

The Falcon Forum

AUSTINTOWN LOCAL SCHOOLS
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Students, Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

As we begin another exciting school year, I am filled with gratitude and optimism for all that lies ahead. Before looking forward, I want to take a moment to thank our incredible Austintown community for your continued belief in our schools.

Your support of the renewal levy is much more than a vote. It is an investment in our students and the future of Austintown Local Schools. Because of your trust, we can continue providing outstanding educational opportunities while maintaining the programs and services our students deserve. We are truly grateful for your partnership.

This year, we remain committed to building on our momentum by fostering innovation, celebrating student success, and ensuring every child has the support they need to reach their full potential. Together, we will continue creating an environment where students are challenged, encouraged, and inspired every day.

Thank you for being an essential part of the Austintown Local Schools family. We are excited to welcome everyone back and continue the tradition of excellence that defines our district.

With Falcon Pride,
Timothy S. Kelty

Austintown Board of Education Members



Our Board of Education members dedicate their time carrying out our mission of strengthening and preparing our students for unlimited future opportunities.

President
Kim Smrek
kimsmrek@austintownschools.org

Vice President
Don Sherwood
donsherwood@austintownschools.org

Katie Berdis
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Fred Marcum
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Harold Porter
hporter@austintownschools.org

Treasurer
Blaise Karlovic

Austintown Elementary School



















SCIENCE OF READING RECOGNITION

Governor's recognition for the second year in a row

PBIS GOLD STATUS

Recognized for Tier 1, 2, and 3 behavior supports.

48 FALCON FIVES GRADUATES

Heading to Kindergarten at AES

CELEBRATING STUDENT TALENT

3rd Annual Art & Gifted Showcawse

GROWING OUR AES FAMILY

Four new preschool classes coming in 2026-2027

Plus: Success After 6 Returned for its fifth year, serving 40 children and their families

Austintown Intermediate School

4 OUT OF 5 STARS!

AIS earned 4 out 5 stars on the State Report Card, a rating that means we are exceeding state standards and continuing to provide outstanding learning opportunities for our students!



CAMP FITCH

Nearly 200 5th grade students attended Camp Fitch in the spring, continuing the Austintown Intermediate tradition that has created unforgettable memories for more than four decades.







A TRADITION OVER **40 YEARS** STRONG

CARING FOR OUR FALCONS

For the third consecutive year AIS proudly operated its Care Closet, providing food, clothing, and essential supplies to students in need. Thank you to Dinesol Plastics and the United Way for helping us support our Falcon Families.

CARE CLOSETS
UNITED WAY OF YOUNGSTOWN AND THE MAHONING VALLEY

Our Annual Staff vs. Student Basketball Game returned in March, with the staff remaining undefeated! More importantly, the event raised funds to support a beloved staff member battling cancer.



WORLD READ ALOUD DAY

Family members, friends, and community volunteers joined students on February 4th to celebrate the joy and importance of reading aloud together.







LIFE SKILLS IN ACTION

Students in Mrs. Inglis' and Mrs. Fuller's classroom built valuable life skills throughout the year by learning to prepare a variety of foods. They even put their baking skills to the test with Mrs. Corbett! These hands-on experiences help foster independence, confidence, and skills they'll use for years to come.











Austintown Middle School



Our AMS Drama Club wowed audiences in March with a Broadway caliber production of The Lion King. Approximately 50 students shined as lion cubs, bringing energy and dedication to the stage. it was a memorable experience for all involved.





Our band and orchestra were part of many contests and were recognized for winning individual and group awards. These contests included Solo and Ensemble Contest, Honors Band, OMEA Honors Band, and Large Group Contest.



Each quarter, Academic Honors Assemblies recognized and celebrated the achievements of our students. Students were honored for earning Honorable Mention, Honor Roll, High Honor Roll, and Perfect Attendance. These celebrations encourage students to continue striving for excellence both inside and outside the classroom.



Our 8th grade students had the opportunity to participate in a Career Fair at the Canfield Fairgrounds, where they explored a variety of career paths and learned about future career opportunities. The experience allowed students to interact with professionals from different fields, ask questions, and gain valuable insight into potential careers and the skills needed for success.





