



# All Aboard-RAILS Review

## From the Desk of the Superintendent

It is hard to believe that the new school year is just around the corner! We have been very busy over the summer preparing, and there are many exciting things happening that will provide more opportunities for our students.

As is true each and every summer, our maintenance and custodial crews have worked at a fever pitch to accomplish the routine summer work of cleaning the entire complex and moving classrooms. On top of that, this summer they renovated, painted and relocated the district office to our new stand-alone offices at 809 7th Street West. The high school has seen a facelift with most halls painted, again by our crew. Also, as part of the high school's new look, new tile floors replace the worn, unsafe carpet. I cannot say enough about the dedication of our custodial and maintenance crews to get our schools cleaned, shined, painted and repaired, ready to greet our students and staff!

As I mentioned, the District Office has relocated to the former Streif home at 809 7th Street West. Our constituents approved the purchase of the home in September, 2013. The former District Office, which was located on the south end of the middle school building, will accommodate two special education teachers, the intervention specialist, Title 1, and the intermediate/middle school teacher's workroom,

freeing-up classrooms and providing much-needed instructional space in the school.

This need for more space not only brought about the District Office move, it is the reason the school board decided to hold a referendum in November. On August 4, they adopted official resolutions, calling for a referendum to build a new elementary school on our KB property and to take care of much needed safety and health concerns on our current campus—in an amount not to exceed \$23,000,000. Our Demographic Trends and Facilities Planning Committee began working on a plan to address space and safety concerns in June 2013. One of their tasks was to survey the community, as a way to recognize taxpayer priorities and to then establish a plan to address the needs and shape the future of education in our district. We heard you, loud and clear, when you answered that the projected costs were just too much. We went back to the drawing board several times, and have brought down the referendum costs considerably! The board has committed \$400,000 per year from the general fund for a five-year period to off-set referendum debt. This is just one of the ways that we were able to decrease referendum costs, and the impact on our taxpayers. The final tax impact figure will not be locked-in until the bonds are purchased after the

referendum, but we are working with R.W. Baird and Associates to lock-in a favorable amount. More information about the referendum and the tax impact will be forthcoming, and we will set dates for informational meetings in the very near future.

You may have heard the great news that we received a STEM Grant—"Making a Makerspace" from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in the amount of \$19,222! This money will be used to create a makerspace. Our space, which will be located in the middle school library media center, will provide a wide variety of STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) activities for students in the intermediate and middle schools. Grant funds will also provide for teacher training. One component of the grant will be robotics. We will be able to offer a First Lego Robotics League comprised of three teams of students in grades 4-8. This is one way we will provide innovative learning experiences for our students to improve their problem-solving and critical thinking skills, while introducing them to areas of study and careers in the STEM fields! See page 7 for more about our grant.

We welcome new staff members to the district and ask them to join us as we begin a new year of dedicated service to our students, parents and community members of Altoona. We look forward to working with all our stakeholders to provide our students with the educational, social and emotional foundation to become contributing members of our society!



Dr. Connie Biedron,  
Superintendent

Proud to be a Railroader!



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## Back to School Information 2014

### Registration for New Students

Students who are *new to the Altoona school district* will register on Monday, **August 18, 9 AM to noon** in the Commons Addition, 1827 Bartlett Avenue. Required documents include birth certificate and proof of residency. Even if you have already completed and turned in your enrollment paperwork, you may want to attend. Tours will be given and representatives from support services (food and transportation) will be available.

If you cannot attend, please contact your school office when it reopens on August 14. See Contact information on the right.

### School Calendar 2014/15

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| School Offices Reopen          | Aug 14 |
| Teachers Return                | Aug 26 |
| Ice Cream Social               | Aug 27 |
| Elementary Orientation         | Sept 2 |
| Intermediate Orientation       | Sept 2 |
| Middle School Orientation      | Sept 2 |
| Gr 9 Orientation (Full-Day)    | Sept 2 |
| First Regular Student Day, K-8 | Sept 3 |
| First Student Day, 10-12       | Sept 3 |
| End of Quarter 1               | Oct 31 |
| End of Trimester 1             | Nov 25 |
| End of Semester 1              | Jan 23 |
| End of Trimester 2             | Mar 6  |
| End of Quarter 3               | Mar 27 |
| Last Day of School             | June 5 |
| Make-up Day                    | June 8 |

