

# *Saraland City Schools*

EST. 2008

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

## STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2026



EXPECT MORE. ACHIEVE MORE.

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## From the Office of the Superintendent

Saraland City Schools  
4010 Lil' Spartan Drive Saraland, AL 36571  
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To Saraland students, employees, and community members:

Every five years, Saraland City Schools engages in a reflective process to review and renew its strategic plan. This process involves analysis of current practices and serves as the framework for ongoing efforts to provide Saraland students a high-quality educational experience. Throughout implementation of our 2015-2020 strategic plan, the Spartans expanded career and technical education opportunities for students, constructed state-of-the-art facilities, and experienced success in academic achievement, the liberal arts, and athletics.

With strategic planning facilitated by LEAN Frog, an educational consulting firm, we assembled a team representative of Saraland school and community stakeholders. This team's first action was to design a survey eliciting community perceptions regarding school system successes and challenges. Survey responses along with additional data were then analyzed by the team and used to inform plan development. The resulting strategic plan will serve as a guide for our work and as a foundation for continuous improvement efforts.

Construction of Saraland City Schools' strategic plan also coincides with a district accreditation review in November 2021. Engaging in both simultaneously encouraged intensive reflection on system strengths and identification of potential areas for improvement.

I am thankful for everyone who contributed to these challenging yet rewarding endeavors. Their work, their support, their vision, and their constructive feedback resulted in a plan that we believe will transform our school system. While Saraland City Schools has received multiple accolades in our brief history, we are confident this strategic plan will build on our successes and lead to renewal of the district's accreditation by Cognia.

With appreciation for our great community,

Dr. Aaron Milner  
Superintendent  
Saraland City Schools



## Executive Summary

The **Saraland City School System** participated in a strategic planning process in partnership with LEAN Frog to develop a new five-year strategic plan. Planning began in July 2021 and ended in October 2021. This process is a continuation of a successful strategic plan the school system incorporated in 2015. The LEAN Frog partnership provided a new strategic planning method involving various members of the education community and Board of Education members, as well as the community at large. As part of the progression, the Strategic Planning Team created a stakeholder survey, which provided the foundation of the new strategic plan. It was determined that, with a population of 14,649, a survey return of 995 would provide a 95% confidence level with a 3% confidence interval. The actual number of 1443 survey responses allowed the team to proceed with confidence in the survey results.

**A set of essential practices for each strand provided specific guidance to help the school system and community implement this model. These practices are drawn from research-based strategies shown to be effective.**

Throughout planning, the team reviewed various data, which included an organizational effectiveness review. Three distinct but interconnected strands comprise the LEAN Frog framework of strategic planning: (1) stakeholder perceptions and identification of strengths and challenges, (2) data review and analysis, and (3) an intense review of organizational effectiveness.

Using the locally developed stakeholder survey results as well as other environmental and organizational scans, Saraland City Schools was able to identify a roadmap for improving current practices while continuing to better prepare students. This model will allow the school system to focus deeply on student achievement and preparedness, providing a welcoming environment and positive culture, engaging families and community members, accommodating the changing needs of employees, and developing and managing fiscal resources. Saraland City Schools is dedicated to our mission of **building a foundation for student success**, and our vision to provide **a community united in building a school system where high expectations and the relentless pursuit of educational achievement establish the foundation for individual success**. This strategic plan provides a focus for our school system's work to support that mission and vision by identifying our top priorities for the next five years.

### Strand 1: Stakeholder Perception

Community, parent, student, and educator surveys and focus groups determine strengths and challenges as well as district vision and mission

### Strand 2: Data Analysis and Review

National, state, and local data review as well as environmental scans to determine current status and set future goals

### Strand 3: Organizational Effectiveness

Analysis and review of governing systems' strengths and challenges as well as methods to affect change



## Our Community

The **Saraland City Schools** system is located in Saraland, Alabama, a friendly, beautiful, and accessible community that boasts an attractive way of life. Saraland has grown into a progressive business hub that still maintains a small-town quality of life for its residents. Residents enjoy a relaxed lifestyle while benefitting from the city's location directly on I-65 and two highway interchanges. The city is one of the fastest growing in the state and has been named an Alabama Community of Excellence, the only municipality in the Mobile County Area to receive the honor.

