

Gaston County Schools
Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting
Monday, May 5, 2025

MINUTES

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee met on Monday, May 5, 2025 at 11:30 a.m. in the Central Office Board Room, 943 Osceola Street, Gastonia, NC. Those members in attendance were: Chairman Jeff Ramsey, Robbie Lovelace (absent), Janna Smith and A.M. Stephens III.

Additional attendees included: BOE Chairman Josh Crisp, Vice Chairman Dot Cherry, Board Member Tod Kinlaw, Superintendent Dr. Morgen A. Houchard, Attorney Sonya McGraw, Associate Superintendents Gary Hoskins and Tonya Kales, Executive Directors Bryan Denton, Kevin Doran and Tyler West, Chief Communications Officer Todd Hagans, Chief Accountability Officer Kelly Cunningham, Directors Tom Nencetti and Cynthia Reynolds, and Board Clerk Dana Luoto.

Curriculum & Instruction Committee Chairman Ramsey called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

Approval/Correction of Minutes

Motion to adopt minutes of March 3, 2025 and March 31, 2025 as presented was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III, seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith, motion carried unanimous. (3-0)

Student Support

Driver Education

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Rebekka Powers reported that the North Carolina Driving School has submitted a request for a bid price increase for the 2025-2026 school year. This request is due to the significant rise in operational costs associated with the continued delivery of past standards of education safety. The proposed increase is as follows:

- Behind the Wheel increase of \$15 (totaling \$240 per student)
- Classroom Instruction increase of \$10 (totaling \$60 per student)

This would be an overall increase of \$25 per student.

Post meeting Note – Staff was able to negotiate a \$10 per student increase for this year which the District will absorb. The cost will remain the same for students.

Student Support

Educator's Handbook

Dr. Rebekka Powers presented information concerning the Educator's Handbook. This is a three (3) year digital platform that records our minor incidents and office referrals for behavior. This platform allows staff to review readily available information about student behavior trends and patterns. This information also provides a faster identification of students in need of individualized services.

Motion

The Motion was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith that the Board

Approve a Three-Year Contract not to exceed \$134,064 for the Educator's Handbook. Item to be placed on the Consent Agenda for the May 19, 2025 Board Meeting.

A vote was taken and motion to approve the item as presented carried unanimously. (3-0)

Dr. Rebekka Powers gave an update on school transfers. Below are schools that are closed to transfers due to capacity. Students requesting a transfer into a closed school will be placed on a wait list:

Page Primary
Belmont Central Elementary
Brookside Elementary
New Hope Elementary
Pleasant Ridge Elementary
W.A. Bess Elementary
Woodhill Elementary

Cramerton Middle
Southwest Middle

Ashbrook High
Forestview High
Hunter Huss High
South Point High

Substitute Staff Placement Services

Executive Director Beth Suber presented a PowerPoint on Substitute Staff Placement Services.

(View PowerPoint)

ATR and Instructional Coach Positions Updates

Associate Superintendent Tonya Kales presented a PowerPoint on Advanced Teacher Roles (ATR) and Instructional Coaches Update.

(View PowerPoint)

Career and College Promise Moving Forward

Tonya Kales reported beginning fall 2025, students will be eligible for reimbursement for books when they successfully complete a course with a final grade of C or higher. College fees will continue to be paid for. There will be a process in place for students who need financial assistance with purchasing books. A parent notification letter is being developed.

2025-2026 Federal Programs Proposed Budget

Title I Director Dr. Cynthia Reynolds, and Tonya Kales presented a PowerPoint on the 2025-2026 Federal Programs Proposed Budget.

(View PowerPoint)

Data Pathway Deep Dive

Executive Director Tyler West presented a PowerPoint on Data Pathway Deep Dive.

(View PowerPoint)

Classroom Moment

Tonya Kales reported that the Classroom Moment item at the May 19, 2025 BOE Meeting will focus on the various celebrations and events connected to graduation for the Class of 2025.

