

# KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK

2024 / 2025



**RANKIN COUNTY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**KINDERGARTEN  
PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2024 ~ 2025  
SCHOOL YEAR**

Dear Kindergarten Parents,

Welcome to the Rankin County School District! What an exciting time for you and your family! It is an honor to be part of your child's educational journey. Their education and well-being are of the utmost importance to the faculty, staff, and administration of the Rankin County School District.

At the Rankin County School District, our goal is to provide the BEST education for all of our students. We know that building a solid academic foundation will pay dividends to our students and families for years to come. Our hope is for students to develop socially, emotionally, and cognitively and form a love for learning at an early age.

We want to encourage and help direct you during the beginning of your child's formal education. Through our combined efforts, we will create a wonderful year of exploration and growth for your child. You will have opportunities to communicate with the school via newsletters, notes, phone calls, conferences, progress reports, and report cards.

Our TEAM is here for you and your child! We encourage you to contact the teacher or principal at your local school if you have any questions. Thank you for trusting your child's education to the Rankin County School District. #Everything-Matters



Scott Rimes, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Education  
Rankin County School District



Brandon  
Florence  
McLaurin  
Northwest  
Pelahatchie  
Pisgah  
Puckett  
Richland

**Rankin  
County  
School  
District**

TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

## PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY & GOALS

### PHILOSOPHY

The kindergarten program of the Rankin County School District is adapted to the needs and interests of the five-year-old child. The kindergarten experiences should aid in the development of the whole child—physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. A vital part of the kindergartner's success in school depends upon the background experiences established at home. A continued sharing between home and school in the growth of each student is a necessary component for a successful program.

Each child will be oriented to school life in an environment that is flexible and planned to permit him/her to make a gradual and progressive transition from home to school.

### GOALS

The goals of the Rankin County School District kindergarten program are as follows:

- To help each child become comfortable in a classroom setting;
- To help each child gain independence, confidence, and self-control;
- To help each child develop communication skills;
- To help each child expand their world of people, experiences, and skills;
- To promote interaction, cooperation, and understanding among the school, parents, and the community;
- To help the child develop a positive self-concept;
- To help the child develop initiative, creativity, independence, and motor coordination through the constructive use of materials;
- To help the child increase the skills involved in physical coordination and body mastery;
- To provide the child with an atmosphere favorable for learning and growth;
- To help the child develop trusting relationships.

## CURRICULUM

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### READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS

Children enter school with different interests, experiences, and needs. In order to better meet the needs of individual students, the Rankin County School District has adopted a Structured Literacy approach to instruction. The Structured Literacy approach emphasizes explicit and systematic teaching of all components of literacy. These components include both foundational skills (e.g., decoding, spelling) and higher-level literacy skills (e.g., reading comprehension, written expression). The Structured Literacy approach ensures the instructional sequence begins with the easiest and most basic concepts and elements and progresses methodically to more difficult concepts.

Students will participate in oral and written reading activities daily as well as participate in various high quality whole and small group literacy activities. The complexity of instructional activities will increase over time as the children begin to develop strong reading skills.

Writing will also play an important role in kindergarten's day. Students will begin with writing letters while connecting them to the sounds they make and will progress to writing words, sentences and a paragraph by the end of the year. The writing process coupled with Writing Revolution strategies will be used to help students make the transition from group to independent writing.

The literacy program includes an assessment component that helps teachers identify the developmental levels of the students. The iReady Universal Screener, an MDE approved screener, provides teachers with valuable information on the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student so the teacher can design lessons that meet the needs of each child. This assessment will be administered three times a year (at the beginning of school, at midterm, and at the end of school). Kindergarten students will also take the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) at the beginning and end of the school year. The KRA provides parents and teachers with a common understanding of what children know and are able to do upon entering school and at the end of the school year.

Parent conferences will be scheduled to explain the results of the aforementioned assessments. Student progress on the development of concepts about print, letter and sound recognition, and reading behaviors will be tracked and shared at each meeting.

