

History of Ridgecrest

In 1962, all of Joe Bradley School's elementary level students, faculty and materials were moved to the new Ridgecrest Elementary School. With the reactivation of Redstone Arsenal in the mid 1950's and the establishment of the NASA Space Program, Bradley School could no longer accommodate the increasing enrollment. Even though Ridgecrest was planned to accommodate a large number of pupils, the architects had to add six rooms shortly before the school opened in 1962. By 1965, several portable classrooms were needed.

The crowded condition was relieved in the fall of 1967 with the opening of McDonnell Elementary School. In 1972-73, the school experienced another large increase in enrollment by the rezoning of Redstone Arsenal first and second graders to Ridgecrest from Madison Pike School (now Morris Elementary). Although the school has had 1700 students at one time, the present enrollment is approximately 400. Redstone Arsenal students in grades K-5 were moved to Williams Elementary School in September of 1990.

There are presently 41 classrooms inside the main building. A P.E. activity building was completed in 1983. Kindergarten classes began in 1978. Computers began to be used in 1985. The At-Risk Program began in 1989. During the fall of 1991, the Headstart Program was included on our campus. A new library was completed in 1995.

Mr. E.F. Dubose served as principal from 1963 until he retired in 1970. Mr. John Williams was principal until 1974, then Dr. Joan Dowdle came to Ridgecrest. The fourth principal, Mrs. Mildred Haga, came in 1981 until 1996. Dr. Rachel Cervantes, was here from 1996-2002. Mrs. Brenda Wingate was principal from 2002-2005. Ridgecrest's current principal is Ms. Dawn S. Williamson.

Ridgecrest Elementary School was accredited by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges and the State Department of Education in 1972. Since that time, Ridgecrest remains an accredited school.