Other Business and Discussions

Superintendent Houchard reviewed several handouts which included graduation ceremony assignments, four-day work week guidelines, FY 2025-2026 Planning Allotment and salary comparisons.

Next Committee Meeting Date/Time

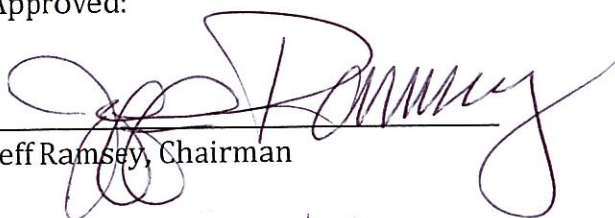
The next C&I Committee Meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2025 in the Central Office Board Room beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Adjournment

All business being conducted, Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. A.M. Stephens III; seconded by Mrs. Janna Smith motion carried unanimously. (3-0)

The Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting adjourned at 1:24 p.m.

Approved:



Jeff Ramsey, Chairman

Date Approved: 6/2/2025

Substitute Staff Placement Services



Substitute Staffing & Management Services
Robbie Nelson, Vice President of Business Development

February 27, 2025

The Importance of Substitute Teachers



According to research by the National Council on Teacher Quality, during the course of a 13-year education – kindergarten through 12th grade – **an average student spends 143 days with a substitute teacher**, just shy of a full school year.



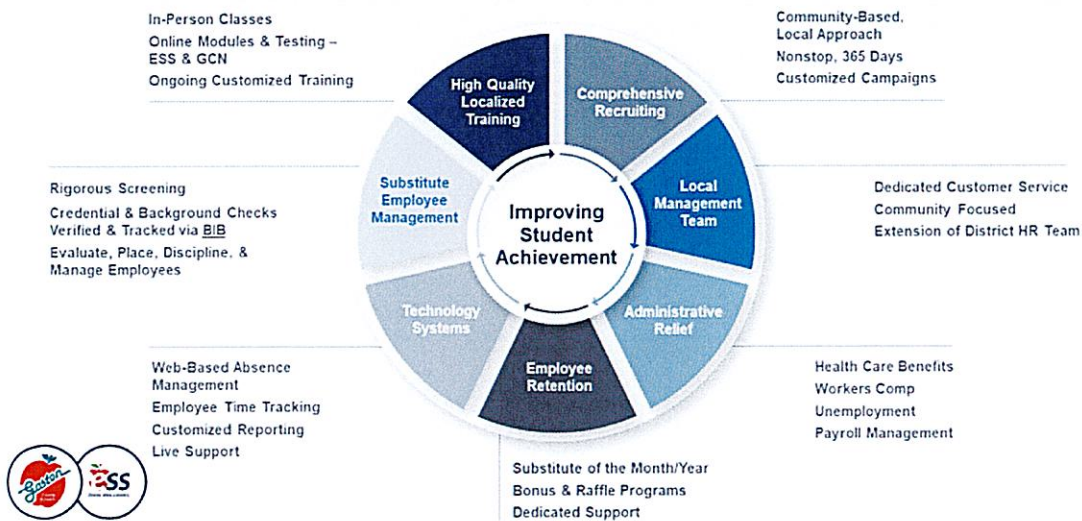
Who We Are



- Exclusive focus on PreK-12 education - customized solution for each district partner
- 900+ Districts, 5 million students served over 35 states by 90,000+ substitute & permanent employees
- Experienced & stable regional leadership team - strong community involvement
- Significant investments in people, processes & technology
- Efficient, accountable, automated systems
- Virtual learning options
- High client satisfaction and retention - 98%+ Nationwide.

