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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Khalil Gibran International Academy to Become Public IB School in Brooklyn**

NEW YORK, June 30, 2011 - Following a vote on Monday evening, the Department of Education (DOE) announced several changes to the Khalil Gibran International Academy (KGIA). Apart from moving the school site near the Atlantic Avenue transportation terminal, the DOE plans to transition KGIA from a junior high school to an international baccalaureate (IB) public high school.

"We are happy to see the DOE moving toward an IB bilingual high school. It is a step in the right direction," stated Dr. Ahmed Jaber, Board Chairman of the Arab American Association of New York and Board member of Beit Al Maqdis Islamic Center, the Arab Muslim American Federation and the Islamic Mission of America.

The school has been facing recruitment challenges due to its location and curriculum. However, with the widespread effort of the Arab American community and partner organizations throughout New York City, such as New Visions for Public Schools, KGIA will now utilize a rigorous curriculum to maintain its vision of an Arabic dual-language school.

"I think this is the best path forward in achieving the original goals of the school," stated Samer Khalaf, Board Chairman of the Arab-American Family Support Center. In addition to providing a competitive, world-class, dual-language education, the IB program allows students to enter colleges and universities as sophomores with a diploma that is recognized and accepted internationally. In light of the changes in the Middle East, KGIA's graduates will be well-positioned to assume roles as leaders and change agents throughout the world.

"This is a very important school for the community. It's an accomplishment for all of us. We need to do whatever is possible to keep it going," stated Pastor Khader El-Yateem of Salam Arabic Church, adding, "I'm excited about the future and the opportunity it brings. I think it is very important to educate our children about our language and our culture."

For additional information, contact Sara Elghobashy: (718) 643-8000, sara@aafscny.org

The Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC) is the largest Arab-American social services organizations in New York. Serving thousands of clients a year, AAFSC provides comprehensive social services to Arab-American immigrant families and children as they adjust to a new culture and navigate American laws and cultural norms. Our mission is to empower new immigrants with the tools they need to successfully acclimate into the world around them and become active participants in the community.

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