

# ***THE CARDINAL'S CHIRP***



ALMA PUBLIC SCHOOL  
PO BOX 170  
ALMA, NE 68920



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## **FROM THE DESK OF SUPERINTENDENT DAVIS**

I would like to welcome back the students, teachers and staff to the new school year. It is great to see all the staff and students back in the hallways again eager to work and learn. The fall activities are off to a good start with practices, and all of the sports should be competitive throughout the season. As we begin the school year with activities, Alma Public School encourages good sportsmanship at all activities, home and away. Fans are encouraged to be positive in support of the teams and players and refrain from negative comments directed toward players, coaches and referees throughout the school year.

### **School Enrollment:**

The 2018-2019 student enrollment is up 17 students from the start of school last year, with 348 K-12 students enrolled. Currently there are 184 elementary students in grades K-6 down 3 students from last year and 164 secondary students in grades 7-12, an increase of 20 students from the start of last year. A special welcome to all of our new students and staff joining Alma Public Schools this school year.

### **2018-2019 Budget:**

The 2018-2019-school budget is almost complete and will be presented at the September 10<sup>th</sup> School Board meeting. The proposed tax asking and total levy is down from the previous year. The tax asking has been decreased by \$81,889 and total levy will be set at \$1.013 down approximately a penny from last year's levy of \$1.015. The levy includes \$0.0925 or \$3,203,909 for the General Fund, 6.5¢ or \$225,136 for the Special Building Fund and 2.3¢ or \$80,807 for the Qualified Capital Purpose Fund. The General Fund is the fund that pays all of the District's expenses associated with running the school. The Special Building Fund is used to make building and ground improvements and repairs and is used to pay off the recent construction projects. The Qualified Capital Purpose Undertaking Fund is paying for the HVAC and Track improvements that were approved by the Board of Education in 2008 and 2010. The School Districts total valuation decreased almost \$7.5 million from \$353,866,357 to \$346,368,957 or a 2.12% decrease. The District had a good increase in State Aid from \$361,475 to \$626,183. A large portion of this money, \$368,564, comes from the District's option enrollment students. For the first time, in several years, the school is getting a significant amount in equalization aid in the amount of \$223,912. A school district's equalization aid is based on the district's needs minus resources plus a complicated list of other factors. The majority of Alma's equalization aid grew this year because of the increase in student enrollment and the cost associated with that increase. If you have questions about this year's budget or any other school related items, please contact me at 928-2131 or by email at [jon.davis@almacardinals.org](mailto:jon.davis@almacardinals.org).

## **AN INTRODUCTION TO NEW APS STAFF MEMBERS**

A new school year. New ideas. New supplies. New faces! It is exciting to introduce the new staff members at Alma Public School.

The principal's office is in the same place, but a new principal has moved into the space. Mrs. Stephanie Brandyberry and her family moved to Alma in June, and she immediately became a friendly face in the building. For the last three years, Mrs. Brandyberry, a Fort Hays State University and University of Nebraska at Kearney graduate, has been the principal in Macksville, Kansas. Prior to that, she taught high school math in Schuyler and Lexington, Nebraska.

The entire Brandyberry family is passionate about Husker football---actually, "Husker anything" according to Mrs. Brandyberry. Besides following the Huskers, she enjoys fishing, reading, and family time on the lake. Mrs. Brandyberry is married to Nick. They have three sons: Nate, a UNL freshman; Carter, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader; and Tucker, a 6<sup>th</sup> grader.

She is excited about living and working in Alma because everyone has been very welcoming and kind. She is also looking forward to growing and learning more as an educator. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]

[NEW STAFF from page 1]

ReDonna Russell, a 19-year veteran elementary teacher has joined the teaching staff. Mrs. Russell, whose family moved to Alma last year, is teaching third grade. She is a Chadron State College graduate who taught in Mead and Wilcox before coming to Alma.

Mrs. Russell is married to Patrick and has four children: daughter, Jordan a student at UNK, and three sons, Daylan an 11<sup>th</sup> grader, AJ a sophomore, and Josh a 4<sup>th</sup> grader. Mrs. Russell enjoys baking and reading, and she is excited to contribute to the learning process of Alma students and to be working in the same school as her children.

Alma Public Schools, also gained three new paraprofessionals this school year. Teresa Whitney, Jessica Coons, and Tabitha Zywiec.

