



## Howard Street Public School Stats

### District:

Salem-Keizer School  
District

### Enrollment:

159

### Diversity:

30% minority

**“Alma allows any parent who is proactive in the education of their child the tools they need to have a more strategic dialogue with their child, the teacher, and the school.”**

*Howard Street Parent*

# CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

## Howard Street Charter School: Building the School-Home Connection

Students are more likely to thrive in environments where they feel connected and supported. This idea rings true for Howard Street Charter School, a small community school located in Salem, Oregon.

Serving 159 students in grades 6-8, Howard Street provides an innovative public education balancing the humanities, language, arts, science and technology.

As a public charter school, the school operates with the support of the Salem-Keizer School District, but takes an autonomous approach to the curriculum, which is based on the 3Es: Einstein (science, technology, engineering and math), Ellington (the fine and performing arts) and Esperanza (the humanities and Spanish).

The 3Es guide and influence all schools activities—from field trips and community service, to after school activities and classroom approaches. Administrators and teachers emphasize proficiency, performance and project-based learning at all levels.

In addition to offering a unique structure, Howard Street places heavy emphasis on collaboration and conversation between parents and teachers to ensure that students get the support they need in order to be successful.

The school uses Alma to keep teachers, parents and students actively engaged in educational outcomes and classroom activities. Having this more effective means of connection allows teachers more time to work with students and have direct conversations with parents. Alma’s streamlined system puts student data all in one place. Teachers can record attendance and academic performance to be referenced by other staff members at a glance. Its intuitive messaging system allows administrators and school staff to interact with parents and students at an individual and classroom level, creating a constant open line of communication.

The system also offers a parent portal, which provides a window into grades, assignments, lessons and scheduling, and offers parents a global understanding of where their student is, and where they are going. Alma allows the school to adapt to the needs of all stakeholders – providing a forum for teachers, students and parents to all communicate in more meaningful ways.

## Howard Street Charter School: Building the School-Home Connection (continued)

“Alma allows any parent who is proactive in the education of their child the tools they need to have a more strategic dialogue with their child, the teacher and the school,” explains Howard Street parent Coleman Presley.

With their students’ grades and information at their fingertips, parents’ interactions with teachers become more about building relationships, and having meaningful conversations about their children’s learning.

“With Alma, students’ grades and information are available online all the time,” said Howard Street principal Christina Tracy. “Over 90 percent of our parents have access – a lot of them get it on their phones – but the idea is that parents can always have access to that information.”

An example of this shift can be seen in the school’s innovative take on the traditional parent-teacher conference. Because parents can easily contact teachers at any time through Alma’s platform and see their student’s performance update in real time, these discussions no longer need to wait until conferences. In lieu of the usual format, Howard Street utilizes these meetings to hold student-led conferences, in which the student presents a portfolio, and explains what they’ve learned in the classroom. Teachers help students prepare their presentation ahead of time, so they are confident in showing their parents their work.

In addition to aligning with the school’s project-based learning approach and allowing students to take ownership of their learning, the exercise gives parents insight on what their students are doing in the classroom, rather than just how they are doing academically, ultimately building and strengthening ties between school and home.

“We want students to talk about what they are learning, not two adults just talking about the kid,” Tracy said. “It really should be about the student.”

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Alma’s all-in-one, intuitive, integrated platform simplifies school administration while fostering better communication and empowering educators with a 360° view of the student learning process. [Learn more at www.getalma.com](http://www.getalma.com)



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