

October 2026

EVERY SCHOOL HAS A STORY.

From the first days of kindergarten to graduation day, Austin Public Schools have shaped generations of students and families. This video reflects on those stories and looks ahead to our school's future. As the community considers the upcoming referendum, we encourage everyone to learn more, ask question and stay informed.

SCHOOL FACILITY BOND REFERENDUM
November 3, 2026

The 2026 School Facility Bond Referendum at Austin Public Schools



Learn More Here

PDF School Facility Bond Referendum Project Budget Breakdown Download 324.6 KB

Principal's Corner - Mr. Schara



Dear Holton Families,

As we complete our first month of the school year, I want to share a few important reminders and provide some information about the work we are doing to support a safe, welcoming, and successful school environment for all students.

Toys and Toy Weapons

Recently, we have had several concerns involving students bringing toys to school, particularly toy weapons. While these items may seem harmless, anything that resembles a weapon must be taken very seriously in a school setting.

For this reason, **toys, including toy weapons and look-alike weapons, should not be brought to school.** School Board Policy 501 addresses weapons and look-alike weapons and provides for significant disciplinary consequences, up to and including possible dismissal from the school district.

Families can help us maintain a safe and calm learning environment by:

- Talking with your child about keeping toys at home.
- Checking your child's backpack regularly.
- Contacting the school if you have concerns or information that may affect student or school safety.

We appreciate your partnership in reinforcing these expectations at home.

Attendance Matters

I also want to emphasize the importance of regular school attendance. You may have noticed that the district frequently highlights attendance through social media and other communications. There is a good reason for this: **being at school each day gives students the best opportunity to learn, build relationships, and experience success.**

We also understand that families sometimes face challenges that make regular attendance difficult. If there are barriers affecting your child's attendance, please reach out to us. We are happy to work with you to identify solutions and support your child.

As part of our MTSS process, Holton has an attendance team that regularly reviews student attendance and puts supports and interventions in place when needed. We also have an administrative assistant who supports attendance efforts at both Ellis and Holton. She works

directly with families to clarify attendance concerns and provides attendance data to our team every two weeks.

School Safety and Crisis Response
I also want families to know about some of the ongoing work happening behind the scenes to support school safety.
Holton has a **Crisis Response Team** that meets quarterly to review issues related to building safety and security. The team includes administrators, our school liaison officer, counselors, teachers, and other staff members.
During these meetings, we review our safety drills and identify ways to make them more effective. We also discuss significant safety or discipline concerns from the previous month and adjust when needed. This ongoing process helps us continually improve our practices and maintain a safe and supportive school environment.

Thank you for your continued support of Holton students and staff. Strong partnerships between families and schools make a tremendous difference for our students. We appreciate your trust and look forward to continuing to work together in the best interests of your child.

Sincerely,
Mr. Schara
Principal

PDF **Standard Response Protocol Parent Handout** Download 286.8 KB

Mr. Malo's Shout Out

Mr. Malo's Shout Out



Dear Families,

I hope you and your loved ones are well. We are grateful for the partnership we share with you and for all the ways you support your child(ren) and our school community.

Important Announcements

- No school October 14–16 — MEA Break. Please plan accordingly.
- October 20 — 6th graders in Medical Detectives will take a field trip to the Hormel Institute.
- October 23 — Quarter ends. Please review your student's progress in Campus Portal
- Look for a Portal Push with November conference information, including how to sign up. Watch your email/portal messages for those directions.

Action items for families:

- Mark the MEA Break dates on your calendar (Oct. 14–16).
- Check Campus Portal regularly and review grades before the quarter ends on Oct. 23.
- Watch for the Portal Push about conferences and sign-up instructions.

Celebrations from the Week

- It has been a wonderful start to the school year. Students are working hard to follow expectations — great job!
- Teachers are thoughtfully supporting students in academics, behavior, and social-emotional growth. We are grateful for their dedication.
- Fifth grade students enjoyed their field trips to the Nature Center — what a terrific learning experience outdoors.
- Reminder: Campus Portal is a helpful way to stay informed about your student's progress and classroom updates.