Mrs. Whitney, a part time para for the last two years, had so much fun at Alma Public School she decided to make it her full-time job. She will be working mainly with lower elementary students. Mrs. Whitney says she enjoys being around the students and staff at APS, and she loves the opportunity to have the same schedule as her daughter Miley. Jessica Coons, a paraeducator in Arnold and a former nanny, is originally from Callaway, Nebraska. She is working toward an elementary degree and enjoys education because she has a passion for learning and wants to help children develop that same passion. Tabitha Zywiec will also help teachers and students in the elementary. She loves helping people so a job as a para fits her passion perfectly. Mrs. Zywiec says that watching students grow and learn is something she loves. Her interest in camping, hunting, and fishing will help her connect with lots of students. Mrs. Zywiec has two children, a son and daughter. Her daughter Khloe is in second grade at APS.

Alma Public Schools is lucky to have so many talented, caring people join its staff.

*The Cardinal's Chirp*

## **FROM THE DESK OF PRINCIPAL BRANDYBERRY**

Happy new school year!! We are off and running! There are several new students who have joined us from various places over the summer, which means there are more students in the building this year.

All students in grades 4-12 have received a student planner they are to have with them while they are in the school building. The handbooks have also been uploaded to the school's website. As with every new year, please remember to review the handbook with your child. Not only does it give them another reminder of what is expected, it will give you a chance to familiarize yourself with the rules we have here at school. The Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Policy has been changed this year with the addition of random drug testing, so please pay special attention to pages 17-19 as well as our policies on being absent and tardy.

*I want to take this time to remind you of the cost of our year-long passes. A family pass is \$80, a single adult pass is \$40, and a student pass is \$20. Our family pass is intended to be used by Alma K-12 students and their parents. If you have a student who is in college they may purchase a single adult pass. The passes may be used for all home events except for any Conference or District tournaments. If you haven't purchased yours come on in to the office so you don't miss out on all of the fun!*

With all of our activities underway I want to remind everyone of the importance of sportsmanship. As representatives of Alma our students need to promote positive behaviors at ALL times. Not only does Alma Public School feel strongly about this, the NSAA does, as well. As a parent/patron at our activities you can model these positive behaviors so we can continue to be perceived as a school with tremendous class. It is important to remember that everyone involved in the activities is human. The officials, the coaches, the players, and the spectators are all human, and everyone makes mistakes. Rather than be negative, let's make it known that in Alma we support our teams in a positive way no matter what!

Our school's calendar can be found at <https://www.rpac-ne.org/public/genie/751/school/1/>, and you can check the daily bulletin link under resources on the school's website for updates during the week, too. If you have any questions feel free to call the school office to speak with me. Let's work together to make 2018-19 the best school year yet!!

## **NEWS FROM THE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE**

Welcome to a new year at APS! I am excited to start my eighth year as the APS Guidance Counselor. Time flies as I welcome another class, full of familiar faces into their senior year. This year will be full of exciting changes and challenging demands, but I am committed to helping each of our students work toward their future goals.

The Class of 2019 is jump-starting their senior year with many of these students already taking college classes and preparing to enter college next year. In Senior Survey we are exploring careers and thinking about what our future holds. Soon this class will be preparing for their final ACT opportunities before applying for college and scholarships. Alma offers John Baylor Test Prep Course to any student interested in utilizing additional study materials. Colleges use ACT test scores to determine admission status and scholarship eligibility. We are excited to offer the test prep to our students in order to help them garner the highest possible scholarship dollars and entrance into the colleges of their choice. If a student would take these classes privately, they would cost hundreds of dollars so we are very fortunate that our school is willing to invest the time (SEE PAGE 3 )

(FROM PAGE 2 ) and money to help out the students in this way. While the students find this preparation very “intense” many students that have completed this preparation in Alma have seen the benefit from it with higher test scores.

Besides assisting the Seniors with college and career preparation, part of my job each week includes teaching Elementary Skills for Growing. I look forward to time in the elementary and getting to help students with learning life skills such as teamwork, decision-making, and staying drug, alcohol, and tobacco free. The elementary curriculum includes many games, activities, projects and great discussion topics each week.

I look forward to helping all the students, parents and teachers at APS have another successful year. My door is always open and I can easily be contacted via email at [brittney.biskup@almacardinals.org](mailto:brittney.biskup@almacardinals.org).

## **APS CHEERLEADERS PERFORM AT NEBRASKA STATE FAIR**

The Cheerleaders attended the Nebraska State Fair on Saturday, August 25, for the Annual Cheer/Dance Expo. Fourteen teams were in attendance this year, and it was another great show!

