

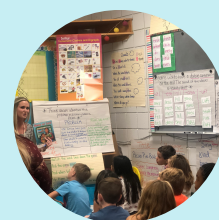
It's Elementary!



Welcome Back

Back to school is the greatest time of the year. We begin again with renewed energy, returning fresh with the desire to impact the lives of the students before us. By now classroom routines are set and teaching and learning is taking place throughout the district. As we walk down the school halls, there is an overwhelming sense of excitement and promise of a successful year.

Much planning and training has taken place this summer in preparation of this task. We are excited about fully implementing the Fountas and Pinnell classroom and the new resources that will be delivered soon for grades 3-5. This will enhance the literacy skills of our elementary students and better prepare them for success throughout the grades. We are also excited about our new Great Minds Math adoption. Math proficiency levels have increased on state assessments and students are showing evidence of being better problem solvers and more critical thinkers. Great progress has also been made in Science instruction. Test scores held steady, even with the new assessment, and students are more actively engaged through the inquiry based learning activities. Professional development trainings in all subject areas were held this summer on the use of these resources and will continue through September for all those unable to attend.



**Fountas and
Pinnell
Classroom**



Eureka Math



**Principal
Academy**

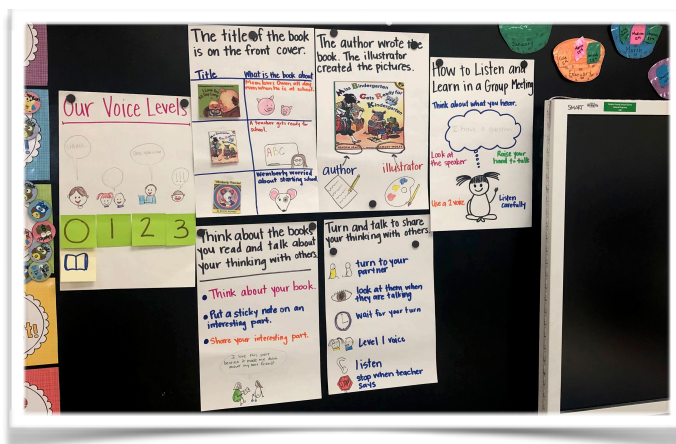
We have much to be proud of in the Rankin County School District and this is a testament to our collective efforts. Solomon Ortiz's quote, "Education is the key to success in life, and teachers make a lasting impact in the lives of their students," is a reminder of the importance of the job that we have been entrusted to do.

Fountas and Pinnell Classroom

This year, we are fully implementing Fountas and Pinnell Classroom resources in K-2. This includes Interactive Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study, and Reading Minilessons. Fountas and Pinnell Classroom is a cohesive, multi-text approach to literacy instruction for all students. The system is designed to support whole-group, small-group, and independent learning opportunities. Each piece provides students with authentic experiences in reading, thinking, talking, writing, and reflecting to realize what it means to live a literate life. Each component allows teachers to understand the crucial role of responsive teaching.

In grades 3-5, teachers will be receiving Interactive Read Aloud, Book Clubs, and Reading Minilessons. This will help ensure a balance of fiction and non-fiction text. Each Interactive Read Aloud kit comes with an organized collection of text sets that contains four to six books. The Reading Minilessons are short, explicit, inquiry-based lessons about a principle that students can apply to their own independent reading. The book clubs provide students with choice and gives them opportunities to facilitate discussion. Students will apply many of the literacy behaviors and understanding they have learned through other instructional contexts.

To see this in action, click the link. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeDVaGo_3y4&feature=youtu.be



Eureka Math

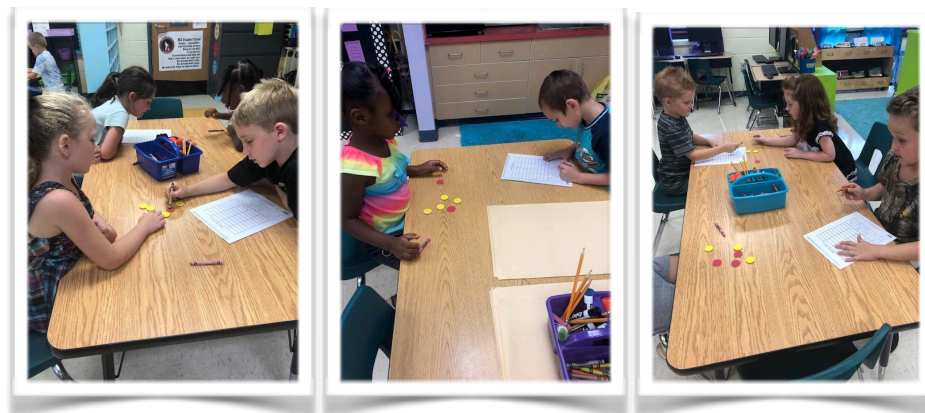
Eureka Math in our kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms has gotten off to a great start! During summer and back to school professional development meetings, teachers participated in Eureka trainings designed to help teachers get started with the curriculum. The trainings focused on engaging students in productive fluency practices and how to effectively plan and customize the Eureka Math curriculum to fit all teachers' diverse classrooms.

