



Qatar's Foreign Influence in American Classrooms

An Investigation into the K-12 Education
Funding Network

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Key Findings

- QFI granted at least \$30.6 million to American K-12 schools between 2009 and 2017, according to the Wall Street Journal. In addition, public records and school board documents identified by Jewish Onliner indicate at least an additional \$1.50 million in Qatari funding after 2017, with the true total likely considerably higher due to disclosure gaps, undocumented and unspecified grants, and intermediary funding. The full scope remains unknown because QFI reorganized from a 501(c)(3) to an LLC in 2012, ending public disclosure, and K-12 schools are not federally required to report foreign funding.
- While Qatar Foundation has been registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) since 2006, QFI has not registered, claiming educational exemption. Legal experts argue QFI's activities—including political advocacy videos and advancing Qatar's national vision—should require FARA registration.
- A March 2025 ISGAP report documented Qatari influence on Brown University's Choices Program, used by over 8,000 schools reaching more than one million students. The report found QFI co-sponsored teacher workshops and funded curriculum awards worth up to \$328,000, while the program gradually modified Middle East content between 2011 and 2022 without notifying schools. Brown shut down the program approximately one month after the report's release.
- Multiple leading nonprofits—including ISGAP, Parents Defending Education, the National Association of Scholars, and the America First Policy Institute—have called for federal investigations into foreign influence in K-12 education, mandatory disclosure requirements for foreign funding, strengthened FARA enforcement, and full curriculum transparency.
- 84% of American adults believe parents have the right to know if Qatar is funding their child's education (2021 HarrisX survey), yet current regulations provide no K-12 disclosure mechanism.

Introduction

On December 17, 2025, Representative Elise Stefanik and House Oversight Chairman James Comer [sent a letter](#) to New York Governor Kathy Hochul with a stark message: the New York City Department of Education was refusing to release copies of K-12 curricula and teaching

materials either funded by Qatar or created and distributed by what the legislators termed “malign domestic actors.” “We therefore request that your administration provide us with documents and information and initiate an investigation of the NYC DOE’s actions,” the letter stated.

The letter focuses on Qatar Foundation International (QFI), which has given at least \$1 million in total to two Brooklyn public schools whose K-12 curricula and teaching materials the NYC DOE refused to release: P.S. 261, an elementary school in Cobble Hill, and P.S./I.S. 30, a K-8 school in Bay Ridge. According to the congressional letter, the money funded the salaries of Arabic teachers and their teaching materials.

The New York case represents only a fraction of a much larger pattern. Over the past decade, Qatar has invested tens of millions of dollars in American K-12 education through a sophisticated network of grants, programs, and partnerships that extend to all 50 states and reach more than one million students. The nature and purpose of this funding often [lack transparency and accountability](#).

This report examines the scope, mechanisms, and implications of Qatar’s educational funding in the United States, while providing an overview of policy recommendations already floated by several leading nonprofits.

Qatar’s Ties to Terrorism & The Muslim Brotherhood

Qatar has maintained a deeply troubling relationship with terrorist financing despite its status as a major U.S. ally. According to [research](#) published in George Washington University’s (GWU) International Affairs Review, Qatar operates within a “permissive jurisdiction” that allows terrorist financiers to channel funds to regional networks with impunity. The State Department has acknowledged that “entities and individuals within Qatar continue to serve as a source of financial support for terrorist and violent extremist groups, particularly regional al-Qaeda affiliates,” stemming from what experts describe as Qatar’s “historical legacy of negligence” characterized by inadequate legal frameworks and minimal prosecutions.

Qatar has served as the de facto headquarters for the Muslim Brotherhood, [according to](#) the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, providing \$8-10 billion to Egypt’s MB government under Mohamed Morsi and hosting the Brotherhood’s spiritual leader Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who justified suicide bombings, until his 2022 death. The Brotherhood’s danger lies in its explicit strategy of “[civilizational jihad](#)” — a 1991 internal memorandum uncovered by the FBI describes the Brotherhood’s work in America as eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within through establishing front organizations and infiltrating institutions to make Islam dominant. The Jerusalem Center documents how Qatar employs

a "21st century Muslim Brotherhood strategy" that transforms traditional Islamic outreach into sophisticated soft power operations encompassing education funding at American universities, media control through Al Jazeera, and political influence—all while hosting international conferences that provide diplomatic legitimacy.

