



# All Aboard-RAILS Review

## On Track for the Future

### Building Projects Update

Construction season is underway and Market and Johnson is making progress on our current projects, which include renovations to the high school and construction of our new elementary school just two miles east of our current campus at 157 Bartlett Avenue.

Students, staff and community members are eagerly watching the progress and looking forward to the new educational and recreational opportunities that will be a reality! We thank our Altoona community for making "On Track for the Future" possible with the passing of our recent referendum.

### Altoona Elementary School

The official groundbreaking ceremony was held at the new elementary school site on June 2. To get the project off to a great start, four elementary students were selected to be a part of the "shovels on the ground" ceremony! The students were accompanied by their teachers, school officials, city officials, and special guests.

Back at Pedersen Elementary and throughout the district and community, students, staff and community members watched and celebrated the historic event by live-stream. The event video is archived on the Rails TV site and can be accessed from the Rails TV Archive link located on the right sidebar at: <http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/railstv.cfm>

On June 16, with permit in hand, the site clearing process began and crews have continued to clear and grade the land to prepare for the foundation. We encourage you to drive by the site to see the progress! The foundation for the gymnasium is scheduled to be poured the week of July 20. We have posted the first of many aerial views of the progress on our website, just follow this link:

[http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/building\\_projects.cfm](http://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/building_projects.cfm)

The aerial view photos were taken by the Market & Johnson drone! We will have regular drone updates, so please like us on Facebook or keep checking the website so you can view our progress from above!



Student "Groundbreakers" with their Teachers & Principal



Dr. Connie Biedron with former superintendents: Greg Fahrman, on left and Bob Bredesen, on right



Altoona Elementary School, which will house our K-3 student population, is slated for occupancy at the start of the 2016/17 school year.

### Altoona High School Project

The remodeling at the high school is in full-speed-ahead mode with a completion date set for the first week in August. The entrance to the high school is receiving a security upgrade including new doors and safety glass to create a safe vestibule entrance. The office area is being re-configured to allow for more efficient use of space and functionality to include a new conference room.

The biggest change is the removal of the lockers which have been relocated throughout the high school in various hallways. The new big open space will be a usable area for students, parents and community members. There will be tables and a variety of chairs for flexible seating and grouping of students and guests for small and large group learning or viewing of athletic events and concerts on the new big screen TV!

Along with a fresh coat of paint and an expanded concession stand we hope this space will provide many opportunities for our students, staff and community members to meet and learn and grow together!

Roof repair and replacement will be done in conjunction with the onsite building projects in the summer of 2016.

*Top Photo:* New look at main entryway

*Middle Photo:* New "lobby" seating area (former locker area)

*Bottom Photo:* New "lobby" area will include large new window and planter

### Looking Ahead: Altoona Intermediate and Middle School Project

Planning has begun for the remodeling of the intermediate and middle schools in the summer of 2016. The present intermediate school hallway and front of the middle school will be removed. This is the oldest part of the complex and is quickly deteriorating making attempts at repair and restoration too costly to be a fiscally sound alternative. Removing this section of the building will allow for off-street bus and parent drop-offs and pick-ups along with much needed parking. This will also allow for a small addition that will contain a new, secure vestibule entrance to the building along with new school and district offices. The majority of the work on the middle school will involve the redesigning of the HVAC systems, asbestos removal, new roofs for the middle and high school, new flooring in the middle school and some reconfiguring of spaces with fresh paint and general repairs. There is a lot of work to be accomplished over next summer so careful planning and scheduling will need to be in place.

Due to this work our school calendar for the upcoming 2015/16 school year has been modified, through receipt of a waiver from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Our school year will begin on August 19 and end on May 25, 2016 to make the most of the construction season in summer 2016.

We look forward to sharing intermediate and middle school progress photos with you then!

