

The Falcon Forum

AUSTINTOWN LOCAL SCHOOLS
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Students, Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

As we look ahead to a new school year, I can't help but reflect on the incredible pride and progress we've experienced together as a community. From academic achievements to major facility improvements, Austintown Local Schools continues to move forward with purpose, and as you will often hear me say, "Who has it better than us?"

Over the past year, our district has celebrated many milestones. We were honored to be recognized by Governor Mike DeWine for our leadership in the Science of Reading initiative, which is already making a measurable impact on how our students learn to read. We've also expanded our College Credit Plus program, opening more doors for students to earn college credit and get ahead while still in high school.

This fall, we're excited to complete our brand new facility, further strengthening our commitment to providing modern, high-quality environments for all students. Combined with continued summer improvement projects and curriculum enhancements, we are building a future rooted in excellence, opportunity, and unity.

As we prepare to welcome students and staff back, our focus remains clear:

- We will continue to improve and innovate, building on what's working and pushing ourselves to be even better.
- We will analyze student data to better support individual needs.
- We will collaborate and grow together as educators and students.

Thank you for your continued support of Austintown Local Schools. Together, we are creating something truly special. Nobody has it better than us!

Timothy S. Kelty

Austintown Board of Education Members



Our board members dedicate their time to carry out our mission of strengthening and preparing our students for unlimited future opportunities.

President
Fred Marcum
fredmarcum@austintownschools.org

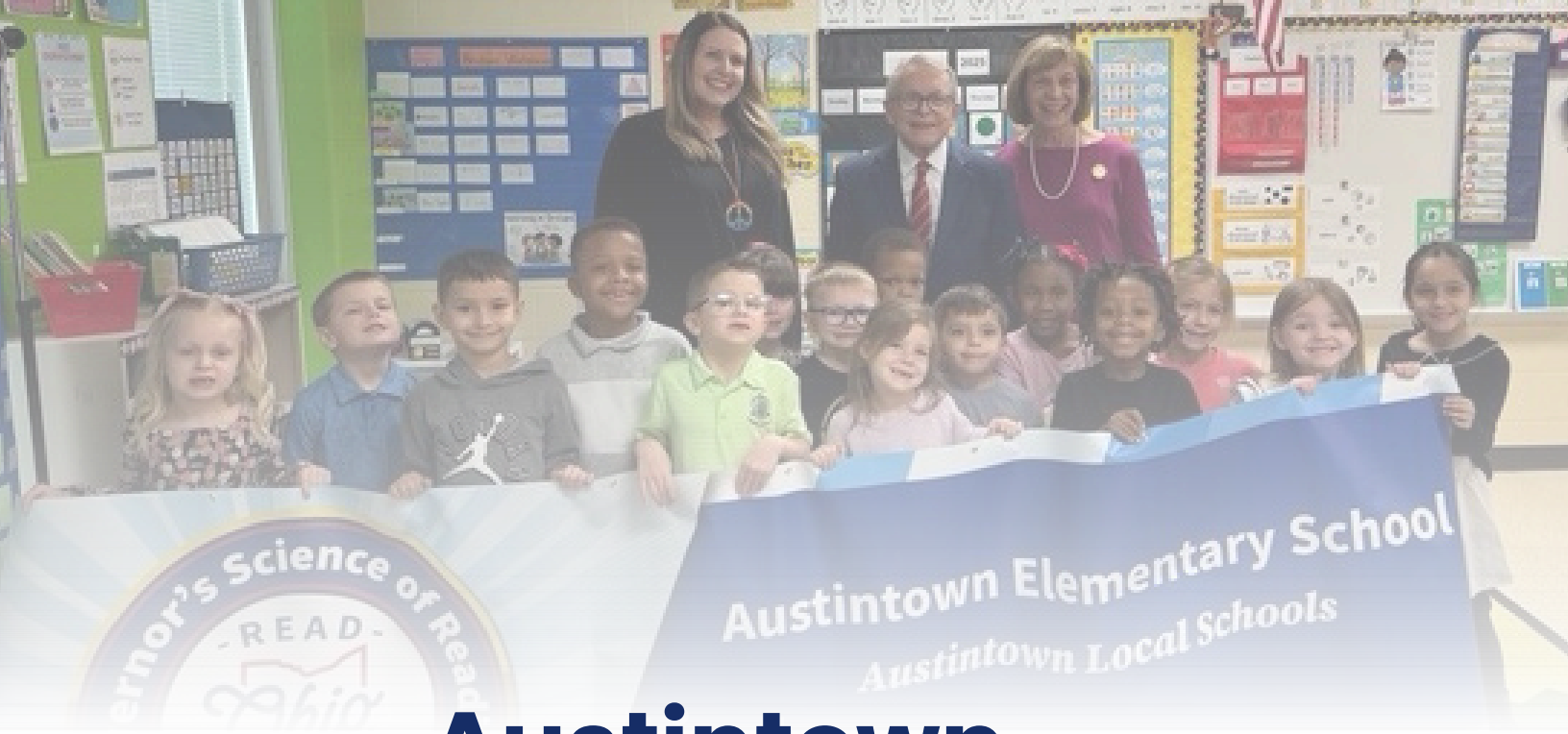
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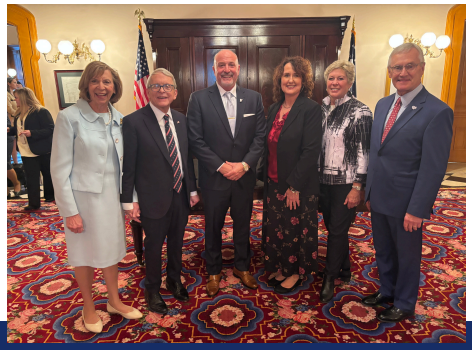
Kim Smrek
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Treasurer
Blaise Karlovic