Qatar's relationship with Hamas combines massive financial support with political protection. The Foundation for Defense of Democracies [reports](#) Qatar has provided an estimated \$1.8 billion to Gaza's Hamas-run government, including \$360 million in annual support. Doha hosts key Hamas leaders including Ismail Haniyeh and Khaled Mashal, who reportedly live in luxury five-star hotels while directing terrorist operations. Hamas maintains a formal political office in Doha, opened in 2012, and Qatar uses Al Jazeera to broadcast Hamas messaging. Despite this support, Qatar positions itself as the lead negotiator in the Hamas-Israel war, raising serious questions about its neutrality.

Beyond Hamas, Treasury Department designations document Qatari-based charities [channeling millions to al-Qaeda affiliates](#), al-Nusrah Front, and al-Shabaab. This is possible, writes Sam Moore in GWU's International Affairs Review, largely because "financers within Qatar continue to have access to informal financial systems." "Stopping terrorist financing requires more than legislation and cooperation; any counterterrorism efforts must be concentrated on dismantling the structures that allow Qatari financiers to operate with relative ease," he concludes.

Public Concern and the Transparency Crisis

The American public has strong views about foreign funding in education once they become aware of the issue. A notable 2021 [survey commissioned by The Lawfare Project](#), an American nonprofit, and conducted by HarrisX, one of the most well-respected market research and analytics companies, reveals the depth of public concern and demonstrates overwhelming support for transparency:

- 84 percent of American adults believe that parents have the right to know if Qatar is funding their child's education
- 81 percent of American voters support more stringent legislation requiring universities to account for every dollar received and what it is spent on
- 70 percent of American adults are concerned about foreign funding influencing what is taught in the classroom and on campus

These findings underscore a fundamental disconnect between public expectations and current reality. Parents want to know when foreign governments are funding their children's

education. Citizens want accountability for how foreign money is spent. Yet the regulatory framework allows QFI to operate with minimal oversight or public scrutiny.

The Lawfare Project's research suggests that Qatar's involvement through QFI is "substantial and significant," with students learning about the Middle East "in a biased way that emphasizes only the positive aspects of Islam while omitting a balanced discussion of other religions or belief systems, most notably Judaism."

A May 2020 [legal memorandum](#) by The Lawfare Project concluded that QFI, universities receiving its funding (including Duke, UNC, and Northwestern), and K-12 teachers participating in QFI-funded training programs should be required to register as foreign agents under FARA because they function as agents of the Qatari government. The memorandum argued that QFI meets FARA's definition of an agent by disbursing funds "for or in the interest of" Qatar, and that recipient universities engage in political activities advancing Qatari interests.

Understanding QFI: Structure and Relationship to Qatar Foundation

Qatar Foundation International (QFI) is the U.S. operating arm of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, a state-run organization in Qatar. This structural relationship is central to understanding the controversy surrounding QFI's activities in American schools.

Qatar Foundation itself is a governmental entity in Qatar, chaired by Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, a member of Qatar's royal family. It has been [registered](#) under FARA since 2006, acknowledging its role as an agent of the Qatari government.

However, QFI operates with a distinct legal structure that creates ambiguity about its obligations:

- Initial Structure (2009-2012): QFI began as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt private foundation, requiring public disclosure of its funding and activities through IRS Form 990 filings.
- Reorganization (2012): QFI dissolved its 501(c)(3) status and reorganized as a Delaware-registered Limited Liability Company (LLC), ending all public disclosure requirements for its funding sources, grant recipients, and expenditures.
- FARA Registration Gap: Despite being funded by and advancing the mission of Qatar Foundation (which is FARA-registered), QFI itself has not registered under FARA, claiming exemption as an educational organization. Legal experts, including The Lawfare Project, [argue](#) this exemption is inappropriate given QFI's activities include political advocacy and advancing Qatar's national interests.

This corporate structure creates a significant transparency problem, according to legal observers: while the parent Qatar Foundation acknowledges its status as a foreign agent, its U.S. subsidiary QFI operates without the disclosure requirements that would normally apply to foreign government activities in American schools.