#### No School for Students:

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Inservice Days       | Oct 2-3      |
| Parent-Tchr Conf     | Oct 24       |
| Thanksgiving Break   | Nov 26-28    |
| Winter Holiday Break | Dec 24-Jan 2 |
| Parent-Tchr Conf     | Feb 27       |
| Spring Break         | Mar 30-Apr 3 |
| Memorial Day         | May 25       |

#### Early Release Days:

Jan 26, Mar 16, Apr 27, June 5

### Regular School Schedule & Contact Information

Pedersen Elementary School (K-3) - 715-839-6050

Regular School Day:

8:20 AM to 3:30 PM

Arrival time for walkers—no earlier than —8:10 AM  
(7:50 AM if participating in breakfast program)

Altoona Intermediate School (4-5) - 715-839-6030

Regular School Day:

8:20 AM to 3:30 PM

Arrival time for walkers—no earlier than —8:00 AM  
(7:50 AM if participating in breakfast program)

Altoona Middle School (6-8) - 715-839-6030

Regular School Day:

7:45 AM to 3:00 PM

Arrival time for walkers—no earlier than —7:15 AM

## Welcome Back!



Altoona High School (9-12) - 715-839-6031

Regular School Day:

7:45 AM to 3:00 PM

Arrival time—no earlier than 7:30 AM

Student Transit- 715-839-5116

### Welcome Back to School Day and First Student Day

#### Grades K-9:

Students in grades kindergarten through eight and their parents will attend “Welcome Back to School Day” on September 2. Parents and students should plan to spend 30 to 60 minutes at school at a convenient time between 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM or 3:30 to 6:00 PM. More information will be coming from your schools. This is a required day.

Freshmen students (grade 9) will attend a full-day orientation also on September 2. Bus transportation will be available for ninth grade students on September 2.

The Regular Schedule shown at the top of this page will be followed beginning September 3. Busing for K-8 and 10-12 students will also begin on September 3.

#### Grades 10-12:

The first day of school for high school students in grades 10-12 is Wednesday, September 3.

### Fees & Food 2014/15

*School Fees:* Grade: K-3 4-8 9-12  
Cost: \$5 \$12 \$20\* \*includes class dues

*Meal Prices:* All regular price student and adult lunch meals were increased by 10¢.

Detailed information along with the National School Lunch eligibility forms for free or reduced price meals will be mailed to families in mid-August. Please call 715-839-6056 if you do not receive the mailing. The application form is also available on the website for download.

School breakfast and lunch will be available as of the first regular day of school. Payments can be made beginning August 18 or online anytime (go to E-Funds on Parent Tab at: [www.altoona.k12.wi.us](http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us)).

School Supply lists are available on the website: [www.altoona.k12.wi.us](http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us) or call your school office

when it reopens on August 14



1st Day of Busing for Grade 9 students is Tuesday, September 2.

1st Day of Busing for all other grades (K-8, 10-12) is Wednesday, September 3.

For more information about the schedules, see page 2.

## Back to School Information 2014

### Bus Information

Bus information including bus stop, route number, and times will be mailed to families eligible for transportation by mid-August. If you have any questions/concerns, address changes, or daycare needs, please call the Student Transit office at 715-839-5116.

As a reminder, students are expected to ride the bus assigned to their area. In the event of a temporary bus stop change, a note from the parent is needed to get on or off the bus at a location other than a student's usual stop. The written parental permission should be turned in to the school office in the morning before the first bell. Office staff will verify and issue a bus pass, which can be picked up before dismissal.

Please have your bus students at their bus stop at least five minutes early and wait a safe distance from the roadway. Remember to approach the bus only after it has fully stopped and the driver has given the signal to board. The drivers will remind students about safe school bus, and bus stop practices.

For more bus safety information please visit the Student Transit website:

[http://www.student-transit.com/bus\\_safety\\_tips.htm](http://www.student-transit.com/bus_safety_tips.htm).

### Absentee/Activity Hotline

**Call: 715-839-6095**

For Altoona High School - Enter a 1  
and follow the prompts

For Altoona Intermediate or Middle Schools - Enter a 2  
and follow the prompts

For Pedersen Elementary School -  
Enter a 3  
and follow the prompts



### Student Absence Procedures

As per Wisc. Statutes 118.15(3)(b), parents or guardians are required to provide a written explanation of absences at the time the student returns to school, or in the case of anticipated absences, prior to the absence.

This is in addition to reporting the absence on the Absentee Hotline 715-839-6095.

Thank you for your cooperation.

