



THE CARDINAL CHIRP

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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

The first nine weeks of school is almost in the books with the first quarter ending on Friday (10-17-25). With the end of the first quarter also comes the wrapping up of the fall sports. The softball program ended their season last week, the cross country team is competing in districts this week, the football team is playing in their last regular season game on Friday, and the volleyball team has only the conference tournament left before playing in the subdistrict in a couple of weeks. The next few days will determine whether any of the fall sports will extend their season in the postseason. Below is some information on school enrollment, NSAA classification, and a reminder about the school's attendance policy.

School Enrollment

The 2025–2026 student enrollment currently stands at 379 students in grades PK–12. This total includes over 100 option students from the surrounding area. The elementary enrollment (PK–6) is 189 students, while the secondary enrollment (grades 7–12) is 190 students.

NSAA Classification

NSAA classifications for Winter and Spring athletics/activities have not yet been published. However, based on current enrollment numbers:

- Boys' teams are expected to compete in Class C or C2 for basketball, golf, track, and possibly wrestling, and in Class D for cross country (and possibly wrestling).
- Girls' teams will likely participate in Class D for cross country and Class C for softball, volleyball, basketball, girls' wrestling, and track.
- Play Production and Speech will continue competing in Class C, consistent with recent years.

Attendance Matters

Each October, I use the newsletter to emphasize the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality for both elementary and secondary students. The reason behind this is simple—research consistently shows that attendance is the number one factor in student success. Unfortunately, this message doesn't reach everyone, and that's why we are highlighting it again.

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Mark Your Calendar

Oct 6-- No School-- ESU Teacher Conference

Oct 10-- End of 1st Quarter

Oct 15-- 10:00 Start-- Teacher Inservice

Oct 23-- 2:00 Dismissal-- Fall Break

Oct 24-- No School-- Fall Break

From the Desk of the Supt.

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Key Points from the Attendance Policy:

(The full policy is available in the **student handbooks**, located on the school's website.)

Reporting Absences:

When a student is absent for all or part of the day, parents should call the school office (928-2131) by 9:00 a.m. This helps ensure student safety and serves as official notification. If no contact is made by 10:00 a.m., local law enforcement may be contacted.

Shared Responsibility:

As stated in the handbook:

"The establishment and maintenance of desirable habits of punctuality and attendance is a shared responsibility of parents, students, and the school." Without this shared commitment, students may struggle academically.

Absence Limits:

Any student who exceeds 10 absences in a class per semester may lose credit for that class. If there are extenuating circumstances, parents/guardians may appeal by contacting the school within 10 school days of receiving notice of potential credit loss.

Activity Participation:

Students who miss more than 10 days per semester may also be removed from extracurricular activities.

Tardies:

After the third tardy, additional tardies begin counting toward a student's total absences. Repeated tardiness may lead to make-up time or other consequences, such as loss of field trip or extra-duty privileges.

Excessive Absence Notices:

These are sent after a student reaches 4-5 absences or tardies. Continued issues may prompt a meeting involving parents, the student, administrators, and/or the school counselor to develop a plan for improvement.

Attendance Intervention Plans:

These plans may include support such as:

- Medical or behavioral health evaluations
- Educational counseling
- Referrals to community services
- Family or individual counseling
- Coordination with external support agencies

If attendance does not improve and the student is absent for more than 20 days (or the hourly equivalent), the school must notify the County Attorney for habitual truancy, in accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-209. Referrals may also occur earlier if needed.

- Medical Records related to absences may be shared with the County Attorney as part of this process.

How Parents Can Help

- Parents can support student attendance by:
- Scheduling appointments outside of school hours when possible
- Avoiding family trips during school days
- Ensuring children wake up on time to catch the bus or arrive on time
- Explaining the importance of daily attendance and punctuality
- Supporting the school's policies on absences and tardiness

Why Attendance Matters

- Consistent attendance helps:
- Students stay on track academically
- Teachers spend less time reteaching
- Office staff focus on duties beyond absence verification
- The district maintains stronger attendance rates, which affect state aid funding
- A drop in attendance may lead to reduced funding from the state.