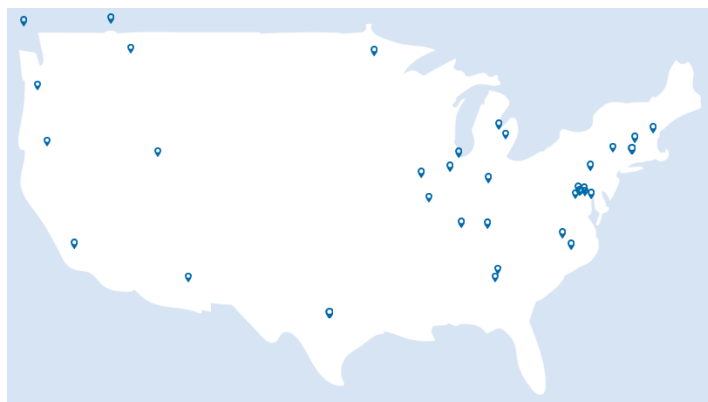
The Funding Architecture

QFI, which is the U.S. arm of the state-run Qatar Foundation, operates as the primary vehicle for the Qatari government's K-12 educational initiatives in the United States. According to the [Wall Street Journal](#), QFI distributed \$30.6 million to K-12 schools between 2017-2019, including supporting Arabic programs and paying teachers.

This figure represents only the traceable donations. Unlike institutions of higher education, which must report foreign gifts [exceeding \\$250,000 under Section 117 of the Higher Education Act](#), K-12 schools face no such [federal disclosure requirements](#), according to the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD). This regulatory gap allows QFI to operate in the shadows.

QFI has developed a comprehensive funding system capable of supporting virtually any type of educational initiative. The organization offers scholarships, awards, and annual [grants](#) available to schools, school districts, [teachers](#), and [individual students](#). Eligible initiatives include language and curriculum development, teacher training workshops, cultural exchange programs, after-school and summer programs, first-year university awards for students continuing Arabic studies, and chapters of the [Arabic Honor Society](#).

A [webpage](#) that QFI previously maintained but now appears to be inaccessible stated that QFI's school grants reach more than 3,200 students in the U.S., U.K., and Canada, and featured a virtual map of QFI-supported Arabic programs throughout the United States.



*QFI-supported Arabic programs in North America K-12 schools.
Source: [QFI](#)*

The map identified 24 schools across 13 states and Washington, D.C., including schools in Los Angeles, New Haven, Boston, Minneapolis, New York City, North Carolina, Portland, Texas, and Virginia. The map noted a particularly high concentration of QFI-supported programs in Washington, D.C., the nation's capital.

During the [tax year](#) July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011, QFI operated as a 501(c)(3) private foundation and received \$7,232,066 in contributions from the Qatar Foundation in

Doha, Qatar. QFI paid \$1,494,899 in grants to U.S. educational institutions, including \$272,334 to Boston Arts Academy Foundation, \$147,882 to American Councils for International Education, \$128,759 to the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and \$116,840 to One World Now. In the 990 IRS form, [Khalid al Kuwari](#), a [senior Qatari government official](#), was listed as [QFI's treasurer](#).

The foundation shared common board members with the [United States-Qatar Business Council](#) and reported it was in the process of dissolving as a private foundation. QFI completed this dissolution in [2011-2012](#) by reorganizing as a [Delaware-registered LLC](#), thereby ending public disclosure requirements for its funding and grant activities.

This multifaceted approach creates multiple points of entry into the American educational system. Rather than funding schools directly in all cases, QFI also channels money through nonprofit organizations, university-affiliated programs, and cultural centers that provide complementary educational services including curriculum development and teacher training.

What is Qatar Funding in American K-12 Education

QFI provides scholarships, awards, and annual grants available to schools, school districts, teachers, and even individual students. The initiatives eligible for funding include:

- 1. Language and Curriculum Development:** The [programs](#) focused on Arabic language acquisition often come with pre-designed curricula, instructional materials, and recommended teaching methodologies.
- 2. Teacher Training:** QFI organizes workshops and professional development [programs for educators](#) to enhance their Arabic language proficiency and cultural competency.
- 3. Cultural Exchange Programs:** Student and teacher [exchange initiatives](#) are billed as an opportunity to foster cross-cultural understanding but also introduce opportunities for Qatar to shape perceptions and narratives about its culture and policies.
- 4. After-School Programs and Summer Schools Programs:** QFI funds [extracurricular activities](#) supporting so called “Arabic language excellence.” In this way, QFI extends its influence beyond the traditional classroom setting, creating an environment where its narratives have broader reach.

5. **First Year University Awards:** QFI initiatives [provide financial support](#) covering a portion of first-year university tuition for high school seniors planning on continuing Arabic studies at university.
6. **Arabic Honor Society (AHS):** With chapters in schools offering Arabic language program, [the AHS](#) supports an extracurricular program including Arab culture nights, concerts, and service-oriented volunteer opportunities.

Qatar Foundation’s extensive network and broad reach underscore the complexity of its influence, as this multifaceted approach makes it more challenging to discern the boundaries between educational support and strategic influence.

