U.S. Department of Education
2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I   [ ] Charter   [ ] Magnet   [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Stan B Stokley
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Saraland Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 229 McKeough Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Saraland   State AL   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 36571-3214

County   Mobile

Telephone (251) 679-5739   Fax (251) 679-5749

Web site/URL   http://www.sespartans.com/   E-mail   sstokley@saralandboe.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____Date_____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Aaron Milner   E-mail amilner@saralandboe.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Saraland City Schools District   Tel.   (251) 375-5420
I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____Date_____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. William Silver
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____Date_____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)

2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.

3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.

6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.

7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.

8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district   1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   1 Middle/Junior high schools
                                           1 High schools
                                           0 K-12 schools

                                           3 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
   [X] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	9	3	12
K	111	94	205
1	101	100	201
2	109	105	214
3	113	99	212
4	116	108	224
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	559	509	1068

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
15 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
79 % White
1 % Two or more races
100 % Total

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 11%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred *to* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	50
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	64
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	114
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	1010
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.113
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
8 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Tamil, Spanish, Gujarati, Chinese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 56 %
Total number students who qualify: 566

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
96 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

8	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	20	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	33	Specific Learning Disability
1	Emotional Disturbance	25	Speech or Language Impairment
4	Hearing Impairment	1	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	4	Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	52
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	16
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   19:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
    Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
    Yes _   No X

    If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

The mission of Saraland City Schools is to ensure that all students realize their unique potential in a school system characterized by exemplary staff, supportive and involved community, recognition and celebration

of diversity, optimal utilization of resources, uncompromising commitment to excellence, and willingness to affect change.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Saraland Elementary School (SES) is a community school serving grades K-4 in Saraland, Alabama, which is located in the southwest part of the state. SES is one of three schools in the Saraland City School System. Saraland City formed its own school system nine years ago, when it separated from a large county school district in 2008. The citizens of Saraland voted to raise their property taxes in 2008 and again in 2015 in an effort to support the school system. Since 2008, the system has built three new schools and done extensive renovation to the existing middle school. SES has been a neighborhood school for more than 50 years, and in 2013 the Saraland Board of Education (SBOE) built a beautiful, new, 120,000 square foot school on the same location as the old school as a demonstration of support for community schools. The school has 1,068 students, a principal, assistant principal, two academic coaches, 52 certified teachers, and 18 support employees. SES has a positive culture and climate centered around a family atmosphere. Diversity is celebrated through assemblies and thematic units. Teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members work closely to support a caring and nurturing environment in the school and the community. An important factor in the success of the school system is the parental and community support for the schools. Parents are actively involved in the day-to-day activities as well as serving on school leadership committees. The Saraland City Council and the SBOE work closely to improve the quality of life of the citizens and the students. The school benefits from an outpouring of support from civic organizations, PTO, local churches, Saraland Police Department, and Saraland Fire Department. Students participate in a wide range of community activities including football, baseball, softball, basketball, cheerleading, gymnastics, dance, church activities, and martial arts. The school serves a diverse community with families from a wide range of social economic backgrounds. Almost half of the students live in homes with low socio-economic statuses. However, all students are held to the same high expectations. The Saraland community has great pride in the school system and the overwhelming majority of the citizens work together to support the schools. The vision of the Saraland City School System is to build a world class education system for students. The heart of the mission statement is to love students and work with them to achieve the greatest amount of individual success. The employees at SES are one of the most important parts of the success of the school. Faculty and staff members are dedicated, professional, and work hard every day to help every child achieve success. The underlying belief is that all children deserve to be in a classroom with a teacher committed to helping them learn and reach their potential. One of the ways SES ensures the success of every child is by tracking the academic progress of each student in reading and math. SES uses Renaissance Learning Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading and Math to assess student's reading and math proficiency quarterly. At SES, students are on a quest to gain knowledge and become better readers. Students participate in goal setting activities and track their progress in individual data folders. As students meet their goals, their picture is placed on Spartan Mountain as a visual display of their academic success. Students look forward to STAR testing and are excited to track their progress. Administrators and teachers also conduct quarterly data meetings to review school wide data to ensure high quality instruction is adjusted to meet the learning needs of students. A system initiative is implemented to meet the social and emotional needs of students. At-risk students are identified and provided with mentors who provide additional support to students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The curriculum at Saraland Elementary School (SES) is aligned with Common Core Readiness Standards (CCRS) and provides equitable and challenging learning experiences for all students. All students are provided with opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills needed to be successful. Implementation of a challenging curriculum is evident through grade-level collaboration and planning. Lesson plans include strategies presented through the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) and Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and promote activities for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Whole group and small group instruction are integrated in reading and math. Individualized literacy stations and math workshops promote hands-on learning and student engagement. The reading program at SES is based on the English/Language Arts (ELA) standards. Reading Street is the core reading curriculum utilized at SES and was chosen for its comprehensive literacy plan and support of the ELA standards. It provides teachers with resources to use during whole group instruction, small group instruction, literacy centers, and tier 2 intervention. The focus on foundational literacy skills begins in kindergarten and the progression of skills build each year. Teachers supplement the core curriculum to ensure mastery of standards. SES implements ARI strategies reinforcing phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension as a supplement to Reading Street. Literacy standards are incorporated during science and social studies instruction with the use of research projects and writing activities.

