

Michigan Islamic Academy (MIA) History

Michigan Islamic Academy (MIA) opened in 1985 as a subsidiary of the Islamic Center of Ann Arbor and Vicinity. The vision of cultivating a community environment that fosters solid Muslim identity development and a robust academic foundation—shared by the nine-member board of education, families, educators, and local community leaders—provided the impetus to establish the school and Islamic Center.

MIA would become the first K–12 Islamic school in Michigan and one of the first in the U.S. to offer all academic subjects (aligned with the [state curriculum framework](#)), along with Islamic Studies, Qur'an, and Arabic. MIA would also become the first accredited Islamic school recognized by the state of Michigan as a non-public school and the first to offer dual enrollment and on-site college courses.

Early Years

In MIA's early years, staff and students faced challenges due to the limitations of a modest educational facility. In the school's first year after being established, for example, MIA's principal did not have a secretary to assist with administrative tasks, and teachers taught combined grades of kindergarten through eighth grade in four classrooms—spaces initially designed to support weekend school classes. Despite these constraints, all stakeholders were determined to make MIA a success.

Evolution

The school soon evolved to meet growing community needs, such as acquiring a part-time secretary and installing playground equipment for the 1987–88 academic year.

MIA reached two significant milestones in 1996: graduating its first class of high school seniors and constructing the infrastructure of its current main building, which accommodated more than the previous 100-student enrollment maximum.

Since then, MIA has graduated over 400 students, many of whom have gone on to attend reputable institutions, represent a wide range of professions, and positively contribute to communities at home and abroad. MIA stakeholders have worked tirelessly to sustain the school's growth. Their collaborative efforts bore fruit in 2013 when MIA achieved its initial accreditation, which we seek to renew for the second time this year.

School Expansion

In 2014, MIA launched its school expansion project to accommodate our growing student body and educational offerings. Although our school community eagerly awaited the much-needed expansion, the initiative posed several challenges. Modular classrooms that housed four elementary grades for over 11 years required removal to make room for the expansion. Classes

held in these classrooms were temporarily relocated to the adjacent Islamic Center's main prayer hall. Using this shared, open prayer space as makeshift classrooms created unique challenges for both students and teachers, as it required that the four spaces be routinely set up at the start of the week and taken down before the end of the week.

Transitions into classrooms in the newly constructed building were finally made permanent when the Certificate of Occupancy for the new building was issued in 2018.

Renovations

After the school expansion project was completed, renovations began for the original building, including a main level, four classes, and four restrooms on the lower level. The project also included the renovation and installment of tile flooring, carpeting in the Pre-K and KG classrooms, LED lighting and drop ceiling, new plumbing, updated sprinkler and fire alarm systems, main office, two new administration offices, customized furniture in the hallways and the offices, and a wall planter in the main hallway.

Plans for New Property

With the steadily growing MIA student population, we have quickly outgrown our current facility. The MIA Board of Education has started with preliminary plans to seek property/land to expand its Upper School (Grades 6–12) to an alternative location.

Today's Diverse Student Body

MIA houses a racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse student body. Seventy-two percent (72%) of students have roots in the Middle East or North Africa. The vast majority of our students and staff are bilingual or multilingual. While most students' first language is English, many have native or advanced proficiency in other languages, including different dialects of Arabic, Urdu, Somali, Pashto, Spanish, French, Turkish, Farsi, Uzbek, and Hebrew.

Most MIA students live in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and Canton. Still, the school also hosts students from more than ten cities throughout the Greater Detroit area, including Westland, Dearborn, Brownstown, Saline, Novi, Livonia, Midland, Jackson, Farmington Hills, South Lyon, Whitmore Lake, Chelsea, and Grosse Pointe Woods. We provide student transportation from cities farther than 30 miles away through an independent contractor, extending passenger van routes to the Dearborn areas. Another passenger van serves the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area.

Staff

Michigan Islamic Academy's staff comprises sixty (60) full-time and part-time employees. Of these, six (6) members are administrators, including the Principal, Guidance Counselor, Elementary Department Coordinator, Standardized Testing Coordinator, and others who work

closely with the principal. Six (6) are department chairs, the academic and guidance counselor, or student support staff. Four (4) are office personnel, including the IT manager, and two (2) are maintenance and security staff. Thirty-eight (38) are teachers, including two (2) professors from Washtenaw Community College and Eastern Michigan University. Twenty (20) staff members are teaching assistants, independent study mentors, or tutors, including one Title I tutor.

Mission, Core Values, Vision, and Goals

MIA's mission, core values, vision, and goals are reviewed bi-annually and were most recently updated in March 2023. Its mission and core values inform the school's vision.

Mission

To provide excellence in education while nurturing Muslim character.

Core Values

Faith, character, perseverance, resilience, and stewardship

Vision

To empower future generations to excel academically, build bridges between Muslims and people of other faiths, and contribute to the betterment of society.

Goals

- To apply holistic teaching methods to ensure students' spiritual and emotional growth and physical and intellectual development.
- To help students develop good character and God-consciousness through a rigorous training program in Islamic Studies.
- To provide students opportunities to become responsible world citizens by instilling the importance of social activism, citizenship, and community service.
- To apply the most proven curriculum to help students achieve academic excellence.