Breakdown of K-12 Funding & Grants from QFI

Analysis of QFI grant distribution reveals clear patterns in geographic and demographic targeting. The organization has concentrated significant resources in California, Texas, Minnesota, and New York, with funding appearing to follow two criteria: high student density and economically disadvantaged school districts with diverse student populations and a high minority enrollment rate. That said, QFI has also funded schools and districts outside of those concentrated areas. Below are several examples of where Qatari K-12 funding has been distributed within the United States:

- QFI funding to the NYC Department of Education grew substantially over the last five years, increasing to [\\$275,000 in 2021 and \\$513,000 in 2022](#)—representing more than a doubling of annual contributions, according to the Standing For Freedom Center. These funds supported initiatives including the [Arab Culture Arts Program](#), bringing QFI's total contribution to [over \\$1 million](#) between 2019 and 2022.
 - Between 2019 and 2020, [QFI gave more than \\$241,000 to two Brooklyn elementary schools](#)—[P.S. 261](#) and [P.S./I.S. 30 Mary White Ovington](#), where approximately 80 percent of students are economically disadvantaged—to fund dual-language Arabic programs.
- In 2016-2017, [QFI provided](#) \$68,305.34 to Minneapolis Public School District (MPS). These grants went to [Lyndale Elementary](#), Ramsey Middle School (now [Justice Page Middle School](#)), and [Washburn High School](#) — schools serving student bodies with sizeable economically disadvantaged populations.
- A \$465,000 QFI grant to Tucson Unified School District (2013-2018) [included provisions](#) giving QFI control over coursework and materials, direct access to students, periodic updates to QFI coordinators, and routine progress reports on individual students, according to the [Center for Immigration Studies](#). The [Daily Caller](#)

also reported on the [grant](#). The Journal [reported](#) that another QFI grant from that time period totaled \$175,243 dedicated to expanding the district's Arabic program.

- In June 2019, the Bozeman School District (MT) approved acceptance of a [\\$42,000](#) grant from QFI to support Irving Elementary School's Arabic language program.
- In [2013](#), QFI provided grants to University of Texas at Austin faculty members to develop K-12 Arabic pedagogical materials and assist Pflugerville Independent School District in establishing a K-12 Arabic language program, including funding teacher certification in Arabic language education.
- In 2017, the Wall Street Journal [reported](#) that "in Portland, Oregon, the public-school system was given about \$375,000 [by QFI] over five years, starting in 2010, and this year received a \$75,000 grant, helping to pay for Arabic programs at two schools. The foundation also funded a trip for some students and staff to travel to Doha."
- The Wall Street Journal [also reported](#) that the Washington Latin Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. received approximately \$1.04 million from Qatar Foundation since 2009 to fund its Arabic language program, making it among the first American schools to accept Qatari educational funding.
- In 2017, Bell High School in Los Angeles received [grants of up to \\$15,000 from QFI](#) for each graduate who chose to continue studying Arabic at university. In 2024, the school received [another grant from QFI](#) to support a workshop for welcoming students from immigrant families. QFI has provided [grants](#) to public schools across Los Angeles including Elizabeth Learning Center, Granada Hills Charter High School, and Hamilton High School
- Public records appear to confirm that QFI awarded, and New Haven Public Schools (NHPS) formally approved, multi-year grants for Arabic language programming. NHPS board action items document QFI funding of [\\$65,919](#) for 2021–22, [\\$66,720](#) for 2022–23, [\\$37,137](#) for 2023–24, and [\\$61,036](#) for 2025–26. Each amount appears in officially approved Finance & Operations records, confirming acceptance and authorization by the district. This includes [Wilbur Cross High School](#), where 91 percent of students are minorities and 76 percent come from economically disadvantaged families.
- In 2015, QFI allocated a [\\$75,000](#) grant to Houston Independent School District to help teachers develop Arabic curriculum for the district's new Arabic Immersion Magnet School. In 2023, HISD's Third Quarter Grant Report shows the school received an additional [\\$180,000](#) from QFI to support its Arabic language program. In 2025, the school received an additional [\\$85,000](#) from QFI for payroll, instructional supplies, and program materials, underscoring the continuation of Qatari funding a decade after the program's launch.

The Curriculum Question

QFI's funding supports two main initiatives: Arabic language programs and Arabic teacher training. Grants include provisions for curriculum design, instructional materials, and teacher workshops that align with QFI's stated objectives. However, the content of these materials has generated significant controversy.

