



VOLUNTEER **HANDBOOK**



STAIR

WELCOME TO STAIR



Dear Volunteer,

We're excited to have you join our team and ignite a love of reading in a Birmingham first or second-grader! This handbook is your roadmap to becoming a successful STAIR tutor and making a real difference in a child's life.

As a volunteer, you are joining a vibrant and compassionate group of individuals who share a common goal: to inspire a love of reading and learning in children. Your dedication and enthusiasm are vital to the success of our program and the growth of the children we serve. Your journey with STAIR of Birmingham will be filled with rewarding experiences and meaningful connections. You'll witness firsthand the transformative power of literacy as you guide your student through the challenges and triumphs of learning to read. Your patience, encouragement, and support will help build their confidence, not only in reading but also in themselves.

Thank You again for joining the team.

-The STAIR Team



START THE ADVENTURE
IN READING!

Our Mission

At STAIR of Birmingham, we know that students in our community are struggling with literacy. Through one-on-one after-school tutoring, we empower students with the tools to read better and dream bigger, because every child deserves to be reading on grade level.

One-on-One Tutoring

Research shows most children will learn to read if gaps are identified by the end of kindergarten and addressed starting no later than 1st grade. Tutoring is one of the most powerful tools for closing reading gaps, as long as a state standards aligned curriculum is utilized, and the same tutor is provided consistently. STAIR follows this research. You can help us reach more students!

Schools Served

- Hayes K-8
- Avondale K-5
- Norwood K-5
- Washington K-8
- Hemphill K-5
- Hudson K-8
- Oxmoor Valley K-5
- Sun Valley K-5
- Restoration Academy
- i3 Academy
- Oliver K-5
- Tuggle K-5

The Program

Four afternoons a week, STAIR pairs over 350 trained volunteers with nearly 200 growing readers for FREE tutoring each school year. In 2000, STAIR began with just a few second graders at Avondale Elementary. Now, as we kick off our 25th year in Birmingham, STAIR has scaled to 12 after-school programs and is piloting daytime and 3rd grade programs.

2023-2024 Results

Because of STAIR, students in our 12 partnering schools received a total of 5,051 sessions of tutoring.

Letter Sound Fluency

- Students who began STAIR knowing less than 60% of the consonant sounds, showed an average gain of 38%.

Phonological Awareness

- Students who began STAIR with less than 60% proficiency in phonological awareness showed an average gain of 33%.



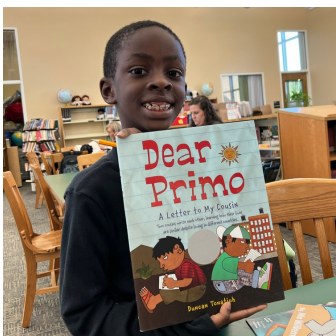
Phonics & Word Decoding

- Students showed a gain of 31% and 23% in 1st and 2nd grade respectively in their ability to use phonics to read and spell new words.

STAIR was able to donate up to 1,770 contemporary, relatable books to our students' for their home libraries.

