

# 19th Annual ISNA Education Forum

In collaboration with Council of Islamic Schools in North America (CISNA)

## *Integrating Social Justice in Islamic Education*

**A** = Arabic Language | **I** = Islamic Studies | **L** = Leadership, Board & Principal | **C** = Curriculum Development

**Friday, April 19, 2019**

**8:00 - 10:00 AM** Registration for Preconferences

**11:00 - 5:00 PM** Registration for Conference

## Pre-conference Workshops

**8:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

LaSalle C

### **Arabic Language Training Pre-conference Workshop**

#### **Enhancing Arabic Reading Skill Through Using an E-cloud Program**

Presenters: **Lina Kholaki, Hala Alfi, Nacheda Baroud Tazani, Lina Aljijakli, and Youcef Mansouri**

Facilitator: **Talaat Pasha**

Understanding the benefit of reading language and age-appropriate level books increases student's vocabulary, reading comprehension skill, and engagement in the classroom. Presenters will share the successful Aldeen Arabic Reading Program using the criteria developed according to the ACTFL reading proficiency guidelines and will share leveled books and how the accompanying comprehension questions were developed to capture the essence of the stories. The program allows students access to a wide variety of appealing books. When reading is enjoyable, it reflects students' interests, it is self-selected and resembles L1 reading.

**Lina Kholaki** has her master's degree in education from Pacific Oaks College, is certified as an ACTFL-OPI and WPT tester, and has been in the teaching field for the past 20+ years. She was appointed as a language consultant and coordinator for Arabic Teachers at New Horizon campuses, She has taught college-level Arabic Language Courses at Cal State San Bernardino and the University of Southern California. Currently, she serves as consultant and instructional coach for LAUSD-Dual Immersion program at Elizabeth Learning Center in Los Angeles, California. Lina is the co-developer of "Hayya Natakalam Maan." She serves as president of National Arabic Teacher Association (NATA K12), co-chair Southern California QFI Teacher Council (SCALTC), and is a recipient of ACTFL Veteran Teacher of the Year Award--San Diego, CA.

**Hala Alfi** has been part of Aldeen Foundation's leadership team since its inception in 1991. With her background in finance and compliance, she assumed the role of Executive Director in 2016; working with a committee of experts, she brought Aldeen's Arabic Reader Program to implementation. She has been working directly with the software development team in designing the cloud-based program and provides technical training both onsite and online as part of the orientation and training provided to participating schools.

**Nacheda Tizani** studied 2 years of computer science in Tripoli University, Lebanon, and is currently continuing her education in the field of teaching. She has been working in New Horizon School for the past 15 years, teaching Arabic as a foreign language in the elementary and middle school. Currently, she is teaching kindergarten and beginning Arabic to grades five through eight. Additionally, she worked on designing the assessment booklet of "Hayya Natakalam Maan" for preschool, pre-k, and kindergarten and formatting pictures for "Lughati Al-Islamiyya". In the past five years, she has been a presenter in national conferences including ACTFL, ISNA, CAIS, NCOLCTL, NECTFL, and the Muslim Conference. In addition to participating in ISNA this year, she is also presenting in CLTA.

**Lina Aljijakli** is a teacher in the Islamic School of Louisville since 2015. She teaches Arabic, Quran, and Islamic

Studies, and she has a bachelor degree in sciences and an education diploma from Syria. Lina is a certified in Tajweed, Quran recitation, and Alqaada Alnooraneya. With over 20 years of experience in teaching, she has a great passion for the Arabic language and has been teaching Arabic for students of all ages since immigrating to the United States in 2012.

**Youcef Mansouri** has a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Algiers and taught philosophy in high school Algeria for 7 years. He moved to the United States of America in 2007, and he started working at the Islamic School of Louisville in 2009. This is his ninth year as an Arabic, Islamic studies, and Quran teacher. Youcef's goal is to help our generation stick to their religion and to have Islamic manners.

