



The Wheeler School

Locations: Providence, RI & Seekonk, MA
Campus Type: Private
Student Population: 800+
Faculty & Staff: 200+

The Wheeler School, a coeducational private school in Providence, Rhode Island, consists of an elementary, middle, and high school, as well as a 120-acre farm in Seekonk, Massachusetts, which offers opportunities for hands-on learning.



Chief Operating Officer, Ian Moorhouse, introduced the Alertus System to the Wheeler School in 2022. This followed a successful implementation of the system at a previous school in 2018. Upon arriving at the Wheeler School, Moorhouse noted a lack of existing security measures. His initial steps involved replacing previously padlocked gates with a swipe card entry. He then sought to implement a comprehensive mass notification system across both the main campus and the farm to improve emergency communication. “When it came to building up all areas of security measures, we moved really quickly and didn’t mess around,” said Moorhouse.

To ensure widespread outdoor alerting, The Wheeler School installed the Alertus High Power Speaker Array at their Seekonk farm. This location hosts a variety of activities and facilities, including athletic fields, the Van Norman Field House, the Sixth Grade Farm Program, a summer camp, a ropes course, and is used for Forest & Farm Days for Early Childhood Education.

In Providence, they implemented a comprehensive Alertus System across its campus. Outdoors, 30-watt Text-to-Speech Horns were strategically placed in parking lots

and around campus buildings. Indoors, the school integrated Visiplex with interior speakers, and installed both the Alert Beacon® (featuring contact closures) and LED marquees in key areas like the gym and cafeteria. Additionally, they deployed Alertus Desktop™ Notification on campus computers and utilized push notifications via the AlertAware® Mobile App.



The wall-mounted Alertus Alert Beacon® sounds, flashes, and displays an alert message in the event of an emergency

Moorhouse remarked that a FEMA representative recognized and complemented an Alertus LED Marquee while on their campus, highlighting Alertus’s growing recognition in the industry.

“Working with Alertus has been seamless, from the simple implementation and training, to support from my account representative,” said Moorhouse. He noted that unlike other “clunky” applications, Alertus is straightforward to use. “It calms the noise when you can simplify a system to be able to notify for a number of reasons.”

The Alertus System is utilized for various situations, including medical emergencies and locating lost students. Additionally, The Wheeler School is mandated to conduct 15 drills annually in Rhode Island, and they leverage the system for these required exercises.

“With Alertus, it’s not just the same prerecorded messages every time, so we can ensure clarity when we are conducting a drill versus notifying for a real emergency. We send all-clear messages after every drill or incident, and every message consistently includes the specific location of the event.”

Both long-term and newer employees find the Alertus System easy to use. The system has been consistently effective through all its upgrades over the years, and adoption has been smooth, with no complaints from users.

Moorhouse enjoys the working relationship he has with Alertus, and the simplicity of the system. “Crisis management is a tough role, but having Alertus makes my job much easier because it works so well,” said Moorhouse. “My biggest concern—the inability to communicate during an emergency—is alleviated by the Alertus System.”

Lessons Learned: Transforming Planning into Response

In December 2025, a tragic active shooter incident occurred on the Brown University campus, just walking distance from the Wheeler School. Moorhouse was notified of the incident while at home and was able to retrieve and edit a pre-set template on the mobile app within seconds. With just a few taps, he initiated a campus-wide lockdown, distributing the alert simultaneously across Wheeler’s indoor and outdoor speakers, desktop computers, and AlertAware mobile apps.

The unpredictable nature of campus tragedies underscores that emergency preparedness is not merely a document on a shelf; it is a live, resilient infrastructure. As demonstrated during the Brown University incident, the speed of information is the most critical variable in life safety. A robust mass notification system that synchronizes mobile, desktop, and physical signage is no longer a luxury—it is the backbone of a modern emergency response framework.

“When a safety threat emerges, school leaders must make high-stakes decisions in a vacuum of “perfect” information—all while navigating fear, misinformation, and immense pressure,” said Moorhouse. He added that having the Alertus System readily available to send critical notifications was a major factor in proactively maintaining the safety of their community.

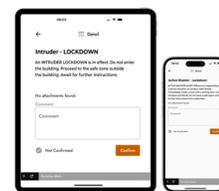
For The Wheeler School, the Alertus System allowed leadership to bridge the gap between detection and action, maintaining community safety even when seconds were the only currency that mattered.



Alertus Desktop™ Notification can deliver a facility-wide emergency notification with attention-grabbing full-screen overrides



Alertus LED Marquees reach large indoor or outdoor public areas with emergency notifications



AlertAware helps expand your critical alerting reach and provides more ways to notify and to activate



The Alertus IP Text-to-Speech Interface (an IP-Audible Visual Appliance or IP-AVA) provides spoken voice output of message text utilizing public address, FACP, LED Marquee, and other alerting devices



Alertus High Power Speaker Arrays provide intelligible and effective notification to widespread, outdoor areas