Thank you for your ongoing support in encouraging your children and partnering with us to create a positive learning environment.

Additional Information

- As mornings get cooler, students may need to wear jackets to school. Please remind your child(ren) to bring jackets home each day so they're not left behind.
- If your child has misplaced items, please have them check the lost and found. Labeling jackets and lunch boxes with names help lost items find their rightful owner.

We are grateful for your continued partnership and for all you do to support learning at home and school.

We look forward to continuing our work together and to a successful rest of the quarter.

Mr. Malo

Mr. Brown's Corner



Holton Families-

Here's hoping the first full month of school has been a good one. As I walk among the classrooms, hallways, and FTLAs, I am constantly amazed by the great things that I see. I love to see the way your children have buckled down and are nailing the start! I see them involved, engaged, and mostly, enjoying what they are doing. Of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the hard work our teachers and staff have put in to make this such a successful start for the students. I feel so fortunate to work at IJ Holton. The staff and students are simply incredible.

Our first big PBIS Celebration event takes place on Oct. 13th. The Snake Discovery Center out of the Twin Cities will be coming down to share some of their friends with us. This will be a different presentation with different critters than were brought last year. These monthly celebrations are our way to thank our students for being respectful, responsible, safe, and for doing their best. The last

event I want to draw your attention to is our first IJ Holton dance. This will take place on Friday, October 23 from 3:30-5:30. Students will have the chance to dance, socialize, visit the concession stand, and most importantly be children. We promote this as a safe event and an event the students must earn based on behavior. Students that have received OSS at any time since the beginning of the year, ISS within 30 days of the dance, or any student sent to Academic Recovery the week of the dance are not allowed to attend. Look for more information soon about these events.

As the calendar changes to October, we must acknowledge the arrival of Fall. The season with the most fluctuation in weather. More than any other season, Fall is when proper outside dress comes into play. In a season where it could be 80 and sunny one day, 25, windy, and rainy the next, only to be 60 and gorgeous the next, this is the month I see our students most unprepared to go outside for recess. Please make sure that your child is prepared for any changes in weather. Keeping an extra sweatshirt in his or her locker is never a bad idea. While the students are not allowed to go back inside to get it once they are out, having the luxury of being able to grab one on the way to lunch could turn out to be a huge benefit.

At IJ Holton, we encourage our students to be Respectful, Responsible, Safe, and to Do Their Best! If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please email me david.brown@austin.k12.mn.us or call me at 460-1525.

David Brown
IJ Holton Dean of Students

Message From The Counselors

Dear Students and Families,

October is National Bullying Prevention Month
As we step into October, we join schools and communities across the nation in recognizing **National Bullying Prevention Month**—a time dedicated to promoting kindness, inclusion, and respect, while raising awareness about the serious effects of bullying.
Bullying can take many forms—physical, verbal, social, and online—and it impacts not just the students involved but the entire school community. By working together, we can create an environment where everyone feels safe, supported, and valued.
Parents and guardians play a crucial role in preventing and addressing bullying. Here are a few ways you can support efforts at home:

- Talk openly with your child about their day-to-day experiences
- Encourage empathy and respectful communication
- Remind them to speak up if they see or experience bullying
- Report any concerns to school staff promptly

Bullying prevention is not just a one-month effort, it's a year-round commitment. Let's continue to work together to build a culture of kindness where every student can thrive.
We'll be celebrating **Unity Day** (Wednesday, October 21) by wearing **orange**—a color that represents hope and support for those who have experienced bullying. It's a day to come together to promote **kindness, acceptance, and inclusion**—and to send a clear message that **bullying is not okay**. To commemorate Bullying Prevention and Unity Day, there will be a variety of school announcements,

engaging activities, and prizes for students throughout the week to address being an upstander and demonstrating acts of kindness and inclusion.
If you have any questions or concerns, or if your child needs support, please don't hesitate to reach out to our school counselors or administrators. We're here to help.
The IJ Holton and Ellis Middle School Counselors wish to thank you for being a valued part of our school community.