**Facilitator: Talaat Pasha** holds a Ph.D. in Arabic and Linguistics from the University of Utah, MA in theoretical linguistics from the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), MA in Discourse Analysis from Menya University, Egypt, BA in English language and literature from Egypt, and BA in Islamic Chaplaincy from the renowned Al-Azhar University, Egypt. Dr. Pasha has long work experience at universities in both the Middle East and the U.S. He is currently the director of the Arabic Language Institute at the American Islamic College in Chicago. Talaat is also a certified trainer in Personality Types, active community member, Khateeb, public and motivating speaker, education consultant, personal and professional development facilitator, He is the founder and director of Pasha Consulting and Training. And the founder and director of Pasha Academy Consultant and Training PACT, LLC. He serves on the ISNA Education Forum Programming Committee.

**8:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

**Madison**

### **Islamic Studies Pre-conference Workshop**

#### **Nurturing Faith and Dismantling Doubt-The Role of the Muslim Educator**

Presenter: **Hatem Al-Haj, Ph.D.**

Facilitator: **Mir Rizwan Ali**

In this age characterized by anxiety and uncertainty, our youth seem to have the hardest time finding spiritual solace and intellectual anchorage. Muslim youth in the USA are not an exception. They may even encounter greater pressures to question their faith, or at least have unresolved questions about some of its teachings. Concerning this problem, the role of families and Muslim educators in full-time and part-time Islamic schools cannot be overstated.

This seminar is intended to tackle some practical ways we, as educators, can identify our youth who may be suffering from uncertainty, address their questions, and dismantle their doubts while nurturing their faith in Islam and love of it.

Some of the main points to be covered:

- ❖ The phases of development and the importance of understanding them in growing faith in our youth
- ❖ Ways of faith acquisition and our different spiritual and intellectual personalities
- ❖ Important introduction about apologetics (the discipline of defending religious doctrines)
- ❖ Answer the questioner, not only the question – first, try to find out what really prompted the question
- ❖ An action plan to address misconceptions, difficult and ambiguous subjects

A detailed answer to some of the frequently asked questions:

- existence of God
- the problem of evil
- faith and science
- gender roles and gender interactions
- the concept of jihad
- reconciling religious and national allegiances
- the penal code in Islam
- slavery in Muslim history
- sectarianism within Islam

**Hatem Al-Haj** was born in Cairo, Egypt. He began seeking knowledge in Alexandria with scholars there. After receiving his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (M.B., CH.B.) with honors from Alexandria University

Medical School, he moved to the United States. He became board certified in Pediatrics by the American Board of Pediatrics. Dr. Hatem also received his Master of Arts in Islamic Law from the American Open University (summa cum laude), and his Ph.D. in Comparative Fiqh from al-Jinan University, Tripoli, Lebanon (summa cum laude). Dr. Hatem currently is the Dean of the College of Islamic Studies (English) at Mishkah University as well as an attending pediatrician. He is a senior member of the Permanent Fatwa Committee of the Assembly of Muslim Jurists in America, the Islamic Jurisprudence Council of Minnesota, and the North American Imam Federation. He also founded the “Building Blocks of Islam” and is currently its president.

**Facilitator: Mir Rizwan Ali** is currently the Religious Director of the Islamic Center of Naperville, and the Director of Islamic Studies/Arabic at the College Preparatory School of America (CPSA) in Lombard. He graduated from an Islamic Foundation School. He has completed his doctorate in Educational Leadership. His dissertation focused on the experiences of Islamic school graduates in the Chicagoland area. He has completed a degree in Shariah from Al Azhar University and serves on the ISNA Education Forum Programming Committee.

**8:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

**LaSalle A**

**Principal and Board Leadership Pre-conference Workshop**

**The Power of Positive Relationships in School Environment and Resolving Conflict and Problem Solving with Different Constituencies**

Presenters: **Necva Ozgur, Leila Shatara, and Safaa Zarzour**

One of the most important responsibilities of principals is to develop strong relationships with different constituencies. Strong relationships in the school setting will foster positive social interaction and establish a nurturing environment of trust and support. However, misunderstandings, conflicts, and complaints are a part of schools’ realities and have to be dealt with before they become a major challenge.