### Parental Rights – Did you Know?

**Parental Rights—Pupil Records** School districts must give full rights with regard to pupil records to either parent, unless there is a court order or other legally binding document relating to divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes these rights. A parent may release records to a stepparent, but the stepparent has no independent right to the record *unless the stepparent is a legal guardian*.

**Special Education Records** When a special education student turns 18, all special education invitations and results are sent to the student unless the student gives written permission for release of information to the parent.

**Consolidated Elementary & Secondary Education Act** The public is invited to review the Consolidated Elementary and Secondary Education Act application and provide input. Call Alan McCutcheon, 715-839-6224.

**Student Immunizations** By state law, students must provide dates of immunizations upon admission to school. Call the Health Department at 715-839-2876, for more information about immunizations or contact your school office when it reopens on August 14.

## Child Development Day: Annual Early Childhood Screening

The school district will sponsor “Child Development Day” on **October 9, 2014 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM in the middle school upper gym** (1903 Bartlett Ave). This cooperative screening model is designed to meet three goals: (1) to educate families concerning normal child growth and development; (2) to develop community awareness of resources available in the areas of education, child care, medical/health and family support services; (3) to identify young children who are in need of further assessment in the areas of physical, sensory, or developmental (personal/social, adap-



**Child Development Day  
October 9—8 AM to 5 PM**

**Especially designed for our  
2 1/2 to 3 1/2 year old  
population!**

tive, gross and fine motor, communication, cognition).

This screening and information day is designed for children who will be 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 years old by September 1, 2014 and live in the Altoona school district. If you did not have a school-age child enrolled in the Altoona school district during the past school year, or if you have recently moved into the district, please call 715-839-6033 to verify that your child(ren) is/are listed on our school census. Call 715-832-5543 to schedule your appointment for

screening.

## Parent Involvement—Teacher Qualifications

### Parent Involvement

The School District of Altoona defines parent involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities.

Board policy IGBC outlines parent involvement and participation. The policy is available online at: <http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/district/policyigbc.cfm>.

### Teacher Qualifications

Federal law requires that we share with you the qualifications of teachers our school district. There are questions you may ask, including: Is my child's teacher licensed to

teach the grades or subjects assigned? Has the state waived any requirements for my child's teacher? What was the college major of my child's teacher? What degrees does my child's teacher hold? Are there instructional aides working with my child? If so, what are their qualifications?

All teachers in Wisconsin schools have at least a bachelor's degree. In our district, teachers are fully licensed for their assignment, and 75% have a Master's Degree. If you want to see the state qualification for your child's teacher you may ask us or find it on the DPI website at <http://tepd.dpi.wi.gov/licensing/license-lookup-introduction>. Contact your school principal, with other questions pertaining to teacher qualifications.

## Annual Notice Concerning Pupil Records

As per Wisconsin Statute 118.125, the School District of Altoona maintains pupil records for all students enrolled in the district's schools. State and federal laws require that the maintenance of such records assure their confidentiality. Accordingly, only school personnel, parents or guardians, or adult pupils, and courts are granted access to records unless parents or adult pupils grant permission. Adult students, or the parent or guardian of a minor pupil, may inspect records kept by the school. Additionally, they may challenge the content if they believe it to be inaccurate or misleading.

The school may disclose personally identifiable information (grade reports, test scores, etc.) from the pupil records of an adult student to parents/guardians without the written consent of the adult student, if the adult student is a dependent of his/her parent or guardian unless the adult student has informed the school, in writing, that the information may not be disclosed.

**Directory Data:** State law allows for the release of “directory data” to parties outside the school unless parents or an adult student request exception to its release in all or in part. **Unless so notified in writing to the building principal by September 22, 2014, the following directory data will be released upon request to authorized parties:**

Students (PK-6): pupil's name, date and place of birth, address, telephone number, student's photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, dates of attendance, awards received, and the name of the school most recently attended.

Secondary students (7-12): pupil's name, date and place of birth, address, telephone number, student's photograph, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, photographs, degrees and awards received, and the name of the school most recently attended.

Unless a written exception is received, student directories, including the student's name and telephone number will be available.

Parents and adult students have the following rights concerning student records in accordance with Altoona school district policies:

1. The right to inspect, review and obtain copies of student records upon request to the building principal. This request must be made in writing to the appropriate building principal. All information must be provided within two weeks of the request.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's school records if they believe the records are inaccurate or misleading. This request must be made in writing directly to the appropriate building principal.
3. The right to consent to the disclosure of the student's school records except to the extent state and federal law authorizes disclosure without consent, which includes the transfer of student school records to another school district.

