



SARALAND Board of Education

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PRESS RELEASE

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Saraland Board of Education Recognizes Lieber Family Generosity

SARALAND, Ala. (July 14, 2016) -- At its June meeting, the Saraland City School Board acknowledged the donation of 26 acres from the Lieber family that will bring the Saraland Early Education Center to life before the end of the year.

The Early Education Center is a proposed 65,750 square foot facility, located near the Elysian Fields neighborhood on Celeste Road, that will house pre-school, kindergarten, and 1st grade students in 29 classrooms. The project is part of the Saraland School System Capital Plan and is slated for completion in December 2016.

After returning to the area in 1998, Jon Lieber, a former major league baseball pitcher, began to invest in property on Celeste Road. He had no real intentions with the land until 2010 when he began considering developing a neighborhood. With the growth of the Saraland School System and subsequent growth in the city, Lieber approached Board President Bill Silver and proposed a possible land donation to the school system. However, the system was not looking to build at the time. In recent years, with student enrollment continuing to increase, dynamics changed quickly. Another building was needed and the offer was reconsidered. The Lieber family's entire property – including the neighborhood – is 1300 acres and is a 40 to 50 year development project, according to Lieber.

“It’s a situation where you have something to believe in and something to be a part of that’s basically brand new,” Lieber said. “The unique thing about Saraland, they’re just scratching the surface of where this city can go. That’s unique in today’s age. ... To be a part of something like that is special.”

At the June board meeting, Board President Silver said to Lieber, “We are appreciative of your generosity and what it’s going to mean to our system and most importantly our students.” Superintendent Aaron Milner agreed, saying that because of the donation from Lieber and his wife Jessica, “kindergarten and first grade students will benefit from a state-of-the-art facility.” With the completion of the Early Education Center, the school system will be able to focus on the specific developmental needs of this age group.

Lieber said working with the school system has been a positive experience. With four children of his own, he’s proud to be a part of a project that directly affects the lives of local children.

“This is a huge move on their part,” Lieber said about the project. “It’s going to be a magnet for that area and for the school system. I see great things happening in Saraland; you want to get out there now.”

Early Education Center construction is on schedule. Classes are expected to move into the facility in January 2017. For the latest construction update, visit https://youtu.be/4_C3c34JPXE.