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Alma™ Offers New Messaging Features and Emergency Notification Capabilities for K-12 Schools

[Affordable SIS/LMS Solution Rolls Out First of Several New Integrated Tools for K-12 Cloud-Based Platform](#)

PORTLAND, Ore. (May 20, 2014) – For schools, improving communication is critical – parents want greater insight into their children’s achievements and struggles, while teachers need a more efficient way to have those important conversations. [Alma](#), a modern and affordable K-12 school management system, today announced new messaging features and emergency notification capabilities that allow administrators, teachers, parents and students to connect in more meaningful ways.

Research has shown schools that effectively involve families have higher student achievement, better teacher morale, higher ratings of teachers by parents, more support from families, and better reputations in the community. Alma brings parents, teachers and students together around common learning goals and provides the collaborative tools needed to foster progress. With these communications features as its latest addition, Alma aims to improve communication at all levels, from school-wide announcements to direct connections with parents and students.

“Alma’s [parent portal](#) gives parents the high level of accessibility and interaction they have come to expect through technology, keeping both them and their students engaged,” said Alma CEO and Founder Andrew Herman. “With the addition of integrated messaging to Alma, schools can provide this level of information sharing and communication much more cost-effectively without adding extra work for teachers and administrators.”

Alma works seamlessly with users’ existing email addresses, so staff, parents and students aren’t burdened with maintaining a separate inbox. Messaging is accessible throughout Alma’s system, so that teachers, parents and students can easily communicate with each other when and where they would intuitively want to, saving time and creating a natural, more convenient user experience.



For example, teachers can send a message to all their classes at once through a link on the teacher dashboard, and parents and students can message teachers from within the online gradebook. As many schools begin the process of changing curriculum styles and shifting toward proficiency-based grading, it is more important than ever that schools provide this level of accessibility.

"Given the complexity and detail that goes into proficiency-based grading, as well as the robust curriculum and instruction it supports, it's imperative we effectively communicate among staff members and with parents," explained Christina Tracy, principal of Howard Street charter school in Salem, Oregon. "The messaging features in Alma will enable us to take a significant leap forward in increasing and improving communications."

Alma's cloud-based [school management software](#) consolidates student information system (SIS), learning management system (LMS) and gradebook functionality with specialized productivity tools and a forward-thinking, user-focused design. Alma's core functionality is free, with the option to add more features and services at a nominal fee for a customized solution that meets each school's budget and unique needs.

The messaging system includes:

- 1:1 messaging that allows staff to connect directly with individual parents and students;
- A "message class" feature that allows teachers to easily send information to all the students in one or all of their classes;
- Mass messaging for administrators to share school-wide non-emergency announcements;
- Group messaging for administrators to send messages to all parents, all students, or select students by grade-level;
- A "bulletin board" feature in the parent/student portals where users can view past announcements from administrators

Alma also now offers emergency messaging capabilities, allowing school officials to send emergency notifications to staff, parents and students via text or voice message. Alma is offering emergency messaging for free for the remainder of the 2013/14 school year; the service will be available for \$2 per student, per year thereafter.

The messaging system is one of the platform's many features that will be rolled out this year. To ensure high-quality training and support, Alma's services will be limited to the first 500 schools that sign up in 2014.



About Alma

Alma offers a new approach to student information and learning management. Alma replaces the expensive, fragmented systems in use in schools today with simple and intuitive online that minimizes busywork and improves school operations and student outcomes. Alma brings together student information, learning management, and curriculum and lesson planning in one place, saving educators' time and giving families better visibility into their students' learning. Best of all, Alma's core services are free – because every school, no matter how big or small its budget, should have access to the best tools available. To learn more about Alma and its features, or to request a demo, visit www.getalma.com.

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