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Comprehensive Staffing & Management Solutions



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Recruiting – Connecting with the Community

Digital Outreach: Indeed, ZipRecruiter, Glassdoor, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook

Traditional: Local Papers, Flyers, Lawn Signs, Outdoor Banners

Referral Program: \$100 per Referral – District Employees and Substitutes

District Activities: Football games, PTO Meetings, Booster Club Meetings

Community Programs: Churches, Nonprofits, Chambers of Commerce, Community Events,



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Training – Focusing on Student Achievement

- Live, In-person, five-hour training for new substitutes
- Substitutes must pass training to be hired
- Training curriculum customized to District's needs
- Trainers are retired educators from your community
- 150 Online training modules offered for further professional development
- **Topics covered:**
 - Professional Teaching Behavior
 - Classroom Management
 - Student and Staff Safety
 - Creative Instructional Strategies
 - District and School Policies
 - Digital Platforms for Virtual Learning



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Substitute Engagement – Targeted Incentives



Weekly Pay

- Direct Deposit every Friday, District Sets Pay Rates

Benefits

- Health, Vision, Dental, Life Insurance, 401(k)

Targeted Incentives

- Gift Cards, Monthly Raffle, Employee of the Month, Impact Award

Referral Program

- \$100 per Qualified Referral

Career Kickstart Incentive

- Up to \$125 Reimbursement for Background Checks

ESS Marketplace Program

- Employee Discount Program

Live Support, Newsletters, and Outreach

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Once We Begin ... These Burdens Go Away

- ✓ Bookkeepers Admin. Calling subs
- ✓ Advertising for Positions
- ✓ Recruiting, Background checks, and onboarding
- ✓ Employee Training and Development
- ✓ Employee Discipline
- ✓ Paying for Absence Management Technology and maintaining it.
- ✓ Employee Payroll

- ✓ Payroll Taxes, SUTA, FUTA, etc.
- ✓ General Liability Insurance
- ✓ Unemployment Claims
- ✓ Workers Compensation Claims
- ✓ Equity Issues in some Schools
- ✓ Substitute Re-Training
- ✓ Handling Negative Incidents
- ✓ Running Reports



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Gaston County Substitute Program Costs	Current Program	ESS Partnership
Projected Sub Payroll - 24-25 School Year	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,900,000
Payroll Taxes (.0765%)	\$ 221,850	
General Liability Insurance	\$ 29,000	
Workers Compensation Insurance and Associated Costs	\$ 87,000	
SUTA	\$ 30,450	
FUTA	\$ 25,000	
AESOP Software	\$ 50,000	
Soft Costs - Marketing, Training, Onboarding, Management, etc	\$ 125,000	
ESS Markup (29.9%)		\$ 867,100
Total Substitute Program Cost	\$ 3,468,300	\$ 3,767,100
Cost Differential		\$ 298,800
Cost Differential %		8.6%

Advanced Teacher and Instructional Coaches Update



Welcome to Mrs. Jonnecia Alford-Simmons as the new Advanced Teacher and Instructional Coach Director (position included in state grant)

ATR Positions (Innovation Schools)	Instructional Coaches (Title I Schools)
Approximately 35 positions	Approximately 27 positions
71 applications (Lead and Reach Teachers) - 29 interviewed with 24 in the pool	70 applications - 36 interviewed with 24 in the pool
Round 2: Open now with a focus on secondary	Round 2: Will open this week
Goal: Positions filled by May 22	Goal: Positions filled by end of May



2025-2026
Federal Programs
Proposed Budget

*Dr. Reynolds and Tonya Kales
May 5, 2025*



2025-2026
Title I Budget

Title I Information

Title I provides federal funding for **high-poverty schools** to **help students who are behind academically and at risk of falling behind**. Services can include **hiring teachers and paraprofessionals, tutoring, purchasing instructional equipment, materials and supplies, parent and family engagement opportunities, professional development, and pre-kindergarten programs.**

2025-2026 Title I Projected Allotment

Planning Allotment	\$9,000,000
Carryover	\$1,500,000
Total	\$10,500,000

2025-2026 Title I Funding

Eligibility (or Threshold)