4. The right to deny the release of student directory data (as noted under Pupil Records, on the left).

5. The right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education.

### Records Maintenance & Destruction

While students are attending school, their records will be maintained in the school of attendance. Upon transfer of the student to another school operated by the district, the records shall be transferred to that school. When a student ceases to be enrolled, records shall be maintained as follows:

- All **behavioral records** will be destroyed one year after the date the student graduated from or last attended the school unless the adult student (or parent if the student is a minor) gives permission for the records to be maintained for a longer period. Where such written permission is received, behavioral records will be destroyed ten years after the date the student graduated from or last attended the

school or as per the Wisconsin Records Retention Schedule. Permission forms for the retention of behavioral records are available in the school guidance office. **“Behavioral Records”** include, but are not necessarily limited to: standardized achievement tests, personality evaluations, evaluations of educational needs, health care records other than a student's immunization records, teacher evaluations other than grades (e.g. progress reports), and statements related to the student's behavior.

• **Progress records** will be maintained in the school office 50 years after the date the student graduated or last attended the school or as per the Wisconsin Records Retention Schedule. **“Progress Records”** include, but are not limited to: a statement of courses taken by the student, grades received in these courses, attendance records, immunization records and records of the student's extracurricular activities.

Call Joyce Orth at 839-6032 for information about policies pertaining to pupil records.



## Tobacco Free Schools

The Wisconsin Legislature enacted Senate Bill 142 requiring local school boards to prohibit the use of all tobacco products on premises owned or rented by, or under the control of, a school board. In response to the legislative mandate the Altoona Board of Education maintains the following policy: *The use of tobacco shall be prohibited at all times on school premises. "School premises" include all property owned by, rented by or under the control of the School District of Altoona. The administrative staff shall inform students, staff, and the general public about this policy and shall establish*



*enforcement.*

This policy prohibits the use of tobacco products on school premises by all persons. For example, citizens attending athletic events are requested to refrain from using tobacco products while on school property. The superintendent and principals are charged with the responsibility to encourage/ ensure compliance with school board policies.

Thank you for your cooperation

## Asbestos

In accordance with the requirements of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986, enacted by congress, the School District of Altoona maintains an asbestos management plan for our facilities. A copy of the asbestos management plan is available for your inspection in the district office during regular office hours.

Any questions should be directed to Greg Johnson, Maintenance Team Supervisor, 1903 Bartlett Avenue, Altoona, WI 54720.

## Animals on School Property

No live animals may be brought into school district buildings, transported on school buses, or permitted on school grounds except as outlined below:

Animals may be brought into the classroom for educational purposes. However, they must be appropriately housed, humanely cared for, and properly handled. Persons bringing animals into the school should receive prior permission from the supervising teacher.

1. Teachers are to check with the school principal regarding any known allergies existing among students in the classroom prior to granting permission. If allergies exist, parents must be contacted for further direction.
2. Teachers must assume primary responsibility for the humane and proper treatment of any animal in the classroom.

3. Teachers must be aware of state laws regulating sale, distribution, and handling of animals.
4. Only the teacher, or students designated by the teacher, are to handle the animals.
5. If animals are to be kept in the classroom on days when classes are not in session, the teacher must make arrangements for their care and safety.
6. Teachers with questions regarding proper care, feeding and handling of animals should contact the science resource teacher or science department head.
7. Animals are not to be transported on school buses.
8. All experiments using live animals must have prior approval of the building administrator.
9. If a staff member or student has been bitten by an animal where skin has

been pierced, the incident must be reported immediately to the school office by the supervising adult. Principals are to assume responsibility to notify public health authorities and to impound for observation.

Public health authorities will determine the appropriate term of confinement of the animal and method of observation.

Other exemptions include:

1. Animals trained to assist persons who are physically impaired shall have unlimited access to district property when being used for that purpose.
2. Animals under the control of public safety officials shall have unlimited access to district property for exercise, educational, and public relations purposes. Proper notification

of such visits shall be left to the discretion of the controller of such animals. Use of these animals by law enforcement officials is under the jurisdiction of state and federal law and is not covered by this policy.

The presence of animals in school buildings or on school property shall also be subject to local laws and ordinances pertaining to animal control. Such laws and ordinances may vary depending on the location of the building/property.

Violation of this policy will result in parent contact and removal of the animal from school property. Refusal to cooperate will lead to disciplinary action. If an adult violates the policy as set forth above, the appropriate law enforcement agency will be contacted and action taken.

Welcome

Join us in welcoming our Newest Staff Members!

