



# School District of Altoona

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Dr. Connie Biedron, Superintendent

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## ALTOONA BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting  
District Board Room  
809 7<sup>th</sup> Street West  
March 10, 2015  
8:30 a.m.

### *Agenda*

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Reading of Public Notice
4. Pledge of Allegiance
5. Board Action after Consideration and Discussion
  - a. Consider Recommendation for iPad Purchase for Elementary School
  - b. Consider Adoption of 2015-17 Budget Resolution Pertaining to School Funding
  - c. Consider Adoption of Resolution Pertaining to the Expansion of Vouchers
6. Discuss Options for Extension of Water and Sewer to Elementary School Site
7. Discuss Retirement Plan Options
8. Adjournment

*The vision of the Altoona School District, in partnership with our students, their families, and our community, is to build a foundation for life-long learning and the emotional well-being of our students. We are dedicated to offering large school opportunities with a small school approach.*

Addition of iPads in the Elementary School  
Core Subject and Specialist Classrooms Recommendation  
March 4, 2015

Project Bidders	Model	Units/Cost	<u>Bid Amount</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Apple Computers Austin TX 78727 (See attached quote 2202144199)	iPad mini 2 Wi-Fi 32GB	80/\$324	\$25,920.00	X

I am pleased to recommend that we purchase iPad mini 2 Wi-Fi 32GB from Apple Computers. Because Apple Computer requires that school districts buy iPads and other computer equipment from them directly there are no competitors to get bids from. We have an excellent relationship with Apple computers, the devices are automatically enrolled into their warranty program and we get a discount when we purchase in bulk 10 packs. I will be purchasing other accessories such as protective cases, screen covers and mobile carts that will meet our needs for charging and protecting the iPads from accidental damage through another dealer. Thank you!

This is an expenditure from the current year (2014/15)  
technology budget.



**Altoona Board of Education**  
**2015-17 Budget Resolution Pertaining to School Funding**

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**WHEREAS**, Wisconsin has a long tradition of providing a high-quality public education system and investing in public education is an investment not only in our students' capacity for success beyond high school but an investment in economic development and the future of Wisconsin; and

**WHEREAS**, since the 1993-94 school year, school districts have been operating under state-imposed revenue limits that cap the amount that schools can collect in state aid and local property taxes combined, and thus serve to limit school spending; and

**WHEREAS**, until recently, revenue limits have been increased annually at the rate of inflation to accommodate increases in costs to school districts and provide a stable and predictable annual increase for schools to use in budgetary planning; and

**WHEREAS**, Governor Walker's proposed 2015-17 state budget allows no increase in revenue limits in either the 2015-16 or 2016-17 school years; and

**WHEREAS**, with no increase in per pupil revenue limits, none of the additional state dollars proposed for K-12 education general aid (i.e., \$108 million in 2016-17) will go to classrooms, rather, it must instead be directed to reducing property taxes; and

**WHEREAS**, the budget proposal eliminates \$150 in per pupil aid in 2015-16, an immediate and actual cut of \$127 million public education funding statewide. Because this aid has been provided outside the revenue limit, districts have no authority to levy property taxes (i.e., cannot recapture) this lost aid; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed budget includes additional funding for sparsity aid and high-cost pupil transportation aid targeted to rural school districts, not all rural school districts qualify for this aid and for those that do qualify, the amounts received are unlikely to offset the loss of per pupil aid in 2015-16; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed budget also expands taxpayer subsidies to private voucher schools and independent charter schools, which will take additional money away from state general aid to school districts (on top of the cuts) and reduce opportunities for public school children; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed budget provides an additional \$105.6 million in each year to increase the school levy tax credit, this money will be paid to municipalities not school districts and does not provide resources directly to schools. Although the name of this tax credit suggests it has something to do with money for schools, its' only connection to school budgets is that it is calculated based on school levies; and

**WHEREAS**, Governor Walker and various legislators have made public comments in support of increasing funding for public schools if additional state revenue is available after April tax collections are counted;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the **Altoona Board of Education** calls upon **Senator Terry Moulton** and **Representative Kathleen Bernier** to work with their legislative colleagues to support increased funding for public education in the current budget for the benefit of Wisconsin's future and for the benefit of all public school students.

Adopted this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2015.



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Helen S. Drawbert  
President

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Michael J. Hilger  
Clerk

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Robin E. Elvig  
Vice President

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Bradley D. Poquette  
Treasurer

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David A. Rowe  
Member



## Altoona Board of Education

### Resolution Pertaining to the Expansion of Vouchers

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**WHEREAS**, the school board, administrators, teachers, staff, parents and community members of the **School District of Altoona** are united in our effort to provide all children with the highest quality educational opportunities possible; and

**WHEREAS**, private school voucher advocates have consistently pushed for expanding taxpayer subsidies to pay tuition for students in private schools in Wisconsin; and

**WHEREAS**, the creation of a state-wide voucher program in 2013 put our state on a path toward the establishment of two separate school systems—one public, one private and both publicly funded; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor in his 2015-17 state budget has proposed to expand taxpayer subsidies for private schools by removing the existing enrollment cap of 1,000 students from the state-wide voucher program, while at the same time freezing revenue limits and cutting per pupil aid to Wisconsin public school districts; and

**WHEREAS**, the cuts to public education in the proposed budget show that our state is not able to adequately support the public schools it is constitutionally mandated to operate, let alone providing a taxpayer subsidy to private schools the state has no requirement to aid.

