



THE CARDINAL CHIRP

VOL XLV ISSUE NO. 4

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Mission Statement: "ALMA: Providing quality educational opportunities to Adapt, Learn, Motivate, & Achieve"



From the Desk of the Superintendent

Mr. Jon Davis, Superintendent

End of First Semester

The first semester will conclude on Wednesday and Thursday, December 18–19, with semester tests for students in grades 7–12 who do not qualify for High School Bonus Days.

- School will dismiss at 2:00 p.m. on both days.
- Friday, December 19 officially marks the end of the first semester.
- Classes will resume on Tuesday, January 5.

Winter Sports & Activities

Our students have dedicated a great deal of time and effort preparing for winter activities, and we encourage our community to come out and support them.

For dates and locations, please check:

- The school calendar
- Individual sport schedules
- The school website or mobile app

Any schedule changes will be posted on the school's social media pages and announced through the school messaging system.

Sportsmanship Expectations

As winter sports begin, we ask everyone—coaches, players, parents, and fans—to model positive behavior and good sportsmanship. This includes showing respect for opponents, officials, and one another while promoting teamwork and personal growth.

While winning is an exciting outcome, the primary goals of high school athletics are to:

- Develop leadership
- Build character
- Foster teamwork and camaraderie

During games, athletes should follow the direction of their coaches. Parents and fans best support students by respecting coaching decisions, avoiding conflicting instructions during competition, and offering encouragement outside of games.

Coaching and participating in athletics can be emotional, and at times, emotions may run high. When inappropriate remarks or actions occur, administrators will address them and expect positive changes moving forward.

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Mark Your Calendar

Dec 10-- 10:00 Start/ Teacher Inservice
Dec 18 & 19-- 2:00 Dismissal/ Semester Tests
Dec 22- Jan 5-- Christmas Break
Jan 6-- Classes Resume
Jan 14-- 10:00 Start/ Teacher Inservice

From the Desk of the Supt.

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Parents play a vital role in their children's success. We encourage you to support participation in individual and team camps and offseason weight training to help students build skills, confidence, and commitment.

Your unwavering support makes a difference. We hope to see you at activities cheering on the **Cardinals** for a successful and positive winter season.

School Board Meeting Update

At the December School Board meeting, the Board approved moving forward with a facilities improvement project following nearly **three years of review and planning**. Wilkens Architecture Design Planning and Facility Advocates completed comprehensive evaluations of district facilities and provided recommendations for improvement. Both firms reported that the buildings have been well-maintained and remain in solid condition overall.

Facility Background

The school buildings were constructed in three primary phases:

- **1940** – Two-story building housing most high school classrooms and administrative offices
- **Early 1950s** – Gymnasium, kindergarten classroom, and several elementary rooms
- **1990** – North and south elementary classrooms, practice gym, and kitchen

The most significant construction since 1990 included the Ag Building and renovations to the southwest portion of the school, which added the high school and elementary music rooms and several elementary classrooms.

Approved Project Scope

The approved project focuses primarily on infrastructure improvements, including:

- Replacing all fan coil units in the 1940 building and converting to a 4-pipe system
- Remodeling four bathrooms in the 1940 building
- Adding a fresh-air system to the 1940 building
- Replacing all windows in the 1990 addition
- Replacing boilers and pumps serving the 1990 addition
- Upgrading the fire alarm panel and installing new detectors, speakers, and devices throughout the facility
- Replacing an outdated fuse panel in the 1950s building

The total estimated cost of the project is \$3,750,000. Most of the funding will come from the existing Building Fund, with the remainder financed through the Qualified Capital Purpose Undertaking Fund. A slight levy increase may occur in future years, depending on state and federal funding.

Why This Project Is Necessary

These improvements are essential to keep facilities compliant with building codes and insurance requirements. By addressing infrastructure needs now—especially in the 1940 building—the district is projected to save \$12–15 million compared to the future cost of demolishing and replacing the building.

Christmas Break & Activity Moratorium

During Christmas break, the Nebraska School Activities Association enforces a Five-Day Practice/Competition Moratorium for all high school activities. This year, the moratorium runs from Wednesday, December 24 through Sunday, December 28.

During this period:

- Student-athletes may not use school facilities for any reason
- Alma Public Schools will follow this moratorium for all students, K–12
- No practices, competitions, or weight training will be allowed

Additionally, the main gym floor will be refinished during the break and will remain closed to all groups and individuals until December 29.

School Closings & Weather-Related Decisions

During winter weather, if school remains in session or has a late start, parents may choose to keep their children home due to road conditions or personal circumstances. If you do so, please notify the school and/or your child's bus driver.

If school is closed or delayed, announcements will be made through:

- The school messaging system
- Radio stations: KRVN (880 AM / 93.1 FM), KQKY (105.9 FM), KICX, KUVR (1380 AM)
- Television stations: KHGI (Channel 13), KGIN (Channels 10–11), KHAS (Channel 5)
- The school's Facebook and Twitter pages
- The electronic school sign

If a late start is announced, please continue monitoring communications, as conditions may worsen and result in a closure. If school must dismiss early, announcements will be made through the same channels.