Zack Langreck [5th grade]
Kayla Dickman [6th grade]
Kirstin Norby [7th grade]
Lea Oelfke [8th grade]

Message from the office

Dear Parents and Guardians,

If your child will need to leave school for an appointment, please enter the absence in the Parent Portal or notify the office in advance. When picking up your child, please arrive with enough time for office staff to contact the classroom and have your child ready for dismissal. Advance notice helps minimize disruptions to learning and ensures your child is ready when you arrive.

If transportation arrangements need to be made with your child, please discuss them before the start of the school day whenever possible.

Our office staff manages a high volume of calls each day. Unless there is an emergency, please avoid calling the office throughout the day with reminders or transportation changes. If daily reminder calls become a concern, we may ask families to make arrangements with their child before the school day begins.

To help ensure your child's safety, please take a moment to review and update your emergency contact information. If your phone number, address, or emergency contacts have changed recently, please let us know as soon as possible. Accurate contact information helps us reach you quickly in the event of illness, injury, or another urgent situation.
You can update your information through the Parent Portal or by contacting support at portal@austin.k12.mn.us.

Please be aware that APS school phone numbers may appear as "Spam" on some phones. We encourage you to save **I.J. Holton's** number, **507-460-1525**, in your contacts to ensure you receive important calls from the school.

Lastly, our lost and found is starting to fill up. Please encourage your child to check there for items lost. Items will be disposed of during winter, spring and summer breaks.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support. We look forward to a great school year!

Sincerely,
I.J. Holton Office

Strategic Priorities

Priority One: Support and resources to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment:

- Bi-weekly, building level crisis team meetings
- Use of communication tools like Talking Points
- 1st 20 days is complete; similar routines established through the entire building

Priority Two: Packer Profile for all learners:

- New PLTW class is launched and moving forward successfully
- We are still looking for items we would like to have in the Packer Portfolio

Priority Three: District-wide multi-tiered systems of support for all learners:

- PLC learning focus
- We are now reviewing data in PLC's to form small groups for interventions
- We use CAPTI testing to screen students for interventions
- We are using the communication log in campus (PLP tab) to better document parent communications
- We have monthly Attendance meetings with our new attendance admin. Assistant.

Priority Four: Excellence in resource management:

- Our school supplies are now in the building before school starts. This allows us to have materials necessary for learning in students' hands on the first day of school.
- We are working to re-paint parts of the building that need to be touched up.

BARR UPDATE

IJ Holton Families,

Our Small Block, Big Block, and Community Connect meetings help us stay focused on the whole student. Over the course of the school year, our goal is to discuss every IJ Holton student at least once in our weekly Small Block meetings. We start by talking about strengths, connections to school, hobbies, and interests. Then, we move into other areas such as academics, attendance, and any areas of concern. Each Small Block is made up of 4 teachers that meet weekly. Please reach out to me if you have any questions about BARR at IJ Holton.

Sincerely,

Karen Dunbar, IJ Holton & Ellis BARR Coordinator

karen.dunbar@austin.k12.mn.us

BARR Strategies

Focus on the **whole student**.

Provide **professional development** for teachers, counselors, and administration.

Use BARR's **U-Time Curriculum** to foster a climate for learning.

Create a **cohort** of students.

Hold **regular meetings** of the cohort teacher teams.

Conduct **community connect meetings**.

Engage **families** in student learning.
Engage **administrators**.

U-Time Sessions

10/1/26

Grade 5 Be Comfortable in Your Own Boots Students discuss how being confident in yourself takes away the power of bullying behaviors. They read the story *Wierd! A Story about Dealing with Bullying in Schools* by Erin Frankel. Then, they decorate a pair of boots on a handout in a way that is unique and makes them feel happy and strong.

Grade 6 Learning to Listen Students learn to recognize the qualities of a good listener. They also learn to recognize how individuals can hear the same information yet process it differently and arrive at different conclusions. They will do this through an activity following very specific instructions that will not be repeated.

10/8/26

Grade 5 My Circles Students identify people who support and care for them. The lesson includes the reading of a story, a class discussion, and the creation of a poster that includes the different circles of people in each student's life.

Grade 6 Conversation Dice Students will be given the opportunity to learn many things about their classmates. They will do this through answering a series of questions based on the number on the dice that they roll.

