

Michigan Islamic Academy

2301 Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Abridged Version



School Year: 2023- 2024

School District: Ann Arbor Public Schools

Intermediate School District: WISD (Washtenaw)

School Name: Michigan Islamic Academy

Grades Served: Pre-K through 12

Principal: Mrs. Fayzeh H. Madani

District Code: 81010

School Building Code: 07091

Board of Education Approval: _____

Authorized Official Signature and Date: Fall 2023

School Improvement Plan Committee (Updated 2022):

Board President	Imen Alem
Principal	Fayzeh Madani
Administration Student Support	Kristine Abouzahr
Department Chairs	Evelyn Sebik Fatiha Alem Sabuhi Imam Leena Abouzahr Shatha Mohammed
Academic Guidance Counselor, Student Support Accreditation Co-Coordinator	Samar Abbasi Shaad Ahmed

Faculty Members	Aafiya Contractor Aalaa Nashashibi Abdallah Jaber Abida Banu Ali Hiary Amel El-Mohri Amna Ghous Asia Salih Ayesha Hussaini Beverly Qoronfleh Eman Mohammad Azizi Erum Naz Evelyn Sebik Fatiha Alem Fatiha Ameziane Fatiha Moustaid Fayzeh Madani Hafida Baghdadi Hajera Qureshi Haneen Al-Qudah Hassina Zamoum Humaira Khan Jumana Abdul-Fattah Kinaya Muridi Kristine Abouzahr Laurie Domaleski Leena Abouzahr Liliana Aggour Maryam Abas Mateen Peracha Matt Schumann Melody (Sara) Partridge Miriam Abouzahr Muna Abu Rumaileh Nadia Boukhalifa Naima Nafees Naseebah Ikram Nawel Mekhaldi
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	Nusrat Huq Rajaa Jayyousi Rizwana Shakir Sabuhi Imam Saeda Jabr Sakeena Chishti Samah Tout Samantha Sanchez Samar Abbasi Sana Khan Sarah Nafees Shaad Ahmed Shatha Alnababteh Shatha Mohammed Sihem Oubibette Sinan Dheyaa Tahmina Akter Uzma Jaffer Yumna Ebrahim Yusra Siddiqui Zeenat Sonia
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Introduction

Michigan Islamic Academy (MIA) is a private, college-preparatory faith-based school that serves a racially and ethnically diverse community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and surrounding areas. Nestled in the heart of the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor's North Campus and neighboring Eastern Michigan University, MIA boasts competitive standardized test scores compared with other Ann Arbor Public Schools and private schools in the district.

History

Michigan Islamic Academy (MIA) opened in 1985 alongside the adjacent Islamic Center on Plymouth Road in Ann Arbor. The vision of cultivating a community environment that fosters Muslim solid identity development and a robust academic foundation – shared by families, educators, and local community leaders – provided the impetus to establish the school and Islamic Center. A pioneering institution from its inception, MIA would become the first K-12 Islamic school in Michigan and one of the first in the nation to offer all academic subjects (aligned with the State Curriculum Framework), in addition to Islamic Studies, Qur'an, and Arabic. MIA would also become the first Islamic school in Michigan to offer dual enrollment and on-site college courses.

In MIA's early years, staff and students were challenged by the limitations of a small, 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 KG through Grade 8 in four classrooms – spaces initially designed to support weekend school classes. Despite these constraints, all stakeholders were determined to make MIA a success.

The school would soon evolve to meet growing community needs, such as acquiring a part-time secretary the following year and installing playground equipment for the 1987-88 academic year. MIA reached two significant milestones in 1996: its first graduating class of high school seniors and the construction of the bones of our current building, which accommodated more than the previous 100-student enrollment maximum. Since then, MIA has graduated over 400 students, many of whom have attended reputable institutions, represent a wide range of professions, and are making positive contributions to communities at home and abroad. MIA stakeholders have worked tirelessly to sustain the school's growth. Our collaborative efforts bore fruit in 2013 when MIA achieved its initial accreditation, which we seek to renew for the second time this year.

A four-year project to expand the school to another location failed in 2016, resulting in a lawsuit against Pittsfield Township for discrimination. As a result, the school was compensated with \$1.7 million and decided not to move. In the summer of 2017, the school would embark on a \$2.5-million expansion project at its current location that spanned one and a half years.

The project added 13,500 square feet to the existing 11,000-square-foot building. The construction included a new stormwater detention system, electrical grid updates, a newly paved parking lot, a gymnasium (with state-of-the-art sound system and acoustic wall panels), a modern science lab with a SMART Board, and seven additional classrooms (one with a restroom and four with sinks).

Although all eagerly awaited the expansion, the project came with 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 classrooms be routinely set up at the start of the week and taken down before the next. Transitions into classrooms in the newly constructed building were finally made permanent when the Certificate of Occupancy for the new building was issued a year later.

After the school expansion project was completed, renovations began for the original building (on the main level, and four classes and four restrooms on the lower level). Tile flooring, carpeting in the Prek and KG classes, LED lighting and drop ceiling, new plumbing, updated sprinkler, and fire alarm systems, a renovated main office, the development of two new administration offices, customized furniture in the hallways and the offices, and a wall planter in the main hall were all included in the renovation project.

