

Birney K-8 Construction Relocation Plan - Q&A

Building Renovations

Q: What work is being done at Birney?

A: Birney is scheduled to have new windows and doors installed throughout the building. Birney will also have new flooring installed (including in the gym) and new bleachers. They are also getting new lockers installed and walls painted.

Q: Why are the renovations beginning in January?

A: The renovations are scheduled to start in January 2026 because the scope of work does not require a full year of student and staff relocation. Additionally, the lead time for receiving construction materials will not allow us to start before January.

Q: How long will the renovations take?

A: The renovations are estimated to take six months to complete.



Q: Why do we have to move out of the building?

A: We must temporarily move out of the building because construction cannot safely proceed while students and staff are inside. The dust, noise, and activity would disrupt teaching and learning and could create an unsafe environment.

Q: Why do we have to be split between two campuses?

A: Due to Birney K-8's current enrollment, there is no single building large enough to accommodate all students. Therefore, we needed to use two buildings—one for grades K-5 and another for grades 6-8—to ensure adequate space for everyone.

Q: When will the move actually occur?

A: The move will take place during Winter recess (December 22, 2025 - January 5, 2026). Additionally, the staff has already begun packing. Movers will be at Birney K-8 to move instructional materials the last week of school before Christmas break (December 15 - December 17, 2025). During that week, the building will have substitute teachers to help cover the rooms while teachers are setting up their new rooms at their respective campuses.

Q: Is it possible to offer any virtual days to ease the transition?

A: No - The district has explored this as an option. However, state enrollment guidelines prohibit the district from using this as an option during the transition.

Q: What is the exact date students will begin attending both campuses?

A: Classes will resume on January 5, 2026, following the Christmas break.

Q: What is the rationale for moving mid-year instead of waiting until the end of the school year?

A: The renovations are scheduled to start in January 2026 because the scope of work does not require a full year of student and staff relocation. Also, the lead time for receiving construction materials will not allow us to start before January.

Q: Was McIntyre Elementary considered as an option in this decision?

A: McIntyre was considered as an option. However, it was not a suitable space for this transition.

Q: What assurance do we have that construction will finish in time for students to return in September?

A: The construction timeline for this project has been set at six months. If additional time is needed to complete the project, the time will be made up over the summer to ensure that classes will resume at Birney's campus in September 2026.

Q: Why was this not communicated over the summer?

A: Planning for this move has taken a lot of coordination and consideration. The district has been working for months to develop a suitable plan to share with families.

Q: Why has communication felt vague and reactive instead of proactive and clear?

A: Planning for this move has taken a lot of coordination and consideration. The district has been working for months to develop a suitable plan to share with families.

Transportation

Q: Will bus transportation be provided to the new campuses?

A: Yes - The district is working with our transportation partner, First Student, to route all students currently enrolled at Birney K-8 to their respective temporary campuses.

Q: What if my child currently walks to school?

A: All students, including students who currently walk to Birney K-8, will be routed on buses by First Student.

Q: What if my child lives within walking distance of the new campus?

A: If your child lives within walking distance of the new campus, they will still be routed on a bus; however, parents can allow them to walk.

Q: When will we be notified of the bus routes?

A: First Student is currently plotting the bus routes, and as soon as the process is complete, you will be notified by email and via MISTar in a timely manner.

Q: What if I have students enrolled at the elementary and middle school levels?

A: For families with students enrolled in both elementary and middle school levels at Birney K-8, the district is staggering the start times to allow parents sufficient time for drop-off at each campus.

Q: How will parents with students at both schools get them to school on time?

A: The district is staggering the start times at both campuses to allow for travel time.

The K-5 students school day will run from **8:45 AM - 4:00 PM**

The 6-8 students school day will run from **8:30 AM - 3:45 PM**

Q: Can Birney revisit the earliest drop-off time for K–5 students? Can it match the 6–8 drop-off time?

A: The building-level leadership has indicated they are willing to work with parents who may need to drop off their students earlier. If that is your need, please reach out to the building leaders directly.

Q: What accommodations will be made for early drop-off for K–5? Who will supervise students if they arrive early?

A: The building-level leadership has indicated they are willing to work with parents who may need to drop off their students earlier. If that is your need, please reach out to the building leaders directly.

Q: Will middle school students be marked late if buses arrive after the new bell schedule?