Schools adopting QFI-funded curricula have faced allegations that they promote political agendas or cultural biases. In early 2024, photographs revealed that PS 261 in Brooklyn, New York, displayed a classroom map of the "[Arab World](#)" showing all countries of the Middle East except Israel, which was labeled "Palestine."

In [2019](#), QFI established a [partnership with Green Bronx Machine](#), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on sustainability education. Through this collaboration, QFI translated Green Bronx Machine's classroom curriculum to Arabic and provided a multilingual portal allowing global access to teaching materials. QFI has also provided [grants](#) to the [Global Language Project](#), a New York City-based educational nonprofit founded in 2009 that introduces Arabic language instruction in disadvantaged public schools.

A comparable map surfaced at Manara Academy in Irving, Texas, where the territory was marked as "Palestine" with Israel completely absent from the display. The maps were part of the Arabic language program funded by [QFI](#). When confronted, school officials said they were unaware of what materials were being used in their own classrooms.

[Samia Shoman](#), a Palestinian-American teacher in Southern California who has lesson plans on [QFI's website](#) teaching Palestinian history, also served as a committee member of the California Department of Education's Draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, which faced backlash for introducing curriculum characterized as "[blatantly anti-Semitic and anti-Israel.](#)"

The Department of Education [investigated](#) how \$235,000 in federal funds were used in 2018 to organize anti-Israel events jointly held by Duke University and the University of North Carolina.

The digital nature of many QFI-funded programs compounds oversight challenges. Schools often do not receive advance notice when curriculum content is modified. The proprietary status of some digital materials prevents parents, school boards, and even educators from conducting independent reviews. This lack of transparency means that changes to instructional content can occur without public awareness or debate.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

QFI describes Arabic teacher training as the “[core](#)” of its activity, a characterization that underscores the pivotal role teachers play in Qatar’s educational influence strategy. The organization offers [Professional Development grants](#) for primary and secondary educators wishing to teach Arabic language or courses on the Arab world.

QFI offers [Teacher Professional Development grants](#) of up to \$2,000 for K-12 educators in public and state-funded schools to attend professional development events, conferences, and courses related to teaching Arabic or about the Arab world. For example, the [University of Pittsburgh](#) announced QFI’s \$2,000 grants for K-12 teachers to attend professional development programs or travel related to the Arab world, including Middle East summer institutes, workshops, or Global Exploration for Educators Organization (GEEO) travel programs.

In 2019, QFI broadened its influence strategy by announcing [Classroom Resource Enrichment Grants](#) (CREGs) available to teachers across all subject areas, not just Arabic language instructors. Starting in 2020, these grants offered up to \$1,000 to teachers with demonstrated need and limited classroom budgets for resources related to Arabic language or the Arab world.

By 2025, QFI's [Classroom Enrichment Grants](#) (CEGs) provide up to \$1,000 USD to primary and secondary teachers at public/state-funded schools across North America, funding instructional materials, in-school cultural events, and student activities that "bolster enrollment in Arabic language classes.”

QFI has sponsored the establishment of the [Arabic Teachers Council](#), with seven main branches in Chicago, New York, Dearborn, [Amherst](#), Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Washington. The [Southern branch](#), funded by QFI and hosted by the Atlanta Global Studies Center, coordinates Arabic language educators across 12 states.

The ATC provides training, resources, and curriculum development for K-12 Arabic educators. Critics like the [Endowment for Middle East Truth](#) view QFI's funding of these regional networks across the United States as part of a strategy to extend Qatari influence throughout American education. QFI is also involved in funding [Arabic Clubs](#) nationwide. Over 50 Arabic Clubs have been established in U.S. schools across various states.

In January 2018, QFI [sponsored](#) an event titled [Middle East 101](#) for public school teachers in Phoenix, Arizona. The event was hosted by the Arizona Department of Education, which had received a [\\$450,000](#) grant from QFI. The main speaker was [Barbara Petzen](#), a senior staff member at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who previously worked for the

[Saudi-funded](#) Middle East Policy Council. Critics claimed the event contained Islamist propaganda and was designed to advance Qatari narratives.

QFI has commissioned [multiple reports](#) to establish itself as the authority on Arabic language education, including a [June 2022 white paper](#) prepared by Georgetown University on K-12 Arabic teacher needs, and partnered with SALaMA to support creation of the [FORWARD with Peers \(FWP\)](#) social and emotional learning facilitation guide for schools.