10/22/26

Grade 5 The Fantastic Five In this lesson, the students identify qualities that make a good friend. After brainstorming ideas with their class, students will have the chance to write down the top five qualities that they look for in a friend.

Grade 6 Getting Acquainted Students develop deeper relationships beyond the surface level and build conversation skills. Students write answers independently, share their answers with a partner, and then share out as a whole class.

10/29/26

Grade 5 See How Lucky I Am Students will be given the opportunity to identify and appreciate their unique talents & skills. They will do this through a video or story and by engaging in a discussion with classmates.

Grade 6 Commonalities This activity helps students learn about themselves and what they have in common with their classmates.

Important Dates to Remember



- **10/12:** PBIS Celebration for Students - Snake Discovery
- **10/14:** ½ Day PD - No School for Students
- **10/15-18:** MEA Break - No School
- **10/19:** Grading Window Opens
- **10/19:** Art Club - Team B Pink
- **10/20:** Medical Detective Field Trip
- **10/22**: YAYA
- **10/23:** End of 1st Quarter
- **10/23:** School Dance 3:30-5:30
- **10/26:** Austin Symphony Orchestra Field Trip
- **10/26:** Art Club - Team A Yellow
- **11/2:** Art Club Team B Pink

- **11/3:** PD Day - No School for Students
- **11/5:** Conferences
- **11/9:** Art Club - Team A Yellow
- **11/12:** Conferences
- **11/16:** Art Club Team B Pink
- **11/20:** Art Club Team B Pink
- **11/23:** Art Club Team A Yellow
- **11/25-11/27 -** Holiday Break

SIGN UP FOR PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES!



We are excited to meet with you during our Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences on **November 5 or November 12**.
Please use the link provided to sign up for a conference time. Be sure to register with your child's homeroom teacher. If you are unsure who your child's homeroom teacher is, please ask your child or contact the school office for assistance. Our office staff is happy to help with scheduling and teacher information.
Please note: You will need to change the calendar view to **November** to see the available conference times.

We look forward to meeting with you and partnering in your child's success!
IJ Holton Office
(507) 460-1525

CLICK HERE: To sign up for parent/teacher conferences.

Consistent Attendance Matters!



At Austin Public Schools, we know that showing up matters. Consistent attendance is one of the clearest predictors of a student's success, not only in the classroom, but in life after graduation. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve academically, graduate on time, and find success in college, careers, or both.

Strong attendance also tells us something important: it reflects how connected students and families/caregivers feel to their school community. When attendance drops, whether for specific groups or across the district, it often signals challenges we can help address, including school climate and engagement, as well as social, emotional, or family barriers.

That's why we're focused on building schools where students want to be. Through strong instruction, supportive relationships, and programs that care for the whole child, Austin Public Schools is working to ensure every student feels welcome, supported, and ready to learn each day. When students feel that connection, they show up, and when they show up, they succeed.
Please watch our new video about the importance of attendance.

Please watch our new video about the importance of attendance.
English: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6QScFl1yD0
Spanish: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UN2NBvMfdZw

SHOULD MY CHILD BE IN SCHOOL TODAY?

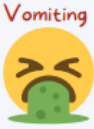
Sometimes, it isn't easy to know when your child should stay home. If you aren't sure your child is well enough to go to school, please contact the nurse at your child's school and they can help.

Fever or High Temperature



A child with a temperature over 100° F should stay home. They may return to school 24 hours after their temperature returns to normal without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

Vomiting or Diarrhea



A child with vomiting or diarrhea should stay home. They may return to school 24 hours after their last episode and when they are well enough to participate in normal activities. It is especially important to wash hands with soap and water during this time, as hand sanitizer is not effective at preventing the spread of some stomach ailments.

Cough, Cold, and Sore Throat



A child with a minor cold may come to school if they are well enough to participate in regular activities. If symptoms are excessive enough to disrupt learning, or they also have a fever, they should stay home. A child diagnosed with strep throat may return to school 12 hours after starting antibiotics and when they are well enough to participate in normal activities.