Final Reminder

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential for academic and lifelong success. Help give your child the best opportunity to succeed by ensuring they are in school every day and on time.

If you have questions about any of the information in this newsletter or other school-related matters, please contact me at **928-2131** or by email at jon.davis@almacardinals.org.



Catch your favorite home events live on Striv.tv!

Voices of the Future

Mrs. Mattie Kreifels, Elementary Music

The beginning of the year has flown by in elementary music! This month, we have been busy learning as much as we can before we get started preparing for the quickly approaching Christmas concert! Last week, the second graders started learning about instrument families and were super excited to have some high school band members come in and play for them! Something new this year in music is the preschoolers coming up. This has been a fun experience, and they are super excited to show off their skills at the Christmas concert!

Cardinal Youth Choir has begun, and we are excited to grow as singers! These students dedicate their recess time twice a week to learning music and technique. This year we have a few exciting opportunities. The students will be singing at the Veterans Day program for the first time! We also have the NMEA all-state honor choir in November and Sing Around Nebraska in February. We are excited to announce that Brynn Guthrie and Malia Stottler have been selected to participate in the NMEA all-state children's choir this year!

Choir Members 2025-2026

4 th Grade:	5 th Grade:	6 th Grade:
Cora Swink	Alaina Thomas	Kelcee Simonson
Jullien Wells	Briar Robinson	Macie McCarley
Raina Schnuerle	Brynn Guthrie	Sydney Siebels
Grace McLain	Devyn Wheeler	Aela Low
Brook Evans	Fletcher Low	
Malia Stottler	Hendryx Ogier	
Abbie Noonan	Michael Eggink	
Anni Bradley	Morgan Laux	
	Marcus Schultz	
	Jamie Turner	



Falling for Learning

Mrs. Alex Davis, Second Grade

I can't believe it's already October! Our second graders have been busy learning lots of fun new things. We are growing as readers, writers, and mathematicians every day, and we're excited for all the fall fun this month will bring! Here are a couple of reasons our second graders love fall.

- "I love jumping in the crunchy leaves."
- "Fall is my favorite because it gets cooler outside."
- "I like picking pumpkins."
- "I love Halloween because I get candy."
- "Fall is fun because I can wear cozy sweaters."
- "I like to drink hot chocolate when it's chilly."
- "I love carving pumpkins with my family."
- "Fall is the best because the trees change colors."
- "I like football games and cheering for my team."

Pumpkins, Costumes, and Candy-- Oh My!

Mrs. Amanda Davis, Kindergarten

The kindergarten class has had a great start to the 2025-26 school year, and we are getting geared up and ready for the month of October. We have a lot of fun things happening during this month. We start our Super Reader Program, we are going to learn about fire safety by having the Alma Volunteer Fire Department visit our school, and we will be traveling to Kearney to the Children's Museum for our first field trip. And, of course, there is the most exciting part of the month, HALLOWEEN!

This year, I have 22 students who are filling my kindergarten classroom. They are very energetic, always ready to learn, and have kept Mrs. Albin and myself on our toes this year! We are quickly adjusting to being in school and finding our way around the halls, as well as learning all kinds of new things and how to follow classroom rules, which can be very overwhelming – FOR EVERYONE!!

I wanted to introduce my class to everyone, and Halloween is such a fun holiday for kids, so we decided to give everyone some suggestions on what to put in your Halloween bowls this year, as well as give you an idea of what they are already thinking for their costume. Here are their answers:

Lincoln Blank – I am going to be a Savannah Banana and Airheads are my favorite.

Myles Brandt – I am going to be a Pumpkin, and Chocolate is the best.

Elsie Calkins – I am going to be a KPOP Demon Hunter, and I love chocolate.

Oliver Calkins – I am going to be a Red Power Ranger, and Smarties are my favorite.

Houston Dietz – I am going to be a tractor, and chocolate bars are the best.

Maverick Eggink – I am going to be Spiderman, and I love chocolate.

Barrett Engel – I am going to be Captain America, and I hope to get gum.