A: No. We know that changes in location and start times may affect students' arrival times; therefore, building-level leaders have indicated they will not mark students for the first hour.

Q: How will bus routing work for school of choice students?

A: The district has directed our transportation vendor, First Student, to route all currently enrolled Birney students. For School of Choice students, First Student is identifying a centralized pickup location.

Q: If my child currently arrives by car, will they become eligible for transportation after the move?

A: The district has directed our transportation vendor, First Student, to route all currently enrolled Birney students. For School of Choice students, First Student is identifying a centralized pickup location.

Q: Will transportation have a list to ensure students get on the correct bus?

A: Yes. Transportation and building-level administrators will have a list of all students and their bus routes.

Q: Will there be one bus that drops off middle school students first and elementary students second, leading to longer rides?

A: First Student will pick up the middle school students first and transport them to the elementary school to pick up the elementary school students. From there, all students will be dropped off together at their respective bus stops.

Q: Will IEP students keep the same bus driver, or will that change?

A: First Student is making every effort to maintain current driver assignments. However, due to turnover rates in the transportation industry, this cannot be guaranteed.

Q: Why not reverse the drop-off order so younger students are not left alone when older siblings leave?

A: The district has directed our transportation vendor, First Student, to route all currently enrolled Birney students. For School of Choice students, First Student is identifying a centralized pickup location.

Q: Given the hardship on families with children in multiple grades (e.g., 2nd, 7th, 8th), what support will the district provide to working parents who must adjust schedules?

A: The building-level leadership has indicated they are willing to work with parents who may need to drop their students off earlier. If that is your need, please reach out to the building leaders directly. If families face challenges with afternoon pickups, the buildings will also have options through partnerships with Champions and Field Zone.

Food Service

Q: Will breakfast and lunch still be provided at both campuses?

A: Yes. Food service will be offered exactly the same way it is at Birney K-8 at both campuses. Lunch times will be adjusted based on the new bell schedules.

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Q: Will instruction be affected at any point due to the move?

A: No. The division of instruction is working closely with building leaders to ensure there are no interruptions to the instructional process during this transition.

Q: Will the students still have elective classes?

A: Yes. Students will still have the elective classes scheduled for this school year. The building leadership is working out the staff schedule in accordance with their collective bargaining agreement.

Q: Will special education services be offered at both campuses?

A: Yes. Special education services will be offered to all students with IEPs in accordance with Michigan Compiled Law.

Q: What grade levels will be at each campus?

A: Kindergarten through 5th grade will move to the Vandenberg campus (12 Mile & Southfield Rd.). The 6th through 8th grade levels will move to the Southfield Regional Academic Campus (Evergreen between 8 & 9 Mile Rd.).

Q: Will latchkey/Champions hours and rates remain the same during the transition?

A: Yes. Per our current contract, Champions' hours and rates will remain the same during the transition.

Q: Will class schedules or teachers change for any grade levels?

A: Building-level leaders are adjusting the master schedule as needed to accommodate the classes students have already signed up for. This is in accordance with the teachers' collective bargaining agreement.

Q: Will the Special Needs (ASD) program keep all current accommodations (sensory room, small class sizes, teacher aides)?

A: Yes. By law, the district is required to maintain the support outlined in the student's individual education plan regardless of the campus the student is on.

Q: How will middle school music/band instruction be affected?

A: Building-level leadership is working with the music and band instructors to mitigate any changes to the program(s).

Q: How will dance students change clothes without dedicated changing rooms? Will they have to use restrooms?

A: During this brief six-month period, students will change their clothes in the restrooms. We are working with our custodial services company to ensure those spaces are cleaned regularly so students have a safe, clean place to change.

Q: How will the district ensure students keep the same teachers they have now?

A: The district is making every effort to keep the current teacher assignments the same. However, under provisions of their collective bargaining agreement, teachers can apply for other positions, which could lead to staffing changes.

Q: Will the quality of instruction remain the same across campuses?

A: Yes. Building-level leaders and teachers are committed to providing the same, if not better, quality of instruction, regardless of campus.

Q: Is the registration office offering flexibility for families who want to transfer to another Southfield school that is more convenient?

A: We want all Birney K-8 families to stay with Birney during this transition. The registration office may allow changes based on space. Please contact your building leader with any questions.