Austintown Elementary School







Governor Mike DeWine, First Lady Fran DeWine, and Ohio education leaders visited Austintown Elementary for a roundtable with school leaders and teachers. The visit focused on how the district uses the Science of Reading to improve literacy.

The commitment from our elementary staff is paying off! Thanks to their dedication and focus on evidence-based reading instruction, the percentage of kindergarten students on track with reading has more than doubled since 2021, which has lead third-grade reading proficiency to nearly 84%, which is a 12% increase from pre-pandemic levels.

Governor DeWine praised Austintown Elementary in his 2025 State of the State Address as a model for reading success.

The Governor and First Lady also visited kindergarten and first-grade classrooms before presenting the school with a Science of Reading Champions banner.







Austintown
Intermediate School

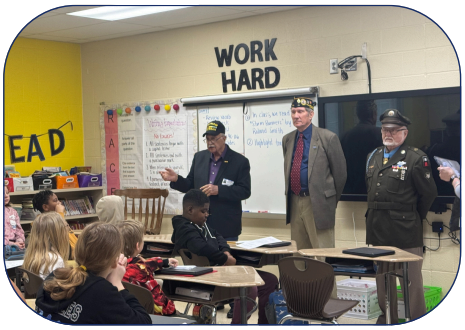


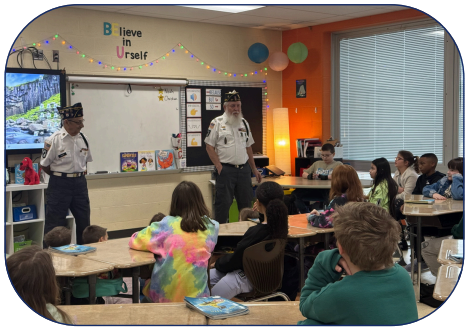


★★★★½

4.5 out of 5 stars

Austintown Intermediate earned 4.5 out of 5 stars on the state report card. This rating indicates that students are exceeding state standards.



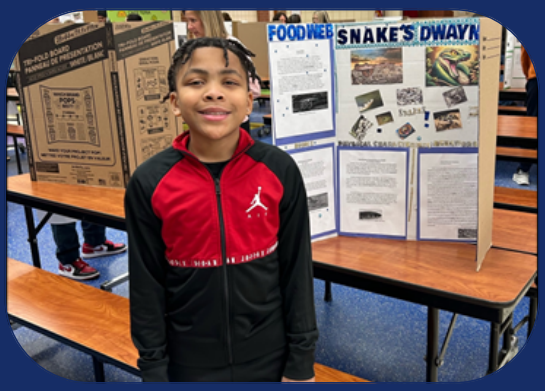


Hug a Hero Day was held in February to recognize the everyday heroes in our community who help keep us safe.