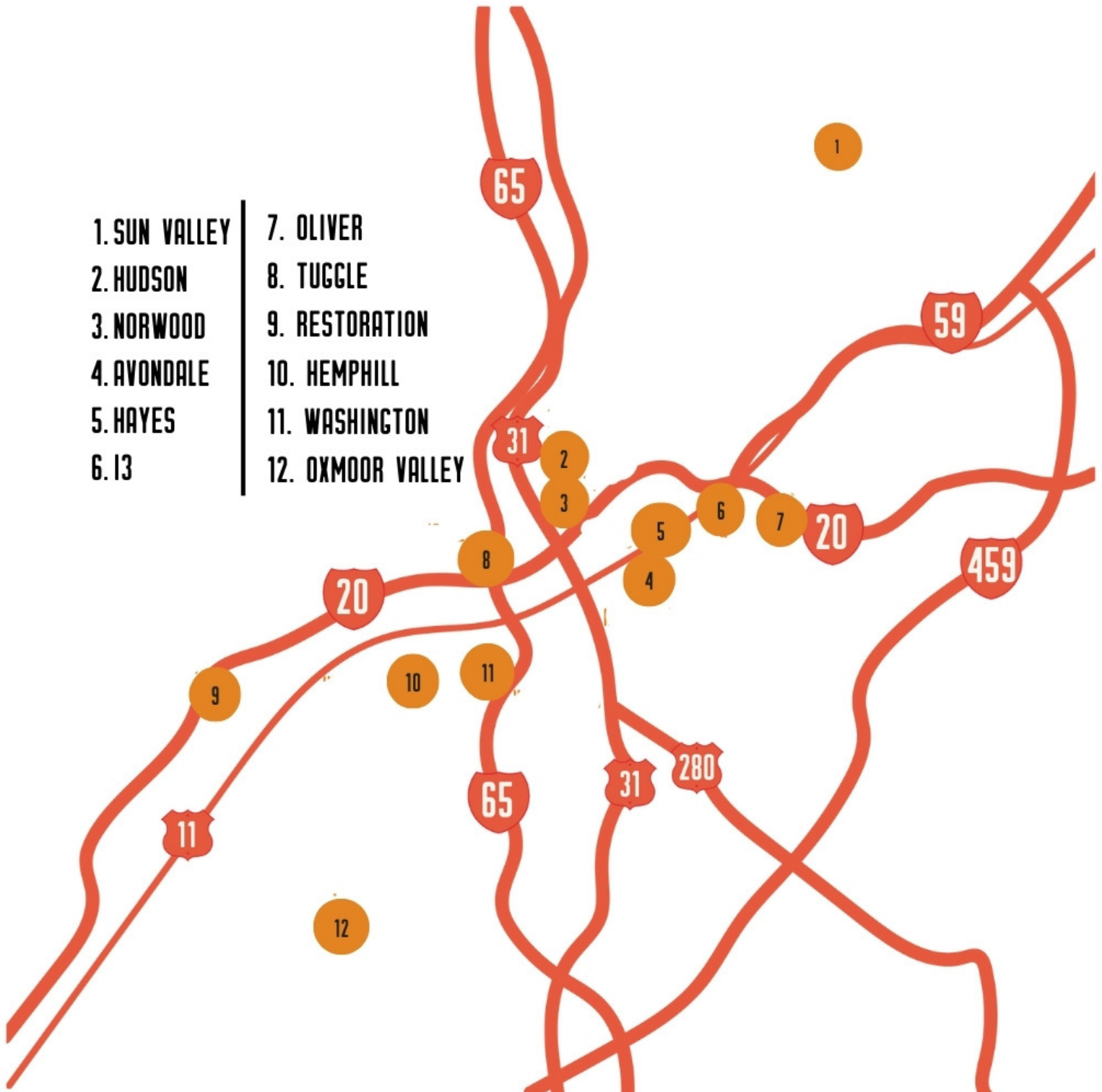
Improvements beginning in 2024-2025 school year

- We are updating our curriculum with a team of district reading specialists to improve the efficacy of each lesson for our students with a heavy focus on phonological awareness and letter sound fluency.
- We are making a concerted effort to increase community engagement and interaction between tutors, parents, students, and STAIR staff.

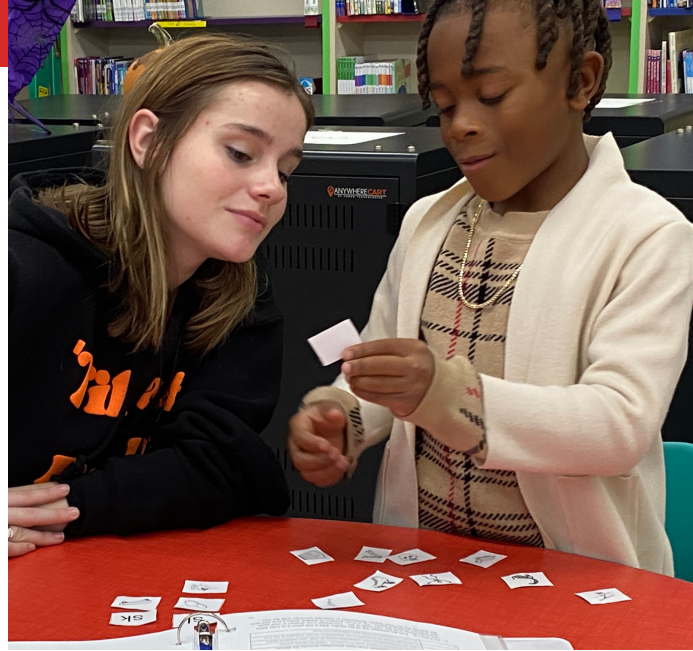


2024-2025 COMMUNITY FOOTPRINT

STAIR partners with 10 Birmingham City Schools and offers programs at i3 Academy (a charter school) and Restoration Academy (in Fairfield). Learn more about program locations and contact information: <https://www.stairbirmingham.org/>



WHAT TO EXPECT



We only provide in-person tutoring at all of our sites. Depending on your tutoring site, tutor arrival time will be at one of the following times. This arrival time will allow you 15 minutes of necessary prep time.

