help recruit new students, inform parents about Arabic, and

raise awareness in the wider school community about what is happening in Arabic class. Below is a collection of real-world advocacy examples drawn from the experience of teachers and administrators working at successful Arabic programs in K-12 settings around the country.

General Strategies for conducting advocacy

Let what is happening in the classroom show

Advocacy for an existing Arabic program should be founded upon what is happening in the classroom: good advocacy relies on good teaching. When students learn communicative skills applicable to the real world and are educated to respect the diversity of Arab culture, advocacy can be understood as the simple work of showing to the world outside the classroom what they are learning and how this experience affects them.

Give students themselves a role in advocacy whenever possible

Teachers and administrators at successful Arabic programs report that the most effective advocates for Arabic language programs are the students themselves. Whatever the focus of a particular advocacy activity may be, letting current or former Arabic language students take the lead in organizing, narrating



and/or demonstrating sends a very powerful message about the impact of teaching Arabic. Students sharing their experiences learning Arabic with relatives, community members, classmates, and school officials is a very effective way to garner interest and support, with the secondary benefit of spreading understanding of Arabic language and culture beyond the classroom.

