

McNairy County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

First Approved: May 29, 2021

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

45 - 50 minutes

Foundational skills that are aligned to the TN state standards are routinely and explicitly taught for 25-30 minutes in a whole group and then continue in small groups that have been organized based on a variety of sources. Each small group gets approximately 20 minutes with the teacher for additional explicit foundational skills instruction that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through student practice. Students then get an additional 20 minutes of independent practice in a station designed for reinforcing these same skills. Another 20 minutes using either a computer program or iPad or an opportunity to practice foundational skills by reading a decodable text or other appropriate reading options.

The foundational skills instructional curriculum adopted by the district is the Benchmark Advance program. Benchmark Advance carefully and systematically provides students with a strong foundation in literacy which is our primary form of instruction. Foundational skills instruction begins on the very first day of school and continues each day as students move from phonological awareness to phonemic awareness, to phonics, and into a connected text. Picture Cards, Letter Cards, Word Cards, Sound/Spelling Cards, Elkonin Boxes, interactive games, and connected texts are provided as students build a strong foundation and become readers and writers.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

The 3rd - 5th grade students have 90-minute blocks for ELA with approximately 30 minutes spent on foundational skills through embedded instruction. More time is spent during intervention, if needed, for specific students in small groups if there are identified gaps to close involving foundational skills. Evidence-based approaches are used to teach skills and the Benchmark Advanced curriculum is used for instruction and student practice. Teachers stress background knowledge, comprehension, vocabulary building, fluency, morphology, grammar, spelling, and writing throughout the 90-minute block. The instruction is aligned with TN state standards and designed for maximum student growth and engagement in reading.

Additional Supports

McNairy County Schools is dedicated to improving student literacy.

Schools and student subgroups with growth scores below 3 will be a focus as the district and schools do the following:

- Support teachers and schools through professional development with the CORE office and our contracted vendor, Teaching Lab.
- Student data is being tracked, analyzed, and used to guide instruction. Specific trackers have been developed that teachers, interventionists, administrators, and coaches are using to identify skill deficit areas and check for growth through progress monitoring and benchmark assessments.
- District-wide coaches collaborate with school personnel in job-embedded professional development to support instruction for Tier 1 and RTI² sessions.
- IPG walkthroughs are conducted to do fidelity checks for using the adopted curriculum and implementation of best practices for instruction.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Supplemental materials may include Heggerty, UFLI, Reading 360, SPIRE, and/or West Virginia Phonics.

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

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) K-5

Intervention Structure and Supports

Our district believes so strongly in providing exceptional interventions to our students that we have teachers in place for the intended purpose of providing foundational literacy skills instruction to the population of students falling below the 40th percentile in ELA. We have a strategic system in place that is aligned with expectations outlined in the Updated RTI² manual. This system allows students in the bottom percentile to receive a minimum of 45 minutes of daily intervention provided by an interventionist who addressed the student's deficit skill. In addition to the 45 minutes, a classroom teacher via a walk to read program, works with these same students in a small group setting.

Students scoring in the 16th-40th percentile are provided the same services for 30 minutes daily. These interventions are monitored to ensure fidelity of instruction, that it is occurring daily and the

appropriate skill deficits for each student are being addressed. Our interventionists use systemic, explicit, and multi-sensory based programs to provide high quality foundational skills instruction to our students and to close skill gaps. Included in these for Tier II are West Virginia Phonics, Benchmark supplemental materials, Heggerty Phonics, UFLI, and Reading 360. For Tier III most programs are utilizing SPIRE, UFLI, continued use of Heggerty, and Sound Sensible.

Progress monitoring is used to inform gap closure and progress made. These materials are used to increase auditory vocabulary, initial sounds, letter naming fluency, letter word sounds fluency, oral reading fluency, print concepts, phoneme segmentation, and word reading fluency in early literacy sessions. Reading strategies with older students include oral reading fluency, silent reading fluency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. Decisions are based on the data and which programs to change or continue utilizing. CORE and PASS tests which are administered to all students scoring below 39% on the URS to determine deficit areas.

Teaching Lab has helped our district organize and use a tracking system for each student that lists their deficit area and tracks any progress monitoring. The deficit areas are addressed in the classroom and in the intervention setting. If a student isn't progressing, the data team will make a tier change or determine what may be needed. These changes may be time of day for services, types of intervention, or provider. Data teams meet monthly to discuss all data and progress. These teams consist of an administrator, interventionist, classroom teachers, and district academic coach when feasible.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Following each universal screening for grades K-5, each school in the district holds data team meetings for the purpose of reviewing data and formulating a plan for improvement. K-5 students are screened three times a year. All involved personnel are included in this data review and decision-making process.

Following this meeting, the parent or guardian of each student who will be receiving additional support, will be notified by a home literacy report (three times a year for K-3 and annually for 4-5) which is a parent-friendly letter indicating the depth and extent of the student's skill deficit, extent of the student needs, the screener results, and the plan of action regarding intervention. This will also include the importance of being able to read by the end of third grade and information about the path to 4th grade. The letter also includes strategies and free resources to help with reading at home and information related to dyslexia. Online resources, and specific activities for improving reading skills are included.

For the first notification of a student who will be new to the intervention program, parents are asked to attend a meeting to discuss any concerns. For subsequent notifications, we use a standard notification letter. These letters are to be signed and returned to verify parent notification. If our first attempt is unsuccessful, a second attempt will be made and followed up with a phone call. Based on the TN law, T.C.A. 49-6-3115, passed in 2021, third grade students who do not have a score of proficiency on the ELA section of TCAP may have requirements related to summer school and/or

tutoring to be promoted to the fourth grade. Therefore, summer programming accommodates these students who may need to attend before promoting to the next grade.

Professional Development Plan

The district employs two instructional coaches for ELA. These coaches have professional development opportunities planned for the purpose of offering instructional models for our K-5 ELA teachers on foundational skills. Additionally, our coaches are available for small group meetings within our five elementary schools to offer Tier I strategies to improve foundational skills instruction in the regular classroom.

District-wide PLC meetings are also conducted that allow for teachers to share in specific grade level meetings about best practices and working with the new series and other new strategies. These PLCs occur each 9 weeks with appropriate protocols in place. The CORE office representative works closely with the district on PLCs, Literacy Learning Walks using the IPG, and data analysis.

Most ELA teachers participated in the Reading 360 training modules during the past few summers receiving valuable information about reading. New teachers will attend the online week 1 the summer of 2024.

The two literacy coaches will continue to emphasize through job-embedded professional development methods that address phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

Teachers will be observed through the IPG, TEAM evaluations, and peer observations by literacy coaches and other teachers to demonstrate knowledge and competency.

An administrator and district leader will attend each PLC. They also provide training to teachers through formal workshops, modeled lessons, one-to-one job embedded sessions, and serve the five schools that have K-5 students. They work closely with administrators, district leaders, publishers, CORE office, and Teaching Lab to search and provide needed information to all stakeholders in the science of reading. They help classroom teachers and interventionists with the AIMSWEB trackers.

All teachers, interventionists, and administrators are analyzing student/school data and determining next steps each quarter for the ELA programs as we work towards strengthening instruction and student achievement.

Additional Comments

We plan to continue a partnership with Teaching Lab to further strengthen our data collection/analysis and support for K-2 teachers with additional professional development in foundational skills instruction. This has proven to be a great resource for us as we strive to improve student learning.