



All Aboard-RAILS Review

We asked . You answered . We listened .

Survey Responses: 841

Thank you for your feedback!

See page 2 for information about where to find survey results.

We asked. In September we sent you a School Perceptions survey to ask what you would support to provide much-needed space for our students. We shared four options that were developed by our facilities committee (Demographic Trends & Facilities Planning Committee) with the help of ADG Architects. **You Answered.** We received valuable information from you, with two main take-away's: "All the options are too expensive," and "We know we have to do something!."

We Listened. In response, the facilities committee went back to the drawing board and asked ADG Architects to do the same. They came up with two solutions that are more reasonable. After considering all the factors, the committee recommended a proposal based on Option 1 (keeping our schools on our current campus), as the solution that best meets our immediate needs. The school board will make a decision on what the next steps will be in the upcoming months.

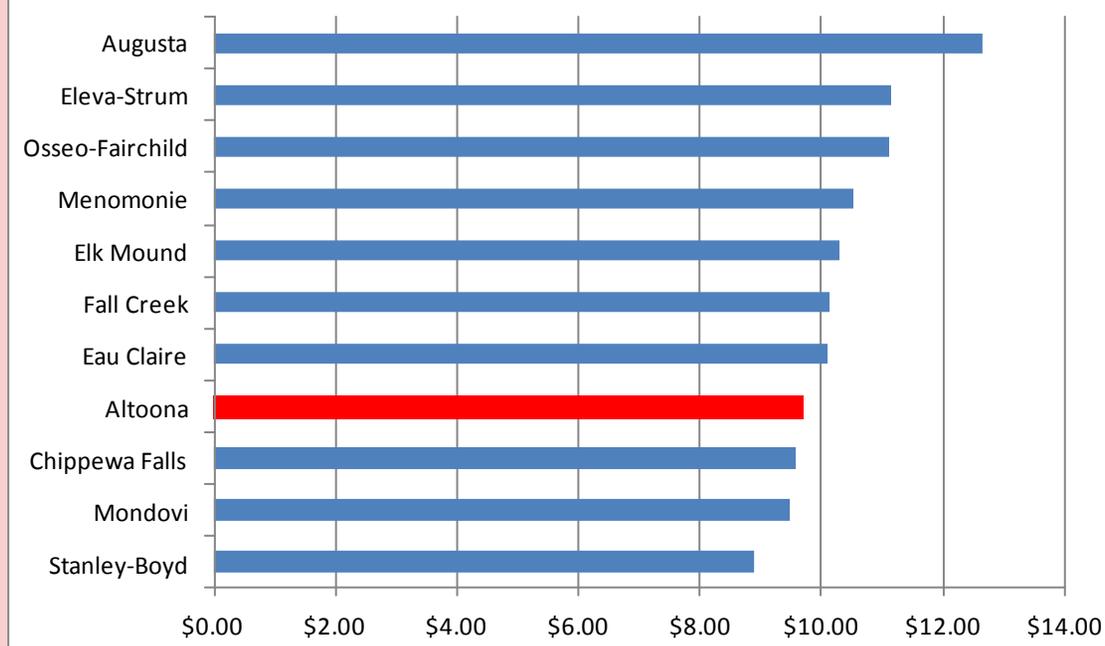
We are aware that any building project will mean an increase in the tax impact on all district homeowners. This is an unfortunate result of our present school funding formula in the state. However, we are proud of the fact that we have been able to keep our tax mill rate among the lowest in the area, and in the lower-half of all school districts statewide. We are mindful of the burden our tax levy can put on homeowners; however, we must provide for our growing student population.

This is an exciting time in our community. There are developments throughout the area that will bring growth to our community. We must be good stewards of our resources to provide the best educational opportunities to our students, while respecting the financial constraints of our constituents - *and this is our goal.*



Dr. Connie Biedron, Superintendent

2012/13 Tax Rates for Area Districts



Tax Rates in \$ and ¢

Augusta School District = \$12.66 (Highest of these districts)

State Average = \$10.19

Altoona School District = \$9.67

Stanley-Boyd School District = \$8.88 (Lowest of these districts)

Mill Rate Facts

It's that time of year, the holidays are over and many of you have already paid your property taxes. So let's review.