During many of the classroom visits by the Elementary Math Curriculum Team, we have enjoyed hearing the mathematical discussions and seeing the hard work going into using this curriculum across the district. The following are pictures of kindergarten students at Oakdale Elementary and 4th grade students at Richland Upper Elementary.



Rikki Morrow from Puckett Elementary is excited about Eureka math and says, “My students are really enjoying finding parts in whole numbers with these fun games and manipulatives in the Eureka math lessons.”

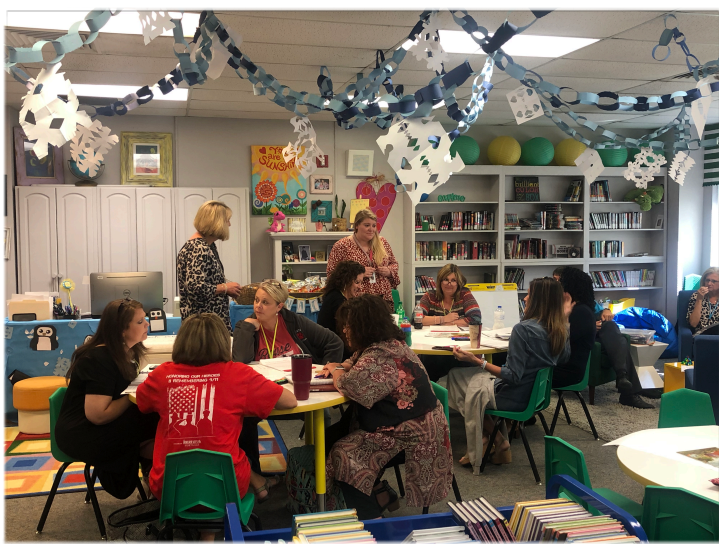
These pictures are from Super Six Shake Up and 5-group creator. 1st Grade Puckett Elementary



Principal Academy

There are many demands that are placed on principals today. Relatively few principals receive ongoing professional development that enhances their ability to lead schools to high performance. The Rankin County Principals' Academy fills that gap by providing ongoing training to elementary principals in the district on the importance of data and curriculum. Principals must be the lead instructor within their school. They must know the curriculum in each grade level and subject.

The academies take place once a month and are led by the Director of Elementary Curriculum and the Curriculum Specialists. Principals analyze live data to make instructional decisions and dive into the curriculum for hands on training. By providing principals with ongoing training, it allows them to be the very best instructional leader in their building.



The September Principal Academy focused on the implementation of Fountas and Pinnell Classroom. Principals, Assistant Principals, and Instructional Coaches observed K-1 classrooms at Pisgah Elementary. The K-1 teachers effectively demonstrated how the different components of Fountas and Pinnell Classroom provided engaging and intentionally focused instruction that was seamless. The principals were able to see this in action and then look at lessons and align the lessons with standards that would have a direct impact on student learning.



New Principal SPOTLIGHT

Lindsay Starbuck - Principal at Richland Upper Elementary



Lindsay Starbuck graduated from USM in December 2002 with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. She received her Master of Education from WCU in August 2013. She completed the Ole Miss Principal Corps Program in August 2018 with a Specialist in Education. She taught in the elementary classroom for 15 years in the West Jasper School District and the Smith County School District. She completed a one year internship in the Petal School District before coming to Rankin County. She was an Assistant Principal at Florence Elementary for one year and is now currently the principal at Richland Upper Elementary School. She has been married to Andy Starbuck for 20 years, and they have three daughters.

Dr. Lamarcus Norman - Principal at Flowood Elementary



Dr. Norman is from Greenville, MS and a graduate of Greenville-Weston High School. He attended Jackson State University where he received a B.S. in Business Administration, subsequently obtaining his Alternate Route Certification in Elementary Education from Mississippi College. He has also obtained a Specialist degree in Education Administration from the University of Mississippi and completed his Doctoral degree from Delta State University. He has been in the field of education for ten years and is currently the principal at Flowood Elementary. He has also been honored as the 2019 Mississippi Educational Computer Association administrator of the year. Dr. Norman lives in Brandon, MS with his wife of nine years Vashaundra and dog Barkley.