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.

Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals

The MIA mission, vision, values, and goals are reviewed annually and were most recently updated in March 2023.

Mission: *To provide excellence in education while nurturing Muslim character.*

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

The school's vision originated from its mission and goals. Michigan Islamic Academy, from its inception in 1985, was a pioneering Islamic school and continues to be one of the most successful in Michigan. MIA offers a solid secular and religious curriculum for students in grades Pre-K through 12. Throughout the years, the school has taught children of various languages and ethnic backgrounds. MIA strives for academic excellence and character development and instills a sense of community involvement and responsibility in its students. Through community service (200 hours required for graduation), extra-curricular activities, and onsite college classes, MIA students can build leadership qualities, develop social skills, and proactively lead in making a difference within their community and beyond. MIA alumni have made significant contributions in schools that they have attended and in their places of work, excelling academically, building bridges between Muslims and people of other faiths, establishing effective communication, and contributing to the betterment of society. The rigorous program offered by MIA not only educates students academically but provides the means for them to succeed socially, spiritually, and emotionally and to be responsible participants in and contributors to the society in which they live.

Core Values: *Faith, character, perseverance, and stewardship*

Goals:

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

Enrollment Trends

2020-2021	187 (COVID-19 pandemic adversely impacted enrollment)
2021-2022	268 (69% increase in enrollment following the return to school)
2022-2023	303 (67 students were on the waitlist at the end of the year)
2023-2024	325 (currently 129 students on the waitlist)

Student Demographics

Gender

At MIA, like at any typical school, the number of male and female students is approximately even, with a breakdown of 55% (177) females and 45% (147) males. Factors contributing to the higher proportion of females are most likely cultural and social factors related to the Muslim identity of the population we serve.

Ethnicity and Language

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.

City/Area of Residence

Most MIA students live in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and Canton. Still, the school also hosts students from more than ten cities throughout the metro-Detroit area, including Westland, Dearborn, Brownstown, Saline, Novi, Livonia, Midland, Farmington Hills, South Lyon, Whitmore Lake, Chelsea, and even 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.

Family Education and Job Categories

The school serves the Islamic community in the area. Most MIA families are from well-educated backgrounds and include computer scientists, engineers, businessmen, physicians, others in the medical field, university professors, educators, etc. A few families are not as well-situated according to socio-economic status to the extent that paying tuition would cause financial hardship. The school has a financial assistance program for students from such families, and some private individuals in the school community anonymously provide tuition assistance.

Surrounding Communities

For an overview of the demographics of the communities that our school serves, we will present data from the three towns/cities that most of our students come from: Ann Arbor, Canton, and Ypsilanti. We will also include statistics from two communities our transportation services serve: Dearborn and Farmington Hills.

The income data is from 2021 and presented in the format average/median. Ann Arbor, \$107,368/\$73,276; Canton, \$124,146/\$104,535; Ypsilanti, \$56,621/\$40,256; Dearborn, \$80,037/\$60,184; and, Farmington Hills, \$116,511/\$93,434.

Data for ethnicity is also from 2021. Ann Arbor is 70.2% White, 6.7% Black or African American, 16.7% Asian, and 6% Other. Canton is 72.2% White, 10.2% Black or African American, 14.1% Asian, and 3.5% Other. Ypsilanti is 61.9% White, 25.5% black or African American, 4.5% Asian, 7.8% Other. Dearborn is 88.5% White, 3.2% Black or African American, 2.3% Asian, and 5.9% Other. Farmington Hills is 62.7% White, 19.9% Black or African American, 14.1% Asian, and 2.8% Other.

The data for ethnicity is not as valuable for our purposes when it lumps those from the Middle East, North Africa, and Southwest Asia in with other Whites. For three cities from which many of our students come, we do have 2021 data that shows the percentage of the non-citizen population and the ten most common countries of origin for those who are foreign-born. Although most of our students and their families are United States citizens, this data gives an idea of the immigration patterns and residence of various ethnic groups.

Ann Arbor, home of the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University, as well as Washtenaw Community College and a couple of smaller colleges, has 11% of the population at non-citizenship status. The most common countries of origin are China (excluding Hong Kong

and Taiwan), India, Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Canada, Germany, Mexico, Pakistan, and Iran. Ypsilanti has 5% of the population at non-citizenship status, with the most common countries of origin of foreign-born residents being Iraq, Afghanistan, Canada, India, Vietnam, Yemen, Jordan, Korea, Mexico, and Syria. Dearborn has 9% of the population at non-citizenship status, with the most common countries/regions of origin of foreign-born residents being Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, India, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Canada, Kuwait, and Northern Africa.

At the county level, we have 2016 data for the regions of origin for Michigan citizens and non-citizen foreign-born/immigrant residents. In Washtenaw County, home to Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, 11% of the population in 2016 was foreign-born, coming from Asia/Oceania (other than China), China, Europe, the Indian subcontinent, the Americas (other than Canada or Mexico), the Middle East, Africa, Canada, and Mexico. In Wayne County, home to Canton and Dearborn, 8% of the population in 2016 was foreign-born from the Middle East, Europe, Asia/Oceania, Mexico, the Indian subcontinent, Africa, the Americas, Canada, and China. In Oakland County, home to Farmington Hills, 11% of the population is foreign-born from Canada, the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, Asia/Oceania, China, Europe, Mexico, the Americas, and Africa.