Our choir students had a successful year, showcasing their talents through annual concerts and a variety of local performances throughout the community. Their dedication, hard work, and passion for music were evident in each performance, and they represented AMS with pride and professionalism wherever they performed.



Our WEB Orientation program helped incoming sixth graders transition smoothly into middle school. Guided by dedicated WEB Leaders, student felt welcomed and connected through tours and activities. Our leaders continued this support throught the year, organizing events that foster a positive, engaging school community.



AMS sports teams had another successful year, bringing home many awards, winning numerous contests and demonstrating a true team-first mindset throughout the season. Their dedication, hard work, and sportsmanship were evident in every competition. A special congratulations goes to our Cheerleaders for winning the State Championship for the second time in a row!

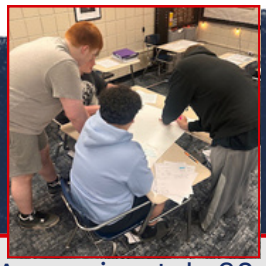
Ohio PTA everychild. onevoice.

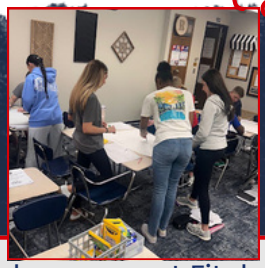
Our PTA had another successful year organizing events that brought the AMS community together. From Fundays, school dances, to Book Fairs and Staff Luncheons, the AMS PTA does an amazing job supporting both students and staff.

Austintown Fitch High School



The Fitch Rock Band program continues its rapid rise, now welcoming more than 90 students for the upcoming school year. This season, the band rocked local venues like Westside Bowl and the Robins Theatre, where they were featured for 90.7 The Summit FM's 330 Day, while performing for charities focused on breast cancer, animal shelters, and suicide awareness. Their expanding presence also caught national attention, earning a generous donation of 200 guitars and basses from Gibson Guitars to support the program's massive growth.







Approximately 90 sophomores at Fitch participated in an ELA II pre-testing workshop with Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Chiera. Students focused on tips and tricks to prep for the Ohio State Test, and over 80% of students that attended grew their score and met competency for graduation.





Campus is getting a tasty upgrade! Funded 100% by the Ohio CTE Equipment Grant Program, our new Fitch Food Truck will support our upcoming Food Truck Business and Culinary Management course in the 2026-2027 school year. Guided by a local chef, students will master hands-on culinary skills and business operations. We even got to take it for an early spin this past school year to deliver Teacher Appreciation gifts!



It was a landmark year for our JROTC cadets, anchored by our largest graduating class in six years! 15 cadets advancing to military service, higher education, and trade schools. Cadets gained hands-on leadership experience by organizing a traditional Military Ball, and showed fierce determination in both the Raider Physical Fitness and Drill competitions.







The Fitch Drama Club produced three shows this year: Clue, A Christmas Carol, and Sister Act: A Divine Musical Comedy. These productions included 30 to 50 students each and were great successes!

Fitch Business Department



Using the Ohio Career Technical Education Equipment Grant awarded by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, we expanded our student-run business program with updated equipment. The standout addition was a popular lunchtime soft-serve ice cream venture, fully managed and operated by students to build practical business and leadership skills.



Our embroidery business had a successful year. Students designed, produced, and sold Fitch staff shirts at the end of the school year and the project was exceptionally well received by faculty.



The Fitch High School Vocal Music Department delivered an unforgettable 2025–2026 season, performing over 20 tri-county shows and bringing home 27 Superior ratings at the OMEA District 5 Contest. Along with hosting 200 regional singers for the Chamber Choir Festival, students traveled to Virginia to sing at veterans hospitals and hospice facilities, and wrapped up the year with a moving concert celebrating the Class of 2026.

