

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

a. Why a new building?

Building a new, dedicated space for Anishinabe Academy helps fulfill a commitment MPS made to its American Indian students and community to offer a high-quality education in a physical space that integrates and reclaims Dakota and Ojibwe culture. A new facility for Anishinabe Academy allows MPS to serve an even larger American Indian community, all in one place.

b. Why for this particular community?

Students have better outcomes when their teachers reflect them, their language and their culture. The physical environment is an important component of a student's educational experience and Anishinabe Academy's current facility has limited our ability to fully realize our mission of providing a culturally responsive education for American Indian students. Minneapolis Public Schools sits and operates on the homeland of our Dakota relatives and as we seek to recognize, honor and celebrate the heritage, cultures and valuable contributions from the original inhabitants of this land, turtle island, this project honors both our Dakota and Anishinabe relatives who are still here.

c. Doesn't the school district have empty buildings that could be used for this program?

As part of the work leading to the recommendation to build a new school on this site, the Facility Advisory Committee first outlined the specifications a new Anishinabe Academy building would require. Staff then reviewed the school district's entire portfolio of 73 buildings and identified three sites that potentially could meet all of the specifications. The former Cooper Elementary school is one site being considered..

d. How is this related to school transformation?

School Transformation is a process that will help MPS determine the programmatic and operational future of the district in a sustainable way. While the vision for a new facility for Anishinabe Academy happened in parallel with school transformation, programmatic and other operational considerations related to school transformation may impact the project. The multiple steps in the Board of Education's approval of this project are intended to ensure that this work is aligned to, and in furtherance of, school transformation.

e. Who is involved in this project?

This project is being led by Minneapolis Public Schools working closely with a steering committee comprised of parents, community members and community organizations.

Current and former Anishinabe Academy families and American Indian families across the district have also been involved.

f. How have you/how will you engage the American Indian community?

Minneapolis Public Schools has sought its American Indian community's input at every step of the process, from conception through implementation. Members of the Anishinabe Academy community have been decision makers within the Facility Committee and in selecting the design and construction teams. Throughout the fall of 2025, we will engage the community by participating in American Indian community events, dedicated listening sessions led by American Indian members, surveys, and school board meetings. Engagement will continue throughout the design and construction process. Please see our upcoming engagement calendar for more information.

g. Will this project be a renovation of the existing building or new construction?

The design team is investigating the opportunities, costs and challenges of renovating the existing structure versus constructing a new building. The recommendation from the Facility Committee was for a new purpose-built school, however the existing building provides some limitations to fully realizing a culturally responsive experience for Anishinabe Academy students.

h. How much will this project cost?

MPS is still in the early stages of this project so the final cost is not yet available. Cost estimates will come from our design and construction consultants based on the approved design and community engagement feedback. A rough estimate will be delivered to the board in January 2026 as part of the Project Charter.

i. How will this project be paid for?

This project will be funded as part of the school district's capital plan, which the Board approves every year. Additional details on the specific funding source and timeline will be available as part of the project's budget approval process.

Why will this project take so long?

Most projects of this nature take about 3 years to complete, depending on a number of different factors. We want to ensure that the community is engaged and informed

throughout the duration of this project, which requires the timeline to allow for that engagement to unfold meaningfully. The end result will be a beautiful facility that honors the cultural traditions and legacy of our American Indian Community, allowing our students to feel affirmed and empowered, and reflects the specific reality of the site and its place in the city.