This year, AIS students and staff welcomed local veterans and active-duty military members. Students asked questions, listened to their stories, and shared their appreciation for our military men and women.



AIS celebrated World Read Aloud Day on February 5th. Family and friends visited classrooms to read to the students throughout the day, celebrating the power of literacy.



Grade 5 hosted their Animal Research Showcase in January. Their families were invited to AIS to share all that they had learned about animals across the world.



Our 4th grade students completed their annual food truck project in May. They had to design their own food truck and plan out everything they would need to start their business. Two food trucks came to AIS at the end of the project for them to see how it all worked, and they got to enjoy some great food!





Our annual Camp Fitch trip was a huge success for our 5th grade students this year thanks to our high school camp counselors and AIS staff. We are so proud to have shared such wonderful memories with our students.

Austintown Middle School



Our AMS Drama Club put on their production of *Pinocchio* in March. Once again, they outdid themselves with an exceptional performance and had a sold-out crowd each night.



Our band and orchestra participated in many contests and were recognized with both individual and group awards. These contests included Solo and Ensemble Contest, Honors Band, OMEA Honors Band, and Large Group Contest.



Our teachers and students continued to perform well this year in the classroom this year, as state test scores rose across each grade level.



This year, our 8th-grade students had the opportunity to experience Washington, D.C. They not only enjoyed sightseeing but also participated in the Changing of the Guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.







Each grade level had its own unique curriculum and expanded students' knowledge through experiences like Balloons over Broadway, Rocket Launch, Career Day, the WEB Program, Loss Group, and Cell Parade.



AMS sports teams had another successful year. They took home many awards, won numerous contests, and maintained a strong team mindset all year.

PBIS
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

The Positive Behavior Matrix was fully implemented this year in all areas of the building. Students were rewarded with Handel's Ice Cream coins and FalconGrams when caught following the matrix. The PBIS Committee earned Bronze Status for the 2024-2025 school year.

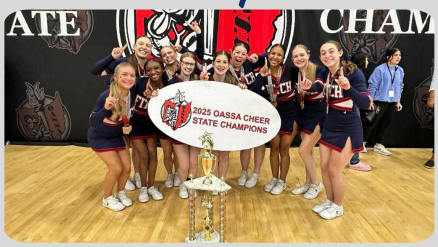




Our choir students had an eventful year, performing in their annual concerts and a variety of local events.

Austintown Fitch High School

Back to Back STATE Champions



The Fitch Competition Cheer Team competed in the Division II Traditional Building category at Big Walnut High School where they defeated Massillon Washington, Bowling Green, Harrison, and Anderson to retain their title and take home the trophy.



This past fall, the Fitch Marching Band had an exciting and eventful season, performing at a variety of events including a Scrappers game, freshman orientation, 10 regular season football games, playoff games, and four band nights, one of which was Fitch's 52nd annual Band Night. The band also performed at two drum nights, multiple pep rallies, the Austintown tree lighting, and the Youngstown Holiday Parade. The season concluded with a memorable trip to Orlando, Florida, where the band gave an outstanding parade performance at Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom.



Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose visited Fitch High School this school year to speak with students about the importance of civic engagement and the electoral process. As part of the visit, students had the unique opportunity to vote on actual voting machines, simulating the real-life voting experience.



Through the Ohio Career Technical Education Equipment Grant, awarded by the Department of Education and Workforce, the Fitch Business Department made necessary technology upgrades. The department's student-run businesses also experienced a successful year, particularly with the operation of a photo booth at various Fitch events. In preparation for future growth, the department invested in an embroidery machine and will begin producing custom merchandise during the 2025–2026 school year.

Mrs. Reed's YSU Communications Class is tasked each year with completing a project that impacts their community. This year, one group decided to turn the English Departments office into a Book Nook for all students to use!





ADDITIONAL College Credit Plus Offerings

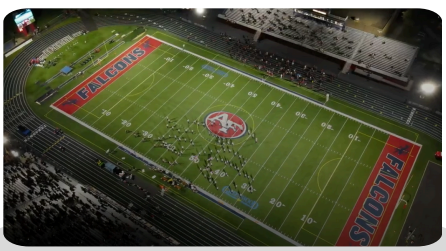
New College Credit Plus (CCP) classes are being offered through Stark State College, allowing Fitch High School to offer more CCP classes than any school in the area. Classes such as Film, Anatomy I & II, Microsoft Office, Computer Apps, Oceans, and welding have all been added to the list of CCP courses at Fitch.







