About Our Community

The City of Clarksdale is located along the Sunflower River with the western boundary formed by the Mississippi River. Clarksdale is named after John Clark, a settler who founded the city in 1948 when he established a timber mill and business. It is currently the county seat of Coahoma County in the Mississippi Delta region with a population of 14,903 citizens (2020 Census). Clarksdale is an agricultural, manufacturing, and trading center. Many African-American musicians developed the blues here, and took this original American music with them to Chicago and other northern cities during the Great Migration.

The Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians had occupied the Delta region for thousands of years prior to the arrival of European settlers and had each developed complex cultures that took full advantage of their environment. European Americans built on this past, developing Clarksdale at the intersection of two former Indian routes: the Lower Creek Trade Path, which extended westward from present-day Augusta, Georgia, to New Mexico; and the Chakchiuma Trade Trail, which ran northeastward to the former village at present-day Pontotoc, Mississippi. They later improved these trails for roadways wide enough for wagons.

The movement of large numbers of people both to and from Clarksdale is prominent in the city's history. Prior to 1920, Delta plantations were in constant need of laborers, and many black families moved to the area to work as sharecroppers. After World War I, plantation owners even encouraged blacks to move from the other parts of Mississippi to the Delta region for work. By this time, Clarksdale had also become home to a multi-cultural mixture of Lebanese, Italian, Chinese and Jewish immigrant merchants.

By 1920, the price of cotton had fallen, and many African-Americans living in the Delta began to leave. The Illinois Central Railroad operated a large depot in Clarksdale and provided a Chicago-bound route for those seeking greater economic opportunities in the north; it soon became the primary departure point for many.

Clarksdale has been historically significant in the history of the blues. The Mississippi Blues Trail places interpretative markers for historic sites such as Clarksdale's Riverside Hotel, where Bessie Smith died following an auto accident on Highway 61. The Riverside Hotel is just one of many historical blues sites in Clarksdale. Early supporters of the effort to preserve Clarksdale's musical legacy included the award-winning photographer and journalist Panny Mayfield, Living Blues magazine founder Jim O'Neal, and attorney Walter Thompson, father of sports journalist Wright Thompson.

In 1995, Mt. Zion Memorial Fund founder Skip Henderson, a vintage guitar dealer from New Brunswick, New Jersey and friend of Delta Blues Museum founder Sid Graves, purchased the Illinois Central Railroad passenger depot to save it from planned demolition. With the help of local businessman Jon Levingston, as well as the Delta Council, Henderson received a $1.279 million grant from the federal government to restore the passenger depot. These redevelopment funds were then transferred on the advice of Clarksdale's City attorney, Hunter Twiford, to Coahoma County, in order to establish a tourism locale termed "Blues Alley," after a phrase coined by then Mayor, Henry Espy. The popularity of the Delta Blues Museum and the growth of the Sunflower River Blues & Gospel Festival and Juke Joint Festivals have provided an economic boost to the city.
## STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Dr. Zedric Clayton, President
- LaFiesta Roland, Vice President
- Dr. Manika Kemp, Secretary
- Joan Morris, Board Member
- H. Clay Stillions, Board Member
- Carlos Palmer, Board Attorney

### SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Earl Joe Nelson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Toya Matthews</td>
<td>Asst. Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosalyn Griffin</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Pulley</td>
<td>Chief Financial Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob French</td>
<td>Chief Strategy Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lajeuna Crenshaw</td>
<td>Principal, HES Elem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephanye Moton</td>
<td>Dir. of Special Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Mary Williams</td>
<td>Urgent &amp; Primary Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adrienne Hudson</td>
<td>Principal, KES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Bell</td>
<td>Director of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven Jossell</td>
<td>Coahoma Comm. College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Damian Collins</td>
<td>Principal, OIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridney Skipper</td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Montgomery</td>
<td>Parent Center Coord.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastor John Givens</td>
<td>PVC Vision Center Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher Turner</td>
<td>Principal, JWS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liz George</td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kameron Haymon</td>
<td>CMSD Social Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willie Harrison</td>
<td>PVC Vision Center Church</td>
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<td>Herbert Smith</td>
<td>Principal, CHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wendy Hood</td>
<td>Teacher, BTW</td>
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<td>Erma Robinson</td>
<td>CMSD Social Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastor Luster Tyler II</td>
<td>Union Grove M.B. Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shawanda Shaw</td>
<td>Asst. Principal, CHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Griffin</td>
<td>Teacher, JWS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief Deputy Will Rooker</td>
<td>Coahoma Co. Sherriff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jenny O’Meara</td>
<td>Transcend Education</td>
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<td>Triccia Hudson</td>
<td>CTE Director</td>
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<td>Abigail Corder</td>
<td>Teacher, CHS</td>
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<td>Cpl. Vincent Jones</td>
<td>Coahoma Co. Sherriff</td>
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<td>Dr. Debra Jackson</td>
<td>Dynamic Connections</td>
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MISSION

We exist to provide a comprehensive educational program that leverages technology to address our scholars’ academic, career, and social needs, equipping them for success in a diverse and evolving world.