AUSTINTOWN FITCH HIGH SCHOOL

CLASS OF 2026



361 earned their diploma

1 Received a perfect score of 36

Received a score of 35

More than 10 million dollars in scholarships offered



60 took Advanced Placement (AP) courses

30 entering a trade after high school

2 Full ride scholarships to The Ohio State University

152 local scholarships amounting to $151,300

9 valedictorians

76 National Honor Society members



1,068 College Credit Plus hours were earned this year by the class of 2026

1 QuestBridge Finalist *(full ride to Ivy League College)*

117 were honored for maintaining a 3.5 GPA or higher



27 athletic scholarships

7 are military-bound

VALEDICTORIAN SPOTLIGHT



Mason Ali



Lily Burns



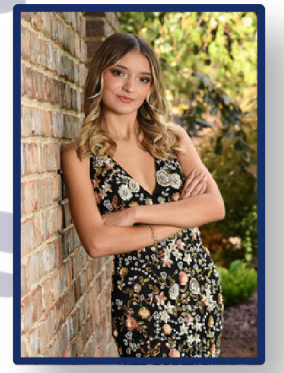
Lyrica Heeter



Kendra Hudak



Gregory Manners



Addison Mitulinski



Melina Rozzo



Zachary Stipanovich



Eva Zheng

ACADEMIC GROWTH AT A GLANCE

Our students are achieving more and growing faster!

STATE TEST PROFICIENCY GAINS

ELA SUCCESS

3rd Grade ELA
+12%
UP FROM 3 YEARS AGO

5TH Grade ELA
+13%
UP FROM 3 YEARS AGO

7TH Grade ELA
+12%
UP FROM 2 YEARS AGO

8TH Grade ELA
+11%
UP FROM 2 YEARS AGO

MATH MOMENTUM



+19%
UP FROM 2 YEARS AGO

HIGH SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

BIOLOGY	+9% UP FROM 1 YEAR AGO
ELA II	+8% UP FROM 1 YEAR AGO
ALGERBRA I	+8% UP FROM 1 YEAR AGO
U.S. HISTORY	+7% UP FROM 1 YEAR AGO

EXCEEDING EXPECTED GROWTH

TOP VALUE-ADDED RESULTS

+4.8%
8TH GRADE MATH

+4.2%
5TH GRADE MATH

+3.8%
7TH GRADE ELA

+2.8%
MIDDLE SCHOOL OVERALL

THE BOTTOM LINE:

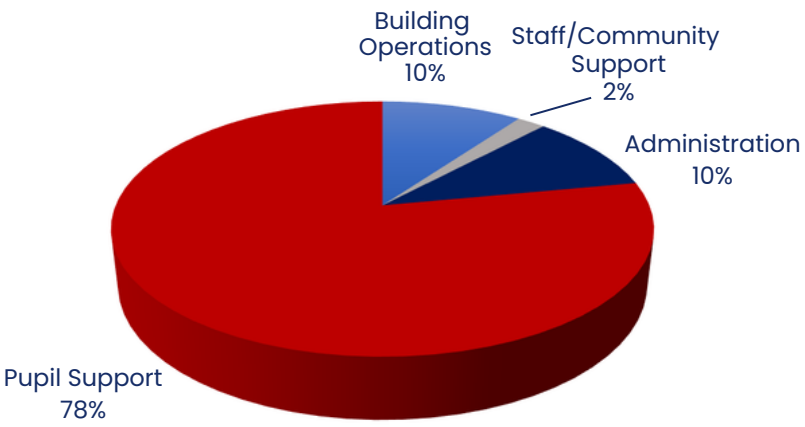
Students across the district are **achieving higher proficiency rates** while **exceeding expected academic growth.**

Thank you to our students, staff, and families for your continued commitment to excellence!