Magnus Herrick – I am going to be Spiderman, and I love Bubblegum.

Kol Koziski – I am going to be a Ninja Turtle, and I like Lollipops.

Josie Laux – I am going to be a Pink Axolotl, and I love Bubblegum.

Asher Maas – I am going to be a Blue Ninja, and Golden Airheads are my favorite.

Kya McCord – I am going to be Snow White, and I hope I get Tootsie Rolls.

Rawlings McKenzie – I am going to be Spiderman, and I love Smarties.

Maeve McLain – I am going to be a Skelton, and I love Smarties.

Francis Moulton – I am going to be a Shark Rider, and M&M's are the best.

Levi Noonan – I am going to be a Ninja, and Snickers are the best.

Olivia Robinson – I am going to be a Horse, and Smarties are the best.

Wesley Sikes – I am going to be a Ninja Turtle, and I love suckers.

Maverick Slocum – I am going to be an Army soldier, and Airheads are my favorite.

Jack Stoelting – I am going to be Spin the Spider, and I love Twix.

Sayer Sutton – I am going to be a Football Player, and Candy Corn is the best.

Thomas Wright – I am going to be a dinosaur, and Snickers are my favorite.

Kindergarten is such a fun age to teach because we are ALL learning ALL the time. If you have a chance to walk down our hallways, keep your eyes open for all of our hard work. And stop in and visit with us if you ever have a chance. I am really excited for this year, and I know I have a great group of kids to work with. Hope everyone has a great school year! Happy Halloween a little early!

The following article by Alisha McCord first appeared in the September 2025 issue of The Cardinal Chirp.

A few student responses were accidentally left out the first time around, so we're thrilled to repost it in order to highlight the great thoughts from every student!

Building Foundations for Community and Learning

Mrs. Alisha McCord, Fifth Grade

What a wonderful start to the school year! I've truly enjoyed getting to know all of our 5th and 6th graders—this is such a lively, curious, and fun group of students. One of the most important parts of any new school year is learning who our students are as individuals and celebrating what makes each of them unique.

I've enjoyed asking my 5th grade homeroom class questions for everyone to share and discuss. These questions range from silly to thoughtful, but they always spark great conversations and help us learn something new about each other.

My favorite question so far has been: "If you could switch places with one relative, who would it be and why?" While some common themes emerged, the answers were wonderfully creative and insightful:

Tony Ardiana: I would switch places with my dad so I could drive.

Kaylee Deyle: I would switch places with my grandma because she has a horse. I could also drive and have a credit card.

Carolyn Dickinson: I would switch places with my grandma because she spoils us and I wouldn't have to go to school anymore.

Cassidy Ehrke: I would switch places with my dad so I could drive and not go to school.

Brynn Guthrie: If I could switch places with someone for a day, I would choose my mom, Jenni Guthrie, in the SUMMER. I could have a shopping spree on her credit card, be able to drive my dad's grey truck, and go to Spring City. I chose her in the summer so I wouldn't have to work.

Miracle Joppa: I would switch places with my aunt Sarah because she works at the Florida beach.

Nevaeh Kindler: I want to switch places with my aunt because she works at the daycare. I like playing with the kids.

Carter Kresser: I would switch places with Dad so I could drive and do other fun stuff.

Fletcher Low: I would switch places with my step-sister, Jajriane, so I could meet her, see how her life is, do her job for her, drive her car, go to college, and be 24. She could see how my school is too.

Bentley Lynch: I would switch places with my brother because he can drive.

Luis Maldonado: I would switch places with my mom because I could go to dancing clubs.

Hendryx Ogier: I would switch places with my dad because I want to be a handyman.

Briar Robinson: I would switch places with my grandma so I could drink coffee and relax.

Marcus Schultz: I would switch places with Grandpa Max, so my grandma could see him one more time.

Alaina Thomas: I would switch places with my mom because I could have money and travel away from my sister. I also could wear makeup, learn how to drive, and try not to crash.

Draven Vasbinder: I would switch places with Dad because he is strong and cool. I would like to drive his car too.