VISION

Our vision is a Clarksdale Municipal School District that empowers students by creating key community partnerships and offering a rigorous academic program that addresses the diverse needs of every scholar.

CORE VALUES

Integrity-emphasizing honesty and exhibiting strong moral principles
Respect-accepting others despite their differences, building relationships that increase trust, safety, and wellbeing
Individuality-celebrating the intrinsic worth of each individual
Empowerment-growing in strength and confidence to make a positive difference in one’s own life and to contribute to a larger good
Innovation-choosing to do things differently to create value for our students, staff, families, and community
Wellness-prioritizing decisions that have a positive effect on the physical, mental, and emotional health of our stakeholders

GOALS

Goal 1: Improve student achievement results as reported by state and other standardized test results to garner a performance rating of “C” or better.
Goal 2: Maintain a safe and orderly school environment to promote success and wellness.
Goal 3: Promote efficient and effective fiscal accountability using a needs-based approach while expanding resources that support student achievement.
Goal 4: Increase community collaboration through parental involvement and strategic partnerships.
Transcend Project

Transcend is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to support communities to create and spread extraordinary, equitable learning environments. The Clarksdale Municipal School District is one of ten rural school communities from across the country that were chosen to participate in a ten-month cohort to reimagine school in rural communities based on their deep-seated commitment to equity and creating strong learning experiences for every young person.

At the start of the ten-month program, our school community identified members of our school district to participate. Through this program, the team has worked locally to enlist our community in shaping the vision for our reimagined school. At the same time, the groups have engaged in convenings throughout the year, exploring high impact topics such as generating a community-led school design process to achieve equitable results for all students, understanding the skills and mindsets needed for young people to thrive in and transform the world, how to ensure community aspirations and needs are reflected, and understanding the science of learning and development.

Transcend was founded on a belief that schools must be reimagined using a community-driven approach, so all children can realize their infinite potential. Their work with school communities and the larger ecosystem is guided by five fundamental beliefs.

1. All children have infinite potential.
2. To realize this potential, we must reimagine “schooling” as we know it.
3. The work is most successful when pursued through a rigorous, community-driven R&D process grounded in equity.
4. While never easy, innovation is absolutely possible.
5. Accelerating progress requires strong local leadership, surrounded by a conducive ecosystem.

Collaboratively Developed Graduate Aims for CMSD

- **Collaboration**: Communicates clearly with others using interpersonal skills in order to cooperate and achieve a common goal.
- **Strong Sense of Self**: Has a positive and accurate view of who they are. Even when in unfamiliar contexts or challenging situations, shows up as themselves and strives for positive impact.
- **Thirst for Knowledge**: Demonstrates curiosity and the desire to discover new things. Asks complex questions to develop understanding. Has deep and broad content knowledge that can be applied as students enter college, the workforce, or the military.
- **Empathy**: Uses communicative skills to constructively understand others’ feelings and background in a given circumstance so that they respond appropriately.
- **21st Century Thinking**: Self-reflects and uses rational examination and judgment to solve a problem, make a choice, or learn something new. Considers multiple perspectives and recognizes potential biases.
**Goal 1:** Improve student achievement results as reported by state and other standardized test results to garner a performance rating of “C” or better.

### Strategy 1: Recruit, retain, and support effective educators and leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>Who’s Responsible</th>
<th>Y1</th>
<th>Y2</th>
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<th>Y4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand recruitment efforts by attending college fairs, using talent recruitment programs (i.e. ZipRecruiter, Indeed, etc.) and job boards.</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
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<td>Develop retention strategies to reduce turnover and retain talent for five (5) or more years.</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
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<td>Offer staff programs that support their social and emotional needs.</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
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### Strategy 2: Ensure student-centered learning, providing high-quality Tier I instruction.

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<th>Action Steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase opportunities for students to take Dual Credit and/or Advanced Placement Classes.</td>
<td>CAO, Curriculum Team, HS Principal</td>
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<td>Increase opportunities for Career and Technical Education and/or work-based experiences.</td>
<td>CAO, Curriculum Team, CTE Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase offerings for visual and performing arts across the district.</td>
<td>CAO, Curriculum Team</td>
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<td>Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Tier I teaching practices to ensure learning in ALL classrooms.</td>
<td>CAO, Curriculum Team, Principals, APs</td>
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### Strategy 3: Provide high-quality instructional resources.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide support to teachers from the Curriculum Department.</td>
<td>CAO, Curriculum Team</td>
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<td>Provide current, standards-based resources to all teachers.</td>
<td>CAO, Curriculum Team</td>
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<td>Provide ongoing PD that targets identified needs.</td>
<td>CAO, Curriculum Team, Principals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Select HQIM for all four core areas and provide training on how to use them with fidelity. Streamline resources.</td>
<td>CAO, Curriculum Team, Principals, Assistant Principals</td>
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<tr>
<th>Planning Phase</th>
<th>Piloting Phase</th>
<th>Implementation Phase</th>
<th>Maintaining Phase</th>
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</table>
**Goal 2:** Maintain a safe and orderly school environment to promote success and wellness.