Staff Demographics

Michigan Islamic Academy's staff comprises sixty (60) qualified and dedicated full-time and part-time employees. Of these, six (6) 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 the instructor for one Washtenaw Community College class, and twenty (20) are teaching assistants, independent study mentors, or tutors (including one Title I tutor). Transportation services at MIA are now outsourced. ***Note: Some MIA staff members assume more than one role. For example, department chairs are also teachers, the Media teacher is also an upper elementary ELA assistant, etc.***

Gender

Most of our staff at Michigan Islamic Academy (MIA) is female. Only ten percent of our staff is male, and half are not in teaching positions. This has been a pattern at our school since its inception and matches that for most private religious schools in the United States, as typically the salary is not as high as in the public and charter schools, therefore making it more difficult for a head of household to support his/her family. This pattern in the gender demographic is

increased at MIA by the cultural tendency for the Middle Eastern/North African and Southwest Asian immigrants, in particular, to strongly encourage their children to pursue careers in the science/engineering/technology and medical fields.

The gender demographic at MIA does come with disadvantages. Research shows that male teachers are role models for boys, especially at the high school level. Also, logistically, it is a more significant challenge, for example, to find and keep a male gym teacher and to have enough male chaperones/monitors for field trips, lunch duties, and open mic assemblies. The challenge of providing a gym teacher has been met by having a male staff member who teaches chemistry and has student/administrative support duties take on the high school boys' PE classes as well. For monitoring and chaperoning duties, we simply fill in with female teachers in our school community who excel in relating to and working with older boys.

Many female staff take on a robust role model, mentorship, and almost parenting character in their relationships with students, naturally incorporating classroom management and life skills in their daily interactions. Many of them have a penchant for organization of details, will go the extra mile in organizing and decorating events, and so on. The preponderance of females on our staff additionally affects our school culture in that there is a heightened sense of understanding that everyone on our staff, female *and* male, is busy with home and work lives. With this, we all benefit from the high value placed on supporting each other in attending to self-care and family needs and a strengthened perception of camaraderie and interdependent collaboration in the departments and across the school.

Ethnicity

MIA's staff is racially and ethnically diverse, with 43% being Middle Eastern or North African, 36% Southeast Asian, 13% White, 5% African, and 3% mixed ethnicity. Our staff have lived in or frequently visited other countries or have extensive multicultural experiences; most are multilingual. All staff speak at least one language other than English at a beginning intermediate or higher level. These languages include Arabic, Urdu, Somali, Spanish, French, Turkish, Hebrew, Berber and Indonesian.

It is clear that the ethnic diversity of the staff and the students are each reflective of the other and immerse the school community in a multicultural environment that encourages respect for others. Also, as studies have shown, diversity at the staff level is very beneficial to students who would, in other settings, be a marginalized minority. They can find ease and comfort in observing their religious and cultural practices, relate to their teachers, find role models in people they see as being like themselves, and learn from the elders around them how to function in and contribute to the broader society.

Credentials: Degrees/Certification and Years at MIA

Michigan Islamic Academy has a highly educated and qualified staff. Eleven percent of our staff hold a PhD, PhD ABD, or MD. Eighteen percent hold a Master's degree with Certification, and 10% hold a Master's degree, while 18% hold a Bachelor's degree with Certification and 41% hold a Bachelor's degree. Five percent hold an Associate's degree. As for the experience, many of our staff have been in the teaching and administration fields for more than a decade, with years *specifically at our institution* being as follows: 18 years and longer, 14%; 12-17 years, 14%; 7-11 years, 16%; 4-6 years, 14%; and, 1-3 years, 41%. In the past few years, we have had a higher-than-usual influx of new staff members due to hiring an increased number of classroom assistants, retirement or reduced hours of older staff, teachers moving into MIA's service area or "transferring" from other area schools, and teachers finishing their degree(s) or re-entering the workforce after having/raising children.

SIP Goals and Objectives

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals and objectives have been generated based on data from state, national, and schoolwide assessments, teacher evaluations, stakeholders' surveys, and general needs assessment results.

It should be noted that although analysis of scores and trends in these scores helps inform decision-making for educational policies, minor differences (whether positive or negative) may not be statistically significant and may, therefore, over time, actually be understood to indicate commonalities between groups/years more than indicating differences between them. Further, it should be recognized that the significance of statistical data analysis for Michigan Islamic Academy is more limited than for larger schools/districts due to the small size of the populations being compared. Regardless of test scores and statistics, MIA will continue to strive for and maintain improvements in all subject areas and grades, fulfilling its mission of providing excellence in education while nurturing Muslim character.

Priority 1: Academic Excellence

Priority 2: Engaging Learning Environment

Priority 3: Stakeholder Engagement

Priority 4: Support for Staff

Priority 5: Expansion to Accommodate Prospective Families