A New or Unusual Rash



A child with a new or unusual rash should stay home until the rash has healed or the child has been seen by a doctor.

Excessive Pain



A child with a minor headache, toothache, or earache may come to school if they are well enough to participate in regular activities. If pain is excessive enough to disrupt learning, they should stay home.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OFFICE WHEN YOUR CHILD IS STAYING HOME DUE TO ILLNESS. WHEN LEAVING A MESSAGE, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR CHILD'S SYMPTOMS, SO ILLNESS TRENDS IN THE SCHOOL CAN BE MONITORED.

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¿DEBERÍA ESTAR MI HIJO EN LA ESCUELA HOY?

A veces, no es fácil saber cuándo su hijo(a) debe quedarse en la casa. Si no está seguro de que su hijo(a) está lo suficientemente bien como para ir a la escuela, por favor, comuníquese con la enfermera de la escuela de su hijo(a) y ella le puede ayudar.

Fiebre



Un niño con una temperatura superior a 100° F debe quedarse en la casa. Podrá volver a la escuela 24 horas después de que su temperatura vuelva a la normalidad, sin necesidad de tomar medicamentos para reducir la fiebre.

Vómito y Diarrea



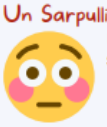
Un niño con vómitos o diarrea debe quedarse en la casa. Puede regresar a la escuela 24 horas después de su último episodio y cuando esté lo suficientemente bien como para participar en las actividades habituales. Es especialmente importante lavarse las manos con agua y jabón durante este tiempo, ya que el desinfectante de manos no es eficaz para prevenir el contagio de algunas enfermedades estomacales.

Tos, Resfriado, y Dolor de Garganta



Un niño con un resfriado leve puede acudir a la escuela si se encuentra lo suficientemente bien como para participar en las actividades habituales. Si los síntomas son fuertes como para interrumpir el aprendizaje, o si también tiene fiebre, debe quedarse en la casa. Un niño al que se le haya diagnosticado una amigdalitis puede volver a la escuela 12 horas después de comenzar a tomar antibióticos y cuando se encuentre lo suficientemente bien como para participar en las actividades normales.

Un Sarpullido Nuevo o Inusual



Un niño con un sarpullido nuevo o inusual debe quedarse en la casa hasta que haya sanado o el niño haya sido visto por un médico.

Dolor Excesivo



Un niño con un leve dolor de cabeza, dolor de muelas o dolor de oídos puede acudir a la escuela si se encuentra lo suficientemente bien como para participar en las actividades habituales. Si el dolor es demasiado fuerte como para interrumpir el aprendizaje, debe quedarse en la casa.

POR FAVOR RECUERDE AVISARLE A LA ESCUELA CUANDO SU HIJO(A) SE QUEDA EN LA CASA POR ENFERMEDAD. CUANDO DEJE UN MENSAJE, POR FAVOR, INDIQUE LOS SÍNTOMAS QUE TIENE SU HIJO(A), PARA QUE SE PUEDA MONITOREAR LA EVOLUCIÓN DE LA ENFERMEDAD EN LA ESCUELA.

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Parent Awareness: IJ Holton Lockdown Drill Dates



IJ Holton Lockdown Drill Dates

app.smore.com

REMOTE LEARNING DAYS

In the event of an unscheduled school closure, valuable instructional time can be lost, often resulting in the need to make up missed school days. Remote Learning Days allow us to take advantage of today's digital resources to maintain continuity of learning, minimize disruptions to instruction, and provide students with meaningful educational opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting.
Enclosed is a link that can be used in the event of inclement weather or an emergency school closure. By keeping this link readily available, you will have quick and convenient access to information and learning resources for all schools at your fingertips.

Remote Learning Days - Austin Public Schools | Inspire. Empower. Accelerate.

Remote Learning Days - Our mission at Austin Public Schools is to Inspire, Empower, and Accelerate as we prepare learners to make a difference in the world.

austin.k12.mn.us

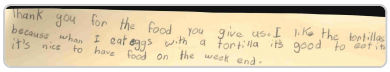
Support IJ Holton and Order Your Fan Gear!