Devyn Wheeler: I would switch places with my mom because I want to cut people's hair and boss Brandt around.

It's been such a joy hearing their perspectives and seeing how much they admire and appreciate their family members. I'm looking forward to many more great conversations as the year continues!



Wickedly Smart Learners

Mrs. Katrina Blank, Third Grade

We have had a great start to the year, and I am so grateful to be back at APS teaching third grade! I have really enjoyed getting to know this year's group of third graders and their many talents, interests, and hobbies. They are a very hardworking group of individuals with positive attitudes towards learning!

We had a great time at the end of September, showing off our school spirit and dressing up for spirit week. This month, we are looking forward to some Halloween fun. We have lots of games and activities planned this month centered around the Holiday including: addition with arachnids, Halloween inferring and drawing conclusions, frightening figures of speech, scary similes, and monster writing. But this group is most excited for the end-of-the-month trick-or-treating! They wanted to share their favorite Halloween Treats!

"I like Skittles or M&Ms"- **Ryker Luke**

"I like KitKats."- **Scarlett Langley**

"My favorite is Candy Corn."- **Clancy Landen**

"Snickers is my favorite."- **Kellen Ardiana**

"Jawbreakers are my favorite."- **Kinsley Gulizia**

"My favorite is gumballs."- **Wyatt Neumeyer**

"Gum and jumbo jawbreakers are the best."- **Reid Charles**

"I like Reese's."- **Hazel Simonson**

Hope everyone has a 'spook'tacular October!

Learning from the Past, Leading the Future

Mrs. ReDonna Russell, Fifth Grade

"You have to know the past to understand the present." -Carl Sagan

The school year is off to a great start...hard to believe we are almost done with the first quarter already! 5th (American History) and 6th (World History) are two of my favorite subjects to teach and we are off and running! The 6th grade have been learning about Ancient Mesopotamia...which includes learning a parody song (some of you parents may be hearing it on repeat ☺), and learning about their religion, social structure, arts, inventions (wheel and arch), and government, such as Hammurabi's Code. These are all areas that will be covered in each unit.

The 5th grade will be learning about the state government and participating in the Kid Governor program over the next couple months. Nebraska just recently joined the program and I am excited to be able to have the students be part of the inaugural year here in our state! Here is an explanation of the program from their website:

Kid Governor® empowers 5th graders to change the world. This groundbreaking approach to civic education immerses students in a real election for their state's Kid Governor, a fellow 5th grader who will represent them during a one-year term of active leadership. More than a contest and not just about the position of governor, the program teaches important lessons about state government, voting, elections, and civic participation. This annual program provides 5th graders the experience of nominating one student candidate from their school and voting in an authentic statewide election. Classes can vote in the election, nominate a student to run for office, or both! Participants identify issues impacting their community and state, research solutions, create platforms to address them, and make campaign videos. Schools run primaries to select nominees; each school's winner advances to the state level.

In November, 5th graders across our state watch and evaluate the campaign videos of seven final candidates. They then participate in a statewide election, casting their votes for the student and platform they support. The student receiving the most votes is elected Kid Governor and serves a one-year term of leadership and advocacy. They work with Civic Nebraska and their Cabinet to fulfill their campaign platform and encourage students to make a difference on the winning campaign issue in their own communities.

Kid Governor® is a national, award-winning civics program led by [affiliate organization] and created by The Connecticut Democracy Center. Launched in Connecticut in 2015, Kid Governor® is now a national movement with programs in other states. Visit [kidgovernor.org](https://ne.kidgovernor.org) to learn about the national program.

---<https://ne.kidgovernor.org>

Due to the late notification from the state about the program, we will just be doing the learning and voting part of the program this year. We have talked about the levels of government in the past with our Election unit for the Presidential Race, but this will be an awesome experience for the kids to actually have a voice in electing the first Kid Governor for Nebraska! I am excited to get started on this unit in the upcoming weeks.



Upcoming Events:



Parents of 5th & 6th Graders:
Wednesday, October 22nd @ 6p.m.
@ APS School Library
Learn about the upcoming 2027 Washington, D.C. educational trip through World Classrooms.