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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Alma Farrell Innovation Academy Advances Toward July 2026 Opening**

**MARICOPA, AZ, February 19, 2026**— Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board members received an exclusive look at construction progress at Alma Farrell Innovation Academy, the first MUSD K-8 campus scheduled to open in July 2026.

Governing Board President Patti Coutré, Vice President Carolyn Lopez, and Board Member Shawnté Rothschild toured the campus alongside Superintendent Dr. Tracey Lopeman, joined by representatives of Grace Design Studio, FMG, and Chasse Building Team.

Designed to serve up to 1,200 students, the new campus is funded through School Facilities Division (SFD) funding and voter-approved bond dollars. It reflects how our community continues to meet the needs of a growing student population.

Guided by the vision *Igniting Minds. Building Futures.*, Alma Farrell Innovation Academy will implement the ASU Next Education Workforce teams model, centered on team teaching and multi-grade level classrooms. The school will also embed a work-based learning pathway beginning in kindergarten and expanding through eighth grade, connecting academics to real-world experiences.

Key features of the new campus include:

- Dedicated literacy areas for independent reading and focused small-group instruction
- Flexible, reimagined classroom spaces designed for multi-age Learning Houses and team teaching
- Maker spaces that encourage creativity and hands-on problem-solving
- Learning stairs and expanded communal areas that promote collaborative learning
- An indoor-outdoor amphitheatre for performances and showcases
- A modern cafeteria designed as both a dining and collaborative space
- Single-use restroom rooms with floor-to-ceiling doors, grouped in an open-cove layout for clear visibility and supervision

The school will also partner with local industry leaders to provide mentorships, simulations, and real-world learning experiences that connect classroom instruction to future career pathways.

*“It’s exciting to see this campus coming to life,”* said Governing Board President Patti Coutré. *“Our community entrusted us with bond funding, and those dollars are being put to work in ways that will directly benefit students. I can’t wait to see kids in the literacy spaces next year.”*

Alma Farrell Innovation Academy will open in July 2026. For more information, visit [afia.musd20.org](http://afia.musd20.org).

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