Click Here to Order Your Fan Gear

If you are in need of extra food, we can help!





Backpack Program

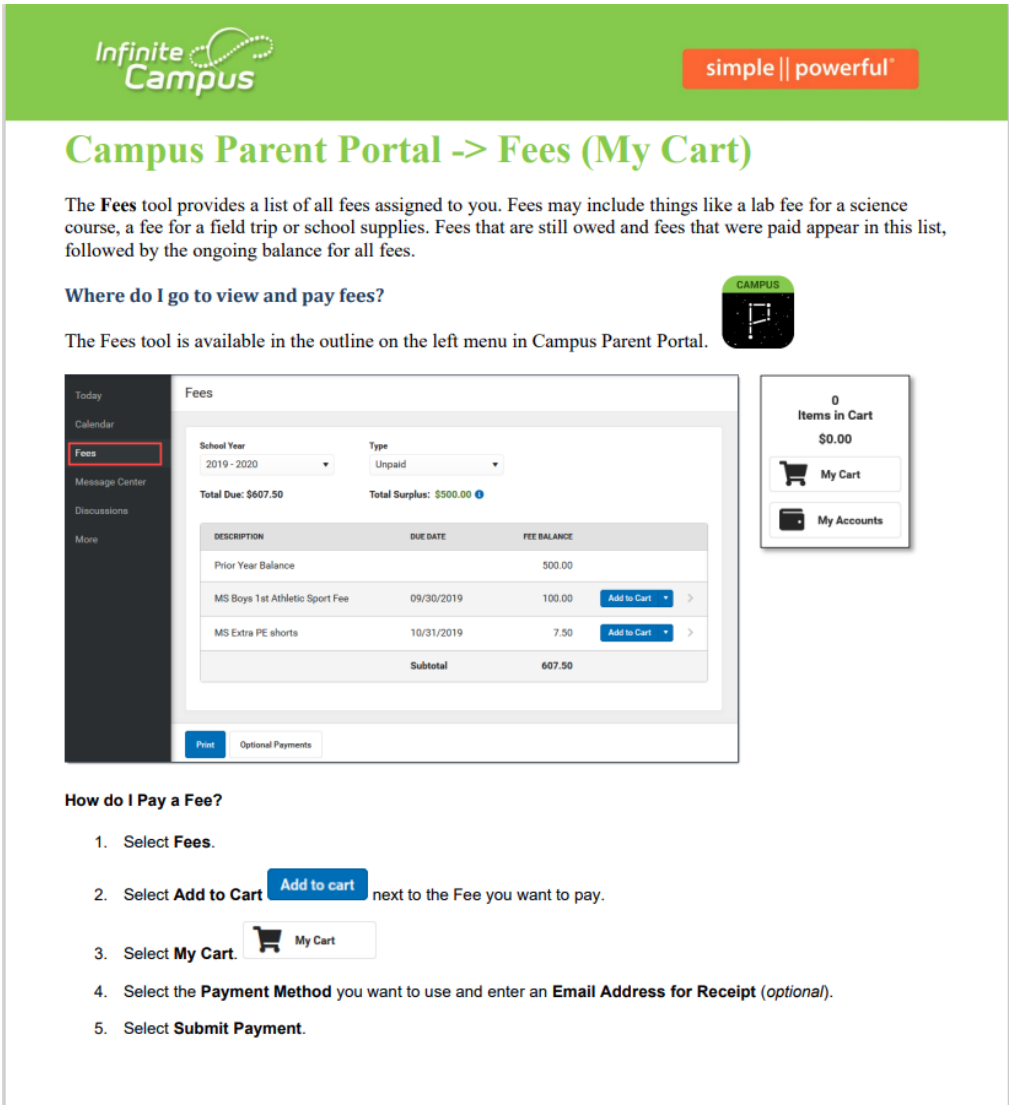
Enrollment for the Backpack Program during the 2026-27 is now open, please click the button above to register for the program.

uwmower.org

DO

Pay Fees

Please see below if you want to pay your fees online. You may always pay at the school with check/cash/or credit card also.



