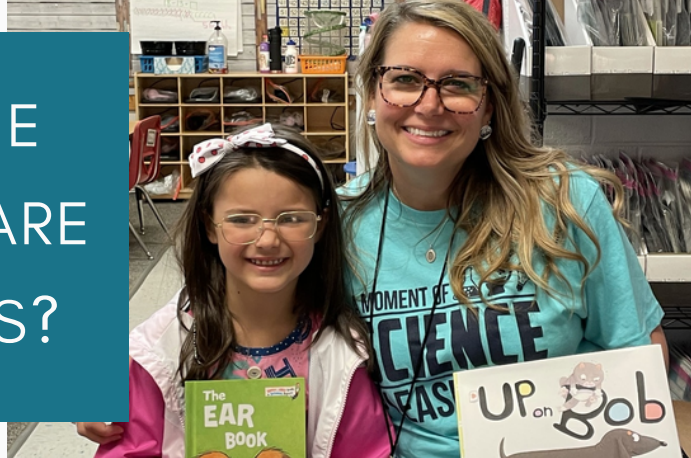


# WHAT SHIFTS IN THE AREA OF READING ARE WE MAKING IN JCSS?



## OUR PROMISE

In Jackson County, we are deeply committed to delivering on the promise of education and equipping every child with the ability to read -- and read well! Learning to read is such an essential skill to not only find success in school and to thrive in society, but to also experience the JOY of reading. We want every child to be successful in reading! We are learning more about what research says about how children learn to read, and what to do when a child encounters difficulty in learning to read. The research that we're learning about and implementing is called the Science of Reading.

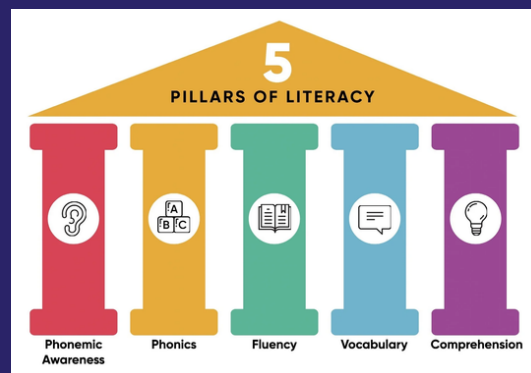
## Aligning our Practices to the Research

The research is indicating that while reading is more challenging for some students than others, with evidence-based, systematic reading instruction, nearly every child can become proficient by the end of 3rd grade. Decades of research have determined that reading occurs in a specific way in the brain in all people. It does not occur naturally the way that speech does. It is a process of building neural-pathways in the brain that link sounds of speech to written symbols or letters that translates into fluent reading and subsequent comprehension.

### *What is the Science of Reading?*

The Science of Reading refers to the research of how the brain learns to read and the methods that best help children learn to read, from the earliest steps in spoken language to being able to successfully decode unfamiliar words. Reading instruction focuses on the following components known as the Reading Pillars:

Comprehension, Fluency, Vocabulary, Phonics and Phonemic Awareness.



**Emphasis on Code in Primary Grades** This means that grades K-2 especially will focus on acquiring the skills to crack the code of our alphabet to the speech sounds in English. (There are 44 speech sounds in English and 150 ways to read and spell them!) Kids must first learn to decode (sound-out) words before they can understand the meaning of text; therefore, we will emphasize instruction in 'cracking the code' in grades K-2.

**Explicit and Systematic Phonics Instruction** JCSS follows the Foundations scope and sequence for phonics skills, progressing from simple to complex. This systematic phonics curriculum will be followed throughout the early grades (K-3rd). Students will progress through lessons as they master skills. In the intermediate grades (4-5), the emphasis will be on word study including grammar and learning about word parts such as Greek and Latin roots.

**Interacting with Words** (Previously referred to as sight words) Instead of just memorizing words through flash cards, research indicates the benefit of supporting students in being able to spell, read, and write the high-frequency words that they learn in context through daily instruction. Students will interact with these words through tapping them, mapping them in sound boxes, reading them, and spelling them.

**Phonemic Awareness** This is the ability to identify the individual sounds in words by listening and manipulating those sounds orally. While this skill will be emphasized in grades Pre K-2 with the Heggerty curriculum. Students in the intermediate grades may also need to practice these skills in order to build the foundation for reading. Don't be surprised if you have a 3rd-5th grader who will be working on phonemic awareness! This is an area that the research has indicated is vastly important.

**Decodable Readers** Our early readers will be working with decodable readers. These are books or passages that primarily include words that students can 'decode' (sound-out) according to the scope and sequence of Foundations they have been taught. Our kids need practice with the phonics skills they are learning and these books provide that practice.

**Leveled Readers** Your child may not be assigned a reading level that corresponds to a letter of the alphabet as they have in the past. Students will work with a variety of texts. Some texts may address specific phonics needs, some may be grade level text to build knowledge that is pertinent to grade level standards, some may be interest-based, and others may be at a determined level for practice. Kindergarten through second grade students may bring home books and passages that are decodable instead of books with patterned sentences that are easily memorized. As a system, we have moved away from using the three-cueing system, which teaches kids to identify words by using strategies other than decoding. In the three-cueing system, students are taught that they can identify a word by deciding if it makes sense, if it would structurally/grammatically 'fit' in a sentence, or if it looks right rather than closely examining the phonics patterns in the word and sounding it out. As they are learning to read, we want our students to look at every letter in the words, apply phonics knowledge, and sound and tap words out!

**Knowledge Building and Vocabulary** Research indicates that reading comprehension is closely connected to the background knowledge we have on a topic we're reading about and by understanding the vocabulary contained in the text. Through integration of literacy and content standards, our students will have the opportunity to build a broad knowledge base. Kids will have access to complex texts, often read aloud by their teacher, and in the process, gain more complex vocabulary. The research tells us that building knowledge and vocabulary contributes significantly to students' reading comprehension and should be taught beginning in the earliest grades.

**Comprehension** The ultimate goal of all reading instruction is for students to understand what they read. The model of The Simple View of Reading demonstrates that reading comprehension occurs only when students have both decoding and word recognition skills and language comprehension skills. Children need the essential skills to read fluently and a good understanding of how our language works in order to comprehend what they read.

**Partner with us** We now know a great deal about how the brain develops as we learn to read and what instructional practices are most effective for all children. We are committed to ensure that we deliver on the promise of literacy for every student in Jackson County and we value your partnership to give your child the highest quality reading instruction.