### MATHEMATICS

The kindergarten program is based on the premise that students learn through doing. Students are actively engaged in hands-on activities with a variety of materials. They are encouraged to inquire, explore, and experiment during math instruction. The kindergarten class becomes a laboratory for students to make predictions, draw conclusions, analyze situations, and learn through movement related to math. The district math materials

help students form a firm foundation for mathematical reasoning, calculation, and problem solving.

### STANDARDS-BASED REPORT CARDS

Rankin County School District uses a standard-based report card for all kindergarten students. This report card provides information on a student's developmental abilities and progress in attaining learning standards in reading, language arts, and math. The standards are derived from the College and Career Ready State Standards, which have been adopted by the Mississippi Department of Education, and grades reflect where a child is performing in direct relationship to these standards. Growth is determined by daily observation of oral and written work as well as district formal and informal assessments.

Since academic success and skill development occur at different rates for all students, this reporting procedure will give an accurate representation of your child's growth. Additionally, your understanding of what is expected of your child and how he or she is progressing towards the learning goals will provide opportunities for meaningful conversation between you, your child, and your child's teacher.

Student progress will be reported in terms of mastery of the standards. Please refer to the district grading policy for specifics concerning grading. You can expect your child to matriculate through the standards

based on the content being covered, and difficulty of the material associated with the content.

A mark of EXCELLENT (E) means that a student is exceeding grade level expectations. A mark of SATISFACTORY (S) means that a student is performing on grade level. A student might begin the year with a NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (N) in some categories of reading, writing, and mathematics. A mark of UNSATISFACTORY (U) means a student's progress is not adequate for age level; the student's performance level is in failing range. However, it is our expectation that all students will be performing at satisfactory or above by the end of the academic year.

Standards blacked out on the report card for a specific term indicate that a particular topic has not been addressed at that point in the year.

### KINDERGARTEN STANDARDS ASSESSED

The skills listed here are those considered necessary for the successful completion of kindergarten. Children that master these skills may be considered ready for first grade. The kindergarten program fosters and encourages readiness – but it cannot be forced. Each child must be allowed to grow and mature at his/her own rate. Pressure on the very young can actually disrupt the learning process.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

### Reading Standards: Foundational Skills

#### *Print Concepts*

- Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.

#### *Phonological Awareness*

- Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds.

#### *Phonics and Word Recognition*

- Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

#### *Fluency*

- Read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.

### Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Text

#### *Key Ideas and Details*

- With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text;
- With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details;
- With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

#### *Craft and Structure*

- With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story;
- Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text;
- Recognize common types of texts.

#### *Integration of Knowledge Ideas*

- With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear;

- With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories;
- With prompting and support, identify reasons an author gives to support points in a text;
- With prompting and support, identify similarities and differences between two texts.

#### *Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity*

- Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

### Writing Standards

#### *Text Type and Purposes*

- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate an event or events in chronological order including a reaction to what happened;
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces;
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts that include information about the topic.

#### *Production and Distribution of Writing*

- With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed;
- With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including collaboration with peers.

#### *Research to Build and Present Knowledge*

- Participate in shared research and writing projects;

- With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information.

### Speaking and Listening Standards

#### *Comprehension and Collaboration*

- Participate in collaborative conversations; listen to others with care, speaking one at a time;
- Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details;
- Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

#### *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas*

- Describe familiar people, places, things, and events; with prompting and support, provide additional detail;
- Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail;
- Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

### Language Standards

#### *Conventions of Standard English*

- Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing and speaking;
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

#### *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use*

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content;

- With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings;
- Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

## MATH

### Counting and Cardinality

- Count to 100 by ones and by tens; (0-25) (-50) (-75) (-100)
- Count forward beginning from a given number within the known sequence;
- Write numbers from 0-20; represent number of objects with written numerals 0-20;
- Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities;
- Count to answer “how many?” with 1-20 items arranged in a line, circle, or array;
- Count to answer “how many?” with 10 items scattered;
- Identify whether the number of objects in one group is “greater than”, “less than”, or “equal to” the number of objects in another group;
- Compare two numbers between 1 and 10 presented as written numerals.

### Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- Represent addition and subtraction with objects, verbal explanations, expressions, or equations;
- Solve addition and subtraction word problems; add and subtract with 10;
- Decompose numbers less than or equal to 10 into pairs in more than one way;
- For any number from 1-9, find the number that makes 10 when added to the given number;
- Fluently add and subtract within 5;

- Identify, reproduce, and extend repeating patterns.

### Number operation in Base Ten

- Compose and decompose, by a drawing or an equation, numbers from 11-19 into ten ones and one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, or nine ones.

### Measurement and Data

- Describe measurable attributes of objects, such as length or weight;
- Directly compare two objects with a measurable attribute in common to see which object has “more of” / “less of” the attribute and describe the difference;
- Classify objects into given categories;
- Count the number of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.

### Geometry

- Describe objects in the environment using names of shapes (squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, hexagons, cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres);
- Describe position of objects using terms “above”, “below”, “beside”, “in front of”, “behind”, and “next to”;
- Correctly name shapes regardless of their orientations or overall size;
- Identify shapes as two-dimensional or three-dimensional;
- Analyze and compare two- and three-dimensional shapes;
- Model shapes in the world by building shapes from manipulatives and drawing shapes;
- Compose simple shapes to form larger shapes.

### Measurement

- Measure length, weight, and capacity using nonstandard units;
- Compare length (longer, shorter, same), mass (heavier, lighter, same), and capacity (more, less, same) using different containers, objects, or figures; and
- Recognize that a clock and calendar measure time.

### Data Analysis and Probability

- Organize data by counting and using tally marks;
- Describe data using math language (more than, less than, etc.); and
- Interpret a bar graph and pictograph.

### Social Development

- Obey school/class rules;
- Demonstrate self-control;
- Complete activities;
- Follow directions promptly and willingly;
- Work independently;
- Listen attentively;
- Participate in group activities;
- Work cooperatively without disturbing others;
- Use materials properly; and
- Accept responsibility for his/her actions.

### Physical Development

- Run, jump, hop, and climb;
- Catch/bounce/throw ball;
- Control pencils/scissors;
- Button, zip, and tie;
- Participate in physical activity;
- Follow rules/safety practices; and
- Demonstrate proper use and care of equipment.

## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO: BE INVOLVED

### AT SCHOOL

- Join the PTO and attend all meetings;
- Volunteer to go on field trips;
- Help with class parties;
- Volunteer to speak to the class about your job and wear your uniform if you have one;
- Collect objects and materials for projects.
- Attend Parent Nights to learn about instructional practices utilized at school

### AT HOME

- Encourage regular attendance;
- Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep;
- Have a good healthy diet, including a good breakfast;
- Take a real interest in the things your child brings home from school;
- Read to your child (fairy tales, adventure stories, alphabet picture dictionary, nursery rhymes, and poetry);
- Please put your child’s name on all clothing;
- Help your child at home to learn to do the following tasks:
  - » hang up coats and sweaters and identify his/her own garments
  - » handle small amounts of money

- » manage buttons, zippers, buckles, and shoe laces
- » take turns listening and talking
- » know simple safety rules, such as not running inside buildings, being alert when crossing streets, using scissors properly, and behaving on a bus
- » know how to use the toilet unassisted and be able to wash and dry hands
- » take turns in games, on swings, and on slides
- » assign simple responsibilities at home to teach the importance of following instructions
- Impress upon your child that the teacher is in charge of the classroom and is your child’s best friend.

### ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- The child must be 5 years old on or before September 1 of the year he/she enters kindergarten;
- The child must have a certified birth certificate (long form);
- The child must have an immunization form obtained from a doctor or health department;
- The child must have proof of residency in the area. Forms for this will be provided to you by the school.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### CLOTHING/POSSESSIONS

Students should be dressed neatly and appropriately. Boys and girls are permitted to wear shorts. All possessions should be labeled with the child's name. Please send a change of clothing. Do not send toys to school, even for show and tell.