Athletics

Sports Information from EMS Athletic Director

Parents and Students:

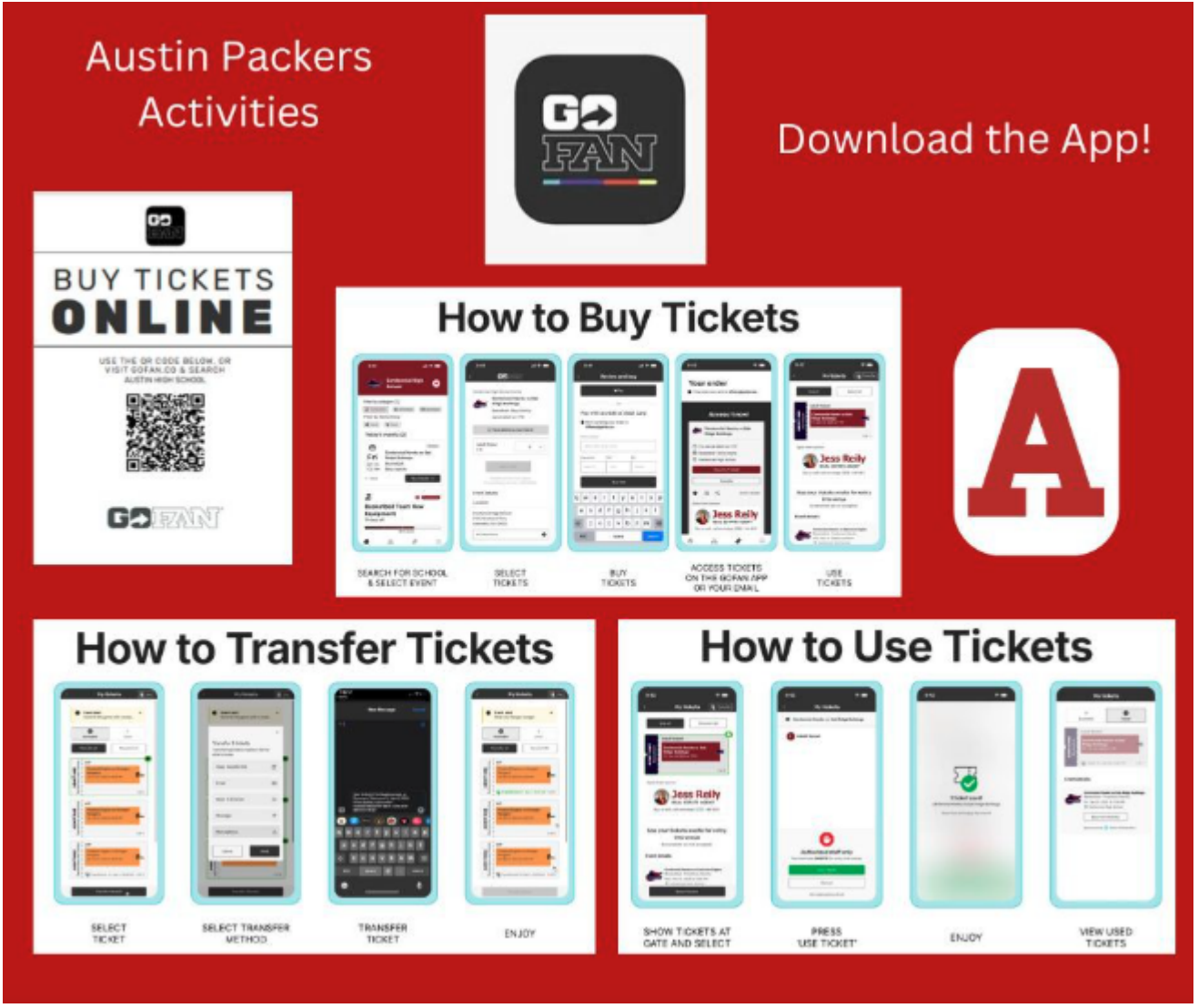
Please see the athletic options for our winter sports seasons. Several opportunities are open at Ellis as well as AHS for our student athletes. Registrations will open on various dates and will only

be open for two weeks. We will be opening up a winter weightlifting option as well - more information to come!

