

Bedford County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: June 22, 2023

Approved: June 14, 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

Bedford County Schools uses a foundational skills curriculum, Core Knowledge Language Arts, grounded in the Science of Reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. This curriculum is divided into two strands: Skills and Knowledge. The Knowledge Strand is centered around complex narrative and informational read-aloud texts and focuses on background knowledge, vocabulary acquisition, analysis of complex texts, and speaking and listening. The Skills strand provides comprehensive instruction in foundational skills, such as phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition; language skills, including conventions of English, spelling, and grammar; fluency, reading comprehension; and writing instruction. These four guiding principles make up the Skills Strand:

- **Explicit Phonics:** Explicit, systematic phonics instruction is a more effective way to teach decoding than “whole language” or whole word methods.
- **Synthetic Phonics:** Synthetic phonics (or linguistic phonics), in which instruction is oriented from sound to letter, is an especially powerful way to teach phonics.
- **Repeated Oral Practice:** Repeated oral practice and oral reading are proven methods of improving fluency.
- **Intensive Practice:** Intensive practice with skills-aligned texts is essential in order to build reliability and automaticity in reading.

Additionally, CKLA engages students in ongoing reading fluency and comprehension practice with decodable readers aligned to the skills students are learning to make meaning from texts and to produce the written word. These readers increase in length and complexity as students develop their reading and spelling skills. Each strand consists of 60 minutes (120 total) of instruction, but Bedford County Schools has devoted 150 minutes of instruction for both strands with 60 minutes for Knowledge and 90 minutes for Foundational Skills for K-2nd students. This instructional time includes activities that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary word work. During the foundational skills instruction block, teachers explicitly teach sounds, students practice saying the sound, teachers model writing

the sound, students learn how the sound symbols look, students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, and students apply the skill in independent practice. As students progress with learning the sounds, they begin to decode blends and digraphs and learn the most common spellings for each sound. Students also practice the sounds in and out of context. Bedford County Schools plans to have K-2nd teachers internalize the CKLA lessons and analyze the lesson pacing of instruction to make sure they remain focused on the intent of the lessons' outcomes and devote the correct amount of time for each portion.

In K-2nd Skills lessons, students are exposed to 100% decodable readers and are able to see and practice the skills learned in context. K-2nd students also have access to a CKLA Hub, a digital student experience designed to connect students to high quality media and apps within the CKLA program. One component of the CKLA Hub is a sounds library that reinforces the sounds learned through correct pronunciations, the correct way to write the symbol for the sounds, and exposure to words with those sounds. The Hub also has the 100% decodables read aloud for students. K-2nd students also have access to CKLA's Amplify Reading, which is a digital personalized learning path that ensures each student receives individual practice and specific skills instruction needed.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Bedford County Schools uses Great Minds: Wit & Wisdom curriculum for grades 3-5 which has an integrated literacy block grounded in the Science of Reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Wit & Wisdom is a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum that helps students celebrate the joy of reading and writing while empowering them to read complex texts. Wit & Wisdom is a 90-minute program, but Bedford County Schools has devoted 120 minutes of instruction for the curriculum with at least 30 minutes of foundational skills instruction.

During the integrated ELA block, Bedford County Schools students engage with texts and activities purposefully sequenced to build knowledge in literature, science, history, social studies, and the arts by incorporating reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. A core lesson sequence in grades 3-5 Wit & Wisdom includes a framework of text-specific content questioning to engage students in the module content and in the process of reading complex texts. Students engage in daily work around reading, understanding, and analyzing complex texts. Students articulate their learning through speaking and writing about their knowledge of the topic of study. Students also have regular practice examining the crafts of writing, speaking, and listening through Craft Questions: students develop responses to the texts they read and grow their critical thinking skills. Some daily lessons give students targeted fluency practice through activities such as reader's theater, poetry readings, and student-led declamation.