### PARENT CONFERENCES/SCHOOL VISITATION

Your child's teacher will welcome any concerns or questions about your child and will be willing to talk with you about these. Arrange an appointment with the teacher in advance so both of you will have time to talk. Please do not confer with the teacher in the pupil's presence or during kindergarten work hours. Classroom visitors are welcome, but must report to the principal's office before visiting.

### BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are observed and may be announced during the school day. Parents may send classroom refreshments for afternoon snack time but are asked not to stay. Make all arrangements in advance with the teacher. There will be no gifts and no school birthday parties can be allowed.

### HEALTH/SAFETY

As a protection to the children, any child with an illness should be kept at home. If a child appears ill and the teacher feels it advisable, the parent

may be asked to come for the child. Parents should inform the teacher if the child has been exposed to any contagious diseases. All precautions will be taken to prevent accidents. First aid will be administered for minor injuries. Parents and doctors will be contacted whenever necessary. Be sure to complete the emergency form provided to you by the school.

### MESSAGES

All messages must be written and signed by the parent or teacher. Do not send an oral message by your child. Emergency messages should be called into the office and will be relayed appropriately. Send a note if your child has been absent.

### REPORT CARDS

A report card will be sent home at the end of each nine-week period. Parents or teachers can request a conference to discuss a child's progress. Teachers will schedule at least two conferences with you during the year. Please try to attend.

### MEDICATION

Medications will only be administered to children by the school if the medication is in its original container and is a prescription drug. Parents must sign the appropriate form provided by the school before prescription drugs can be given.

## OUR SCHOOLS

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Each kindergarten teacher holds a standard elementary teaching certificate issued by the State Department of Education. The schools where kindergarten is being held in the Rankin County School District are as follows:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Rouse Elementary School<br>151 Boyce-Thompson Drive<br>Brandon, MS 39042<br>Phone: 601-825-5437    | 7. Northwest Elementary School<br>500 Vine Drive<br>Flowood, MS 39232<br>Phone: 601-992-0924            |
| 2. Steen's Creek Elementary School<br>300 Highway 469 N.<br>Florence, MS 39073<br>Phone: 601-845-5724 | 8. Oakdale Elementary School<br>171 Oakdale Road<br>Brandon, MS 39047<br>Phone: 601-992-5442            |
| 3. McLaurin Elementary School<br>2693 Star Road<br>Florence, MS 39073<br>Phones: 601-845-2127         | 9. Pelahatchie Elementary School<br>213-B Brooks Street<br>Pelahatchie, MS 39145<br>Phone: 601-854-8060 |
| 4. Flowood Elementary School<br>102 Winner's Circle<br>Flowood, MS 39232<br>Phone: 601-992-6277       | 10. Pisgah Elementary School<br>125 Tori Bowie Lane<br>Brandon, MS 39047<br>Phone: 601-829-2937         |
| 5. Highland Bluff Elementary School<br>5970 Highway 25<br>Brandon, MS 39047<br>Phones: 601-992-5168   | 11. Puckett Elementary School<br>6382 Highway 18<br>Puckett, MS 39151<br>Phone: 601-825-6140            |
| 6. Northshore Elementary School<br>110 Northshore Parkway<br>Brandon, MS 39047                        | 12. Richland Elementary School<br>200 Spell Drive<br>Richland, MS 39218<br>Phone: 601-939-4375          |



**Bring Everyone's Strengths Together!**

We will all intentionally focus on empowering our students to reach their maximum potential by embracing opportunities and challenges while cultivating a tradition of distinction in education.



**Rankin County  
School District**

TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

**RANKIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

1220 Apple Park Place | Brandon, MS 39042

Phone: 601.825.5590 | Fax: 601.825.2618 | [www.rcsd.ms](http://www.rcsd.ms)