

## **Anderson County Schools**

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

First Approved: February 28, 2024

Approved: June 7, 2024

This Foundational Literacy Skills Plan has been approved by the Tennessee Department of Education and meets the requirements of the *Tennessee Literacy Success Act*. All portions of the Foundational Literacy Skills plan were submitted to the department and approved. To view the supplemental artifacts, please contact the district directly.

### **Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades K-2**

Our district employs a robust foundational skills curriculum deeply rooted in reading science and tailored to meet the Tennessee ELA standards. Our adopted Wit and Wisdom curriculum is supplemented with the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement (TNFSCS) for foundational skills instruction. This curriculum prioritizes foundational skills as the cornerstone of instruction, allocating a dedicated 60-minute block each day for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2.

Within this instructional time frame, a comprehensive range of activities is implemented to foster phonological awareness, phonics mastery, fluency enhancement, as well as comprehension and vocabulary development, commonly referred to as "word work." During these sessions, educators deliver explicit instruction on specific phonetic sounds, facilitating student engagement through interactive sound practice. Following this, students are guided in replicating the sound orally to ensure accurate pronunciation, while simultaneously observing the teacher's model of sound transcription.

Finally, students engage in independent practice sessions, either in small groups or individually, to apply and internalize the newly acquired skills.

#### *Daily Foundational Skills Instructional Time for Kindergarten through Second Grade*

In our kindergarten through second-grade classrooms, students engage in approximately 150 minutes of English Language Arts (ELA) instruction each day. A dedicated 60 minutes of this time is specifically allocated to foundational skills instruction, utilizing the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement. This curriculum places a strong emphasis on phonics and phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These are essential components of early literacy development. Throughout the day, foundational skills are seamlessly integrated and reinforced as students participate in small group reading activities. Additionally, our curriculum, Great Minds' Wit and Wisdom, is a comprehensive knowledge-based program. Within Wit and Wisdom, brief language lessons are included to reinforce phonics and grammar standards, providing students with a well-rounded ELA experience.

### **Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5**

In our third through fifth-grade classrooms, students dedicate approximately 150 minutes to English Language Arts (ELA) instruction daily. This comprehensive instruction encompasses a 90-minute lesson focused on Reading and Writing Standards, with the addition of foundational literacy standards FL.PWR.3 (Phonics and Word Recognition), FL.WC.4 (Word Comprehension), FL.F.5 (Fluency), FL.SC.6 (Word Composition), and FL.VA.7a (Vocabulary Acquisition).

Our adopted curriculum, Great Minds' Wit and Wisdom, takes an integrated approach to address foundational skills within this grade band. The 90-minute lesson structure consists of a 75-minute main lesson, which includes foundational literacy skills and standards embedded into the curriculum for a minimum of 30 minutes. Following this, an additional 15 minute "Deep Dive" session delves deeper into foundational standards and skills using texts from the main lesson.

This segment specifically targets morphology, grammar, and spelling, enriching students' understanding and application of these critical elements.

Moreover, beyond the Wit and Wisdom lesson, the remaining designated time (60 minutes) is allocated for independent reading and evidence-based small group reading activities. During this period, students engage in structured literacy practices and receive explicit support for fluency, decoding, morphology, grammar, vocabulary, writing, and comprehension skills tailored to their individual proficiency levels. This multifaceted approach ensures that students receive comprehensive ELA instruction that fosters both skill mastery and a deep understanding of textual content.

### **Additional Supports**

Anderson County Schools is dedicated to improving student literacy. Subgroups struggling with low scores on state testing, particularly in foundational skills such as decoding, encoding, fluency, and comprehension, require a multi-faceted support system.

The following outlines a detailed plan for our school district to provide individualized help to support these specific subgroups of students.

- Professional Development for Educators
  - Decoding and Encoding: Workshops and courses focused on phonics, word recognition, and spelling strategies to improve students' decoding and encoding abilities.
  - Fluency and Comprehension: Training on techniques to enhance reading fluency and comprehension, including guided reading practices, repeated reading strategies, and use of graphic organizers.
- Instructional Coaches:
  - Deploy literacy coaches to work directly with teachers, providing in-class support, modeling effective strategies, and offering feedback on instructional practices emphasizing supporting specific student subgroups.
- Collaborative Learning Communities:

- During weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teachers can share best practices, discuss challenges, and collaborate on intervention strategies tailored to their students' needs (all students and focused subgroups).
- Targeted Interventions and Programs a. Response to Intervention (RTI):
  - Review current RTI groups and interventions to ensure students are correctly identified and are receiving appropriate interventions to match skills gaps. Regularly monitor student/subgroup progress and adjust interventions accordingly.
  - Structured Literacy Programs: Implement structured literacy programs that emphasize systematic, explicit instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.
- Family Engagement:
  - Conduct literacy nights to educate parents on how to support their children's literacy development at home. Provide resources such as reading lists, games, and activities that reinforce school learning.
- Continuous Assessment and Data-Driven Decision Making
  - Formative Assessments: Implement regular formative assessments to monitor student/subgroup progress in decoding, encoding, fluency, and comprehension. Use assessment data to identify areas of need and tailor instruction and interventions accordingly.
  - Data Analysis and Feedback: Establish a system for analyzing assessment data and providing feedback to teachers, students/subgroups, and parents. Use data to inform instructional decisions, track the effectiveness of interventions, and make necessary adjustments.
- Creating a Supportive Learning Environment Positive Reinforcement:
  - Develop incentive programs to motivate students/subgroups and recognize their progress and achievements in literacy. Celebrate successes, no matter how small, to build confidence and engagement.

