

Islamic Academy of New England

A Brief Guide to Our Teachers & Staff

2018-2019



The Islamic Academy of New England is honored to offer such a talented and high-qualified group of educators to the community. They are energetic, passionate, highly qualified academically and through experience, and fully embrace the mission of our school. This adds to a positive and warm Islamic environment. They come from a diverse background of professional disciplines and each teacher and staff offers unique experiences to our students.

Administration

Sr Nur'Izzah Khalil, Principal
Sr Aminah Muhammad, Assistant Registrar
Sr Dalal Aldajani, Office Manager

Elementary Homeroom

Ms Souheir Al-Mousa, Kindergarten
Sr Marylou Elhusayni, Early Childhood Co-Teacher
Sr Oya Bozkurt, First Grade
Mrs Cassandra Valley, Second Grade
Sr Rana Elbeih, Third Grade
Shamaila Zia, Fourth Grade
Miss Laura Spiegler, Fifth Grade

Subject Teachers

Sr Rabiya Atcha, Art Teacher
Sr Senda Hentati, Gym Teacher

Islamic Studies Department

Sr Rachida Benkaci, Arabic Lead Teacher
Sr Aliaa Eltawansy, Arabic Teacher
Sr Asma Shaqrah, Quran & Tarbiyah Coordinator
Sr Hoda Elsharkawi, Religion Teacher

Pre-School

Sr Heba Hasan, Lead Pre-School Teacher
Mrs Hiba Hantash, Pre-School Co-Teacher
Sr Iman Mkanssi, Pre-School Teacher Assistant
Sr Ruqaiya AlAbdalla, Pre-School Teacher Assistant

Maintenance/Security

Br Zineddine Benkaci
Br Dirgham Alkhalaf

Sr. Nur'Izzah Khalil, B.A., M.Ed.

Principal

Sr Nur earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Psychology from the University of Calgary, Canada, holds a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Bridgewater State University and is a licensed K-6 administrator with the Massachusetts Department of Education. She has worked with the City of Calgary, with the Government of Singapore, has over a decade of advertising experience and came from a family of educators. Upon her arrival in the US in 2002, she returned to her first passion, teaching, and immediately became part of the IANE-ANA family as our middle-school Social Studies teacher first, later as our third-grade teacher, before assuming her current administrative role. She is ever thankful to Allah s.w.t. for this rare opportunity to make a difference in the community and to help shape the minds of our precious Muslim youth. Sr Nur can be reached at nkhalil@iane.org.

Sr. Aminah K. Muhammad, A.S.

Assistant Registrar

Sr Aminah serves many roles at both ANA and IANE. She has her Associate's degree from Northeastern University. She has extensive experience having worked in Islamic schools since 1984 in both Massachusetts and Mississippi. Sr Aminah has been with Al-Noor Academy since 2000 and started full-time at IANE in 2006. She can be found at both schools serving as a lifeline between parents, students, and

teachers. Her favorite activities include working with children, reading, and sewing when she has the time to sew! Sr Aminah can be reached at amuhammad@iane.org.

Sr. Dalal Aldajani, B.S.

Administrative Manager

Sr. Dalal graduated from University of Jordan with a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering and has taught in an Islamic school in London, UK, for three years. Subsequently she participated in a Saturday Islamic school for two years in Cambridge, MA, and currently holds an administrative position at IANE. Outside of work, Sr Dalal actively leads a Girls Scout troop and is skilled in arts and crafts projects. Sr Dalal can be reached at daldajani@iane.org.

Sr Hoda Elsharkawi, B.A.

Religion Teacher

Sr. Hoda holds a BA in Mass Communication & Journalism (1996) from University of Zagazig, Egypt. She has completed courses in Islamic Creed, Quran Exegesis, Sciences of Quran, Fundamentals of Islamic Jurisprudence and Hadith Sciences at Islamic American Open University, Virginia. Sr. Hoda was the Head of the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) Outreach Department (1999-2002), and is now leading a support group for new Muslim women. She is married with three children who attend both the Islamic Academy of New England and Al-Noor Academy, and can be reached at helsharkawi@iane.org.

Sr. Asma Shaqrah, B.A., M.A.

Quran Teacher & Tarbiyah Coordinator

Sr. Asma Shaqrah obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Arabic Language and Literature from the University of Jordan, and her Master's Degree from American College. She has been teaching Arabic for 10 years; 3 years in Jordan and 7 at the Islamic Academy of New England (IANE). Sr. Asma has been the lead teacher in the Arabic Department at the IANE. Sr. Asma is the head of the Arabic Department at Muslim American Society Council of Islamic Schools (MASCIS) and has done many projects in the school such as "My School" video clip and the Arabic Calligraphy project. Sr. Asma's goal is to help the students understand Quran through teaching Arabic to build strong Muslims and build a strong Muslim community. Sr Asma can be reached at ashaqrah@iane.org.

Sr. Rachida Benkaci

Arabic Lead Teacher

With over ten years of experience teaching Arabic language at the Islamic Academy of New England, Sr Rachida is certainly not an unfamiliar face amongst the staff. Armed with extensive knowledge in Arabic language and literature, she has been a driving force behind the Arabic department at IANE in the past and has contributed tremendously towards instilling the love of the holy language of the Quran in the hearts and minds of our students for many years. We welcome Sr Rachida back this year with open arms and a prayer that she may continue with her dedicated service to the school with the same zeal that has been her trademark so that our students go on to learn and excel in the Arabic language, insha'Allah. Sr Rachida can be reached at rbenkaci@iane.org.

Sr Aliaa Eltanwansy, B.A.

Arabic Teacher

Sr Aliaa holds a Bachelor's degree in Regional and Urban Planning from the University of Cairo and worked as an architect for three years in Egypt. Sr Aliaa joined the Islamic Academy of New England last year as second-level Arabic teacher after having been involved with various Islamic schools since 2003 as a parent. Sr Aliaa loves art and has experience with painting Ancient Egyptian art on papyrus. Sr Aliaa can be reached at aeltawansy@iane.org.

Sr. Hebaallah Hasan, B.A., M.Ed.

Pre-School (PreK) Lead Teacher

Sr Heba is our Lead Teacher for two Kindergarten (K1 & K2) classes. She has a Bachelor's degree in Classical Languages and Literature from Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt and majored in Greek and Latin. She successfully received her Master's in Education with a major in Early Childhood from American

College. Sr Heba is a certified pre-school teacher from the Department of Early Education and Care. She has enjoyed working with our beautiful four-year-old children for over eight years and is presently in her seventh year of teaching at IANE. Sr Heba can be reached at hhasan@iane.org.

Mrs Hiba Hantash

Pre-School (PreK) Co-Teacher, B.A.

Mrs Hiba Hantash attained her Bachelor's degree from Beirut Arab University in Lebanon with a major in Biology. She had four years of experience teaching Biology and Science at both the middle and high school levels while she was in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates. She is currently studying Early Childhood Education at Bristol Community College and can be reached at hhantash@iane.org.

Sr Iman Mkanssi

Pre-School (PreK) Teacher Assistant

Sr Iman joined us since 2013 as our pre-school teacher assistant and she is thrilled to return this year to our pre-school classes, and to teach Arabic to our youngest group of students at IANE! Sr Iman actively volunteer-teach at the Islamic Center at both ICNE-Sharon and ICNE-Quincy and can be reached at imkanssi@iane.org.

Miss. Souheir Al-Mousa, Assoc.Degree

Kindergarten Teacher

Miss Souheir grew up in Damascus, Syria. She studied French literature at Damascus University, and has Early Childhood Teacher certification with EEC. She lived with her family in Saudi Arabia for four years, in Oman for two years, and in the United Arab Emirates for three years. While in the Emirates, she worked in the library at the American University of Sharjah. Miss Souheir relocated to Massachusetts in 2002 and began working at the Islamic Academy of New England that year as a kindergarten assistant and has been our kindergarten teacher for the past ten years. Miss Souheir celebrates the miracle of being able to watch her students grow and learn during the year they are with her. She enjoys the privilege of being able to see them read and write their first words and can be reached at smousa@iane.org.

Sr. MaryLou Elhusayni, B.S.