Your total tax bill is made up of levies from several different taxing jurisdictions including, but not limited to, state, county, city or township, school district, and CVTC. The 2013/2014 mill/tax rate for Altoona Schools (one line on your tax bill) is \$9.77 per \$1,000 of value on your home. That means on a home valued at \$100,000 the school portion of your tax bill would be approximately \$977. A home valued at \$200,000 would see the school tax rate at approximately \$1,954.

There are 424 school districts in the state, of which 169 districts have a 2012/2013 tax rate lower than Altoona, ranging from \$1.75 - \$9.62. That means, well over half or, 251 school districts have a 2012/13 tax rate higher than Altoona, ranging from \$9.68 to \$64.51 per \$1,000. Three other districts in the state had the same tax rate as Altoona at \$9.67.

2012/2013 is the most current data available for comparisons.

Years of Change!

Examples of district, state and global changes that have altered the landscape of education:

- Collective bargaining (Act 10)
- New superintendent
- Two new principals
- Grade 4-5 Intermediate School
- Common Core Standards
- New math and reading requirements
- New technology for staff and students
- Increased reporting, analyzing and using student data
- Increased focus on 21st Century Learning (problem-solving, creative thinking, project based learning, global thinking and interaction)
- Growing student population
- Aging facilities
- Increased student needs due to student disability and economic concerns

In the face of these changes, a number of community members have come forward with potential solutions - serving on our Strategic Planning Committee and most recently, our Demographic Trends & Facilities Planning Committee.

The school board and administration work together to make sure their work aligns with our Strategic Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives!

Thank You!

Demographic Trends & Facilities Planning Committee:

Robin Elvig, Chair
Dave Rowe

Matthew Biren
Frank Borg
Kelley Gaynier
Ann Kaiser
Susan Sivertson
Todd Trapani
Bob Wilcox
Jeannie York
Jan Zander

Survey Results:
<http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/district/planning.cfm>

School Board Roles & Responsibilities

Along with many aspects of our society, changes have occurred over the years in the duties and responsibilities of school board members. A member of a school board in the state of Wisconsin takes-on a responsibility of time and commitment, as well as a passion for student learning and public education. The Wisconsin Association of School Boards states, “In essence, the school board determines what needs to happen in a school district and the superintendent and staff determine how to make it happen.”

The Altoona school board and experienced school board members across the state find that the following qualities are essential to being an effective school board member:

- A commitment to the belief that all children in the school district are entitled to have a beneficial educational program.
- An open mind and a willingness to continually learn.
- A willingness to invest the hours that will be necessary to faithfully discharge their duties.
- Freedom from conflict with any special interests. School board members are expected to be advocates for the school district.
- A willingness and ability to attend seminars and workshops in order to remain current in the latest research and laws related to education, enabling them to make intelligent decisions in their own school district.
- A vision and an ability to understand and embrace changes in our society.
- The ability to interact in a respectful manner with other school board members to advance the best interests of the school district.
- The capability to articulate the philosophy and goals of the school and to listen carefully to the criticisms offered by people with differing views.

Education, experience, dedication and continuous effort are vital to the effectiveness of each school board member. Educational leadership develops through years of school board service and through attendance at continuing-educational programs. The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) created a Board Recognition Program to encourage school board members to participate and strengthen their skills as the local educational leaders.