QFI funded Georgetown University's Initiative for Multilingual Studies to conduct an [18-month study](#) (January 2022 - July 2023) investigating the "professional identities" and "critical language awareness" of K-12 Arabic teachers in the U.S., with findings explicitly aimed at shaping professional development for primary and secondary Arabic teachers nationwide.

At Duke, Qatar spent \$110,000 in 2019 on a teacher "[immersion program](#)" for grades 6-12 educators from North Carolina, Illinois, and Virginia, with participants "hand-selected" by QFI, demonstrating QFI's direct control over participant selection in university-hosted programs.

QFI's website maintains a [blog](#), The Journey of an Arabic Educator, featuring educators involved in QFI-supported programs

Cultural Exchange and Immersion Programs

Beyond direct classroom instruction, QFI funds programs designed to immerse American students and teachers in Qatari culture and perspectives. The organization funds [GEEO, Global Exploration for Educators Organization](#), a nonprofit based in Norristown, Pennsylvania that provides travel programs specifically designed for teachers and educators.

QFI allocates a Teacher Professional Development individual grant of \$2,000 for K-12 educators in the social sciences, humanities, and arts fields, covering GEEO trips to Arabic-speaking countries including Morocco, and Egypt. In 2019, QFI arranged a [trip](#) to Oman and Qatar for 16 K-12 teachers.

GEEO provides teachers with a suggested [reading list](#) to be completed before their educational trip to Qatar. The reading materials include books that present favorable portrayals of the country without addressing controversies regarding [labor practices](#), [women's rights](#), or Qatar's [relationships](#) with designated terrorist organizations.

In November 2024, students from two Virginia high schools participated in [QFI's Classroom Connections](#) exchange program and visited Qatar. These programs are presented as opportunities to foster cross-cultural understanding, but they also create opportunities for

Qatar to shape perceptions and narratives about its culture and policies among American educators and students who will return to influence their peers and communities.

Since 2011, QFI has provided funding to Concordia Language Villages, a nonprofit organization based in Moorhead, Minnesota that operates language and cultural immersion programs sponsored by Concordia College. The initial grant was [\\$100,000](#) for Arabic language programs. In [2015-2016](#), the cooperation expanded with grants for Arabic curriculum development and assessment, along with [annual scholarships](#) allocated by QFI to Concordia Village's Al Waha Arabic summer program for K-12 students.

Through its [School Break Arabic Program Grants](#), QFI provides organizational funding that enables K-12 students to access Arabic language programs at no or reduced cost. [QFI](#) collaborates with [Kalimah Programs](#), a Maryland-based educational initiative focused on teaching Arabic language and culture to K-12 students through STEAM-infused immersion programs. Through its School Break Arabic Program Grants, QFI provides tuition scholarships for students to attend Kalimah's [STEAM Arabic Summer Camps](#).

[QFI](#) has partnered with [Global Nomads Group](#), a New York City-based NGO specializing in cross-cultural exchange and education, to facilitate [virtual exchange programs](#) connecting American and Qatari students. These programs have included exchanges focusing on topics such as the Syrian refugee crisis and cross-cultural dialogue.

Grant recipients of QFI include [Teens of Color Abroad](#), which offers students of color language learning and cultural exchange opportunities; [Culturingua](#), which facilitates virtual exchange programs; and [OneWorld Now!](#), a Seattle-based NGO focused on world language learning for high school students.

Domestically, QFI-funded programs have included [field trips for students](#) to events such as the House of Palestine Annual Culture Festival in San Diego, California.

The Broader Educational Ecosystem

QFI's influence extends beyond direct grants to public schools. The organization plays a significant role in funding organizations and cultural centers that shape the broader educational landscape. While not directly connected to the K-12 public school system, these entities provide complementary educational services including curriculum development, teacher training, and cultural programming.

A Memorandum of Understanding published by QFI states that it was [formed](#) "for the purpose of advancing the vision" of Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser and the vision of the Qatar Foundation. QFI's [Executive Director stated](#) in 2018 that "QF's CEO Sheikha Hind Al-Thani — and her mom, QF Chairperson Sheikha Moza bint Nasser — are my bosses!"

QFI maintains an ongoing collaboration with [NaTakallam](#), a New York-based social enterprise that connects refugees with language learners through virtual sessions. Through this partnership, QFI provides fully-funded classroom sessions for K-12 teachers focusing on Arabic language skills, culture from the Arabic-speaking world, or refugee experiences.