The Cardinal team performed 4 times in various areas of the fairgrounds. Not only do the girls get to showcase their talent, but they get to enjoy the fair activities and food, too. The team looks forward to this event each year. Special thanks to the Fair Board for hosting this annual event.  
--Mrs. Wolfe

## **MATH FUN IN 4TH-6TH GRADE** --Mrs. Wolfe

The 4-6 Grade students started fine-tuning their Math skills for the 2018-2019 school year. Each week they work on a specific skill in order to become proficient. They started week one *The Cardinal's Chirp*

## **SAINTS CROSS COUNTRY INFORMATION**

The Alma/Southern Valley “SAINTS” Cross Country team this year consists of 7 members. Members on the boys Varsity team from Alma are Vince Ongtangco (Jr), Michael Edgar (Jr), Colten Fisher(So), A.J. Russell (So) and Cody Wells(Fr) and from Southern Valley are Ivan Varela(Jr) and Bryan Elias(Fr).

The girls Varsity runner this season is Winona “Nonie” Mitchell a junior from Southern Valley.

The CC-SAINTS head coach is Deb Smolik, assisted by Brittnay Nurnberg and Kate Likens.

TO THE TEAM: ALWAYS BELIEVE IN YOURSELF as much as others believe in you. If you Believe it , You can Achieve it!! - Coach Smolik

Alma meets at the Alma Golf Course: Sept 10<sup>th</sup> 4:30pm and Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> 4:00pm

Coach Interview:

*What have you been doing to prepare for the season?*

The team attended a summer camp in Cozad. Some members also ran in fun runs and 5K events around the area with the one in Lincoln being their favorite.

*Who do you see as leaders on the team?*

The leadership will come from the veteran runners. Ivan Varela, a Junior has been running on the Varsity team for three years so he has stepped up to the role and does a great job in leading the team.. We are unique in that I feel any of the upper classmen could step up to lead when needed.

*How does the team work together?*

The team runs as a strong group with each recognizing the importance of their role as a team member. The team is a motivated group of highly spirited individuals which energizes the team. Encouraging one another and staying positive and always pushing forward through the long workouts show that we definitely strive to have team unity and comradery to help each other reach the finish line.

*Tell us about yourself?*

COACH DEB SMOLIK- This will be my second year as head coach for the cross country team and my seventh year as assistant coach for the Alma track team. I graduated from Alma High School. I continued my education at the University of Nebraska Kearney where I competed on the track and field team. I have earned two professional degrees. A Pharm.D. degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center as a pharmacist and my teaching certificate from UNK. I currently teach 7-12 Science at Alma Public Schools. I live in Alma with my husband Dr. Tony Smolik and three children Emma (college at CalPoly, CA), Ehren(So) and Elana(7<sup>th</sup>).

I look forward to the season and coaching these athletes. I enjoy watching each athlete progress through the season, meeting the challenges and continually working hard to reach their goals.

-COACH DEB SMOLIK

with addition and quickly moved on to subtraction, moving from “Summer Brain” mode, to “School Brain” mode. One of the students’ favorite Math activities is Math Races. It’s a great way to start each class by getting excited about

learning new Math skills! We are focusing on the Math standards, learning what each of them means, and how to achieve proficiency. Practice may not make us perfect, but practice certainly develops a better understanding!

# ALMA BAND AND CHOIR STUDENTS FOR 2018-19

Mr. Ritter was excited to welcome 57 students in grades 9-12 to the high school music department this fall. Choir has 39 students and 43 students are in the band. He also welcomed 34 students into the Jr. High band. Band is the only “optional” class that jr. high students can choose from.

All the students are looking forward to carrying on the tradition of musical excellence that has been passed on to them by former students.

Students in the high school band are: Kaylee Baker, Joel Brown, Karri Christensen, Colton Dahlgren, Carter Davis, Sadie Dietz, Maddie Ehrke, Jonah Felix, Elliott Fletcher, Mitchell Gehrig, Adam Gesick, Ashlee Hauver, Nakayla Hock, Jillian Holmberg, Kyle Johnson, Cyrus Jordan, Kelsey Kermmoade, Kayla Kindler, Madison Korman, Michelle Lujan, Caleb Malone, Emily Malone, Grant McQuay, Peyton McQuay, Caitlyn Menze, Nova Monk, Ali Moulton, Sammy Moulton, Bonnie Nelson, Vince Ongtangco, Jessica Pfeil, Marcus Pineda, Sadie Ritter, Colin Rourke, Ehren Smolik, Kendall Stemper, Alina Stenka, Coltin Stephens, Carlee Stuhmer, Gage Thulin, Abigail Waldo, Alexis Wolfe, Madison Wolfe