<http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/staff/newstaff2014.cfm>

## About our STEM Grant “Making a Makerspace”

### Statement of Need

Wisconsin faces the challenge of developing an economy that is more knowledge based than is presently the case. Encouraging a significantly higher number of students to consider careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) could be an important step in remedying this situation. Equally important, given STEM-related advances and the influence of those advances on the economy, there is a great need for all Wisconsin students to have a solid foundation in these areas of study. Finally and perhaps most critically, there are troublesome participation gaps in STEM that have the potential to widen the achievement gap if they are not successfully addressed.

STEM education and courses, are an innovative approach to actively engaging, motivating and inspiring learners of all ages. STEM courses actively integrate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and raise the achievement of all students so they are college and career ready and can successfully pursue a career pathway. Quality STEM education depends upon community and industry partnerships and helps close the achievement and technical skills gap between economically disadvantaged students, students of color, and their peers. STEM education inspires learning which benefits the common good, resulting not only in individual gains in STEM skills, but also in stronger communities as a result of students applying their skills to solve relevant community issues.

“If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.”

John Dewey

### Our Grant—Making a Makerspace

“Making a Makerspace” will address the primary needs we identified: to motivate and develop the self confidence in STEM skills of female and economically disadvantaged 4-5 grade students, add STEM projects to the project based curriculum, and expand horizons of both targeted groups so they consider STEM high school and post secondary courses and career options. The goal of the Altoona project based intermediate school STEM grant is to create an innovative, evidence based program and activities in order to encourage groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields to complete more related projects and courses in intermediate, middle and high school, increase college- and career-readiness and close the STEM achievement gap of these groups. To accomplish this goal, the District will use grant funds to create a makerspace including a mini fabrication lab for our 4-5 grade project based intermediate school students, and train teachers to design STEM based projects and to use the equipment.

The project also hinges on several partnerships including Xcel Energy, Ayres and Associates, and the City of Altoona. Additional partnerships will be sought to allow for future expansion of the project.

### Making a Makerspace - Related Strategic Goals and Objectives

#### Strategic Goal 1: Address the learning needs of the whole student

- ◆ Objective 1: Address the emotional well-being of each student
- ◆ Objective 2: Graduate students who are college- and career- ready to compete in the global marketplace

#### Strategic Goal 2: Recognize & embrace the pivotal role of technology within our classrooms providing for 21st Century learning

- ◆ Objective 1: Use integrated technology to develop opportunities for staff and students

#### Strategic Goal 4: Practice good stewardship of resources

#### Strategic Goal 5: Build trusting relationships & partnerships with the community

### What is a Makerspace?



To describe them simply, makerspaces are centers with tools. Makerspaces combine manufacturing equipment, community, and education for the purposes of enabling users to design, prototype and create manufactured works that wouldn’t be possible to create with the resources available to individuals working alone. These spaces can take the form of loosely-organized individuals sharing space and tools, for-profit companies, non-profit corporations, organizations affiliated with or hosted within schools, universities or libraries, and more. All are united in the purpose of providing access to equipment, community and education, and all are unique in exactly how they are arranged to fit the purposes of the community they serve.

The beauty of the makerspace is its’ ability to not only inspire students, but to accelerate their knowledge intake through exciting and imaginative curricular application.



School District of Altoona

Phone: 715-839-6032

Fax: 715-839-6066

E-mail: jorth@altoona.k12.wi.us

# Back to School Ice Cream Social

We're Social! Join our network:  
[altoona.k12.wi.us](http://altoona.k12.wi.us)  
[facebook.com/altoonaschooldistrict](https://facebook.com/altoonaschooldistrict)  
[pinterest.com/altoonaschools](https://pinterest.com/altoonaschools)  
[twitter.com/AltoonaSup](https://twitter.com/AltoonaSup)  
[twitter.com/AltoonaSD](https://twitter.com/AltoonaSD)  
[youtube.com/user/AltoonaSchools](https://youtube.com/user/AltoonaSchools)

Let "life-long learning;" the "emotional well-being of our students;" and "large school opportunities with a small school approach" define us.



Wednesday, August 27  
5:30—7:00 PM

10th Street Park  
Altoona

Rain site:  
Hobbs Sports Center  
2300 Spooner Ave

EGRWSS  
POSTAL CUSTOMER

*Proud to be a Railroader!*

Non-Profit Organization  
US Postage  
PAID  
Eau Claire WI  
Permit No. 1557

School District of Altoona  
809 7th Street West  
Altoona WI 54720