

Benton County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

First Approved: May 12, 2021

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

Kindergarten through second grade students spend an hour in foundational skills instruction daily. K-2nd grades utilize the CKLA evidence-based foundational skills piece. The CKLA foundational skills piece is aligned to TN state standards and received an “all green” rating on ED Reports. This implementation began in the 2020-21 school year. Plans are to continue to use CKLA foundational skills materials through the life of this ELA adoption period. CKLA foundational skills program will be implemented in the Pre-K classrooms as well. This will provide a solid foundation for our youngest learners and allow them to easily transition into the kindergarten foundational skills program.

The CKLA foundational skills program follows the sounds-first approach to reading instruction and is the primary form of instruction in K-2. Students receive explicit instruction and practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Students in grades 3-5 spend 90 minutes on ELA instruction daily. This 90-minute block includes an integrated approach to foundational skills (30 minutes) and knowledge-building content instruction. Grades 3-5 utilize the CKLA evidence-based program for this integrated approach to reading instruction. CKLA scored “all green” on ED Reports. This program is aligned to TN state standards and provides opportunities for students to receive instruction in foundational skills grounded in the science of reading such as spelling, grammar, morphology, writing, and fluency while also engaging in knowledge-based reading instruction that builds background knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Additional Information

Benton County Schools is dedicated to improving student literacy. We have implemented several strategies to improve our literacy data including (but not limited to) School Level collaborative meetings, coaching cycles with highly qualified instructional coaches, the structured analysis of common assessments, and various training that involves our HQIM and proven instructional moves.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (K-5)

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (K-5)

Supplemental Instructional Materials

K-2 uses Wit and Wisdom as our knowledge piece. (Approved waiver)

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

STAR Literacy Suite: Pre-K

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus): K-5

Intervention Structure and Supports

Benton County has specific procedures and protocols that are reviewed and distributed annually by the district RTI² coordinator and school level RTI² coordinators. The district RTI² team meets a minimum of 5 times per year and consists of the district RTI² coordinator and school level RTI² coordinators. The district team also consults with the SPED and ESL supervisors. The district team participates in ongoing collaboration and training and redelivers to administrators and at school staff meetings. In addition, the district RTI² coordinator keeps school administrators abreast of current information, improvement, and goals at district leadership meetings. Benton County also consults with the Northwest Core coordinator.

A nationally normed, skills-based universal screener (Aimsweb) is used 3 times per year at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. The screener can be administered to students in prekindergarten. Students identified as at-risk are administered survey level and/or diagnostic assessments to determine levels and specific deficits to best assign small group intervention. Both the universal screener and progress monitoring tools are utilized for RTI² in the following areas of skill deficit: Basic Reading, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Written Expression, Math Calculation, Math Reasoning/Problem Solving, and Characteristics of Dyslexia. The Rapid Naming test is used as an additional screener to meet the requirements of the "Say Dyslexia" law. Our district uses research-based programs for interventions for students with characteristics of dyslexia (Wilson, Foundations by Wilson, and Spire).

The district data coach supports the school level RTI² coordinators and data teams in analyzing benchmark data. All elementary schools have data teams that monitor data and meet at 4 ½ week intervals to review progress and adjust programming based on student needs such as changes to the duration, materials, and intensity of intervention.

Students identified as at-risk receive 30-45 minutes of intervention daily during a grade level time in the master schedule just for RTI. Small group intervention is specific to the area of student need. Daily logs are kept by each interventionist. Administrators and the district RTI² coordinator conduct

fidelity checks to ensure Tier implementation is aligned with district protocol and monitoring requirements.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Parents of students in grades K-5 are notified that their child has scored “at-risk” for a significant reading deficiency (scoring in the 0-40th percentile) immediately following the completion of the fall universal screener. Scores are communicated to parents in parent-friendly language that includes information about small group instruction that will directly align with their child’s skill deficits and that research-based materials to address these deficits will be used.

Parents are notified of their child’s progress, or lack of progress, after the 4 ½ week data team review. Any changes being made due to lack of sufficient progress as shown by progress monitoring and universal screening data are communicated to parents. And, that these changes will support their area of deficit. Progress monitoring communications go out to parents every 4 ½ weeks. The ELA curriculum contains parent letters in the younger grades that inform parents of the foundational skills and knowledge on which the students are working. Parents and families can better support their children when they are informed.

The letter also includes no cost activities, importance of reading by 3rd grade, and information on the pathway to 4th grade. These letters go home to families three times each year for K-3 and annually for 4-5.

Professional Development Plan

Benton County teachers can benefit from a variety of literacy professional development opportunities.

The May 2024 professional development plans include K-2 Enhancing Planning and Instruction in CKLA focused on foundational skills planning as well as a 3rd-5th grade Enhancing Planning and Instruction in CKLA. In addition, CKLA will also facilitate a Small Group Instruction professional development opportunity for teachers in grades K-2 and 3-5.

Additionally, our teachers engage in regular co-planning sessions in our Teacher Collaboration Model. In these, teacher leaders, coaches, and administrators facilitate rich conversations around topics such as resource use, lesson and unit planning, and differentiation. Our coaches also engage in Coaching Cycles for every teacher, with additional cycles for new and struggling teachers. These cycles focus on individual needs established by the educator and the coach.

Benton County K-5 teachers and administrators have completed the TDOE Early Reading Training. We have a plan in place for any new K-5 teachers to complete course 1 of the training prior to teaching.

Additional Comments

The RTI progress letter is used for students receiving RTI services in grades K-12.



The "Dyslexia" letter is used for students once the need is recognized through testing. Dyslexia characteristics are communicated with parents through this letter.