### Altoona High School Project Photos



Financial Picture

# General aid for schools

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has released the following estimates for 2015-16 general school aid:



School district	2015-16 general aid estimate	Difference from 2014-15	Percent change
Chippewa Falls	\$27.9 million	-\$335,100	-1.19%
Eau Claire	\$56.4 million	-\$269,300	-0.48%
Altoona	\$9.99 million	+\$14,300	+0.14%
Menomonie	\$19.2 million	+\$448,400	+2.39%

Staff graphic

Leader-Telegram Staff Graphic used with permission.

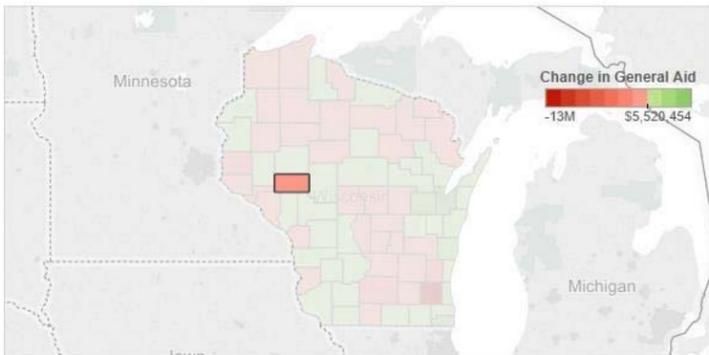
The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) released state aid estimates for 2015/16 general school aid on July 1.

Required by law to give districts estimates of their state aids, the DPI based their figures on K-12 funding proposals making their way through Joint Finance and awaiting approval from the legislature and the Governor. "Aid estimates have been made in prior years when the state budget wasn't finalized by June 30. But budget proposals that would take public school funding to boost private school vouchers and charter schools adds more uncertainty to how the final figures will come out in three months. There's really no way to project that right now," said John Johnson, DPI communications director.

Even with the uncertainty of how the final figures will come out, we are pleased that the projections for the Altoona school district show an increase of \$14,300. While we were hoping to regain some of the aid that was lost in 2014/15, staying level under this projection is encouraging as we work toward finalizing our budget.

## Change in General Aid for School Districts 2014-15 to 2015-16

This map shows the change in General Aid to school districts by county. Click on a county to show the change in General Aid for individual school districts in that county.



### Eau Claire County, Change in General School Aid for School Districts

School District	2014-15	2015-16	Change in General Aid
Eau Claire Area	\$56,636,372	\$56,367,115	-\$269,257
Altoona	\$9,971,361	\$9,985,701	\$14,340
Fall Creek	\$5,579,166	\$5,465,907	-\$113,259
Augusta	\$3,908,989	\$3,654,576	-\$254,413
Grand Total	\$76,095,888	\$75,473,299	-\$622,589

Source: [http://sfs.dpi.wi.gov/sfs\\_genaid\\_current](http://sfs.dpi.wi.gov/sfs_genaid_current) 2015-16 General Aid amounts are estimates. Amounts include deductions for the Milwaukee Choice program and charter schools. The state provides some support to school districts outside of General Aid.

As can be seen in the graphic to the left, ours is the only Eau Claire County school district projected to receive an increase in general aid.

All told, Eau Claire County school districts are projected to lose a total of more than \$600,000 in 2015/16.

Reminder: Back to School is EARLY in 2015/16!

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School Offices Reopen	Aug 5
New Student Registration (See details on Page 4)	Aug 5
Teachers Return	Aug 17
Ice Cream Social	Aug 17
Elementary Orientation	Aug 19
Intermediate Orientation	Aug 19
Middle School Orientation	Aug 19
Gr 9 Orientation (Full-Day)	Aug 19
First Regular Student Day, K-8	Aug 20
First Student Day, 10-12	Aug 20

More information to follow in the Regular Rails Review edition.



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# New Student Registration

**Wednesday, August 5  
9 AM to 12 noon**

Commons Addition  
1827 Bartlett Ave

New Student Registration is intended for students  
who are *new* to the Altoona school district.

Required documents include birth certificate and proof of residency. Even if you have already completed and turned in your enrollment paperwork, we encourage parents and students to attend. Tours will be given and representatives from support services (food and transportation) will be available.

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.**

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