- Elementary School
 - $\geq 50\%$ Economically Disadvantaged
- Middle School
 - $\geq 65\%$ Economically Disadvantaged
- High School
 - $\geq 75\%$ Economically Disadvantaged

School Identification

- Student Enrollment
- Direct Certification Percentage
 - Collected by the Food and Nutrition Department yearly

Year	Number of Identified Schools
2024-2025	28
2025-2026	27 (<i>Pinewood is no longer a Title I school</i>)

\$432.74 per student

2025-2026 GCS Title I Schools

Elementary Schools		Middle Schools
Bessemer City Central	Lowell	Bessemer City
Bessemer City Primary	North Belmont	Grier
Brookside	Pleasant Ridge	Southwest
Carr	Rankin	York Chester
Catawba Heights	Robinson	
Chapel Grove	Sadler	
Cherryville	Sherwood	
Costner	Springfield	
Gardner Park	Tryon	
H.H. Beam	W.B. Beam	
Kiser	Woodhill	
Lingerfeldt		

Gaston County School Federal Funds Areas of Focus

- ❑ Ensure all schools are supported with Instructional Coaches and PD Facilitators
- ❑ Increase professional development opportunities for district and school base staff
- ❑ Establish and implement a district wide strategy for school improvement - Innovation Schools

2025-2026 School Level Supports

Additional Support Staff <i>(Instructional Coaches, literacy teachers, teacher assistants)</i>
High Dosage Tutoring
Supplies and Materials including Technology
High Quality Professional Development
Parent Engagement Activities

2025-2026 District and School Level Support

Parent Involvement - <i>District and School Sponsored</i>
Private Schools - <i>per share</i>
Pre Kindergarten
School Improvement Interventions
Professional Development - Instructional Coaches - <i>linked to ATR PD</i>
District wide Instructional Initiative - Elementary and Middle School Instructional Coaches

2025-2026 District Level Support

Title I Administration Salaries

Workshop Expenses

Travel

Supplies and Materials

Indirect Costs

2025-2026 Title II Budget

Title II Information

The purpose of the Title II program is to provide grant funding to **increase student achievement** consistent with the challenging State academic standards; **improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders**; increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and **provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders**

2025-2026 Title II Projected Allotment

\$1,240,192.00

Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education
PD Facilitators for New Teachers, International and others (<i>non Title I schools</i>)
Human Resource Support Staff
Workshop Expenses
Supplies & Materials



2025-2026 Title III Budget



Title III Information

Title III funds are designed to help schools improve the education of Multilingual Learners (MLs) by providing **language instruction, academic support, and resources** to ensure students achieve English proficiency and meet state academic standards.

2025-2026 Title III Projected Allotment

	PRC 104	PRC 111
Planning Allotment	\$347,588	\$20,000
Carryover	\$60,000	\$5,000
Total	\$407,588	\$25,000

2025-2026 District and School Level Support

ESL Director
ESL Coordinator
Professional Development - ESL Lead Teachers
ESL Data Management System - ELlevation
ESL Curriculum Resources (English 3D, Hands on English, Frames for Fluency)
ESL Supplementary Resources (ELL TEAM, Just Right Readers)



2025-2026 **Title IV Budget**



Title IV Information

Title IV funds provide students with **access to a well-rounded education; support safe and healthy learning environments, and improve the effective use of technology** to enhance academic achievement and digital literacy for students.