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2**

Great Minds Wit and Wisdom (approved waiver)

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5**

Great Minds Wit and Wisdom

### **Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI2 and Say Dyslexia requirements**

EasyCBM grades K-5

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) grade 3

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

Anderson County implements the EasyCBM Universal Screener thrice yearly (Fall, Winter, and Spring) to identify students with significant reading deficiencies or those at "high risk." The RTI team,

comprising the RTI chairperson, principal, academic coach, classroom teacher, SPED teacher, and interventionist, convenes to review screener results, identifying students scoring between the 0-40th percentile. During the RTI meeting, students deemed "at risk" are placed into Tier II or Tier III intervention groups based on team consensus. These small-group interventions are conducted daily, targeting individual skill gaps to foster improvement. Our district follows the guidelines outlined in the TN RTI<sup>2</sup> Manual.

Anderson County offers various research-based reading intervention options for use during intervention sessions. Upon identification, additional tools like the Quick Phonics Screener (QPS) are employed to pinpoint specific areas of need and guide instructional support. Approved Tier II (30 min) and Tier III (45 min) interventions include targeted small group reading sessions, Heggerty, Words Their Way, and the TN Foundational Skills Supplemental Remediation. Teachers and interventionists adapt these interventions to suit their RTI<sup>2</sup> groups' needs.

Progress monitoring data informs decisions regarding intervention duration, materials, and intensity adjustments if students aren't making expected progress. The RTI<sup>2</sup> team convenes every 4.5 weeks to assess intervention effectiveness and consider necessary modifications. Students in the RTI<sup>2</sup> process complete probes at their instructional level, with probing intervals aligned with their tier. Additionally, a grade-level probe is conducted every 4.5 weeks to gather sufficient data to identify learning gaps warranting more intensive intervention, potentially leading to a tier adjustment or referral to special education. This process ensures accurate completion of rate of improvement and gap analysis worksheets.

As stated previously, some students undergo further assessment to determine eligibility for an Individual Learning Plan-Dyslexia (ILP-D). Upon parental consent, these students receive intensive interventions focusing on foundational skills, meticulously documented in the TN Pulse system. Alternatively, students with parents declining ILP-D participation continue to receive targeted interventions in foundational skills.

### **Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports**

Establishing a strong partnership between home and school is vital for student success. Upon identifying a child as "at risk" for significant reading deficiency based on universal reading screener results, parents receive notification three times a year for grades K-3 and annually for grades 4-5.

This letter emphasizes the importance of reading proficiency by third grade, offers suggestions for home activities, and outlines the reading intervention provided by Anderson County Schools. It also provides a clear explanation of the student's skill gaps and the extent of their needs. It includes:

- Details scores and their impact;
- Specific reading interventions and supports that the district or public charter school recommends for the student, which may include the interventions provided by the district or public charter school pursuant to Tennessee's RTI<sup>2</sup> framework manual;
- Dyslexia information and resources for students identified with the characteristics of dyslexia;

- A statement about the importance of a student being able to read proficiently by the end of grade 3;
- No-cost reading activities that a family may use with their student at home to improve reading proficiency;
- And a statement about 4th grade promotion pathways under § 49-6-3115(a)(1) for students in grade 3 with an achievement level of “approaching” or “below” on the ELA portion of the student’s most recent TCAP test.

Progress monitoring serves as a tool for teachers to assess how students are progressing on specific skills. It encompasses both formal and informal assessments and helps gauge the effectiveness of interventions. Regular updates on progress monitoring are communicated to parents through written communication, and parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's teacher with any questions or concerns. Classroom teachers ensure that parent contact is made, and progress monitoring reports are sent home.

If students fail to make sufficient progress despite interventions, a referral to Special Education is initiated. Parents are promptly notified, with notification dates documented on the referral form.

Parents are actively encouraged to participate in all parent engagement activities offered at each school, fostering a collaborative relationship between home and school to support student learning and development.

### **Professional Development Plan**

All required employees have completed and passed the state’s Reading 360 course. New teachers hired into the district will also complete this course or take the required assessment on foundational skills. They will also take a mini course as a part of their involvement in the New Teacher Institute with Anderson County Schools. This mini course will address phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. New kindergarten teachers participate in a yearlong training assessing students’ knowledge of sounds in words, high frequency words, and writing composition. These new teachers will also learn to use these assessments to guide their instruction in small group foundational skills lessons. The training will be provided by the district’s kindergarten coach. She has received training through Georgia State University on early childhood literacy.

K-5 interventionists will receive yearlong training with an interventionist academic coach. The coach will focus on phonemic awareness, alphabetic principles and phonics, decoding, and encoding. Training will occur during weekly 2-hour PLC sessions.

Grade Level Collaborative Planning Sessions during weekly 2-hour PLC sessions: reinforce foundational skills practices, intellectual preparation and planning around adopted ELA curriculum including foundational skills lessons, analyzing student work products including writing samples, grade level data review to look for trends, concerns, and next steps, and increasing student ownership and engagement in the ELA Classroom.