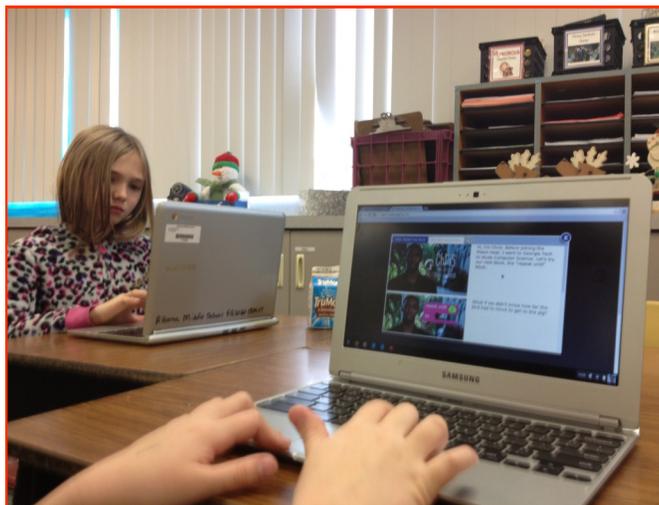
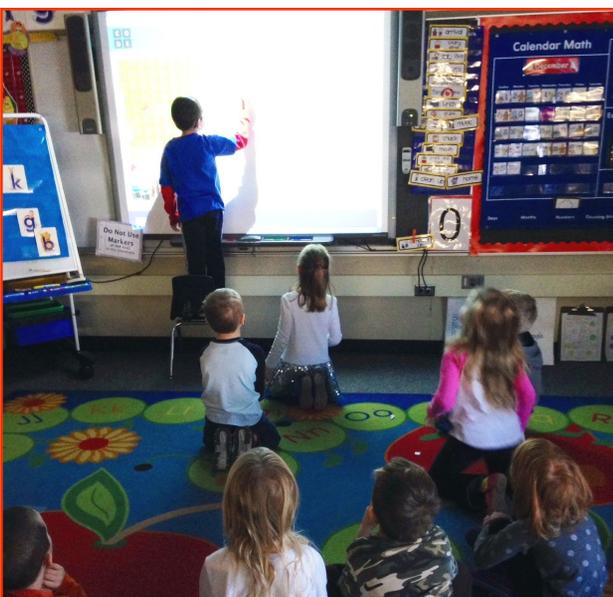
Board members are awarded points for participating in WASB and NSBA educational programs. Each program awards 1 to 30 points, depending on the length of the program. Awards are given for Levels 1 through 5. Altoona school board members are active participants and embrace this continuous learning in order to better serve our students.

Meet Your School Board

Member:	Position:	Years of Service:	WASB Recognition :	Contact Information:
Helen Drawbert	President	12	Level 5 (> 675 points)	715-828-0088
Robin Elvig	Vice President	6	Level 4 (> 450 points)	715-828-8069
Mike Hilger	Clerk	3	Level 2 (> 150 points)	715-832-8823
Dave Rowe	Member	1		715-832-0210
Brad Poquette	Treasurer	.5		715-835-3338

Altoona School Board members have a long-tradition of involvement in the WASB Board Recognition Program! Our most recently retired board members, Ed Bohn and Red Hanks, both attained a WASB Recognition Level of 5! Ed served on the school board for 20 years, and Red for 18 years.

The Hour of Code



Student Voices

“I couldn’t stop coding, so I did it at home too!” Sarah

“I love doing this. I would like to be a video game creator some day.” Peyton

“I passed all the Angry Bird levels! I am on the next set of codes. I hope I get all the awards for it.” Aidan

Computer Science Education Week

What is coding and why did our school district participate in the “Hour of Code” during Computer Science Week, December 9-15? Coding is the language of computer science and our students from kindergarten through 12th grade got involved to find out what coding is and experience what it can do!

Computer science is a foundational science for the digital age. It develops students’ computational and critical thinking skills and shows them how to create new technologies. This knowledge is fundamental in preparing students for the 21st century - no matter their occupation.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts there will be more than 150,000 computing job openings, annually, which makes it one of the fastest growing occupations in the United States. They predict that by the year 2020, the U.S. will have one million more jobs in computing than they have trained professionals to fill them. These jobs pay more than the national median annual salary. Additionally, these jobs are in a wide variety of services.

We are looking at how we can continue to provide this instruction district-wide in the future. Our high school currently offers classes in computer science, however, we will evaluate the possibility of bringing coding instruction to students across the district.

President Obama recently stated, “Learning these skills aren’t just important to students’ future, it’s important for our country’s future.”



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

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The Hour of Code



Do you want the answer to "what's for lunch" at your fingertips? "What's for lunch?" can be delivered to your twitter feed at 5:30 the night before. Follow: <https://twitter.com/AltoonaSD>

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Happy New Year!

School District of Altoona
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