

Hancock County Students Read, Read, Read to Succeed



In rural Sparta, 48.8 percent of children live in poverty and 100 percent of elementary-school students receive free school meals. In 2015, 58 out of 87 third graders at Marvin E. Lewis Elementary School weren't reading at grade level. That's why several partners focused on improving childhood literacy are now participating on the Hancock County Early Childhood Health and Education (EC-HEED) strategy team.

Preschool children are provided with free books and technology resources, while K-5 students utilize the Lexile Framework for Reading—a scientific way to match readers with text that's at an appropriate level of difficulty. Teaching staff received extensive training to successfully implement the framework, and the school started using a model called ["Read, Read to Succeed,"](#) which encourages students to read daily, both at school and at home.

These efforts are paying off, as third graders achieving proficient reader or above at M.E. Lewis improved by 7 percent between 2015 and 2016.