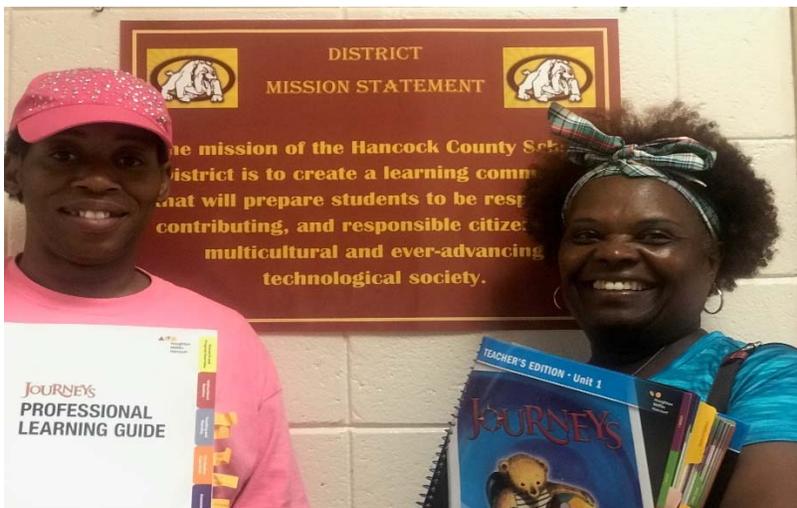


By

**Dr. Charles R. Culver, Superintendent of Hancock County Schools**

**New Textbooks Purchased for Reading and Mathematics**



**Mrs. Constance Holsey and Mrs. Joan Jackson, early childhood education specialists, are excited about the new reading and math series.**

The Hancock County School District has adopted and purchased a new curriculum for Reading (ELA) and Math for Grades K-12. These programs will strengthen the academic achievement of students within the school system and increase student performance on the Georgia Milestones assessments in reading and math. With a new focus nationwide on close reading of complex texts, teachers and students will focus attention on building understandings and analyses of complex texts and engage in repeated readings to explore multiple levels of meaning. This reading program includes high-quality texts that are rich and complex. The selections in the textbooks offer opportunities for interest provoking reading and thoughtful responses.

Teachers in kindergarten through Grade 12 gave up a part of their summer vacation last week to take advantage of a 2-day summer training opportunity. The professional development workshop was designed to introduce the new reading and math programs to teachers. Houghton

Mifflin Harcourt coaches/trainers were present in Hancock County to roll out the reading series call *Journey's* for Kindergarten through Grade 5 and *Collections* for Grades 6-12th.

In addition to the new reading programs, teachers in Kindergarten through Grade 8 completed professional development training on the new math program called *Go Math*. Teacher in Grades 9-11 completed professional development for the new math program, *Algebra 1 Geometry, Algebra 2* (AGA).

The Houghton Mifflin Harcourt curriculum was selected to enrich the instructional program in an effort to keep up the momentum of continuous improvements made in the school system during the 2017 school year. Data from the Hancock County Schools Accountability Report, Hancock County Schools are among the “Schools that Beat the Odds” in Georgia and are no longer on the “Needs Improvement list.

Throughout the professional development workshop, the teachers demonstrated enthusiasm about the training they received, indicating that they embraced an opportunity to use the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Key components of professional development, including activity, content, administrative roles, and the level of collaboration needed. Professional development activities for teachers increase school improvement efforts, and enhance a culture of collaboration by reducing isolation and creating a sense of shared responsibility for student achievement.

Teachers are excited about the new reading and math programs. Mrs. Sharon Hill, an early childhood education teacher, stated that she is thrilled about “the alignment of the program to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, formally known as the Common Core Curriculum.”

Mrs. Constance Holsey, a specialist in early childhood education, indicated that she thought a beneficial aspect of the new reading and math programs includes “the wide variety of learning activities available for students, which increase opportunities for differentiated learning experiences to match the learning style of diverse students.”

Mrs. Joanne Jackson, another specialist in early childhood education commented, “The fact that there is a built in component to address Response to Intervention (RTI) is a very positive aspect of the new reading and math programs.”



**Dr. Almer Harper, Assistant Principal; Dr. Mayrequita Willis, District Reading Specialist, and Mrs. Sharon Hill, First Grade Teacher Share Ideas in the Response to Intervention Workshop**

After teachers completed professional development on the new reading and math series, administrators and teachers participated in a pre-planning Response to Intervention (RTI) Academy Workshop. The workshop included a review of the RTI process to help teachers begin

the RTI process, use test results and other data to determine tiers for learning, and select strategies to use as interventions.

Dr. Culver and the BOE are making provisions for parents and the community members to increase their involvement in education as the new programs are implemented in all schools. Parent and community volunteers are encouraged to make a commitment to increase their level of support to the school system. Research from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory indicate that support from parents and the community promotes higher academic achievement among students as measured by state-mandated test scores, enrollment in higher-level programs, promotions by grade, earned credits, regular school attendance, better social skills, improved behavior, graduation, and postsecondary education success.