The vocal music department performed multiple concerts this year and had over 50 community performances, featuring all four choirs. The Concert Choir traveled to New York City, where they performed in two veterans' hospitals and made their Lincoln Center debut under Grammy award- winning choral conductor Eric Whitacre.



Digital Media students applied their drone piloting skills in real-world settings, capturing aerial footage at football games and commencement.







Photo Credit: Sherono Photo

The Fitch Rock Band program continues its impressive rise as one of the fastest-growing music programs in the district. Enrollment has jumped from 45 to 70 students this year, with projections exceeding 90 students for the 2025–2026 school year. Throughout the year, the students performed at venues across the greater Youngstown area, including Westside Bowl, Rock Bottom, and the Ribs-N-Rock Festival in Boardman. Their expanding presence in the regional music scene is bolstered by increasing industry support, most notably an endorsement from S.I.T. Strings, whose artist roster includes members from Mötley Crüe, Shinedown, and The Black Keys.

The program's national reach has grown thanks to the work of instructor John Anthony, who performs with the nationally touring group The Vindys and through his involvement with the national curriculum, TeachRock.



Fitch Drama Club put on one-act plays in the fall and premiered the musical *Phantom of the Opera* in the spring, with the first-ever dinner theatre ahead of the performance. Both were outstanding successes!





Xojier Lewis has been accepted into the prestigious United States Military Academy at West Point, an honor achieved by only 12% of applicants each year. Lewis served as the Corps Commander of Fitch High School's JROTC program, the highest-ranking cadet leadership position. In this role he was responsible for overseeing the corps, mentoring fellow cadets, and ensuring the program's continued success. He was also awarded **Outstanding Cadet of the Year** by his unit and honored at the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Cadet Night Dinner.

STATE TEST SUCCESS

our students are soaring!

We are proud to share that our students have made significant progress on the state assessments this year! This information is according to the preliminary results we have received.

AES

- Although the elementary level is not a tested area, we also attribute our rising scores to the strong foundation set at the elementary level.

AIS

- All ELA and Math averaged 19% higher than the state proficiency average!
- 4th Grade math reached 90% proficiency!
- 5th Grade math increased 5% in proficiency since last year!
- All ELA and Math tests increased in proficiency!

AMS

- All ELA and Math increased in proficiency from last year!
- 8th Grade math increased 11% points in proficiency!
- 7th Grade ELA increased 6% points in proficiency!

FITCH

- All tested math and history areas increased in proficiency!
- Geometry increased 8% points in proficiency!

AUSTINTOWN FITCH HIGH SCHOOL

CLASS OF 2025



330 earned their diploma

1 received a 36 on the ACT

(A perfect score on the ACT is 36)

