



For Immediate Release: July 24, 2020

Railroader Return-to-School Plan Released

Detailed plans outlining our September return to school were released to parents today, Friday, July 24.

A District team worked long and hard, analyzing potential options given our priorities - high levels of health and safety, instruction that is student-centered, flexible, and responsive to needs, support of social and emotional needs, and our spaces.

Our Railroader Return-to-School Plan includes a **full-virtual option for those who prefer it and (with the exception of 4K) and hybrid learning for everyone else**. This maximizes our resources to get as many students back to our school buildings as possible; provides high levels of health and safety practices, and instruction that is student-centered, flexible, and responsive to students' social and emotional needs.

"The Railroader Return-to-School Plan was collaboratively developed to both follow health official guidance and maximize resources to bring students back to school safely. We know that each family in our community has varying personal needs. We hope the options we have created support our students, families, and staff as we resume learning in the fall." Dr. Heidi Eliopoulos

Plan details are attached.

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Joyce Orth, Communications Coordinator
School District of Altoona

jorth@altoona.k12.wi.us · 715-839-6032



Dr. Heidi Eliopoulos
Superintendent

Our Railroader Return-to-School Plan

Our plan includes a **full-virtual option for those who prefer it and (with the exception of 4K) and hybrid learning for everyone else.** This maximizes our resources to get as many students back to our school buildings as possible; provides high levels of health and safety practices; and instruction that is student-centered, flexible, and responsive to students' social and emotional needs.

A Full-Virtual Option

While we are excited to have students back in our schools, we understand that there are reasons individual students or families might prefer a fully virtual option in the fall. **We will have a 100% virtual option for families who prefer this. Please contact your child's principal by August 4th if you would like your child to have a 100% virtual education in the fall.**

Altoona Elementary School	Tara Betlach	tbetlach@altoona.k12.wi.us	715-838-2160
Altoona Intermediate School	Andrea Steffen	asteffen@altoona.k12.wi.us	715-838-2213
Altoona Middle School	Steve Buss	sbuss@altoona.k12.wi.us	715-838-2205
Altoona High School	Jim Reif	jreif@altoona.k12.wi.us	715-838-4376

Hybrid Learning for All

It is not currently possible to have all Altoona students in school every day. If all students came back for full days every day, we would not be able to follow the requirements in the Eau Claire County Order. However, **we have maximized resources to get as many students back to school as possible.** Below is the schedule for each school. **Across the district, our buildings will be closed to students on Wednesdays to provide for deep cleaning.**

Altoona Elementary School 4K Program

We are adding an additional 4-year-old kindergarten teacher in order to make our class sizes smaller and enable us to spread out into our spaces. This will not affect programming. Our 4K students will have the same type of programming at our new 4K Center that they had in the past. **The only schedule change is that their day off will be on Wednesdays this year, not Friday's. 4K students will attend either mornings or afternoons Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Our 4K Center will be closed on Wednesdays for deep cleaning.**

Start Date: September 14th

Altoona Elementary School (K-3) Hybrid

Classroom tables will be exchanged for individual desks so that students can be spaced out in our large elementary classrooms. **Students in Kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 3rd grade will attend Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday in-person. On Wednesdays, all K-3 students will participate in at-home learning so that the school can have deep cleaning. Age and readiness will determine if student learning activities will be virtual or paper.**

Start Date: September 1st

Altoona Intermediate School (4-5) Hybrid

One additional section of 4th grade and one additional section of 5th grade will be added in order to make class sizes smaller. This will allow students to be spread out more and meet the requirement of having students 6 feet apart. **Students in 4th and 5th grade will attend Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday in-person. On Wednesdays, all 4-5 students will participate in at-home virtual learning so that classrooms can have deep cleaning.**

Start Date: September 1st

Altoona Middle School (6-8) Hybrid

Because of classroom sizes and grade populations, **students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade will be split between in-class learning and virtual learning. Students will be divided into two groups. Group A (last names starting with A-L) will attend in-person on Mondays and Tuesdays and do virtual learning on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Group B (last names starting with M-Z) will participate in virtual learning on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, and have in-person learning on Thursdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays, all 6-8 students will participate in at-home virtual learning so that classrooms can have deep cleaning.** Our intention is to have households scheduled in the same group, including if they have a sibling at the high school. If you have a unique situation where you need a group change, please contact Mr. Buss.

Start Date: Group A (A-L) will start on Tuesday September 1st; Group B (M-Z) will start on Thursday September 3rd.

Altoona High School (9-12) Hybrid

Similar to Altoona Middle School, because of classroom sizes and grade populations, **students in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade will be split between in-class learning and virtual learning. Students will be divided into two groups. Group A (last names starting with A-L) will attend in-person on Mondays and Tuesdays and do virtual learning on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Group B (last names starting with M-Z) will participate in virtual learning on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, and have in-person learning on Thursdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays, all 9-12 students will participate in at-home virtual learning so that classrooms can have deep cleaning.** Our intention is to have households scheduled in the same group, including if they have a sibling at the high school. If you have a unique situation where you need a group change, please contact Mr. Buss.

Start Date: Group A (A-L) will start on Tuesday September 1st; Group B (M-Z) will start on Thursday September 3rd.

Masks (or other Cloth Face Covering)

Students are not required to wear masks for the full day unless local orders change to require them.

Students will be instructed to wear masks when they are not able to keep 6 feet of distance from others. Times when students will be instructed to wear masks include

- When arriving at school and entering in the door
- When passing through the halls with other groups of students
- When an activity in the classroom involves students moving around and into each other's space

Guidance from the **Wisconsin Department of Health Services** tells us that masks should not be mandatory for **students**. If an individual student or a family has a reason why a student can't or shouldn't wear a mask, the student will not be forced to do so. We will provide each student with a cloth mask and will give families information on how to wear and clean a cloth mask. We will follow the recommendation of instructing students to wear masks when they are not able to keep 6 feet of distance with others. We encourage parents to help their child(ren) practice wearing a mask if this will be new for them. Any student who wishes to wear a mask the full day is welcome to do so.

Transportation

School buses typically carry more students than can be seated 6 feet apart. If your schedule allows and you are willing to volunteer to transport your own child to and from school, we would greatly appreciate the help reducing the number of riders on the buses so that they can be spread out further. We ask that students riding the bus wear a mask.

Ongoing Review

This plan has been made based on what we know about COVID-19 and our Eau Claire County Public Health Order at this point in time. As the health of our community evolves, we will continue to review our plan on a frequent basis. As adjustments need to be made, we will communicate with our families as quickly as we are able.

More Communication is Coming

This is a lot of information and more details will continue to be sent out. For now, we wanted to get you the information you need to begin planning for your child for fall. **Families with 6th through 12th graders will be contacted by their schools in August to notify them of which group their child(ren) has been assigned to: Group A or Group B.**

Our website will be kept up to date with current information: <https://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/rails-return>