This presentation, our highly-experienced presenters will help board members, administrators, and principals:

- ❖ to build strong partnerships with different constituencies,
- ❖ establish effective preventive strategies in handling complaints,
- ❖ and resolving conflicts in the most effective ways.

We will also have case studies, solve real-life challenges, and answer questions, including those regarding legal issues facing schools.

**Necva Ozgur** is the founder and Executive Director of MERIT and founding School Head of New Horizon School Pasadena (NHSP). Necva obtained an M.S. degree from the School of Pharmacy at the University of Istanbul and later, an M.Ed. degree in Human Development from Pacific Oaks College, where she wrote her thesis on *Strategies to Achieve Excellence in an Islamic School*. After serving NHSP as principal and leading the school to earn Blue Ribbon recognition, she established MERIT, Muslim Educators’ Resource, Information, and Training Center. Necva provides consultation to Islamic schools on board training, principal coaching, accreditation, school establishment, and evaluation. Necva serves on the CISNA board and served as board chair of Bayan Claremont College. Necva served as chairperson on ISNA Education Forum committees, as a trustee of NHSP, ICSC, the California Association of Independent Schools, and the Council of Spiritual and Ethical Education. Necva also chaired a committee to develop Islamic school standards for joint accreditation with AdvancED.

**Leila Shatara** is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Educational Leadership and Research Methodology at Florida Atlantic University. Ms. Shatara was a public school teacher and then an Islamic school principal, having served in education for over 20 years. She has been an educational consultant for Islamic schools for the past 6 years, providing professional development for boards, principals, and teachers. She currently serves as President of the Council of Islamic Schools of South Florida, the Vice President of Florida Islamic Schools Association, and Vice President of the Council of Islamic Schools in North America. She has also served on the Education Forum Programming Committee for the past 5 years.

**Safaa Zarzour** is an educator, attorney, and a community activist. Professionally, he is the Superintendent of Universal Schools in Illinois and Indiana. He is also the President of Zarzour Law LLC. Safaa is newly elected ISNA Vice President-USA, co-founder of the ISNA Education Forum, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Schools of North America (CISNA), member of the Board of Advisors of the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving, Vice Chair of the Mosque Foundation, elected board member of Oak Lawn Community High School and President of the Syrian Forum USA. Previously, he has served as Secretary General of ISNA, General Counsel and Chief Operations Officer of Zakat Foundation of America, Chief Executive Officer of IQRA International Foundation, and adjunct law professor at Loyola Law School.

**8:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

**Division**

**Leadership Challenge Pre-conference Workshop**

**Helping Principals Rise to the Next Level**

Presenters: William White and Sufia Azmat

Facilitator: Patricia Salahuddin

In the first half of this workshop, Islamic school leaders will reflect on their leadership skills and compare these to the best practices from the **Leadership Challenge Method** by authors James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. The purpose is to raise awareness of how our actions align with research-based best practices and to discover specific strategies to leverage our strengths and to improve our weaknesses.

In the final half of the day, leaders will review protocols for authentic Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and connect them with leadership best practices. Before completion of the workshop, participants will collaborate with peers utilizing the PLC format to create an action plan for real-world leadership challenges.

**William White** holds a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and is the principal at the Islamic School of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky. In addition to his role as an administrator, he has also worked as an elementary school teacher and university lecturer. He is passionate about school improvement and leadership development and is currently a co-director of Diversity in Leadership Center (DLC), a non-profit dedicated to establishing and developing a network of aspiring Muslim leaders.

**Sufia Azmat** is the Executive Director of CISNA which specializes in Islamic school accreditation. She is a certified teacher with over 20 years of experience in education. Her administrative roles include serving as Middle School Division Head, Principal, and Head of School at several K-12 schools. She is an education consultant whose workshops include Bullying Prevention, Effective Communication, and Improving School Climate. Ms. Azmat has been asked to speak at national and international education conferences including the International Congress on Islamic Education in Istanbul, Turkey. She is currently enrolled at Bayan Claremont School of Theology in the Islamic Education and Leadership Program and serves on the ISNA Education Forum Programming Committee.