In 2021, QFI funded a [research study](#) examining social and emotional learning among refugee students at schools across Virginia, Texas, and Michigan. One research site included [Global Education Excellence \(GEE\)](#), an Ann Arbor-based charter school management company operating schools in the Detroit Metropolitan Area where students are required to take Arabic language courses.

In 2019, QFI [partnered](#) with SIMA Studios, a [Los Angeles-based nonprofit](#) impact media agency focused on social justice documentaries. In 2021, QFI and SIMA Studios [launched](#) the [Arab World Spotlight Challenge](#), inviting high school students to produce [multimedia projects](#) responding to films from the Arab World Vision Playlist.

This network of affiliated organizations and programs creates a diffuse system of influence that is difficult to track or regulate. By funding entities that then work with schools, QFI can extend its reach while maintaining a degree of separation that complicates efforts to assess the full scope of its activities.

The Brown University Choices Program

[ISGAP's March 2025 report](#) documented Qatari influence on the [Choices Program at Brown University](#), a K-12 curriculum used by over 8,000 schools across all 50 states and reaching more than one million students.

The program, which developed curriculum materials on global issues including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for [more than 30 years](#), systematically removed key historical documents including the Balfour Declaration, misrepresented Israel's history by listing [Tel Aviv](#) as Israel's capital instead of Jerusalem, downplayed the diplomatic significance of the Abraham Accords, and rewrote narratives by downgrading Hamas and Hezbollah from 'labeled terrorist organizations' to groups merely 'considered' terrorists while recasting Muslims as 'indigenous' and Jews as 'colonialists.'"

These changes occurred gradually over more than a decade. Schools using the curriculum were not informed when content was modified. The proprietary nature of the digital curriculum prevented parents, school boards, and educators from reviewing and assessing changes.

The ISGAP report also raised questions about Brown University's compliance with Section 117 of the Higher Education Act, which requires institutions to disclose foreign funding

exceeding \$250,000. There was substantial evidence suggesting that Brown University may have failed to disclose foreign funding related to the Choices Program. The report further raised concerns about the potential exposure of student and teacher data to third-party entities.

Congressman Kevin Kiley, Chair of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education of the House Education and Workforce Committee, stated that the report “suggests foreign influence from Qatar has infiltrated the Choices Program hosted at Brown University.”

Approximately one month after the report's release, Brown University [announced](#) that it would shut down the Choices Program after 35 years. University spokesperson Amanda McGregor stated the decision was “exclusively financial.”

The Choices Program case illustrates several important dynamics. First, it demonstrates how foreign influence can operate through intermediary institutions that lend credibility and obscure the original funding source. Second, it shows how curriculum content can be gradually modified over time in ways that are difficult for end users to detect. Third, it highlights the challenge of enforcing disclosure requirements when educational programs operate in regulatory gray areas between higher education and K-12 systems.

Qatar’s Broader Influence Strategy

Qatar’s investment in K-12 education must be understood in the context of its much larger financial presence in American higher education. Qatar is the largest foreign donor to U.S. universities, having invested more than [\\$6.3 billion](#) in American higher education since 1986. These funds have flowed to institutions including [Harvard](#), [Georgetown](#), [Northwestern](#), [Cornell](#), and [Carnegie Mellon](#).

Qatar spends at least [\\$405 million annually](#) to cover expenses for six U.S. universities operating branch campuses in [Education City, Doha](#). These American institutions include Georgetown, Northwestern, Cornell, Texas A&M, Carnegie Mellon, and Virginia Commonwealth University. These arrangements create financial dependencies that may influence how these institutions address topics related to Qatar, the Middle East, and geopolitical issues in that region.

Northwestern University's [Qatar Foundation-funded campus in Doha](#), established in 2008, offers American journalism students full degrees and exchange programs. A [2013 agreement](#) with Al Jazeera Network created joint training and research initiatives, with Northwestern consulting for Al Jazeera's U.S. launch. The agreement with Al Jazeera was terminated in July 2024, according to [Campus Reform](#).

Professor Justin Martin, who the Washington Free Beacon reports received over [\\$1.3 million](#) from the Qatar Foundation while promoting BDS and advising on Al Jazeera's credibility, faced no discipline after posting a [9/11 anniversary tweet](#) declaring "Happy 9/11" and claiming the U.S. is "complicit in far more terror than it has ever suffered," which Northwestern's president condemned. The Department of Education [reported in 2020](#) it had no records of Northwestern's contracts with Qatar entities.