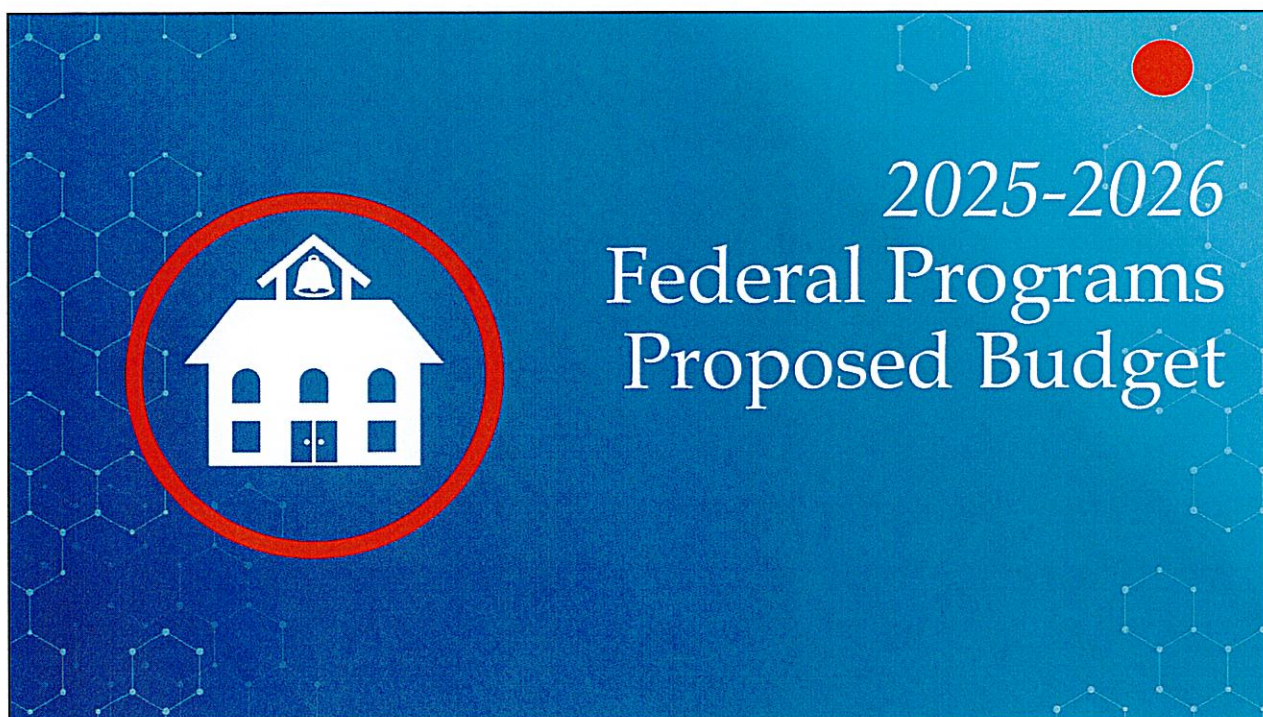
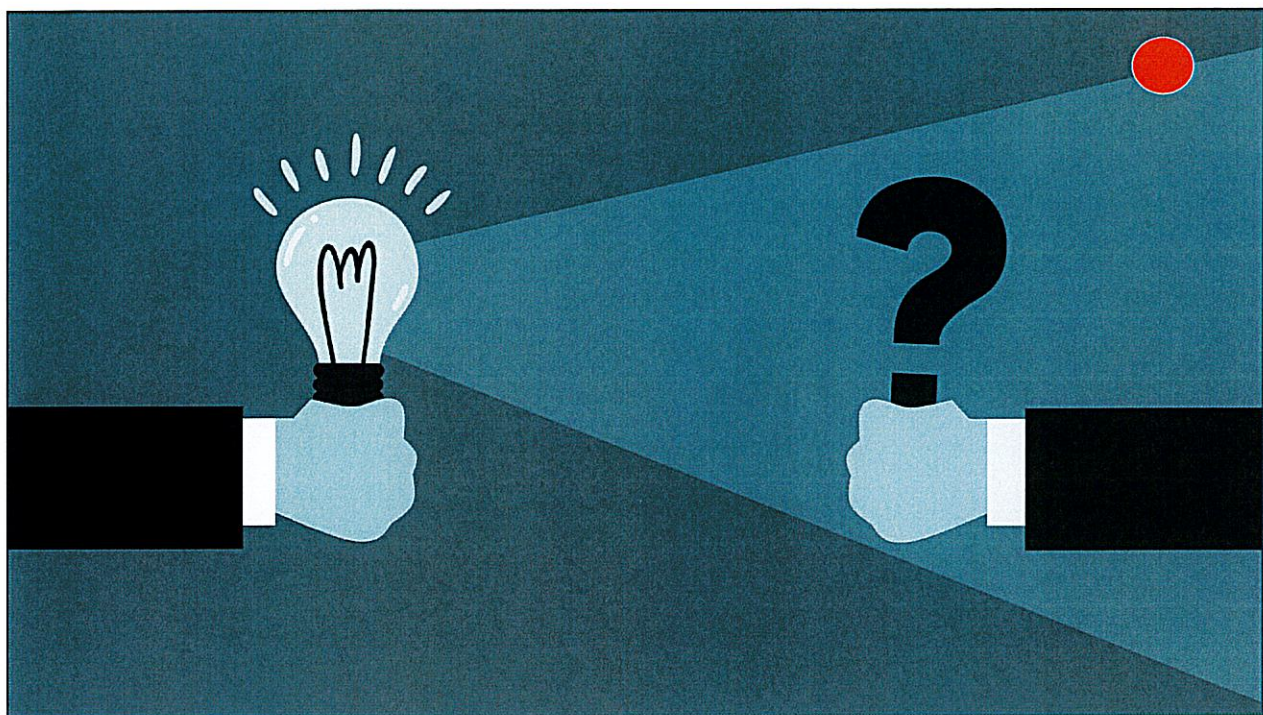
2025-2026 Title IV Projected Allotment