The core math curriculum at SES implements the math CCRS and the eight mathematical practices set forth by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics to ensure the foundation of skills begins at kindergarten and builds from year to year. The core math program implemented is the Alabama, Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) due to its strength in promoting investigation and building conceptual knowledge using hands-on manipulatives. AMSTI strategies are applied during whole group instruction, small group instruction, and math workshop. Students are engaged in learning with the use of manipulatives and games.

The science program at SES is based on the Alabama Course of Study Science Standards and the five E model of instruction. Each content standard addresses the three scientific dimensions (scientific and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas) according to the 2012 National Research Council publication, A Framework for K-12 Science Education. A logical progression of skills that builds on disciplinary core ideas are introduced in kindergarten and built upon in subsequent grades. Teachers implement AMSTI strategies in science during classroom instruction to assist with teaching the new science standards. Students are engaged in learning with hands-on science kits that promote discovery and investigation. Science kits are based on the five E model of instruction: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate, which are evidenced during investigation activities in science labs at SES. During this time, students investigate topics such as heredity and diversity, weather and climate, soils and shores, and energy and waves.

The core social studies curriculum at SES implements the Alabama Course of Study Social Studies Standards with a focus on the four organizational strands: economics, geography, history, and civics and government. Implementing this curriculum provides opportunities for responsible citizenship, civic learning, and promotes engagement of students. Second and third grades participate in the Liberty Legacy Super Citizen Program, which makes learning history, civics, character, financial literacy, and career readiness exciting. These immersive learning experiences teach students to become responsible, outstanding citizens. Each year twelve local citizens are nominated and recognized by students for being super citizens in the Saraland community.

The preschool at SES incorporates the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children. The core curriculum focuses on language, math, science, technology, motor skills, health/daily living, and social/emotional skills. The preschool classroom serves special needs and typical learning students. It is a full day program located on the SES campus, and students participate in all school-wide activities. The pre-

k curriculum is aligned to kindergarten through third grade academic standards and strives to ensure students are equipped with the pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills necessary to be successful in kindergarten. Preschool and kindergarten teachers participate in vertical alignment activities to establish consistency in standards and instruction. Additionally, the preschool program focuses on behavioral and social interactions to prepare students for a smooth transition to the kindergarten setting. The foundation provided by the SES preschool prepares students for success in the primary grades.

2. **Other Curriculum Areas:**

Saraland Elementary School (SES) has an art teacher, a music teacher, and a computer teacher. The elementary art curriculum gives students the opportunity to learn and experiment with different types of media and art making processes. The elements of art and principles of design play an important role in the SES curriculum; they allow students to see how artwork is structured and applied during the creative process. Students are taught how to use art materials in a variety of ways and are given freedom to make choices about their artwork while supplementing curriculum standards. Other subject areas are integrated into lessons to ensure students make connections with the general education curriculum. Students have art or music classes for 45 minutes every other week. Student art projects are displayed in the school and in local art shows.

The music program at SES aims to instill a love and appreciation for music within children, while providing a stimulating environment for students to explore music through hands-on experiences. Connections with other academic areas are easily and naturally made through music instruction. The K-2 music classes focus on differentiating between beat and rhythm, discovering patterns in music, reading simple rhythmic patterns, and learning terminology to describe elements of music, such as tempo, pitch, dynamics, and articulation. Second grade students make connections with math as they study pizza notes and how they relate to fractions. Upper elementary students participate in a Music Around the World unit, while they practice map skills and learn songs from various cultures and languages. As students move into third and fourth grade, they begin to read more complex rhythms and identify lines and spaces for treble clef pitches on the music staff. Fourth grade students participate in the Recorder Karate curriculum, which is a culmination of K-3 ideas and concepts (beat, rhythm, melody, dynamics, etc.). The elementary choir performs at many local events including Greek Fest, Christmas events, and school programs. The choir also performs two musicals per year for the students and the community. Parents and community members are actively involved in planning and constructing the set for choir musicals. A contracted dance teacher designs and teaches dance routines to choir members for all choir musical programs.