In addition to directly addressing grade level reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards, Core lessons provide embedded instruction in grade level foundational reading skills such as spelling, language, and vocabulary. One of the instructional routines is an ongoing, sequential, and explicit writing instruction where students learn to write and write to learn. The curriculum meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons through the Deep

Dives portion. Bedford County Schools students are engaged in daily 30 minute Deep Dives that follow each core lesson focused on vocabulary study, grammar, morphology, spelling, writing, and fluency. Vocabulary and language skill instruction is also integrated into core lessons, and explicit fluency instruction and meaningful fluency practice occur in each Wit & Wisdom module. Students also practice fluency through homework passages taken from module texts to build fluency and deepen comprehension of those texts.

Additional Supports

Additional Support for Targeted Student Subgroup:

Bedford County Schools has adopted two state approved curriculums (CKLA for K-2nd and Wit & Wisdom for 3rd-5th) for ELA instruction. The district has devoted more time to ELA instruction than required by the two curriculums to allow K-5th teachers to address foundational skills needs. In K-2nd Skills lessons, students are exposed to 100% decodable readers and are able to see and practice the skills learned in context. K-2nd students also have access to a CKLA Hub, a digital student experience designed to connect students to high quality media and apps within the CKLA program. One component of the CKLA Hub is a sounds library that reinforces the sounds learned through correct pronunciations, the correct way to write the symbol for the sounds, and exposure to words with those sounds. The Hub also has the 100% decodables read aloud for students. K-2nd students also have access to CKLA's Amplify Reading, which is a digital personalized learning path that ensures each student receives individual practice and specific skills instruction needed. In 3rd-5th lessons, teachers devote time to small group instruction to address foundational skills deficits.

BCS will implement the following strategies to support the targeted student group.

- Utilize instructional support from the Literacy Implementation Network (LIN).
- Incorporate tutoring either before or after school for the targeted student group.
- Strategically place targeted student group students with highly effective teachers.
- Send home literacy supports for families.
- Be sure to provide skills and standards based small group remediation and instruction for the targeted student group.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (K-5)

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Great Minds Wit and Wisdom (3-5)

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Bedford County Schools uses the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplements (Sounds-First) to support phonological awareness instruction.

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

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus): Grades K-5

Intervention Structure and Supports

Bedford County Schools administers three reading universal screeners to K-5th students. In the fall, K-5 students are given the Aimsweb universal screener to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are “at-risk”. Grade level teachers, interventionists, and building administrators review universal screener data to determine which students score between the 0-40th percentile. Students scoring in that range are classified as Tier II or III and in need of reading intervention support and are given a diagnostic (Survey Level Assessment) to determine specific deficits in order to best assign students to a small group with an intervention that will narrow skill gaps. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for approximately 60 minutes a day in their area of greatest deficit.

Bedford County Schools has research-based option for reading intervention support available to our students who are “at-risk” and/or have been identified with a significant reading deficiency. Our recently adopted K-2nd ELA curriculum, CKLA, contains an Assessment and Remediation Guide in which teachers can find activities that directly address targeted skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students. The CKLA Assessment and Remediation Guide provide multiple additional resources for teachers to use as they support students on their path to mastery of grade level foundational skills:

- **Sample lessons:** Sample lessons are provided, as well as lesson templates to guide the planning to build lessons that fit the specific needs of individual students or small group.
- **Word/Chaining Lists:** The guide includes words lists and chaining lists that teachers can plan into a lesson for students to use for practicing the mastery of the letter and sound correspondences identified as weaknesses.
- **Activities for Reteaching:** The guide includes activities to be used for reteaching. All of these activities are engaging and designed to be teacher-facilitated. Though there are worksheets for some activities to support structuring instruction, the focus is to provide students with ongoing support and feedback.
- **Games for Reinforcement:** The guide includes games for reinforcement. The games are designed to help students apply and practice targeted skills.
- **Progress Monitoring Assessments:** Resources for progress monitoring are included in the foundational skills strand. The data generated by these assessments can guide and inform instruction for individual student progress. Placement and Student Performance assessment are provided in the Teacher Guides. To supplement these, the guide provides progress monitoring assessments specific to each skill teachers may be targeting for remediation. These assessments can be used diagnostically to inform instruction and systematically to contribute to a record of student progress.
- **Additional Resources:** The guide includes additional resources such as comprehension thinking and reading charts, sound articulation charts, decoding strategies, and a concept of print checklist.
- For grades 3-5, Wit & Wisdom materials provide a range of support for both teachers and students to address specific students' skill gaps and progress monitor for student improvement, including:

- Reading Scaffolds: Organizing ideas from informational and literary texts establishes student understanding of the main ideas and plot points to the consideration of deeper ideas.
- Frequent Feedback: Students receive ongoing and explicit feedback from peers and teachers.
- Scaffolds: Lessons include specific suggestions for how to scaffold instruction, including remediation suggestions.
- Extensions and Differentiation Suggestions: Lessons offer suggestions for how to extend learning for students who already have well-developed skills.

If the intervention is not proving to be effective, more comprehensive, strategic interventions, become an option, such as support materials from the HQIM. Data teams meet every 4.5 weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. The data team considers progress monitoring data and also looks at other variables (attendance, engagement, etc.) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or provider such as the duration, intensity, or materials for intervention.

Bedford County Schools K-5 students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students are also screened using additional survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who do demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs that meet the law's requirements.

Bedford County Schools uses a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. The district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified that the SPIRE curriculum is used to support those students, as it is based on the Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and is considered a strong support for those students. Interventions take place daily using a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that make them stronger in that skill. For example, students who need instruction in comprehension may read a new text and answer scaffolded questions, all related to the knowledge-building unit they are studying in Tier I instruction. For students who need fluency support, they may receive intervention using the SPIRE program.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Bedford County Schools notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child is "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-40th percentile) immediately after the fall, winter, and spring universal screeners are administered. Students' scores are communicated in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. Parents are informed about what intervention and the amount of time the student will receive to address the skill deficits. Lastly, the importance of reading on grade level by the end of third grade is shared along with suggestions for no cost reading activities for families to use at home when students are having difficulty. Additionally, we share information on the pathway to 4th grade.

Bedford County Schools' teams analyze students' progress monitoring data, conduct data team meetings every 4.5 weeks, and send notifications home to inform parents about how students are assessed and subsequently their child's progress or lack thereof. In the notifications, school data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screener data.

Additionally, Bedford County Schools has the K-5th ELA curriculum pacing guide maps on the district website, so parents have access to what foundational skills and knowledge students are and will be learning. Schools also send home newsletters outlining specific skills and knowledge students are learning each week.

Professional Development Plan

Many K-5 and other teachers have participated in the Tennessee Department of Education's Early Reading training courses during the summers of 2021, 2022, 2023, & 2024. Week one is an asynchronous training centered around the theory and research of the Science of Reading, and week two is an in-person training centered around the application of the Science of Reading. During the 2022-2023 school year, BCS trained about 80 educators on Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading & Spelling (LETRS).

Bedford County Schools was a member of the TNTP-LIFT Network where districts across the state of TN were supported in their usage of HQIM. K-2 teachers will participate in ongoing PLCs throughout each school year focused on effective internalization and delivery of the CKLA Foundational Skills lesson using TDOE internalization templates. 3-5 teachers will also participate in ongoing PLCs throughout each school year focused on effective internalization of Wit & Wisdom lessons using the TDOE internalization templates.

Currently, Bedford County Schools is a part of the Literacy Implementation Network (LIN) focused on strengthening ELA instruction for grades 3-8. The LIN Support will provide district and school-based PD for school leaders and instructional coaches over lesson/unit internalization, use of the IPG, TEAM-IPG connection, Long Range Planning, and Feedback.

Our 2024-2025 PD includes the following:

- All Pre-K-2nd teachers have or will participate in the Reading 360 Week One asynchronous training for teachers.
- Some K-5th and other teachers have or will participate in the Early Reading Course Two in-person training for teachers.
- Some 5th-12th and other teachers have or will participate in the Secondary Literacy training.

These trainings will focus on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. Participants will receive a completion certificate.

Additional PD:

- Science of Reading, HQIM, COMP, Math Contextual Understanding, Syllabus Writing

- Grade level meetings to review instructional maps, school long range plans, and district CFAs.