\$668,600.00

Director of Professional Development
Alternative ED Coordinator (Flex Program)
Curriculum Coordinators (3 - elementary and secondary by content area)
Technology
Workshop Expenses

Gaston County School Federal Funds Areas of Focus

- ❑ Ensure all teachers are supported with Instructional Coaches and PD Facilitators
- ❑ Increase professional development opportunities for district and school base staff
- ❑ Establish and implement a district wide strategy for school improvement - Innovation Schools



Data Pathway Deep Dive

For information

K-12 Pathways

Elementary

- Kindergarten Readiness (NCELI)
- K-2 Reading at or above grade level (mCLASS composite score)
- 3rd at or above grade level (725 lexile, BOG, Check-Ins, EOG)
- 3-5 Math at or above grade level (iReady, Check-Ins, SchoolNet, EOG)
- 5th Science at or above grade level (Check Ins, SchoolNet, EOG)

Middle

- 7th Grade Reading & Math at or above grade level (Check-Ins and EOG)
- 8th Grade Science at or above grade level (check ins, EOG)

High

- Successful completion of Math I and English 9 by the end of Grade 9
- A score of 19 or higher on the ACT OR a Silver or higher on WorkKeys
- Graduation rate of 95% or higher

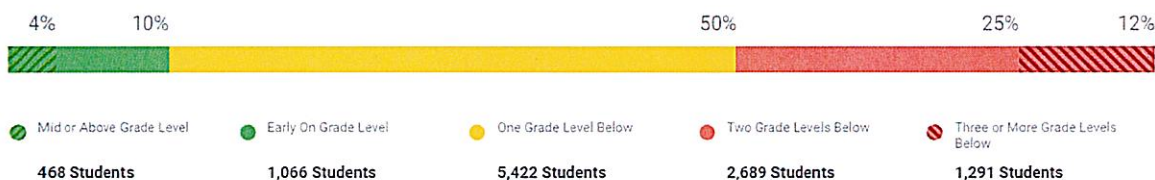
Strategic Moves in 2024-2025

- Instructional principal meetings in schools were focused on math observations and instructional improvements
- Modeled the work of the PLC with principals - diving into standards and analyzing unit assessment questions
- Focused support from Academic Facilitators in 3rd - 5th grade Math
- Conducted *EOG Review Unit* planning sessions with teachers to help them analyze data and plan targeted instruction prior to test day.