SES has several curriculum programs to support the robust general academic curriculum. The students have daily scheduled physical education classes either in the climate-controlled gymnasium or on the school playground. SES has a dynamic physical education (PE) program lead by outstanding PE faculty and staff. All of the PE classes are designed to be fun and promote a healthy lifestyle. The PE staff has a large variety of equipment and provides a wide range of physical activities for students. In addition to the regular PE curriculum, the staff brings in community resources to promote a healthy lifestyle. Examples of community agencies include the Mobile County Health Department, Saraland Police Department, local dentists, and the American Heart Association. Topics provided by community agencies include fire safety, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, healthy lifestyle choices, the Jump Rope for Heart Program, and a dental hygiene program. The students enjoy the challenging PE activities and look forward to PE every day. SES has a computer teacher who teaches technology skills to all students in a modern computer lab. All students have 45 minutes of computer class every other week. Students learn keyboarding skills, research skills, and use online prescriptive educational programs for personalized learning. Online programs of learning feature exercises, interactive typing games, and positive reinforcement. The skills learned prepare students to become 21st century learners. SES also has an active archery team that participates in local, state, and national tournaments and a running club that meets every Friday afternoon. The running club has won the award for greatest participation in the Mobile's First Light Marathon Kids run for the last two years.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Saraland Elementary School (SES) utilizes a variety of instructional methods, interventions, and assessments to meet the diverse needs of all students. Student engagement is the primary focus at SES. Teachers employ various grouping patterns (whole group, small group, and individualized) during instruction. To ensure students master standards, teachers select appropriate grouping patterns for student success. Students learn differently; hence, teachers strive to implement strategies that best address individual student needs. SES teachers use strategies presented by Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) during reading instruction and in other content areas to reinforce comprehension and vocabulary. Examples of these daily strategies include think-write-pair-share, turn and talk, and exit slips. Teachers also implement strategies presented by Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) during math and science instruction. This initiative is grounded in strategies that promote daily use of small group instruction. Students are actively engaged in learning in a variety of ways. Teachers include AMSTI and ARI strategies to promote activities that meet the needs of all learners. Whole group and small group explicit instruction are integrated in reading and math. Math workshops and literacy centers encourage student engagement and hands-on learning that meets individual student needs. Differentiated instruction is provided daily with literacy stations, math workshop, small group instruction, and tier 2 and tier 3 interventions. Compass Learning, an online prescriptive program, is utilized by students in reading and math to strengthen deficient areas and provide enrichment. The program retrieves data from STAR Reading and Math programs to develop individual learning paths for students to improve their current proficiency levels. Students are closely monitored during the Response to Instruction (RtI) process. Struggling students are referred to their specific problem-solving teams and additional tier 2 and tier 3 interventions are provided. Tier 2 support is provided by classroom teachers using the intervention component included in the Reading Street series published by Pearson. Tier 3 intervention is provided in pull-out settings by intervention teachers. SPIRE, a multi-sensory program for struggling readers, and AMSTI intervention component for math are utilized during Tier 3 intervention.

Common grade level assessments are used in classrooms. Horizontal alignment among grade level teachers ensures all students are assessed the same. This is accomplished through quarterly data meetings and monthly grade level meetings. Vertical alignment across grade levels ensures consistency in expectations and requirements from one grade level to the next. These meetings are conducted annually to strengthen areas of deficiency and promote enrichment opportunities for specific grade levels. Additionally, assessments are reviewed by teachers, local school administrators, and central office personnel to monitor alignment with CCRS and ensure instruments contain rigorous test items that adhere to the levels presented in Webb's Depth of Knowledge model.