**Facilitator: Patricia Zahirah Salahuddin** is an educator for more than 30 years for middle and high school students in public and Islamic schools. In 2000, she became a National Board Certified teacher and in 2011 she earned a doctorate of education in Curriculum and Instructions from Florida International University (FIU); the focus of her research was character education in a Muslim school's curriculum, which has been published. She is founder of Muslim Teachers Association (MTA) and Council of Islamic Schools of South Florida (CISSF), both organizations facilitate networking and professional development for teachers and administrators serving Muslim schools. Patricia is the chairperson for Clara Mohammed School Board of Miami, Florida and Vice Chairperson for Islamic Schools League of America, (ISLA). Additional board service includes Council of Islamic Schools of North America (CISNA), and Florida Islamic Schools Association. Presently, Patricia is also serving as an Adjunct Lecturer for Florida International University, and she serves on the ISNA Education Forum Programming Committee.

**8:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

**LaSalle B**

**Teachers Training Workshop**

Presenters: **Jessica Heybach, Ph.D., Wafa Mohamed**

Facilitator: Faten Abdallah

## **A Democratic Education Curriculum for Islamic Schools**

Participants will learn the essential elements of democratic education in K-12 settings. Particular emphasis will be paid to the following questions: What is a democracy? What is democratic education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? How can school foster democratic dispositions in students? Participants will learn process-oriented strategies for cultivating a democratic classroom and school culture. Furthermore, participants will explore a variety of real-world examples to highlight how these ideas work in practice.

Overview of the Democratic Education Workshop

### **The State of Civics, Social Justice, and Democratic Education:**

- ★ NCSS: 3C Framework
- ★ Illinois Teaching Standards

**Foundational Ideas:** What is democracy? (Dewey, Creative Democracy) What is democratic education? (Gutman, Democratic Education) What are democratic dispositions?

### **Characteristics of Democratic Education:**

- Non-Repression
- Belief in Human Equality
- Dialogue Across Difference
- Dissent & Civil Disobedience
- Questioning Assumptions & Common Sense
- Revision
- Passion for Civic Affairs
- Collaboration
- Faith in Others
- Relevancy

### **Small Group Discussion:**

- Classroom Examples Elementary Curriculum
- Classroom Examples Middle School Curriculum
- Classroom Examples High School Curriculum

### **Civics, Ethics, and Democracy in Action**

- Open-ended Questioning of Students: <http://rightquestion.org/>
- Controversial Issues in the Classroom: Diana Hess' work
- Inquiry and Problem Based Instructional Strategies: Tucson Arizona *Precious Knowledge*
- Local and Global Aims: Cosmopolitanism: Martha Nussbaum's work
- Ethics Bowl and P4C Initiatives: <https://www.plato-philosophy.org/> and <https://nhseb.unc.edu/>

### **Small Group Discussion:**

- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threat) Analysis of existing classroom curriculum as it relates to Democratic Education.
- How can you apply these ideas to your classroom?

**Jessica A. Heybach**, Department Chair of the Ed.D. Programs at Aurora University. Dr. Heybach currently teaches graduate courses in educational research and curriculum studies. Her scholarly interests include questions of justice and equity in education and how conceptions of teacher neutrality influence curriculum and instruction. Dr. Heybach has published in such journals as the *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *Educational Studies*, *Education and Culture*, *Critical Questions in Education*, and *Philosophical Studies in Education*.

**Wafa Mohamad** is an elementary school teacher in the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in Leadership in Curriculum and Instruction at Aurora University. Her research is focusing on the experiences of Muslim American students and their subsequent participation in civil society. She is a native of Chicago whose publications and presentations have specifically explored how media and curriculum portrays Muslims along with the subsequent effects of this portrayal on their identity formation.