Over 13 million dollars in scholarships offered



55 took Advanced Placement (AP) courses

20% military bound or entering a trade after high school

48 graduated from our online program

161 local scholarships amounting to $270,000

12 valedictorians

66 National Honor Society members



1,302 College Credit Plus hours were earned this year by the class of 2025

63 graduated with honors

127 were honored by the PTSA for maintaining a 3.5 GPA or higher



1 attending West Point Military Academy

VALEDICTORIAN SPOTLIGHT


Jordan Corll


Gianna Franklin


Evan James


Elizabeth Pfeffer


Robert Roach


Anthony Ruggles


Samantha Severn


Chloe Smith


Josephine Sollitto

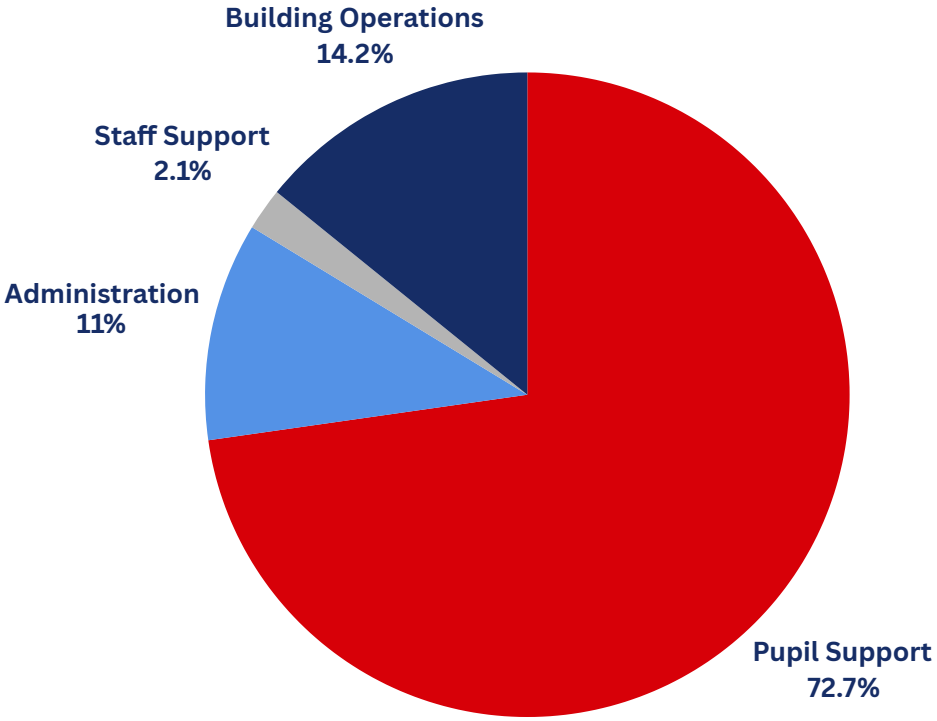

Elizabeth Spalding


Rachel Spalding

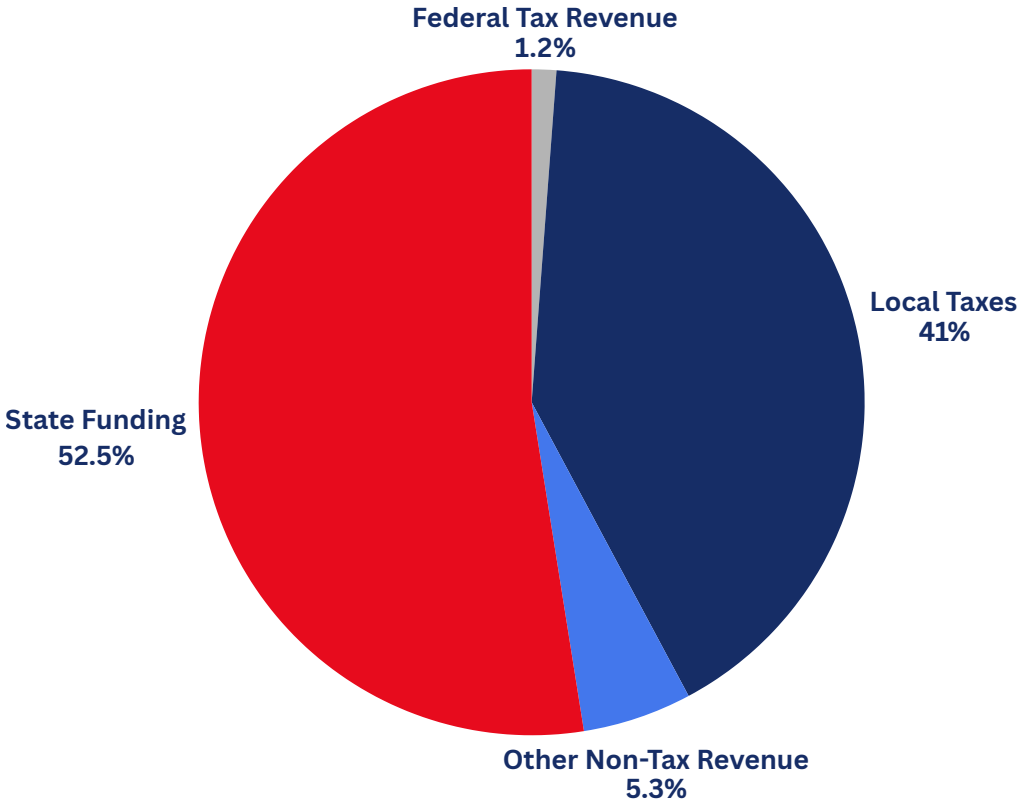

Addison Williams

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Year 2025



WHERE THE MONEY GOES



WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

The Ohio Auditor of State Award with Distinction was presented to the Austintown Local School District for excellence in financial reporting related to the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and compliance with applicable laws for the previous fiscal year.

