



**Starting a new school: a general list of guidelines for starting a new program from scratch or expanding an existing program (from a weekend program to a daily school, for example).**

The Golestan Colab is available as a *free* resource to all educators looking to start a school, including spreadsheets for financial analysis, lesson plans, onsite training, recruiting, parent and employee handbook templates, and general consulting.

1. Market – is there a need for a Persian language program? If so, how large is the local population? Is there a car culture? How far do you think the average person would be willing to drive to send their child to your program? Based on the answers to these questions, you can identify the region you want to target. How large is this region? 2-mile radius? 10-mile radius?)
2. Define your ideal program – how do you envision a successful program to look in 10 years? Is it a weekend program? After school? Daily school? Is it traditional, progressive, or a hybrid of the two? How large do you envision it becoming at its fullest potential?
3. Come up with a long-term plan for the school, starting with something small and scalable. For example, if you foresee having a daily preschool and after school program with 200 students in 10 years, plan on starting off with a small program to start (either 3 days a week or weekends, for example) and scale up from there.
4. Develop a financial model for the first year with projections for subsequent years based on the parameters described above. Things to consider: student:teacher ratio, class sizes, number of classes running simultaneously – It is recommended to start small and grow once more established even if it means there is lost revenue. The reason for this is that you're better off operating a program with a good reputation at a loss than a sub-par program that brings in a profit. With the former, eventually with word of mouth, you will have a consistent stream of students, while with the latter you risk losing your current students and many new families. It is much harder to recover from a bad reputation than it is to build a good one from scratch.
5. Research city/county/state regulatory requirements.
6. Look for real estate that can accommodate your short term plans while potentially allowing for growth and executing your long-term strategy based on the parameters described above (including regulatory requirements):

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*Golestan Center For Language Immersion and Cultural Education*

- a. Churches and synagogues are good places to start but are usually hard to come by.
  - b. Community centers may work as a short-term solution to start up as a recreational program.
  - c. Established schools may rent out unused space (if starting a weekday program) or on weekends (much easier to come by).
  - d. Some residential properties may work for a small program.
  - e. Purchase or rent a building that meets county regulatory requirements.
7. Financial analysis – plug in estimated costs and revenue scenarios to evaluate whether your model is a viable one. *The Golestan Colab has a spreadsheet template to share.*
  8. Develop your curriculum and teaching philosophy.
  9. Select a name, develop an identity (brand, logo etc), print flyers and post cards, build your website.
  10. Announce the launch of the school and start recruiting! Use social media as much as possible. Word of mouth is your best friend.
  11. Do not over-enroll when you first start out. This is very important. Create a waiting list with the students that didn't make your cut off (6 to 8 students to start, depending on the age), then slowly start to let more in as you refine the program (about 2 months).

The Golestan Heritage Language Collaborative (Colab) in Berkeley California was established to help provide support and expertise to all families and educators wanting to raise bilingual children. The Colab produces teaching materials (including an audiobook of stories for children) and provides pro bono consulting to individuals and schools building heritage language programs for children. For more information, please email [Colab@golestankids.com](mailto:Colab@golestankids.com) or visit [www.Golestankids.com/colab/](http://www.Golestankids.com/colab/).