Just a reminder - prior to registration, sports physicals must be turned in to the Ellis office. They can be dropped off or emailed to nicole.murphy@austin.k12.mn.us
Registration options will NOT show up in the Portal until the physical is entered.
If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

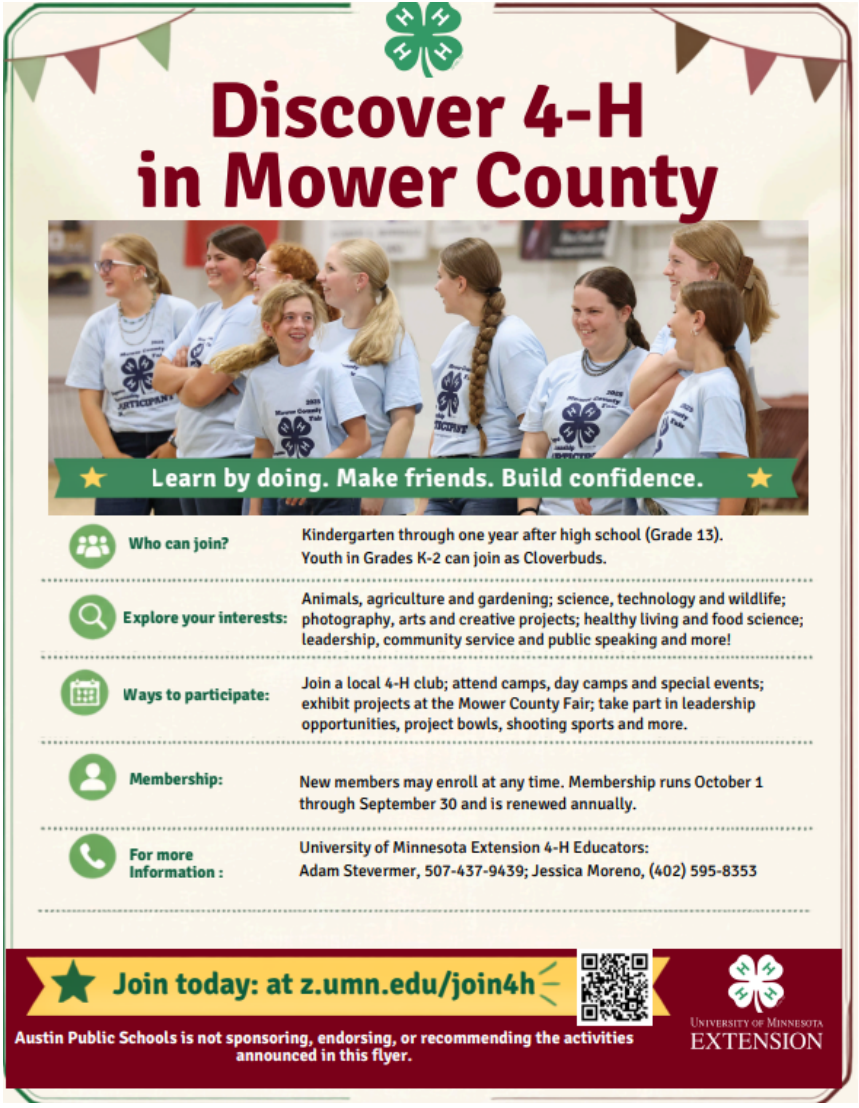
Nichelle Gabrielson, Middle School Athletic Director





Austin Public Schools is not sponsoring, endorsing, or recommending the activities announced in these flyers.

Would you like to join 4-H?



Free Community Event



Workshop for ages 8 & up



An Evening of Fun!









Homecoming 2026



















Nature Center Field Trip







IJ Holton Intermediate School

https://holton.austin.k12.mn.us

Principal: Dewey Schara
Assistant Principal: Kane Malo
Dean of Students - Dave Brown
Principal's Administrative Assistant: Karla Dooley

1800 4th Ave SE
Austin, MN 55912
507-460-1525

School Hours:
7:45 AM - 4:00 PM (Mon-Thursday)
7:45 AM-3:00 PM (Fri)