



Sartartia Middle School
Cholly Oglesby, Principal

Nomination- Schools Transforming Learning

Sartartia Middle School
Fort Bend Independent School District
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Sartartia Middle
[Canva Video Link](#)
[YouTube Video Link](#)



Overview and Background

Sartartia Middle School is part of Fort Bend Independent School District, committed to inspiring and equipping students to pursue futures beyond what they can imagine. Located in the New Territory community, Sartartia serves 1,282 students in grades 6–8. Our students come from Brazos Bend, Cornerstone, and Walker Station Elementary Schools and continue on to Austin and Clements High Schools. Sartartia benefits from strong community partnerships, an active PTO, and a shared commitment to striving to be the best middle school in Texas.

Our campus serves a richly diverse population of learners. This diversity is one of our greatest strengths, providing students daily opportunities to learn alongside peers from a wide range of cultures, backgrounds, and experiences.

Six years ago, as Sartartia Middle School returned to campus following COVID-19, we were not only rebuilding routines—we were redefining who we were. At the same time, I was entering my first year as principal, leading with the belief that culture must come before compliance.

As we returned to face-to-face learning, I intentionally made no immediate changes and focused on listening. During that first year, a staff member asked what the “LEAD” flyers posted throughout the building meant. When no one could clearly explain them, it revealed a critical truth: our values were not fully understood or owned by our community.

We knew then that Sartartia needed more than words on the wall. We needed shared beliefs, shaped by our community and lived daily. That realization became the catalyst for meaningful organizational transformation.

Focus Areas (Visioning Document Alignment)

Our work aligns most strongly with Article V: Organizational Transformation, as we focused on redefining campus identity, operationalizing shared values, and creating systems that empower both students and adults. Equally important was our alignment with Article I: Student-Centered Learning and Engagement, ensuring that student voice, belonging, and engagement were foundational—not supplemental—to who we are as a campus.

Work

We began by gathering voices across the campus community. Through staff focus groups, student conversations, and surveys, we asked one central question: *What does it really mean to be Sartartia?*

From that collective work, three core values emerged: Accountability, Integrity, Respect

Together, these values formed AIR, a unifying identity that quickly became more than an acronym—it became our shared language. At Sartartia, we often say, *“This is what we live and breathe.”*

AIR is not symbolic. It is operationalized through expectations, celebrations, decision-making, and daily interactions. From classrooms to hallways, students and staff understand not only what AIR stands for, but why it matters.

As our culture evolved, student recognition became a key driver of growth. We intentionally shifted from recognizing perfection to celebrating effort, progress, and persistence. Students learned that success at Sartartia is not about being flawless—it is about showing up, learning from mistakes, and continuing to grow.

Through intentional recognition systems, students see that when they demonstrate AIR—even imperfectly—adults notice, encourage, and push alongside them. This has fostered a culture where students feel safe taking academic and personal risks, knowing they are supported.

Recognition is embedded throughout campus life—classrooms, celebrations, and daily interactions reinforce the message that every student matters and every step forward counts.

At Sartartia, teaching and learning are at the heart of everything we do. We intentionally build dedicated PLC time into our master schedule so grade-level and content teams have meaningful opportunities to collaborate during the school day. Our shared mindset—*“We’ll try anything once”*—has created a sense of ownership and encouraged instructional risk-taking, leading to greater student engagement and choice. Most importantly, we’ve built a culture where teachers feel safe to take risks, reflect, and grow, always with the goal of getting better every day.

Professional learning is job-embedded and continuous. Teachers participate in learning walks focused on campus look-fors, including academic discourse, student voice and choice, collaboration and engagement, and a culture of inquiry. Teams observe classrooms, debrief using structured protocols, and apply learning directly to instructional planning.

Our Leading Improvement Community (LIC) serves as a collaborative structure that supports student outcomes and instructional practice through shared responsibility and partnership with other campus leaders. Sartartia partners with two other FBISD middle school campuses and engages in six collaborative walks throughout the school year, strengthening our cycle of continuous improvement.

Results

The impact of this work is visible and measurable:

- **Clarity of Identity:** Students and staff can clearly articulate what AIR means and how it guides expectations, behavior, and learning.
- **Stronger Culture and Belonging:** Student voice actively shapes campus decisions, traditions, and celebrations.
- **Increased Student Engagement:** Students are more willing to take risks, persist through challenges, and hold themselves accountable.
- **Sustainable Systems:** AIR serves as a foundational framework for onboarding, recognition, discipline, and instructional expectations.
- **Continuous Growth:** Our community is inspired to try something new today so we are better tomorrow.

Most importantly, Sartartia emerged from a moment of uncertainty with a stronger sense of purpose. What began as a simple question about old posters evolved into a campus-wide transformation rooted in trust, voice, and shared ownership. At Sartartia Middle School, Accountability, Integrity, and Respect are not just words—they are what we live and breathe.