Students in the high school choir are: Jarod Asche, Tessa Bach, Charity Breaux, Joel Brown, Abi Cevera, Kennedy Chesney, Karri Christensen, Austin Christian, Colton Dahlgren, Hunter Dahlgren, Margaret Dubbs, Jonah Felix, Joseph Felix, Nakayla Hock Dakota Hughes, Kyle Johnson, Kelsey kermmoade, Kayla Kindler, Kortnie Lennemann, Michelle Lujan, Emily Malone, Grant McQuay, Peyton McQuay, Caitlyn Menze, Nova Monk, Ali Moulton, Sammy Moulton, Vince Ongtangco, Jessica Pfeil, Sadie Ritter, Colin Rourke, Ehren Smolik, Shiann Spady, Alina Stenka, Jason Stenka, Carlee Stuhmer, Alissa Vlach, Abbi Waldo, Tiffany Wells

Students in the Jr. High band are: Melani Bantam, Alden Bewley, Linden Biskup, Karsten Bradley, Carter Brandyberry, Lilly Brown Ryan Brugh, Mikaela Christensen, Weston Christensen, Gavin Dunse, Ashlyn Fischer, Wyatt Hammond, Peyton Herrick, Natasha Hock, Jet Holmberg, Lance Johnsen, Tessa Johnson, Ryan Kermmoade, Sarah Kreutzer, Garrett Molzahn, Addison Neal, Jakin Neal, Brett Pfeil, Addison Pool, Katy Prickett, Saryn Prickett, Riley Scott, Delaney Seyler, Addison Siebels, Elana Smolik, Joshua Stephens, Torrance Tischner, Jack Waldo, Morgan Woetzel. --Mr. Ritter

## ART CLASSES WORKING ON COLLECTIVE VISUAL ART PROJECT

Welcome to the new school year! We enjoyed a beautiful summer and now it's time to get back to learning. The 1-12 art students are already working on a collaborative piece to display in the Commons. Each student is creating one piece that will fit into the collective piece. The intention of this project is to demonstrate to the students that each person is important and their participation is desired and necessary in order to create a strong community. Hopefully we will have more than 200 pieces in the completed work.

We begin this year concentrating on strengthening our personal voices and learning how to communicate with those voices through visual art. As the students work through their various projects they are continually reinforcing the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that are greatly desired by higher learning facilities and future employers.

Have a wonderful autumn,  
Mrs. Ritter

## THANK YOU!

The Alma Public School staff wishes to thank *Main Street Variety* for organizing and sponsoring “Lunch on Us” on August 13th. It was a great way to start off the year!

The following businesses also helped sponsor the event:

- Donovan's Smoke Shack & BBQ*
- Stamford Insurance Agency*
- Lake Life Boutique*
- Dragonfly Desserts*

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR PARENT/TEACHER  
CONFERENCES ON  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2018  
School dismisses at 1:00 pm  
Conferences run from 2:30-7:30 pm**



# CARDINAL VOLLEYBALL READY TO RISE IN 2018

The motto for the 2018 volleyball season is “rise”, and that’s exactly what the Lady Cardinals hope to do this season. With 20 girls out this year, depth will be a strength of the team, and many girls will be challenging for playing time this fall.

In order to develop team culture, the coaches have the girls wearing the same color shirts each day, wearing hair scrunchies for gamedays, and staying connected during team huddles. The team also has had multiple team bonding experiences in hopes of creating team chemistry on-and-off the court. The identity of the team hopes to be a strong fundamental team that excels in the serving and passing game. With six seniors, the Lady Cardinals hopes to use their experience and high volleyball IQ to their advantage.

Team members include:

Maloree Graf, Dakota Hughes, Kelsey Kermmoade, Kayla Kindler, Abby Waldo, Tiffany Wells, Kaitlin Cook, Caityln Menzen, Shiann Spady, Tessa Bach, Karri Christensen, Maddy Dubbs, Maddie Ehrke, Michelle Lujan, Haylee Wing, Abigail Fox, Jessica Pfeil, Carlee Stuhmer, Alexis Wolfe, and Madison Wolfe. ---Mr. Ehrke