



SARALAND Board of Education

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Saraland Schools Prepare Students for Health Science Careers

Saraland – In its first two years, Saraland High School's program designed to jump start a student's pursuit of a medical career has seen the number of classes and student enrollment grow. In 2014, the Health Sciences Program initially offered two courses and served 48 students and has now grown to a total of 80 enrolled students and offers the four courses needed to prepare students for the CNA test.

This spring, the program's first class of 19 students will qualify to test for the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) credential. The test consists of both a written and clinical skills test.

To be able to take the test, students are required to complete coursework as well as 24 clinical hours recognized by the State of Alabama Department of Public Health. Saraland students are obtaining clinical experience at North Mobile Nursing Home and Rehabilitation in Eight Mile.

"The experience they gain through the internship is invaluable as it allows students to provide hands on care to patients and deal with real healthcare situations," said Tammi Thames, MSN, RN, who teaches the program. "It is rewarding to observe students demonstrating the skills and knowledge they have obtained throughout the Health Sciences Program."

This program not only provides students courses and experience valuable on a transcript or resume, but also affords real world experience in the medical field. An additional benefit to participation is that students can earn the CNA credential before they graduate from high school.

"Offering the CNA program to high school students allows students the opportunity to explore the health care field prior to entering college," Thames said. "This experience is dynamic as it helps students determine if healthcare is their true passion and something they want to further pursue in college as a lifelong career."

The program typically begins in the 10th grade with Foundations of Health Science, which is followed by Medical Terminology the next year. Senior level courses include Therapeutics of Health Science and the internship. Participating students build a foundation in health sciences which includes medical terminology and terms, diagnosis and treatments, along with a focus on learning and mastering CNA skills.

"These students will graduate prepared to enter the workforce," said Dr. Aaron Milner, Superintendent of Saraland City Schools. "This is additional evidence that Saraland City Schools is focused on the workforce development needs of Southwest Alabama. Not only is Saraland City Schools improving the lives of current students, our system is initiating academic programs which will have a strategic impact on the economy of Mobile County by ensuring graduates are qualified employees, equipped to enter fields of the greatest need in our region."

The health science classroom at Saraland High School is designed with four clinical lab stations, including hospital beds and bedside tables, two mannequins, a patient monitor, functional nursing station, vital signs equipment, ambulatory and transport equipment, a stretcher, CPR equipment, 11 computers, and 25 iPads that allow students to receive optimal training experiences.

The Health Sciences Program is funded by a 21st Century Workforce Development Grant from the state of Alabama. The competitive grant for over \$71,000.00, allowed the high school to offer the four required courses and to hire experienced personnel to teach the program.

"Mrs. Thames has done an outstanding job with the Health Sciences Program in an extremely short time span," said Dr. Kristen Sousa, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Saraland City Schools. "The daily instruction delivered to the students is rigorous and meaningful and will equip them with skills needed for the medical field."