The Five- year forecast was presented to the Board of Education in May of 2025 by Treasurer/CFO Blaise Karlovic. The five-year forecast serves as a tool to communicate and assess the financial health of a school district. The district submits this twice annually to the Ohio Department of Education. Each five-year forecast contains two components:
1) historical and projected financial data and 2) notes to explain any significant changes or "assumptions" a district used to develop the reported financial projections. To view our forecasts and other financial data, visit: **austintownschools.org/departments/treasurers-office**.

Food Service Department

FREE MEALS FOR ALL STUDENTS

We are happy to announce that breakfast and lunch meals will continue to be free for all students for the 2025-2026 school year.

Each student can receive one free breakfast and one free lunch meal each school day.

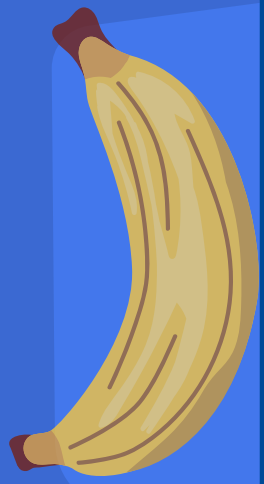
No action is needed for your student(s) to participate and receive free school meals. Students can simply come through the meal service line to receive one free breakfast meal and one free lunch meal each school day. Extras and a la carte items are still available for purchase. Complete information can be found on our website at **AFFoodServices.com**.

Menu Upgrades

We are bringing more choice to each lunch line! AMS and FHS students will enjoy bar-style menus each Tuesday that feature new entrees such as an All-American Cheeseburger Bar and a Baked Potato Bites Bar. AMS will also feature a new Fresh Salad Bar each Wednesday.

New grab-n-go items will be available in our coolers such as a mini charcutier board, new wraps and sandwiches, and new soup options at Fitch.

Our tried and true favorites will remain on the menu – like brunch for lunch, pasta with meatballs, and toasted cheese and tomato soup.



STAY CONNECTED

Visit our Food Services website at AFFoodServices.com to stay up-to-date on happenings in our department. Click on the Going Green icon to have our menus emailed to you each month!

Parents are encouraged create login at **LINQConnect.com** to view their student's lunch account. Special features such as alerts, transaction history, and menu information can be accessed with an account.

Transportation

BUS ROUTE INFORMATION



Bus Routes will be ready **ONE WEEK** prior to the first day of school.

Bus Route information, including pick up/drop off times, bus number, and bus stop location are available on the **Versatrans E-Link Parent Portal,** which can be found on the transportation page of our district website along with login instructions.

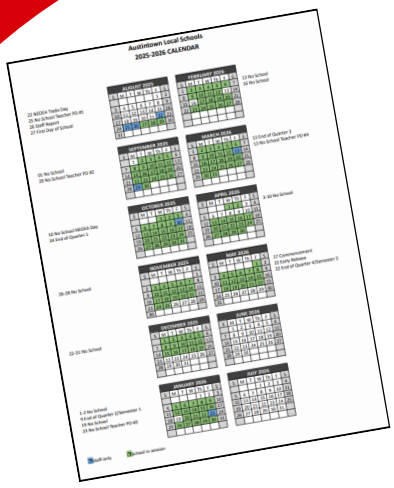
Please continue to check the parent portal up until the first day of school, as adjustments may be made due to new resident families enrolling in the district.

HOW CAN I SEE THE BUS LOCATION?

You can view the location of the bus in real time (there is approximately a 30 second delay) by downloading the **Versatrans My Stop App** via smart phone.

Please arrive at your designated bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled bus arrival time.

Austintown Local School District
700 S. Raccoon Road
Austintown, OH 44515


Austintown Local Schools
2025-2026 CALENDAR

2025-2026 Calendar

Use the QR Code or visit austintownschools.org under the "Parents" tab to view.

Coming soon!

MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS

Stay up to date on what's happening in your building with our NEW monthly newsletter!

The newsletter will be sent via text each month to ensure you're in the loop. Be sure you are opted in to the one call system to receive texts.