### Strategy 1: Secure district facilities and fleet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Y5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a needs assessment on surveillance cameras in the district and secure funding to meet existing needs.</td>
<td>COO, Director of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate, select, and purchase software to assist with bus routes and to monitor safe driving practices.</td>
<td>COO, Director of Technology</td>
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<td>Install backup cameras on all district vehicles.</td>
<td>COO, Director of Maintenance</td>
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<td>Develop a comprehensive maintenance plan/protocol to ensure the timely repair of facilities and equipment.</td>
<td>COO, Director of Maintenance</td>
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### Strategy 2: Ensure the social-emotional and physical well-being of students and staff.

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<th>Action Steps</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form a district-level committee to select and implement a social-emotional learning curriculum that also includes a staff component.</td>
<td>CAO, Counselors, and Social Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a wellness committee to identify and help address the physical and social-emotional needs of students and staff.</td>
<td>COS, COO, Nurses, Social Workers</td>
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### Strategy 3: Develop and implement a comprehensive crisis management plan.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish school and district safety committees to develop crisis management plans, including a plan for implementation.</td>
<td>COO, Principals, Safety Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner with law enforcement agencies to provide training and supplies for SROs, admin, faculty staff and students, helping them know how to respond in an emergency.</td>
<td>COO, SROs, Principals, Safety Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct emergency drills to help ensure preparedness (fire, active shooter, tornado, earthquake, etc.).</td>
<td>COO, SROs, Principals, Safety Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct yearly CPR training for all staff.</td>
<td>COO</td>
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**Goal 3:** Promote efficient and effective fiscal accountability using a needs-based approach while expanding resources that support student achievement.

### Strategy 1: Align resources to support student learning.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate new and existing programs to monitor for return on investment.</td>
<td>Chiefs, Directors, Designated Committees/Teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey students to ascertain end user satisfaction.</td>
<td>CSO, CFO, Designated Committees/Teams</td>
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### Strategy 2: Maintain a healthy fund balance of approximately 10% of the annual budget.

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<tr>
<th>Action Steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide quarterly financial updates for staff that highlights expenditure trends.</td>
<td>CFO</td>
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<td>Manage and restructure debt as appropriate.</td>
<td>CFO</td>
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### Strategy 3: Utilize fiscally sound short- and long-term operational planning.

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<th>Action Steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide a financial procedural manual to ensure consistent practices district-wide.</td>
<td>CFO, Federal Program Director</td>
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<td>Hold regular financial planning and accountability trainings for building administrators to increase their capacity.</td>
<td>CFO, Business Office</td>
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Goal 4: Increase community collaboration through parental involvement and develop strategic partnerships.

### Strategy 1: Communicate with all stakeholders.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create and implement a communication system encompassing the district website, social media accounts, mass calls/texts to quickly provide information to stakeholders.</td>
<td>COS, CSO, Director of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a monthly newsletter (external) that informs the community of happenings within the district.</td>
<td>Superintendent, Chiefs, Directors, Principals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a monthly newsletter (internal) that informs staff of happenings within the district.</td>
<td>Superintendent, Chiefs, Directors, Principals</td>
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<td>Designate Parent/Community Liaisons within schools as point of contact.</td>
<td>COS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilize creative marketing tools for outreach.</td>
<td>COS, Parent Liaisons</td>
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### Strategy 2: Engage stakeholders in sharing the responsibility of learning.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create and grow Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) at each school in the district.</td>
<td>COS, Principals, APs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide digital/print resources for stakeholders.</td>
<td>COS</td>
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<td>Establish academic showcases that create more activities for parents and students to learn together.</td>
<td>CAO, Principals</td>
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### Strategy 3: Collaborate with stakeholders to offer students new opportunities.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create opportunities for students to job shadow individuals in our community or one nearby.</td>
<td>CTE Director, HS Principal</td>
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<td>Allocate resources for our students to attend job fairs and equip them by providing mock interviews and/or professional clothing.</td>
<td>Social Workers, COS, HS Principal</td>
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<td>Invite professionals to serve as guest speakers and to expose students to various career options.</td>
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