**WHEREAS**, the governor's proposed budget would, for the first time, pay for vouchers directly out of the state general aid--money public school districts receive from the state; and

**WHEREAS**, in the past, vouchers have always been funded by a separate appropriation but now, for the first time, for every dollar that a new voucher student receives, public schools will receive less state aid; regardless of whether the new voucher student was ever enrolled in a public school; and

**WHEREAS**, because public school districts can't raise property taxes to make up for the general aid they lose as a result, this will be a further cut to affected public school budgets, resulting in fewer opportunities for children in those public schools; and

**WHEREAS**, voucher expansion could exacerbate declining enrollment and by diminishing economies of scale and scope could hamper the ability of many public school districts to operate schools efficiently;

**THEREFORE**, the **Altoona Board of Education** resolves to express its opposition to the governor's proposal and to inform parents and taxpayers of our district and the legislators who represent our district of the following facts about voucher programs:

## **Fact #1 — Vouchers Do Not Improve Student Achievement**

According to multiple studies of private school voucher programs in the District of Columbia, Milwaukee, and Cleveland, students offered vouchers **do not** perform better on average in reading and math than students in public schools. In Racine, students in public schools perform better on average in reading and math than voucher students, despite the fact that over 60 percent of Racine public school students are in poverty (i.e., qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches with family incomes of less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level), while the Racine voucher program accepts students with family incomes of up to 300 percent of the poverty level.

In 2011, the non-partisan Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau released a five-year longitudinal study, which concluded that students in Milwaukee using vouchers to attend private schools perform no better on standardized tests than their counterparts in public schools.

## **Fact #2 — Vouchers Avoid Public Accountability**

As locally elected officials, public school board members understand the importance of accountability for our public schools. We operate within a framework of open meetings and open records laws and stand before our communities for election or reelection as voters hold the ultimate accountability at the ballot box. As careful stewards of the public purse, we also accept the responsibility to closely examine our policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that we are being as efficient and as productive as possible.

Based on three years' experience, we find the recently developed school report cards to be an effective way to measure our progress and report our results. We are thankful for the effort and resources expended to create the current accountability (report card) system, and we remain committed to finding ways to help every student achieve and be successful.

Against this backdrop, we note that vouchers channel taxpayer dollars into private schools that can be operated by for-profit (or not-for-profit) organizations, and are not bound by most state instructional requirements or graduation standards, are not yet subject to either the state's accountability system (i.e., no school report cards will be issued until 2016-17 under current law) and are not subject to the requirements contained in state and federal laws governing special education services for students with disabilities.

Voucher schools are not governed by locally elected school board members who must stand for election or re-election, and do not operate transparently. Private voucher schools are not required to adhere to state open meetings and public records laws. They are not required to hold budget hearings or provide information to the general public about their budgets.

Voucher schools do not have to employ highly qualified teachers who have a background in the subjects they teach; in fact, they do not even have to hire certified or licensed teachers. Voucher schools do not

have to accept all students, nor do they have to provide students with the same due process protections afforded students by public schools. And even if a student is admitted to a private voucher school, the school can later reject him or her for numerous reasons of its own choosing, including poor academic performance.

### **Fact #3—Unlimited Statewide Voucher Expansion Will Drain Resources Away From Public Schools**

If the private school voucher program is expanded and students who are residents of our community opt to attend a voucher school with a taxpayer subsidy, our district would lose state aid (to the voucher schools).

Vouchers have always been funded by a separate appropriation. Now, for the first time, the state would pay for vouchers directly out of the state aid--money public schools receive from the state. Under the proposed budget, for every dollar that a *new* voucher student in the statewide voucher program receives, public schools will receive less state aid. And because public schools can't raise property taxes to make up for this lost aid, this is will be another cut for public school students. Allowing uncapped enrollment in private voucher schools combined with the funding mechanism proposed by the governor's budget will reduce opportunities for children in public schools.

The *Budget in Brief* document issued by the State Budget Office reiterates this objective of having the money follow the student. It states, "The Governor recommends... [s]etting the course to a future in which each choice (voucher) student is funded the same way, with his or her home district's per pupil allocation following the pupil to the school of choice... ."

### **Fact #4—The New Admissions Criteria Proposed for the Statewide Voucher Program Will Still Shift the Cost of Private School Tuition for Voucher Students to the Taxpayers**

The budget bill proposes to change the criteria for acceptance into the statewide voucher program. Under the new criteria, a pupil must satisfy one of the following to attend a private school under the statewide voucher program. The pupil must: (a) have been enrolled in a public school in the school district in the previous school year; (b) have not been enrolled in school in the previous school year; (c) have attended a private voucher school under the statewide voucher program in the previous school year; or (d) be applying to kindergarten, 1st grade, or 9th grade.

These are similar to the requirements that have been in place for the Racine voucher program since its inception. While these requirements are intended to favor public school students transferring into private voucher schools, the experience in Racine is that more than half of the students entering the voucher program there this year were never enrolled in and/or have never attended Racine public schools. To the extent that these students would have attended a private school in the absence of the voucher program, the voucher program is shifting the burden for paying the costs of private school tuition of voucher students to the taxpayers of this state.

Problematic for public schools is that these voucher payments will come directly at the expense of districts in which those students newly admitted to the statewide voucher program reside, regardless of whether those students have ever been enrolled or attended public schools in those districts.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the **Altoona Board of Education** calls upon **Governor Walker**, **Senator Terry Moulton** and **Representative Kathleen Bernier** to remove all expansion of vouchers (i.e. taxpayer subsidies for private schools) from the state budget bill.

Adopted this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2015.



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