Foreign Agent Registration

Qatar Foundation has been [registered](#) with the U.S. government as a foreign principal under FARA since at least 2006. However, there is no clear evidence that QFI itself has registered. The distinction is significant. FARA registration requires detailed disclosure of activities, funding sources, and the nature of work performed on behalf of foreign governments. It creates a public record that allows journalists, researchers, and policymakers to track foreign influence activities. Without FARA registration, QFI operates with substantially less oversight and transparency.

Policy Recommendations from Leading Organizations

Multiple American nonprofit organizations and research institutes have published policy recommendations aimed at addressing foreign influence in K-12 schools. While these organizations have focused on different countries and aspects of foreign influence, their recommendations share common themes around transparency, parental notification, federal oversight, and enforcement of existing laws. Below is a comprehensive overview of the policy recommendations put forward by these organizations.

Parents Defending Education

[Parents Defending Education](#), which conducted extensive investigations into Chinese government influence in American K-12 schools, has recommended the following measures:

- State and federal officials should immediately begin investigations to determine the scope of foreign governments' involvement, influence, and access to K-12 student information and curriculum
- Investigation findings should be made public once complete, enabling parents to make informed decisions about their children's involvement in foreign-funded programs
- Congressional committees of jurisdiction should hold hearings to determine the scope of security vulnerabilities and evaluate how foreign infiltration of K-12

classrooms has compromised student information, curriculum data, and America's intellectual property

- Families should have full access to view how cultural and language immersion programs are financed

National Association of Scholars

The [National Association of Scholars](#), which published a comprehensive report on Chinese influence in American K-12 education titled "China and Our Children," recommended:

- Congress should revitalize the Foreign Agents Registration Act to ensure it captures educational influence operations
- Educational authorities should develop and offer foreign language curricula based on American ideals and worldviews as alternatives to foreign government-funded programs
- Federal policymakers should establish ratio funding restrictions on universities that partner with K-12 schools to deliver foreign-funded programming

Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP)

[ISGAP](#), following its investigation into Qatari influence through Brown University's Choices Program, called for the following actions:

- The Middle East Choices Program should be immediately suspended for K-12 students pending a comprehensive review
- The U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice should conduct a federal investigation into undisclosed foreign influence on K-12 education
- Congress should hold oversight hearings on the relationship between universities and K-12 programs
- Federal authorities should strengthen enforcement of disclosure laws, including mandatory reporting of all foreign funding received by K-12 schools under an amended Section 117 of the Higher Education Act
- Organizations like Qatar Foundation International should be required to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act for their activities in U.S. schools
- Schools should implement full transparency in K-12 curriculum development, requiring them to provide parents with access to all social studies resources used in classrooms

America First Policy Institute

The [America First Policy Institute](#) endorsed three pieces of House legislation that the organization stated “reflect ideas from the America First Agenda”:

- The TRACE Act (Transparency in Reporting Adversarial Contributions in Education Act), which requires schools to make available, upon parental request, any funding, curricular materials, or memorandum of understanding with a foreign country or foreign entity of concern
- The CLASS Act (Combatting Lies of Authoritarians in School Systems Act), which requires school districts to report foreign funding or contributions over \$10,000 to the Secretary of Education
- The PROTECT Act (Promoting Responsible Oversight to Eliminate Communist Teachings for our Kids Act), which requires school districts to choose between accepting funding from the Chinese Communist Party or from the U.S. Federal Government

Common Themes Across Organizations

While these organizations have investigated different aspects of foreign influence—ranging from Chinese government programs to Qatari funding streams—several consistent themes emerge across their recommendations:

- **Transparency and Disclosure:** All four organizations emphasize the need for greater transparency regarding foreign funding and influence in K-12 schools, whether through parental notification requirements, public reporting, or enhanced disclosure laws.
- **Federal Oversight and Investigation:** Multiple organizations call for federal investigations by agencies including the U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice, as well as Congressional oversight hearings to assess the scope of foreign influence.
- **Enforcement of Existing Laws:** Several organizations recommend strengthening and enforcing existing legal frameworks, particularly the Foreign Agents Registration Act and Section 117 of the Higher Education Act, to cover K-12 educational programs and partnerships.
- **Parental Rights and Access:** Organizations consistently recommend that parents should have access to information about foreign funding sources and the ability to review curriculum materials that may be influenced by foreign governments or entities.

- **Alternative Programming:** Some organizations suggest developing American-based alternatives to foreign government-funded language and cultural programs to maintain educational objectives while eliminating foreign influence concerns.

These recommendations represent a range of approaches—from immediate program suspensions and investigations to longer-term systemic reforms—that organizations have proposed to address foreign influence in American K-12 education.