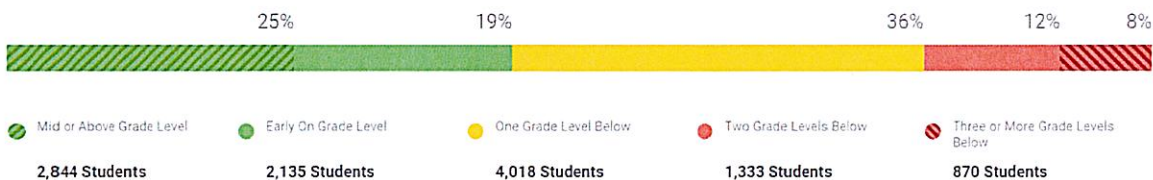
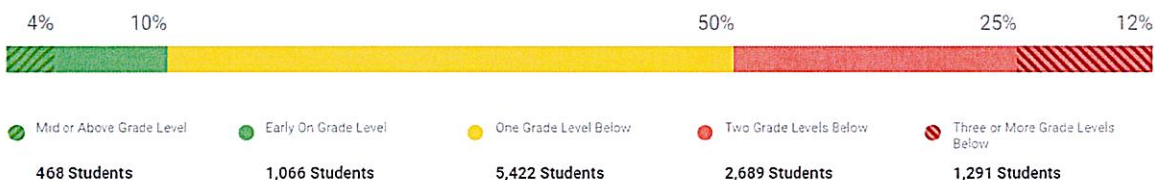
iReady Diagnostic Information

- Used in 1st through 5th grades (Kindergarten uses AMC as their diagnostic)
- Provides teachers and parents with information about how the student performs compared to grade level and national norms
- Teachers use student results to inform whole group and small group instruction

3rd-5th Grade Math Data Beginning of Year



3rd-5th Grade Math Data Beginning of Year to End of Year



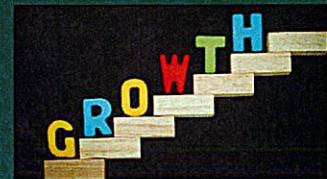
Schools with Highest iReady Growth

School	Growth
Rankin	46 points
Cherryville	45 points
Hawks Nest	44 points
WA Bess	43 points
Catawba Heights	42 points
North Belmont	42 points
New Hope	40 points
Pinewood	40 points
Lowell	39 points

Big Picture iReady 2024-2025 Results

1st through 5th grade data:

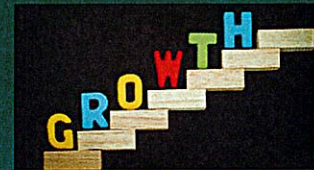
- GCS increased on-grade-level students by 34 percentage points (2023-2024 was 30)
- GCS decreased below-grade-level students by 19 percentage points (2023-2024 was 14)



Improvement Across Assessments

- NC Check-Ins 2024-2025

	Check-In 1	Check-In 2	Check-In 3
3rd Math	35.9	44	54
4th Math	38.7	44	52.4
5th Math	41.6	43.6	50.4



2023-2024 Comparison

	Check-In 1	Check-In 2	Check-In 3
3rd Math	39.2	41.6	53.2
4th Math	42	44.4	51.6
5th Math	42	44	49.6

Next Steps in 2025-2026

- Continue instructional principal meetings in schools, concentrating on math standards and instructional feedback
- Focus professional development on coaching and data-driven instruction
 - Principals, Assistant Principals, Instructional Coaches, Advanced Teaching Roles
- Improve core curriculum units in two main ways: ease of use and differentiation resources for all levels of students
- Professional Development for teachers will be ongoing by unit

Data Pathway Deep Dive