Saraland formed its own city school system in 2006 and opened its doors to students during the summer of 2008. It is now ranked as one of the top-performing school systems in Alabama. Since its inception, Saraland City Schools has more than doubled in size, from 1,500 students in 2009 to over 3,241 students in 2021.

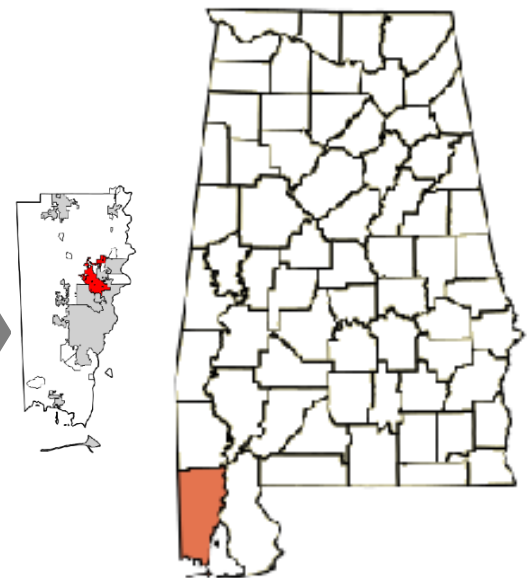
With a population of 16,171 (2020 Census Counts) and with new subdivisions, new businesses, and annexations, Saraland is one of the fastest growing cities in Mobile County. The top-rated school system and quality of life have boosted Saraland's real estate market. The home ownership rate in Saraland is 73% which is higher than the national average of 64.1%. From October 2019 to June 2020, the city issued 70 residential construction permits with a total valuation of \$14.5 million

The Saraland community is very supportive of the school system. In 2015, the citizens approved a 7.5 mil ad valorem tax increase to fulfill Capital Plan goals. Goals attained include the purchase of new buses, technology infrastructure improvements, increase access to student digital devices, expansion of career and technical opportunities for high school students, and the construction of the Saraland Early Education Center. The system is now comprised of

four schools: Saraland Early Education Center (PK-1), Saraland Elementary School (grades 2-5), Saraland Middle School (grades 6-8), and Saraland High School (grades 9-12). The following is the current enrollment at each campus: Saraland Early Education Center - 505, Saraland Elementary School - 922, Saraland Middle School - 739, and Saraland High School - 1075.

Seventy-five percent of the student population is White, sixteen percent is Black/African American with the remaining population is comprised of Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and other races.

Forty-six percent of Saraland City Schools' students receive free/reduced lunch.



Saraland City Schools employs 340 people, of whom 216 are teachers. The pupil-teacher ratio is 20:1.

From the enriching fine arts classes in elementary school, a challenging STEM program in middle school, and expanding college and career experiences in high school, Saraland students are afforded multiple opportunities to connect and discover their passions with the goal to build a foundation for future success.

## Our Schools

**S**araland City Schools (SCS) first opened its doors to students in 2008. In the first decade of operation, student enrollment doubled – demonstrating not only growth but also community confidence in the district. As good stewards of taxpayer dollars, Saraland is characterized by its small-town spirit with big goals for student success. Simply stated, one town, one team, one dream collectively working to build a foundation for student success. In Saraland, it's truly *the people who make the difference!*



- o AMSTI
- o eMINTS
- o Phonics First
- o iReady
- o NearPod
- o MyOn
- o Newsela
- o BrainPOP
- o A+ Education Partnership
- o A+ College Ready
- o Renaissance On To College
- o See Saw
- o Flocabulary
- o Reflex
- o Alabama Best Practices Center
- o Key Leaders Network
- o Powerful Conversations Network
- o Flight Works AL-We Build It Better

Expect More - Achieve More is echoed in the halls and demonstrated through program additions, school accolades, and state-of-the-art facilities. Resultantly, the educational foundation established in elementary school is strengthened in the middle grades at Saraland Middle School where enriching academics through studies in instrumental and vocal music, foreign language, digital literacy, coding, robotics, visual art, and drama is a priority. All of this is accomplished through coordination of local, state, and federal funding for programs such as those listed in the graphic.

Formative (benchmark) assessments including but not limited to unit assessments, DIBELS, and iReady are used throughout the year to provide feedback to teachers and students regarding student mastery of course of study objectives. Information gained through these assessments allow teachers to adapt instruction to meet student needs.