**Facilitator: Faten Abdallah** is an educator of more than 15 years of experience in education working with newborns to older adults. Ms. Abdallah is currently teaching social sciences at Rockford Iqra School for grades 8-12, and she has been teaching Syrian newcomers English as a Second Language for the past two years. Ms. Abdallah has two BA degrees, in history and political science, with graduate work in foundations of Education. You can connect with Ms. Abdallah at <http://www.twitter.com/connectingwomen>. She serves on the ISNA Education Forum Programming Committee.

**8:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

**State**

### **Quran Teachers Training Pre-conference Workshop**

**Bring Your Students Closer to the Holy Qur'an (Graduate Fluent and Accurate Readers)**

Presenters: **Dalia El Deeb, Marwa Thabet and Mona Hemid**

Facilitator: **Khalida Baste**

Learn innovative teaching strategies, engaging activities, and user-friendly digital tools that you can immediately implement to remove two barriers between your student and the Holy Qur'an:

- Lack of Reading Fluency

- Lack of Understanding.

تعليم القراءة بطلاقة وإتقان في أقصر وقت تعليم العربية لفهم القرآن  
استراتيجيات فعالة – إبداع وطرق عملية مجربة - تقنية سهلة الاستعمال

The session aims at providing attendees with knowledge and training that enables them to augment their students' achievement in two major areas:

- Fluency and accuracy of reading (Nurania method & other teaching strategies)
- Understanding (Tafseer strategies & Arabic To Understand Qur'an Program)

The session presents innovative teaching strategies and user-friendly engaging digital tools that teachers can easily and immediately implement.

The Nurania method and the self-developed "Arabic To Understand Qur'an" Program are the backbones of the training and discussions. The interactive session features presenters with experience in curriculum design, teaching strategies, designing learning activities, and the use of digital tools.

**Dr. Dalia El Deeb** carries an Ijazah with Sanad of Qur'an recitation according to the narration of Hafs upon Imam Aasim. She published a series of Islamic Studies books for Elementary students & presented in a number of educational forums and workshops for professional development of Qur'an teachers in several USA states, as well as in Cairo, Jeddah & Dubai. Currently, she is the director of Ahlul-Qur'an Academy and of the Hifdh program at Bayaan Academy of Tampa, FL. She is also the Chairman of Nuraniya training & Certification in USA in affiliation with the Furqan Group for Qur'an Education in Jeddah, SA.

**Marwa Thabet** teaches and designs Arabic courses at Western, a public high school in California. She has been teaching middle and high school students since 2008 and contributed to the development of STARTALK Arabic model curricula. Thabet received her bachelor degree in French from Faculty of Al-Alsun, Ain Shams University in Cairo; her Single Subject Teaching Credential in Arabic from California State University Fullerton; and her Master degree in education from Cal Poly Pomona. Completing all her degrees with excellence, Thabet became a member of Golden Key International Honour Society. In addition, Thabet studied "Tajweed" for five years in Qotoz Quran School in Cairo and is a certified "Nouraniyah" teacher.

**Facilitator: Khalida Baste** brings over 18 years of experience in education serving in different capacities in private schools in Chicagoland and UAE. Currently, she is the principal of Islamic Foundation School, Villa Park, IL. Previous to IFS, she spent 3 years as the Vice Principal of Applied Technology High School and Secondary Technical School in UAE. Prior to her experience in UAE, she was the Principal of Aqsa School for 6 years. Before pursuing leadership roles, Ms. Baste gained 8 years of experience as a math and science teacher in Aqsa School. Ms. Baste has a BS degree in Psychology from Loyola University, an MS degree in Biotechnology from Northwestern University, and an MA in Educational Leadership from Lewis University. She serves on the ISNA Education Forum Programming Committee.

**12:00 - 1:15 PM**

**Lunch Break**

**1:15 - 1:45 PM**

**Grand Ballroom A**

**Jumu'ah Prayer**

Khateeb - **Tayyab Yunus**

**2:00 - 5:00 PM**

**All Pre-conference workshops will resume**