

IT'S ELEMENTARY

Elementary Curriculum

Eureka Training

On January 6, Math teachers across the district attended professional development led by Eureka Math Curriculum professionals. During this time, they studied how to effectively teach word problems in their classes by dissecting problems through the process of chunking and utilizing tape diagrams. Teachers were grouped into bands of K-2 and 3-5 teachers to be able to have conversations based around the same ages. Teachers enjoyed taking their learning to a deeper level of understanding of word problems through this professional development.

Fountas and Pinnell

ELA teachers in grades 4-6 worked with colleagues and instructional coaches across the district to become familiar with the *Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™ Interactive Read-Aloud Collection* and *The Reading Minilessons Book*.

Interactive read-aloud is the foundation for instruction within a literacy rich classroom. It promotes the joy of reading while expanding students' vocabulary and increasing their ability to think, talk, and write about text. Teachers use these texts as examples from which they generalize the understanding of the mini lessons. Minilessons extend and engage students' thinking through high quality texts with a practical application in literacy. It was a great day of growing and learning as they worked together to develop an understanding of the systems of strategic actions that support effective thinking within, beyond, and about texts.



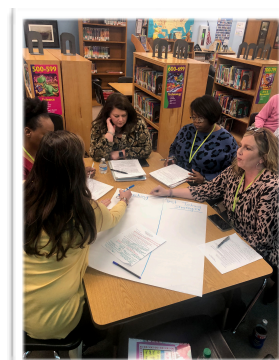
Data Driven Instruction

Elementary principals and instructional coaches participated in the February Principal's Academy. The academy focused on analyzing data and incorporating different instructional approaches in the classroom.

Each group of participants listed and presented the various strategies that teachers could use during instruction to help students thrive. Data that is analyzed and used effectively creates a school culture that is data driven.

Leaders within the building learned:

- Data driven is a process that involves the teachers.
- Teachers must have a risk free environment where they are able to ask questions and gain useful information to take back to their own classrooms.
- Instruction is intentional and focused based on student needs.
- Assessments become a piece of the process created for instructional purposes.



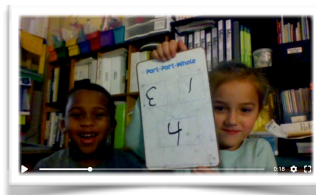
Growing Into Instructional Leaders

Rankin County School District strongly believes in building teachers to be leaders at the district and state level. With great excitement, Rankin County School District is beginning its third year of the Growing into Instructional Leaders Cohort. The goal is to equip teachers with best practices to build growth in themselves and their students. This year, the members will focus on discovering their true leadership styles and how to grow best practices in their leadership ability. In January, the teachers met for the first time. During meetings, the teachers will be going through a John Maxwell study of becoming mentors. The focus of the January meeting was *Getting Ready to Mentor Others*. The members of the cohort are looking forward to meeting again next month.

Empowering Every Voice: Flipgrid in the Math Classroom



Teachers across the district are working to incorporate technology into their math lessons using Flipgrid. At the Spring Eureka Math professional developments, teachers were asked to solve a math problem from one of the lessons they are teaching. From there, they recorded their responses using Flipgrid, a video discussion platform, to explain their thinking. This powerful experience has been a huge takeaway with many teachers allowing them to almost immediately incorporate it into their math block. Flipgrid empowers every student to have a voice and allows them the opportunity to explain their conceptual understanding in a fun and engaging way. By using this tool in their instruction, teachers can easily clarify misconceptions, check for student understanding, and provide an outlet for every student to share their thinking. From kindergarteners sharing their number sentences to sixth graders explaining statistics, Flipgrid has proven to be an engaging technology tool for all.



Scan this QR code to view a student-created Flipgrid explaining line plots.



Principal Spotlight



Mrs. Lacey was born and raised in Rankin County. She is a proud graduate of Pelahatchie High School. She received a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Belhaven University, Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Mississippi College, and Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from The University of Southern Mississippi.

Mrs. Lacey's has been in education for 18 years, with all of her experience in the Rankin County School District. She began her teaching career as a 4th and 5th grade teacher at Pelahatchie Elementary School. She later transferred to Oakdale Elementary School where she taught 4th grade. Mrs. Lacey was an assistant principal at Florence Elementary School for 4.5 years before transitioning to head principal. She served the Florence community as head principal at Florence Elementary School for 6.5 years and maintained a level A rating during her

administration as a proud Florence Eagle.

Mrs. Lacey was named Rankin County School District's Administrator of the Year in 2015 and again in 2020. In 2018, Mrs. Lacey became the principal at Brandon Elementary as a bulldog. During her first year at Brandon Elementary, the school's overall scale score increased 34 points. Mrs. Lacey continues to move students and teachers from great to best exemplifying what it means to maintain a tradition of excellence. Mrs. Lacey resides in Brandon, MS with her husband, Michael. Together they have four amazing children: Kaylynn, a Junior at Ole Miss majoring in Education, Michael Alan, a Freshman at Northwest Community College, Cole, a Senior at Florence High School, and Emma, a Freshman at Florence High School.



Catie Gunn is the principal at Steen's Creek Elementary in Florence, MS. She received her Bachelor's in Elementary Education in 2002 from The University of Southern Mississippi, Master's Degree in Elementary Education at Delta State University in 2004, and Specialist in Educational Leadership in 2011 at The University of Southern Mississippi.

Mrs. Gunn grew up in Cleveland, MS and is a proud Delta girl. She began her career in the MS Delta as a Critical Needs Teacher at McEvans Elementary School in Shaw, MS where she taught first and fifth grades for several years. In 2004, she made her way to Rankin County teaching 5th grade at Pisgah Elementary and then 4th and 5th at Florence Elementary. After deciding to pursue the role of a principal, she became an Elementary Curriculum Specialist working with elementary teachers and principals throughout the district. Her next step towards leadership led her to being

the assistant principal at Puckett Elementary, where she led successfully for two years, seeing her wolf pack move to a Level A. When the opportunity to lead in her hometown of Florence became available, she

jumped at the chance to make a difference in her community. She has been at Steen's Creek Elementary, also a Level A school, as the principal for the past five years and loves her eagle team and students!

Catie Gunn has worked as an educator for 17 years. She has enjoyed each part of her journey and feels that her various roles have helped her become the educational leader she is today.

Mrs. Gunn is enjoying serving her community of Florence and Rankin County. She has resided in Florence since her marriage to Trey Gunn in 2007. She has two beautiful girls, Taylor Grace Gunn who is a fourth grader at Florence Elementary, and Olivia "Livi" Gunn who is four and can't wait to be in Kindergarten next year!