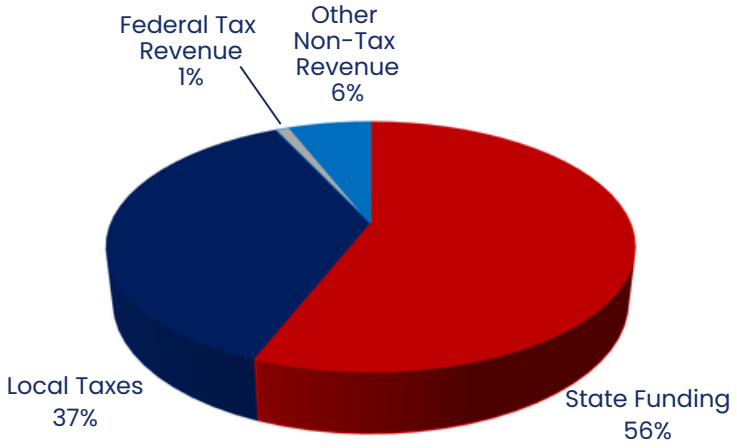
FOCUSED ON LEARNING

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Year 2026



WHERE THE MONEY GOES



WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

The Five- Year Forecast was presented to the Board of Education in May of 2026 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**.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Awards for Excellence in Government Finance recognize innovative programs and exemplary leadership within public finance, evaluating submissions on technical significance, efficiency, cost-benefit analysis, originality, and transferability.

As part of this commitment to high standards in financial management, Austintown Local Schools has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This designation recognizes state and local governments that go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare comprehensive annual financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure.

DID YOU KNOW?

We have Care Closets in every school building!

This vital program is fully funded through our partnership with the United Way of Youngstown. These closets serve as dedicated spaces designed to provide our students with immediate, discrete access to essential items, such as food, clothing, hygiene products, and school supplies, ensuring that every child's basic needs are met so they can focus on learning and thriving in school.



Driven By Heart and Dedication

Building and maintaining a resource like this takes incredible heart and effort. Lisa Fitzgerald (AIS Counselor), Megan Klein (AMS Intervention Specialist), and Amanda Shrader (Fitch Intervention Specialist) were honored with the Dedicated Service Award this year at the United Way Annual Meeting for their work with our Care Closets. This recognition highlights just how much coordination and devotion go into supporting our students every single day.

Food Service Department

FREE MEALS FOR ALL STUDENTS

We are happy to announce that breakfast and lunch meals will continue to be provided at no cost to students during the 2026-2027 school year.

Each student is eligible to receive one free breakfast and one free lunch meal each school day.

No action is needed for your student(s) to 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.**

Serving Our Students with Pride

This school year was full of exciting food celebrations as well as taste-testing opportunities for our students to vote on new menu items for the 2026-2027 school year.



National Butterscotch Pudding Day

Fitch Students testing the new BloomTM Probiotic Soda





Fitch Students Testing Hot Honey Chicken and Buffalo Chicken Dip

AES/AIS VIP Breakfasts



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 to stay connected with their students' meal accounts by creating a login at **LINQConnect.com**. Special features such as alerts, transaction history, and menu information can be accessed with an account.

CONTACT

You can reach our department directly at **330-797-3900 ext. 1315** to discuss your student's meal account, food allergies, account restrictions, meal benefits, and all food service related questions.

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.

Scan Me to view transportation site

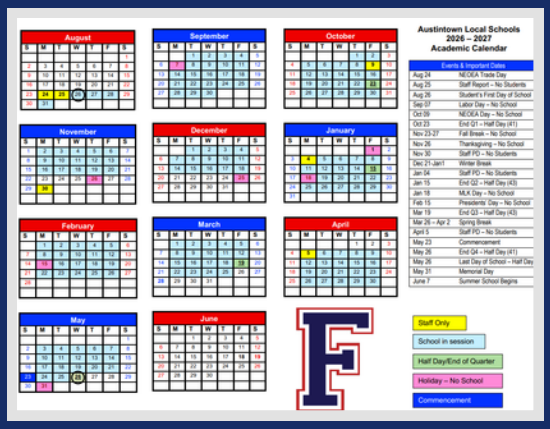


Please arrive at your designated bus stop five minutes prior to the scheduled bus arrival time.

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

2026-2027 Calendar

Use the QR code or visit austintownschools.org under the “Parents” tab to view.





Stay connected. Stay informed.

Our monthly newsletters are packed with important updates, upcoming events, and great things happening throughout the district!
Be sure you are opted in to the One Call system to receive text messages.