Holiday Greetings

Merry Christmas to everyone! I hope you and your family have a safe, restful, and enjoyable holiday break.

If you have any specific questions that you would like answered in regards to the school, please contact me at the school. You can call me at 308-928-2131 or send your question by email to jon.davis@almacardinals.org.



Connections Through Communication This Season

Mrs. Jenni Guthrie & Mrs. Amy Donley,
Speech Language Pathologist

As the holiday season approaches, it's the perfect time to help your child build meaningful connections with others—while also strengthening their communication skills! Simple, everyday activities can support your child's language development and confidence when speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Here are a few fun ideas to try at home:

1. Play Conversation-Boosting Games

Games that involve talking and turn-taking are great for practicing communication!

- Try "Guess Who," "Charades," "20 Questions," or "I Spy."
- Encourage your child to describe what they see, explain their thinking, or give directions.
- Family board games also promote teamwork and social language!

2. Write and Send Holiday Cards

Help your child write cards or notes to family, friends, or teachers.

- Talk about what message they'd like to share ("What do you want Grandma to know about your week?").
- Practice sounding out words or writing short sentences.

For younger children, they can draw a picture and dictate their message for you to write.

3. Make Friendly Phone or Video Calls

Encourage your child to call a family member or friend to say hello.

- Before the call, help them plan what they'd like to talk about (e.g., "Ask Grandpa about his dog!").
- During the call, model good listening and turn-taking skills.
- Celebrate their effort afterward—it builds confidence!

Small Moments Make a Big Difference

When children talk, listen, write, and play with others, they're not only sharing joy—they're also practicing key communication and social-emotional skills that help them succeed in school and life. Let's make this season a time to connect through words, laughter, and love! 💬❤️



Catch your favorite home events live on Striv.tv!



What We've Been Learning-- And Celebrating-- This Season

Mrs. Annette Lowe, Fourth Grade

It is so hard to believe that we are almost ready for Christmas break. We have been working hard this year and having a lot of fun doing it. We finished up the MAPS test for the year and we were excited to see what gains we made from our previous scores.

We have worked on several different genres in reading this year and just finished with biography. We have studied realistic fiction, poetry, drama, and expository and learning the differences between each of them and what types of things we will find when we read the different genres.

In math we have been learning about problem solving and getting the hang of long division. With this, we have learned that we need to be more proficient in our multiplication facts to be able to work in long division. Our fact practice has been going well, so we are making a lot of progress.

We also have had some fun along the way. We decided that we would have a comfy clothes and snacks party day after all of our hard work in our MAPS testing. We all brought snacks to share with each other and had cups of hot chocolate to go along with the snacks. It was a very fun day with all of the different kinds of snacks that we shared.

We are so looking forward to taking a little bit of a break and enjoying the holidays with family and friends. Hopefully, we can all rest and relax and be ready for the beginning of the year and all of the things that we will be learning about.

Learning Disabilities: Understanding Strengths, Challenges and Support

Mr. Jesus Felix, Secondary Resource

What is a learning disability?

I often find myself explaining what Learning Disabilities are to students. I thought the Chirp would be a great opportunity to get a little information to you. The easiest way to explain a Learning Disability is to describe a student with a Learning Disability as having a normal IQ ranging from 85-115, with the average being 100, which means they are just as “smart or smarter” than their peers! A student with a Learning Disability may have a brain that may have difficulty reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, recalling, and/or organizing information. Learning Disabilities can't be cured or fixed. So what can be done? We, it's a team of teachers and parents, work together as a team to help support students with Learning Disabilities in the learning process. We focus on strengths and make accommodations, and/or modifications. With these tools and support from parents and staff, students can be successful within the school setting and beyond.

Some facts about Learning disabilities:

One in seven Americans has some type of learning disability. As many as 80% of students with learning disabilities have reading problems. Learning disabilities should not be confused with other disabilities such as autism, intellectual disability, deafness, blindness, behavioral disorders, or other health impairments.

Some things to consider:

Students with Learning Disabilities can learn, they are just as “smart” as their peers, and just like you and I, they have areas in their lives that are hard. For those students, school work may be harder, and it may take extra time and support, but they can be very successful in school. As you watch TV, sports, and go throughout your day remember many of your favorite entertainers, co-workers, shop owners, and family members, may have a learning disability. Those are examples of the successes students with Learning Disabilities can and do have in school, post-high school, and as they enter the workforce and into their adult lives.

Parents can help support their children with learning disabilities. For example:

- Focus on strengths. All children have things they do well and things that are difficult for them. Find your child's strengths and help them learn to use them. Your child might be good at math, music, or sports. She could be skilled at art, working with tools, or caring for animals. Be sure to praise your child often when she does well or succeeds at a task.
- Develop social and emotional skills. Learning differences combined with the challenges of growing up can make your child sad, angry, or withdrawn. Help your child by providing love and support while acknowledging that learning is hard because their brain learns in a different way. Try to find clubs, teams, and other activities that focus on friendship and fun. These activities should also build confidence. And remember, competition isn't just about winning.