Data drives all instructional decisions at SES. Teachers reflect upon data and examine professional practice to assist with guiding instruction. Multiple formative assessments are analyzed for vertical and horizontal alignment throughout the school year (classroom assessments, STAR Early Literacy, STAR Reading, STAR Math, Aspire Periodic, and mock assessments). Summative data are examined over the summer months to provide guidance for curriculum, instruction, and assessment development for the upcoming academic year (ACT Aspire, Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA), and the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) test). Teachers maintain a data binder for formative and summative data, which is reviewed during grade level meetings and local school curriculum meetings. Areas of strengths and weaknesses are identified through analysis of this data. Instructional planning reports are generated through STAR to provide individualized strategies and skills for students based on strengths and weaknesses. Teachers use this information to monitor and adjust small group instruction and intervention. SES has high expectations for all students. Teachers and staff believe all students can succeed regardless of their race, sex, or socio-economic status. These high expectations for students have resulted in test scores that are among the top in the state. SES is a high performing school that has consistently performed well on state-mandated summative assessments such as the ACT Aspire. SES is proud of its academic success and continues to make strides to improve instruction. Administrators, academic coaches, and teachers work collaboratively to evaluate and improve instruction to ensure SES remains one of the best schools in the state.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The faculty, staff, and administration of Saraland Elementary School (SES) work together to promote a positive climate and culture for students and employees. The culture is centered around the belief that every individual should be given the best opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve maximum potential. The school leadership strives to be a positive encouragement for all students and staff and works closely with all employees to provide assistance for all students. Incentives are provided for students to go above and beyond the basic achievement levels. Students who increase their reading level by one year during the school year have their photo posted in the main hall. Students earn prizes, t-shirts, food items, and baseball tickets as Accelerated Reading rewards.

SES values the relationship between teachers and parents and works to promote positive communication and a spirit of working together for the success of every child. All students at SES have a data notebook with their reading and formative assessment data. School administrators and academic coaches meet one on one with students four times per year to review the data folders. During the meetings all data is reviewed and students set achievement goals for their next formative assessment. This is an important time for the school administration to praise and encourage students for their individual progress.

The counselor uses group guidance, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support to provide social and emotional support for all students. Lessons related to career planning, character education, safety, and anti-bullying are used to ensure a positive safety network for students. All students have counseling classes two times per month. The counselor also organizes Red Ribbon Week, Parenting Day, Advisory Council Meetings, Drop-Out Prevention, and Big Brother Big Sister Mentoring Program activities to promote student success. The school leadership team works to create a positive environment for teachers by working together through positive caring relationships. The school administrators consistently demonstrate a genuine concern for all employees and their families. The feeling of concern and trust among the administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents creates a positive culture in the school and the community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Saraland Elementary School (SES) administrators, teachers, and staff have established high expectations for all students. These expectations are shared with parents regularly through face to face meetings and conferences, school newsletters, weekly teacher newsletters, the school brochure, the Student-Parent Handbook, the school's website, and through social media. School Cast calls are made frequently by the administration to keep parents abreast of all activities and to communicate important information. Other events such as Open House, state-wide Parenting Day, the Title I Parents Right to Know meeting, and Parent Pop-in Nights equip parents with the necessary tools to help their children achieve success at SES. The Saraland community's commitment to SES is unwavering.

On-going support from stakeholders through monetary donations and participation in school-wide events has enabled SES to expand in enrollment, broaden its academic and extra-curricular activities, and improve school safety. Monetary donations have been provided from Swedish Steel, state representatives, and local businesses to enhance student learning. Moreover, community members volunteer in classrooms to assist teachers with daily routines. They also participate in Fall Festival, Spring Fling, the annual book fair, and classroom activities. Each school year, Saraland police officers discuss the importance and rules of pedestrian safety, and Saraland firefighters provide a hands-on experience for students concerning fire safety. Also, local church organizations support the families of students at SES by donating backpacks with school supplies annually and one hundred bags of groceries to at-risk students weekly. Local dentist and orthodontic representatives visit SES each year to provide information on dental hygiene care and offer free dental screenings to students. Community members from a variety of occupations visit classrooms to read to students, participate in science experiments, and teach students about their professions. The Saraland community continuously gives back to SES.

3. **Professional Development:**

Saraland Elementary School (SES) administrators, teachers, and staff work collaboratively to develop an annual professional development plan based on the school's academic and operational needs. Professional learning is related to improving student achievement and provides instruction that results in personal growth for certified and support staff members. The plan is evaluated regularly for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning, and the conditions that support learning. All certified personnel in the school system complete a Professional Learning Plan annually. District initiatives have led to administrators and teachers participating in professional development that includes Alabama Math, Science, and Technology (AMSTI) Math, AMSTI Science, Alabama Reading Initiative, Renaissance Place, and Compass Learning. Professional development opportunities such as data meetings, grade level meetings, and faculty meetings are conducted and support the improvement of instructional practices to ensure student success.