- 3:00 pm: Norwood, Tuggle, Hudson
- 3:15 pm: Avondale, Hayes, Hemphill, Oliver, Oxmoor Valley, Sun Valley, Washington
- 3:30 pm: i3, Restoration

Site Staff will give students a snack before tutoring begins.

Students will receive 45 minutes of one-on-one STAIR tutoring two afternoons a week.

Site Staff will let everyone know when it's time to wrap up the session. Tutors work with the student to put books away and place supplies back where they belong.



2024-2025

Calendar

Please visit www.stairbirmingham.org/calendar for the STAIR program calendar. Note that STAIR follows weather closures and holidays of the schools served. So please check for emails and phone messages for closures during extreme weather days.

STAIR Contact Info

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(205) 730-7799

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Mallory Shaneyfelt, Director of External Communication -
mshaneyfelt@stairbirmingham.org



Building Strong Relationships & Consistent Support

- **Be There, Every Time:** Tutors are the heart of STAIR's success! Consistent attendance allows you to build a strong rapport with your student and maximize their learning. Aim to commit to at least 10 sessions per semester.
- **Follow the Program:** STAIR's curriculum aligns perfectly with state standards and uses a proven, systematic approach. This ensures students receive targeted instruction based on their developmental needs. Also, don't bring outside materials that could disrupt the learning environment.
- **Track Progress Together:** The "Progress Check" helps us understand your student's strengths and weaknesses. Complete it after each activity to guide future sessions.

Building Strong Relationships & Consistent Support

- **Safety First:** Student safety is paramount. Wear your nametag, report any concerns to staff, and seek help managing behavior if needed. Always be respectful and encouraging towards your student.
- **Focus on the Positive:** Positive reinforcement motivates students and keeps them engaged. Celebrate their achievements and offer constructive feedback.
- **Professionalism Matters:** Avoid negative remarks about students, their school, their family, their teachers, or school staff.
- **Fairness and Equality:** Refrain from bringing food, candy, gifts, or rewards. These can cause distractions and inequities among students.



Building a Fun and Engaging Experience

- **Let's Take a Break!** Use the provided resources! The student binder offers "Brain Breaks" and engaging STAIR games to keep sessions dynamic and address fatigue.
- **Celebrate Success!** End each session with a high note! Highlight what your student accomplished and express your encouragement.
- **Special Events.** Consider attending graduation or holiday parties to further connect with your student and the STAIR community.

Reminder: You play a vital role in your student's success! By following these guidelines, you'll create a positive, consistent, and effective learning environment.

First Day Tips

- Arrive a few minutes early to navigate around the end-of-school pick-up and understand parking on your first day. (you won't need to do this if you were able to attend ordination)
- You won't be able to eat at the sites, but you can bring a water bottle.
- Talk to the other tutors. You all are a team, and all share a passion. Get to know those at your site

HOW TO BE THE BEST VOLUNTEER

(not just with us)

Subscribe to Being a Co-Dreamer

Understand that the community Parents and teachers know what dreams they have for their children. Our jobs is to subscribe and be a partner to that dream.

Checking Your Compassion

Examine your intentions and motivations for volunteering. Am I feeling pity? Am I assuming things about my students, their school, or their parents? Do these assumptions help or harm the goals of volunteering

Practice Humility and Self-Compassion

Approach interactions with humility and with an open mind. Acknowledge that you have much to learn and that you may make mistakes along the way. Also, don't push yourself more than you need to. The best volunteers take care of themselves mentally and physically.

Be a Megaphone

Shout out the work you have been doing. Be vocal about your student's accomplishments (without using identifying words). Advocate for the program. Invite people to volunteer with you.

Safety BOUNDARIES

These are here to protect you and the child.

You are a mandatory reporter.

What does that mean with STAIR?

If you see or hear something, say something to the site staff as soon as you can.

Do not promise students you can keep a secret.

Never be Alone with a Child

- Do not tutor in rooms by yourself.
- Do not to enter the restroom with a child

Student/ Family Privacy

- All information about a STAIR student and/or their family will remain confidential and will only be discussed with STAIR staff.
- Don't post pictures of your student on your personal page
- No sharing of personal phone # or email with students

Extra information

- Side hugs only
- No lap sitting
- No gift giving
- No child should ever be touched or spoken to in anger.