Early Childhood Co-Teacher

Sr MaryLou has a Bachelor's degree in Science from Roger Williams University. She has been an assistant in our Kindergarten class for three years and has also supported both our First and Second grade classes. Additionally, Sr MaryLou has also taught Spanish to our students and has been actively involved in fundraising activities for our school. She can be reached at melhusayni@iane.org.

Mrs Oya Bozkurt, B.Ed, M.Ed

First Grade Teacher

Sr Oya is a dynamic and experienced elementary school teacher who is dedicated towards educating young students and inspiring them to love to learn in a safe, engaging and nurturing environment. She obtained her Bachelor's degree in Education from Salem State College and her Master's degree from Jones International University. Sr Oya has taught in both the Lawrence and Methuen public school districts and comes to IANE with over 12 years of teaching experience. She is highly skilled in evaluating individual student needs and developing student-focused teaching strategies. Sr Oya can be reached at obuzkurt@iane.org.

Mrs Cassandra Valley, B.Ed. M.Ed.

Second Grade Teacher

Mrs Cassandra Valley obtained her Bachelor's degree in Education from Framingham State University and her Master's degree in Education from Lesley University. As part of her degree, Mrs Valley completed three exhaustive field studies at the Framingham Public school district and had experience observing and conducting lessons in various elementary grades one through five. She successfully student taught a class of 23 fourth grade students in all core subjects for four full months at the Franklin Public school. She is committed to motivating students while providing a safe and friendly learning environment. Mrs Valley can be reached at cvalley@iane.org.

Sr Rana Elbeih, B.Sc.

Third Grade Teacher

Sr Rana holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from University of Massachusetts, Boston, and is currently completing her Masters' Degree in Higher Education. She has been a member of our IANE faculty over the years in various roles ranging from being a long-term substitute teacher to being one of our valued pre-school teachers. Sr Rana even taught at our ICNE's weekend-Saturday school before joining us full-time. She can be reached at relbeih@iane.org.

Mrs Shamaila Zia, MD

Fourth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Zia received her Bachelor's of Medicine & Surgery degree from Dow University of Health Sciences, Karachi in 1992. She then completed her medical internship in Medicine & Surgery from Civil Hospital, Karachi, receiving excellence in both. In her medical school, she actively participated in debates and received the best debater award. She relocated to the U.S. in 2001 and brings her passion for science to the classroom. She has taught science to grades six through 10 and has served as the IANE fourth grade homeroom teacher in 2015-16. She has also contributed to the community volunteering as ICNE Sharon Youth Director, Women's Event Organizer and Sunday School Teacher. She can be reached at szia@iane.org.

Miss Laura Spiegler

Fifth Grade Teacher

Miss Spiegler obtained her Bachelors degree from Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, and upon graduation, she joined the AmeriCorp program and worked at the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. She subsequently pursued her Masters of Arts in Teaching at Clark University in Worcester. Miss Spiegler comes with several years of teaching experience with the most recent being the New Bedford Public where she taught fourth grade, and earlier at the Worcester Public where she taught second grade. Miss Spiegler can be reached at lspiegler@iane.org.

Sr Rabiya Atcha, B.A.

Art Teacher

Sr Rabiya was born and raised in Chicago. Eventually moving to New York, she graduated from City University of New York's Queens College with a BA in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, as well as Psychology. She also received certification through the NYS Department of Education, as an Elementary Education Teacher. After working in NYC public schools for two years, she moved to Rhode Island and taught the fifth-grade class here, at IANE, for two years. She is excited to be joining us once again as the Art Teacher. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, baking, photography, and spending time with her family. Sr Rabiya can be reached at ratcha@iane.org.

Br. Zineddine Benkaci

School Maintenance

Br. Zineddine is another familiar face amongst the staff at IANE and ANA. Br. Zine has been in charge of the janitorial services at both schools for many years now. Not only have his services been invaluable in maintaining the buildings at both schools, this father-of-three's daily presence at the school has always been a source of comfort and joy for all the staff at the school where everyone has embraced him as part of their family and has depended on his helping hand time and time again. Alhumdulillah, Br. Zine will be continuing his service to the school again this year and we welcome him back with great warmth and joy.

----- We Look Forward To Seeing You at IANE ! -----