Since SES is a large elementary school with over 50 teachers, it is often a challenge to meet the professional learning needs and interests of all teachers. As a result, SES integrates professional learning communities as an important part of the professional development process so that teachers can select communities that support their interests and areas of need. For instance, administrators, academic coaches, and teachers participate in instructional rounds at least three times per year. Feedback indicates teachers feel they have benefited from the instructional rounds and view the activity as meaningful, embedded professional development. Grade level teachers participate in problem solving team meetings and grade-level meetings. Student data are analyzed and assessments and lesson plans are adjusted as needed.

Teachers also participate in technology learning communities to increase knowledge of technology use in the classroom. Staff members are trained to implement a formal process that promotes discussion about student learning. School leaders participate in the Powerful Conversations Network, Instructional Partners Network, and Key Leaders Network. Information and best practices from these professional learning opportunities enhance the school staff's ability to promote and incorporate discussion, questioning, and reflection among faculty and staff. These practices are incorporated during grade level meetings, data meetings, faculty meetings, and instructional rounds. Academic coaches provide peer coaching regularly through the coaching cycle, modeling, monitoring, conversations, and reflection. December 2016 survey results indicate 94% of teachers participate in collaborative learning communities that promote productive discussion about student learning.

4. **School Leadership:**

The Saraland Elementary School (SES) leadership team works together to create and foster a family atmosphere on campus. The principal, assistant principal, and academic coaches review policies and programs needed for student achievement. The school principal employs a democratic approach to leadership. A school Advisory Council of 12 faculty and staff members provides school-wide leadership and meets every three weeks to plan for school improvement. All faculty and staff members provide input for school improvement through written correspondence at least once a year. The input from this process is the beginning of the school's continuous improvement plan. Online surveys are used to solicit feedback and school improvement ideas from parents and community stakeholders. These surveys play an important role in the development of the continuous improvement plan.

The principal is visible in the morning and afternoon carline and has frequent interaction with parents and grandparents regarding their suggestions for school improvement. The two academic coaches work closely with all teachers to monitor student progress. The academic coaches provide side by side coaching with all new teachers and any other teacher needing assistance with curriculum and instruction. New teachers are paired with veteran teachers for mentoring relationships. The leadership team uses monthly newsletters, weekly calendars, school website, Facebook, Twitter, and an online grade reporting system to ensure daily positive contacts with parents and community members. Selected faculty and staff members post pictures and videos to Facebook, Twitter, and the school website. All faculty and staff members are encouraged to submit classroom activity photos to be posted on social media weekly. The principal leads by example and communicates high expectations for faculty, staff, and students. The primary focus on high standards is

centered around what is best for the students. Best practices with regard to facility management, curriculum, scheduling, and school safety planning are intended to ensure student safety and to help all students reach their greatest potential. Through dedicated and democratic leadership, the school principal has created a culture that fosters a love for learning and sets high academic expectations for students. School policies and practices promote collaboration and ownership of the school vision, which leads to high student achievement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Data plays an important role in instruction at Saraland Elementary School (SES) and is regularly used to guide instructional practices and strategies. The school leadership team, faculty, staff, and students utilize formative and summative data for progress monitoring of academic achievement. The school uses several formative assessments to monitor student progress. Some of the assessments are online while others use paper and pencil. One of the progress monitoring assessments used is the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR). This online assessment is used to progress monitor student achievement in reading and math. The online ACT Aspire Periodic Assessments are formative assessments used to measure student growth in reading, math, and science. Data from these assessments aid teachers in preparing students for the Aspire summative assessment. Additionally, paper-based quarterly mock assessments are given for reading, math, and writing. Academic coaches grade the mock assessments and analyze results with teachers and students. Rigorous weekly common assessments incorporate higher order Depth of Knowledge skills and are aligned to the state standards.

Monthly Response to Instruction (RtI) meetings are held to discuss and develop strategies for struggling students. Classroom teachers provide tier 1 instruction and tier 2 intervention in the classroom. Academic coaches and intervention teachers provide tier 3 intervention for struggling students during the school day outside of the regular classroom. Quarterly data meetings are held to review all forms of data for the purpose of evaluating students' academic progress. Lesson plans and pacing guides are adjusted to reflect identified strengths and weaknesses. All students have data folders for their individual data. Students track their own progress in STAR, ACT Periodic Assessments, and paper-based mock assessments. Students review their data and set quarterly goals for all three assessments. The principal, assistant principal, and academic coaches meet one on one with students to review their data notebooks and set goals for the next formative assessment. The principal meets individually with every student before the summative assessment to review data folders and to set a goal for each assessment. Keeping the focus on student data and student achievement enables the administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents to work together for maximum student achievement. The clear focus and high expectations for student achievement is the key to academic success at SES.