Students are also assessed annually using a variety of state mandated summative assessments. To measure annual reading and math progress, all 2<sup>nd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade students participate in the *ACAP Summative*. Student progress in science is assessed in grades 4, 6, and 8.

As the flagship in the district, Saraland High School provides students with academic rigor aligned with career and technical education opportunities in the areas of pre-engineering, teaching and training, health sciences, welding, business management and administration, as well as food, wellness, and dietetics. Summative assessments administered in high school include: the Pre-ACT (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade), the ACT (10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade), and ACT WorkKeys assessments (12<sup>th</sup> grade). High school students enrolled in Advanced Placement programs may also opt to participate in the national Advanced Placement testing program.

In addition to improving the lives of current students, the school system is initiating academic programs which will have a strategic impact on the economy of Mobile County by ensuring graduates are workforce ready. Saraland is an up-and-coming community, offering tremendous support for its schools! It's a great day to be a Spartan!

# Saraland City Schools

## By the Numbers

**3,241**

Students

**1**

Early Education Center

**1**

Elementary School

**1**

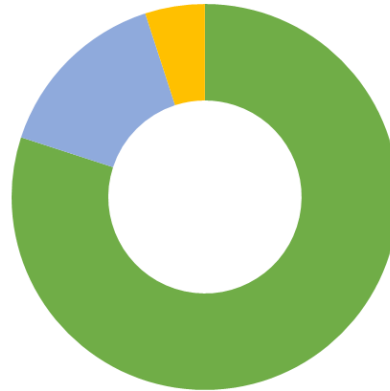
Middle School

**1**

High School

**1**

Alternative Program



### Student Enrollment

- White: **75%**
- Black: **16%**
- Other: **9%**

**93%**

College & Career Readiness (2021)

**87%**

Academic Achievement (2019)\*

**100%**

Academic Growth (2019)\*

**96%**

Graduation rate (2021)

**\$11.1M**

Scholarships awarded to 2021 graduates

\* Pre-pandemic assessment data based on last issued ALSDE state report card.

**\$**

**2021 BUDGET**

**\$41.6M**

*(3.44 months in reserve)*

School	Grades	# Students
Saraland Early Education Center	PK-1	505
Saraland Elementary School	2-5	922
Saraland Middle School	6-8	739
Saraland High School	9-12	1075

# Our Process

Developing the strategic plan was a true collaborative process and a purposeful collection of stakeholder input focused on developing the direction of Saraland City Schools. Beginning in July 2021, the district’s Strategic Planning Team (SPT), with facilitation from LEAN Frog, began the process of reviewing national, state, and local data and building a stakeholder survey designed to elicit community perceptions around the big ideas of:

- (1) What are SCS’s greatest challenges?
- (2) What are the most important skills graduates need?
- (3) What evidence is used to evaluate the quality of our school system?
- (4) What should be SCS’s financial priorities?

The SPT analyzed additional district data, including the 2015-20 Strategic Plan Goals and AdvancED (now Cognia) Review results, to begin the process of addressing needed adjustments to the district vision and mission.

Subsequent meetings were held to review the results of the stakeholder survey, as well as the results of a recent Organizational Review. Using this information, the SPT created a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis which resulted in vision, mission, and belief statement recommendations to guide the district going forward.

In September 2021, the STP formulated strategic objectives and critical initiatives as the impetus for action during the next five years. Focus groups were convened to review and provide feedback. In October 2021, the SBOE received a report of the **Strategic Plan for 2021-2026** for review. On November 4, 2021, recommendations were approved by the Board.

With the Board approval granted, district administration assigned the five strategic objectives to leaders who will work with teams of district and school staff members to develop Action Plans for implementation.

This Strategic Plan is the framework for improvement and will be monitored using a Balanced Scorecard.

## July – October 2021

WORK/PLANNING SESSIONS	FOCUS GROUPS	INFORMATION GATHERING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Strategic Planning Team Meetings</li><li>▪ District Leadership Meetings</li><li>▪ Focus Group Meetings</li><li>▪ BOE Meetings</li><li>▪ Local School Leadership Meetings</li><li>▪ Action Plan Development Meetings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Community</li><li>▪ Business Partners</li><li>▪ Parents</li><li>▪ Students</li><li>▪ Educators</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Stakeholder Survey</li><li>▪ Organizational Review</li><li>▪ Standardized Test Data</li><li>▪ Workforce Development Information</li><li>▪ Educational Research</li><li>▪ State Department Report Card</li><li>▪ SWOT Analysis</li></ul>

## Our Strengths

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### Using S.W.O.T. Analysis, the following were identified as strengths of Saraland City Schools:

- Strong and effective leadership
- Support for system vision
- Positive climate and culture throughout district
- System image/recognition
- Community support/involvement
- Quality teachers/staff
- Continuous professional development
- Access to quality technology/services for students/faculty
- Focused vision among stakeholders
- Progressive outlook
- Facilities and maintenance of the facilities
- Employee retention
- Family-oriented staff
- Mechanisms in place to ensure every child in our system is cared for and has a purpose
- Safety of students and security of facilities
- Teamwork
- Graduation rate trending upward
- Increased ACT scores
- Growth of CTE programs
- Athletic programs
- Newly built/newly renovated buildings and athletic facilities
- New and varied digital resources
- Growing awareness of the importance of mental health
- Financial transparency
- Strong communication
- System success positively impacts community economy
- Student advocacy program
- Professional learning incentives for employees
- Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training





# SARALAND CITY SCHOOLS

## *Our Mission:*

Building a foundation for student success.

## *Our Vision:*

A community united in building a school system where high expectations and the relentless pursuit of educational achievement establish the foundation for individual student success.

### FOCUS AREAS

#### STUDENT OUTCOMES



Maintain high expectations and provide equitable access to multiple opportunities resulting in high achievements for every student, every day.

#### STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION



Foster engaged stakeholders who are actively involved in promoting student success.

#### STAFF DEVELOPMENT



Recruit, hire, grow, and retain qualified personnel who continually improve practices to meet all student needs.

#### SUPPORT SYSTEMS



Integrate a multi-tier system of support to build relationships and promote student success.

### FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

*Maintain a purposeful and sound fiscal structure to efficiently address student and staff needs.*

Fiscally Sound

Allocate Resources  
Effectively

Adequate Cash  
Reserves

Meet Generally  
Accepted Governmental  
Accounting Standards



## SYSTEM GOALS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	Critical Initiatives	Key Performance Indicators
<b>STUDENT OUTCOMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer engaging student learning experiences to heighten career awareness, promote career exploration, and provide career preparation.</li> <li>Develop life skills, such as problem solving, communicating, collaborating, and leadership.</li> <li>Provide personal growth opportunities to develop character traits such as perseverance, self-motivation, initiative, resiliency, and leadership.</li> </ul>	ACT and ACAP summative assessment data, formative assessments (iReady, DIBELS, etc.), CTE credentials, 2-yr and 4-yr college placement, college remediation enrollment, Accelerated Reader (AR), vocation rehabilitation services
<b>STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide additional opportunities for parental and community involvement.</li> <li>Strengthen/build partnerships with new and existing businesses, civic organizations, institutions of higher education, and community agencies.</li> <li>Use multiple modes of stakeholder communication (emails, phone calls, text messages, social media, meetings, publications, etc.).</li> </ul>	ParentLink messages, PowerSchool student information system parent usage statistics, surveys, social media analytics, parent contact logs, CTE, school counselor, and library media advisory committees, community partnerships, visitor logs
<b>EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide relevant and ongoing professional learning opportunities for all faculty and staff.</li> <li>Provide accountability to ensure rigorous academic expectations and instruction meet student needs.</li> <li>Establish a positive culture built on best practices to recruit and retain faculty and staff.</li> </ul>	National Board Certified teachers, TEAMS contracts, professional development (number/type) and participation, retention rate, career fair participation, observations (walkthroughs, ELEOTS, Teacher Effectiveness - ATOP), instructional rounds
<b>SUPPORT SYSTEMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster a supportive learning environment where students feel safe, valued, and connected.</li> <li>Maintain transitional support across all grades, between schools, and from school to life.</li> <li>Encourage healthy practices and community partnerships that support a well-balanced life.</li> </ul>	MTSS meeting agendas, safety plan, Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) professional development, targeted PD, Peer Helper Initiative, Project Outreach, student health assessments, school-based therapy community partnerships, student advocacy program, tiered intervention
<b>FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain current and relevant instructional and technological resources.</li> <li>Build and maintain state-of-the-art, safe facilities.</li> <li>Maintain operational efficiency and effectiveness.</li> </ul>	Budget, audit, facility construction/upgrades, work orders (completed vs outstanding), utilities, revenue

## Saraland Board of Education

To ensure efficient administration of the system and its schools, the governing body, the Saraland Board of Education (SBOE), establishes policies and supports practices that respect the autonomy of the system and school leadership. The SBOE consists of five members appointed to five-year, rotating terms by the Saraland City Council. SBOE members are active in the community and are viewed as community leaders. The SBOE sets policy while the Superintendent and local school administration implement the approved policy. The Superintendent partners with the SBOE to develop, recommend, and implement policies aligned with the system's mission of building a foundation for student success.

### SCS Board Members

- Mr. William Silver, Board Member, President
- Mrs. Renee Clarke, Board Member, Vice President
- Dr. Lonnie Burnett, Board Member
- Ms. Josephine Rodgers, Board Member
- Dr. Gary Shockley, Board Member



SARALAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

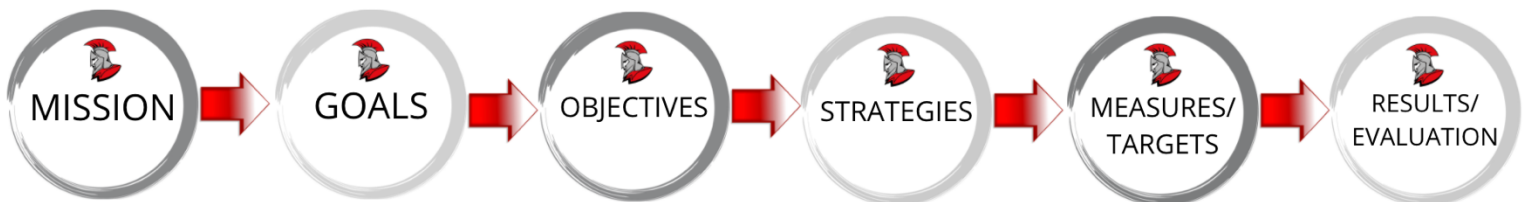
# Supporting Motivating Empowering

Mr. William "Bill" Silver, Mrs. Renee Clarke,  
Dr. Lonnie Burnett, Ms. Josephine Rodgers, and  
Dr. Gary Shockley

*...thank you for your continued service  
and support of the Spartans!*

## Strategic Planning Team Members

Team Member	Position
▪ Dr. Aaron Milner	Superintendent
▪ Dr. Frankie Mathis	Assistant Superintendent
▪ Mr. Shane Martin	Chief School Financial Officer (CSFO)
▪ Mrs. Amy Pippins	Director of Special Programs
▪ Mrs. Donna Hughes	College & Career Readiness Coordinator
▪ Mr. Jeff Ward	Federal Programs & Student Services Coordinator
▪ Mrs. Stephanie Pope	Mental Health Services Coordinator
▪ Mrs. Terri Jo Napp	School Psychologist
▪ Dr. Kim Williams	Principal, Saraland Early Education Center
▪ Dr. Stan Stokley	Principal, Saraland Elementary School
▪ Mr. Alex Crane	Principal, Saraland Middle School
▪ Mr. Brent Harrison	Principal, Saraland High School
▪ Dr. Lonnie Burnett	Saraland Board of Education
▪ Mrs. Claudette Bryant	Parent, Business Owner
▪ Mr. Joe McDonald	Parent, Saraland City Council
▪ Mrs. Vijal Patel	Parent, Business Owner
▪ Mr. Jeff Schmitz	Parent, Community Representative
▪ Mr. Vincent Walker	Parent, Post-Secondary Education Representative



## Notable Achievements



**A+** Overall Niche Grade

#7 OF 136 DISTRICTS  
SAFEST SCHOOL IN AL

#9 OF 136 DISTRICTS  
BEST SCHOOL IN AL

#9 OF 136 DISTRICTS  
WITH BEST TEACHERS IN AL



**SARALAND ELEMENTARY**  
**2017 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL**  
**AND**  
**2018 TITLE I DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL**



EDUCATION  
**REPORT**  
CARD

1 of 15 school  
systems in Alabama to  
earn an "A" on the  
state report card - of  
the 15 "A" districts,  
Saraland has the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
highest free/reduced  
population



3 GOLDEN APPLE  
AWARDS FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN  
TEACHING AND  
LEADERSHIP  
2020-2021



6 NEW NATIONAL  
BOARD CERTIFIED  
TEACHERS (2020)



Saraland High  
School Voted  
Best Overall  
Athletic  
Program  
2021  
Lagniappe  
Readers'  
Choice Award



**Council for  
Leaders in  
Alabama  
Schools**

2021 "LEADER AMONG  
EDUCATIONAL LEADERS"  
AWARD, DR. STAN STOKLEY



## Successful Initiatives

### CAREER TECH

Students in grades 7-12 may participate in Career & Tech Education (CTE) courses, with six clusters offered in high school and additional opportunities in middle school:

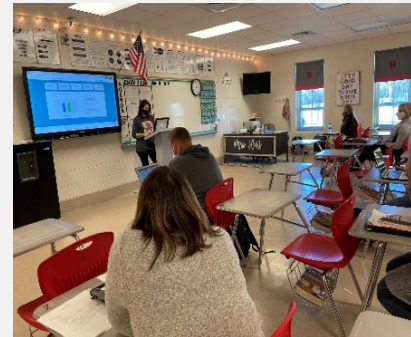
Business Management and Administration; Food, Wellness, & Dietetics; Business Technology Application (middle school); Teaching and Training; Teen Discoveries/Teen Connections (middle school); Welding; Health Science; and Engineering. Certifications include:

- Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)
- ServSafe Food Protection Manager
- National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) Core – Welding
- Autodesk Inventor, FANUC, Fusion, and Revit (Engineering)
- Praxis – Core Academic Skills for Educators
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Patient Care Technician (PCT), Basic Life Support (BLS) - American Heart Association, CPR Instructor



### LEARNING CULTURE

- Implementation of iReady formative assessments enable data-based instructional decisions in math and reading, provide supplemental resources for teachers, and offer K-8 students personalized, online instruction
- Addition of Instructional Partners (IPs)/Local Reading Specialists (LRS) at each school to assist with curriculum implementation
- Only 1 of 3 school systems in the state of Alabama to administer PreACT to every 9th grade student and ACT to every 10th grade student at no cost to parents



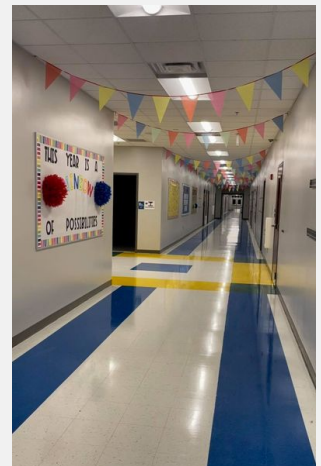
### TECHNOLOGY

- Upgraded all teacher digital devices (system-wide)
- Installed 45 Promethean Boards (65" interactive panels to replace SmartBoards)
- Purchased Special Needs Assistive Technology
- Allocated approximately \$110,000 for student devices purchases in 2020



### FACILITIES

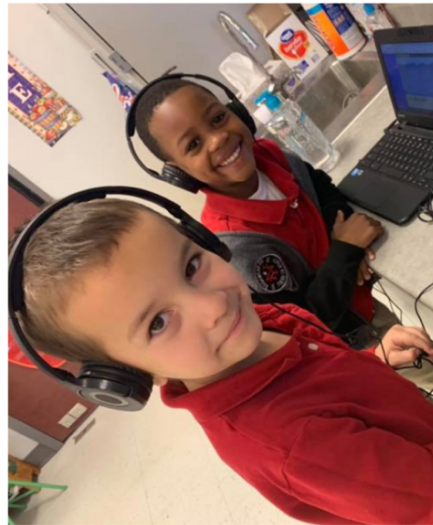
- Added 8 new classrooms at Saraland Early Education Center (opened August 2021)
- Constructed Fine Arts Facility/Storm Shelter at Saraland Middle School (projected completion December 2021)
- Completed CTE kitchen classroom renovation at Saraland High School (July 2021)
- New track and soccer complex construction underway at Saraland High School



# Sp **A**rtans



## Make the Grade



WWW.SARALANDBOE.ORG



NOW  
**cognia**

### Saraland City Schools

4010 Lil' Spartan Drive  
Saraland, AL 36571