INFORMATION TO FILL IN AT YOUR STAIR SITE ORIENTATION:

NEED TO KNOW: STAIR material locations

- Student Binders
- STAIR Library
- Book Activities and Other Activities
- Phonological Awareness and Phonics Games
- Other Materials
- Restrooms

Flow of The Day:

- Parking and building entrance
- Tutor Arrive Time _____
- Begin cleaning up at _____
- In line and ready to dismiss at _____
- Complete the progress check for each activity and make sure to date the activities.
- Move STAIR “Lesson Divider” to the end of the lesson and the beginning of the next.

First Day At STAIR:

- Complete and share the Read All About Me activity
 - Student and Tutor versions
- Complete Humpty Dumpty reading comprehension activity
- Read a book or jump into the lesson plan activities

STAIR OF BIRMINGHAM'S NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

STAIR of Birmingham does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental ability, veteran status, military obligations, and marital status in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. STAIR of Birmingham is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, and vendors.

STAIR OF BIRMINGHAM'S WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

STAIR of Birmingham requires that all volunteers and employees observe high ethical standards in the execution of their responsibilities. It is the intent of STAIR of Birmingham to comply with all laws and regulations that apply to its operation; with STAIR of Birmingham's mission; and with the bylaws and operational policies. The full cooperation of all volunteers and staff of the STAIR of Birmingham with this policy is necessary to achieve and maintain such compliance.

Any volunteer or employee of STAIR of Birmingham may report practices that are unlawful or are noncompliant with the STAIR's mission, bylaws, or operational policies and procedures and should do so in good faith, having reasonable grounds for believing that the practices disclosed are in violation of STAIR's governing and operating principles. Such individuals are protected from retaliation if the report is made in the following manner:

1. If the whistleblower is a member of the Board of Directors, a written complaint should be sent to the President of the Board. If the matter involves the President or if the Board member is not comfortable in making the report to the President or feels that the President has not responded appropriately, the complaint should be sent to a member of the Governance Committee.
2. If the whistleblower is a volunteer for STAIR, but not a member of the Board of Directors, a written complaint should be sent to the Site Director of the site to which the volunteer is assigned. If the matter involves the Site Director, or if the volunteer is not comfortable in making the report to the Site Director, or believes that the Site Director has not responded appropriately, the complaint should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer.

3. If the whistleblower is an employee of STAIR, a written complaint should be sent to the employee's immediate supervisor. If the matter involves the supervisor or if the employee is not comfortable in making the report to the supervisor or feels that the supervisor has not responded appropriately, the complaint should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer. If the matter involves the Chief Executive Officer, or if the employee is not comfortable in making the report to the Chief Executive Officer or feels the Chief Executive Officer has not responded appropriately, the complaint should be sent to the Governance Committee of the Board of Directors.

The recipients of the written complaint must fully and promptly investigate all complaints brought to them and must take appropriate corrective action, bearing in mind the best interests of STAIR. STAIR of Birmingham will not retaliate, either by removing the volunteer or ending employment, respectively, against any volunteer or employee who has submitted an allegation in good faith. However, if it is found that the allegation was not made in good faith, adverse consequences for the volunteer or employee, whichever is applicable, could ensue.

Whistleblowing complaints will be handled with sensitivity, discretion, and confidentiality to the extent allowed by the circumstances and the law. Generally, this means the whistleblower complaints will only be shared with those who have a need to know so that STAIR of Birmingham can conduct an effective investigation, determine what action to take based on the results of such investigation, and in appropriate cases, with law enforcement personnel.

Contact Information

Chief Executive Officer: Karen Griner, 205-730-7799 ext. 4
kgriner@stairbirmingham.org

2024-2025 Governance Committee of the Board of Directors

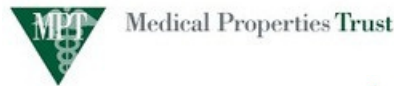
President: Sarah Wheeler, (313) 570-4374
sarahwheeler225@gmail.com

Immediate Past President: LeDon Jones, (205) 313-2111
lfjones@centerstatebank.com

For Site Staff contact information, visit stairbirmingham.org/our-team.

STAIR Supporters*

STAIR wouldn't be possible without the generous support of the following foundations and organizations as well as many individual donors and community partners.



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**This list reflects supporters who gave between 7/1/23 and 6/30/24*

We are thrilled to have you on board and look forward to working together to create a brighter future for the children of Birmingham. Welcome to the adventure!

Notes: