



# SARALAND Board of Education

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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Saraland Elementary Receives National Blue Ribbon Honors**

SARALAND, Alabama (September 28, 2017) – U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos today recognized 342 schools as [National Blue Ribbon Schools](#) for 2017. The recognition is based on a school's overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Saraland Elementary was one of the schools recognized as an Exemplary High Performing School and is among Alabama's highest performing elementary schools as measured by state assessments.

Without question, Saraland Elementary School is characterized by its *small town* spirit with *big goals* for student success. A place with a shared vision – one town – one team – one dream, where the faculty, staff, and community are dedicated to students and committed to excellence.

Overall, “National Blue Ribbon Schools are active demonstrations of preparing every child for a bright future,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to the honorees. “You are visionaries, innovators, and leaders. You have much to teach us: some of you personalize student learning, others engage parents and communities in the work and life of your local schools, and still others develop strong and forward-thinking leaders from among your teaching staff.”

During a reception on Thursday afternoon, Principal Stan Stokley reflected on the honor stating, “A principal friend of mine characterized this award as winning an academic championship. A school is just like a team. Any winning team is made up of many players, coaches, and support personnel. This is not an individual award or an award for a few individuals.”

This coveted award affirms the hard work of educators, families, and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content.

“We take great pride that Saraland Elementary School has been named nationally as one of the best. Saraland Elementary is not a magnet and not a charter,” said Dr. Aaron Milner, Superintendent. “Rather, it's a traditional public school that welcomes all the children our community's parents send us. Then, our faculty, staff, and administration give our best to every child that enters the doors each day. The sole reason for this recognition is our students' level of achievement in comparison to other schools and is evidence of our commitment and appreciation of the community's trust in Saraland City Schools.”

Now in its 35th year, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has bestowed recognition on more than 8,500 schools. On Nov. 6-7, the Secretary and the Department of Education will celebrate with these honorees at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Up to 420 schools may be nominated each year. The Department invites National Blue Ribbon School nominations from the top education official in all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Department of Defense Education Activity and the Bureau of Indian Education. Private schools are nominated by The Council for American Private Education (CAPE).