- Use resources & support groups to help you learn more about parenting a child with learning difficulties. Learning and thinking differences are common. You and your child are not alone in this journey.
- Plan for the future. Many parents whose child learns and thinks differently worry about the future. Help your child plan for adulthood by encouraging them to consider their strengths and interests in education and career choices. Remind them that learning differently isn't tied to how smart they are. In fact, many people with learning difficulties are very bright and grow up to be highly successful at what they do. Special career and work programs can help build confidence by teaching decision-making and job skills. Many colleges have programs to support students who learn and think differently to successfully earn a degree.

(Learning Disabilities & Differences: What Parents Need To Know By Jennifer Zubler, MD, FAAP)

I hope this information helped you understand a little about Learning Disabilities. There are many online websites and organizations that can help you gather more information concerning disabilities, as well as ways to support children and parents.



From One-Act to Speech: What's Next?

Mrs. Courtney Stottler, Secondary ELA

We have officially wrapped up our One-Act season, and we are so proud of the hard work, dedication, and teamwork our students demonstrated throughout the process. One-Act provides students with valuable opportunities to grow in confidence, collaboration, creativity, and performance skills—and those experiences carry directly into our next exciting season. As we turn the page, we are looking forward to beginning Speech season! Speech offers students a chance to strengthen their public speaking, writing, critical thinking, and communication skills through the preparation and performance of competitive speeches. Students learn how to organize ideas clearly, express themselves with confidence, and connect with an audience—skills that are beneficial in the classroom, future careers, and everyday life.

Speech is open to students in grades 9–12, and no prior experience is required. Whether a student enjoys writing, performing, storytelling, or simply wants to build confidence speaking in front of others, Speech provides a supportive and encouraging environment to grow those skills.

If you have a student who may be interested in competing this season, they are encouraged to see Mrs. Stottler for more information. Practices will begin once classes resume after Christmas break, and we would love to welcome new faces to the team.

We're excited for what's ahead and can't wait to see our students continue to grow, compete, and succeed!

A Very Merry Preschool Season

Mrs. Sidney Kahrs, Preschool

We have had such a great start to the school year in Preschool! It has been so fun getting to know each of my students and watching them learn and grow each day. We have really enjoyed their daily stories, seeing new friendships form, and watching their creativity flourish! They are such an awesome group of kids and we have made so many fun memories together!

Some highlights we have enjoyed so far this year include:

- Learning how to write our first and last names
- Taste testing red, yellow, and green apples for A week
- Trick or treating downtown for Halloween
- Writing our letters and numbers in shaving cream
- Playing in our corn sensory bin
- Making thankful turkeys

We have especially loved decorating our Christmas tree, making gingerbread houses, and painting our own Rudolph this month! They are so eager for Santa to come and wanted to share their responses to "What would you do if you could be Santa Claus for one day?"

Bronson: Deliver presents to my brother.

Jordan: Bring presents to people.

Judd: Eat cookies and drink milk all day.

Madeline: I would give Barbie dolls, Transformers, video games, and puzzles to everyone.

Makayla: Bring kids presents.

Mariel: Give lots of presents to my mom.

Palmer: Make toys with the elves.

Parker: Go for a sleigh ride with the reindeer.

Sadie: Give presents to my family.

Tatiana: Go on his sleigh to deliver presents.

Ty: Give presents to all the kids.

Walker: Deliver presents to Parker's house.

Whit: Build robots at the North Pole.

Zayleigh: Play tag with the reindeer.

Happy Holidays!



BeReal: The Year You'll Want to Remember

Mrs. Dawn Schemper, Technology Coordinator

The Yearbook class has put an incredible amount of time, creativity, and dedication into the 2024–2025 school yearbook, and we are excited to share that the books are officially hot off the press!

Throughout the year, students spent countless hours photographing school events, sorting and organizing thousands of pictures, collaborating with one another, designing page layouts, and carefully selecting images that best capture the many activities and special moments taking place in our building. Their hard work and attention to detail helped ensure that this year's book truly reflects the spirit of our school community.

The theme for this year's yearbook is "BeReal," inspired by the popular photo-sharing app. The theme celebrates authenticity, real moments, and genuine memories—highlighting the everyday experiences, candid moments, and meaningful connections that make this school year unique.

Yearbooks are now available for purchase for \$30. If you would like to purchase a copy of the 2024–2025 yearbook, please see Mrs. Schemper or Mrs. Stottler.

Congratulations to our Yearbook students on a job well done, and thank you for preserving the memories of this school year!



PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

February 12th, 2026

2:30-7:30 p.m.

Elementary conferences will take place in the teachers' classrooms and the secondary teachers will be available in the multipurpose gym.

8TH GRADE REGISTRATION AND PARENT MEETING

February 12th, 2026

6:00 p.m.

8th grade students and their families are highly encouraged to attend to discuss high school requirements and registration for freshman year