

## Clarksville Montgomery County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

First Approved: July 3, 2023

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

CMCSS has an integrated 120-minute literacy block for grades K-2 that is aligned to the Tennessee ELA Standards. During this literacy block, there is a designated portion of time (45-50 minutes daily) dedicated to explicit foundational skills instruction. The district supplements Benchmark Advance curriculum with the Phonics First Foundations for Reading and Spelling program for foundational skills instruction including phonics, word recognition, and word composition. This program is based on the Orton Gillingham approach. The program has five main components: a three-part drill (auditory, visual, blending) of individual phonograms, new sound, syllabication, red word (sight word) review, and new word introduction (to include sentence dictation), and oral reading fluency. The instructional process provided in the Phonics First program is explicit, systematic, cumulative, and multi-sensory. It includes clear & accurate pronunciation of sounds, the use of visual aids, explanation of rules for the sound(s) & spelling patterns, modeling, guided, and independent practice. In addition, K-1 teachers use the Best For All TN Foundational Skills Sounds First stand-alone curriculum supplement for phonological and phonemic awareness. This state-provided curriculum supplement encourages engagement, is explicit and systematic, provides multiple opportunities for students to respond, and accelerates students' phonological and phonemic awareness development.

We also integrate foundational skills instruction provided in our state-approved curriculum, Benchmark Advance. This instruction includes lessons and activities that build print concepts and phonological awareness, provide additional phonics practice, develop sentence composition skills, allow opportunities to build fluency, vocabulary work, and comprehension development. Benchmark Advance provides multiple types of texts including decodable, word study, and shared reading texts which allow students to immediately apply the out-of-text foundational skills instruction they received to an authentic text. Benchmark Advance also provides teachers with guidance on how to embed daily writing instruction that is connected to the texts read throughout the unit. This allows students the opportunity to apply their word and sentence composition skills, as well as demonstrate their understanding of print concepts.

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

Our district has an integrated 90-minute literacy block for grades 3-5 that is aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards. Teachers use an evidence-based, integrated approach to explicitly teach word work with affixes, roots, as well as explicitly teaching fluency, morphology, encoding, sentence composition, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. These skills are embedded in daily teaching to produce cohesion of the standards. Teachers also embed writing instruction connected to the texts utilized from Benchmark Advance. CMCSS expects 3-5 ELA teachers to include 15 minutes of explicit foundational skills instruction, and 15 minutes embedded in the knowledge-building, writing, and small group portion of the reading block to meet the minimum requirement of 30 minutes of foundational skills instruction.

For example, our 3rd grade has a three-week unit on animal adaptations. Students' prior knowledge is activated at the beginning of the unit, and then students closely read complex texts related to the topic. Students are taught to closely read these texts with integration of the ELA standards while also activating cognitive skills to visualize, evaluate important information, and make connections within a text to create a standard of cohesion. Students will continue to revisit texts related to the content to practice fluency by repeated reading. Vocabulary words such as environment, predator, prey, and habitat, are explicitly taught throughout this unit. Students also have daily dedicated word work related to specific graphemes, affixes, and roots followed by guided practice with encoding and decoding words that contain those specific word parts. These words come from the texts within the unit that all connect to the enduring understanding of how animals survive in their respective environments. Students will then have a writing prompt that assesses not only their knowledge of the content but application of the writing standards, as well as the word and sentence composition standards explicitly taught throughout the unit.

### **Additional Supports**

As Clarksville Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) moves into the 2024-25 academic school year, students in struggling 4th grade ELA subgroups across all tiers (I/II/III) will receive explicit instruction, with small groups, using research-based high quality instructional materials focused on the specific area of identified student need. Students are grouped according to similar need. Additionally, the students will be provided high dosage tutoring opportunities within the regular scheduled day and in extended learning.

With an intentional focus on supporting students in identified struggling subgroups, instructional leaders will utilize the Instructional Practice Guide [IPG] tool to support classroom teachers in identifying and applying instructional shifts necessary for providing students access to high quality literacy instruction. The IPG tool provides classroom teachers with actionable feedback on supporting struggling students through improved instructional practice around

- (a) effective reinforcement of key literacy concepts,
- (b) development of higher-order thinking skills,
- (c) appropriate on-going formative assessment of literacy skills acquisition, and

(d) supporting students in the development of reflective learning strategies.

CMCSS will provide additional support for students in struggling subgroups through intentional staffing and staffing support. Academic coaches, Interventionist, Unique Learning Needs Consulting Teachers, and Content Consulting Teachers will provide support through modeling and application of high-quality instructional materials and research-based literacy strategies.

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

Benchmark Advance (K-5)

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

Benchmark Advance (K-5)

### **Supplemental Instructional Materials**

CMCSS utilizes Phonics First Foundation for Reading and Spelling until its inclusion on the state supplemental instructional materials list. The district supplements Benchmark K-5 Advanced in K-2 with Phonics First Foundations for Reading and Spelling. Phonics First Foundation for Reading and Spelling, developed by Brainspring (an IMSLEC Accredited MSL program), is a multisensory, systematic, structured, sequential, phonics-based, direct-instruction approach to teaching beginning, at-risk, struggling, learning disabled, dyslexic and ELL readers.

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

Our primary universal reading screener is the Fastbridge Suite for grades K-5. We also administer AimswebPlus to our third-grade students for the Spring.

### **Supplemental Reading Screeners**

Our supplemental reading screeners include:

- AimswebPlus (Pearson)
  - Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN) for K-1
  - Encoding for 1st- 3rd
  - Spring administration of Reading measures for 3rd grade
    - Oral Reading Fluency
    - Vocabulary
    - Comprehension II.
- Words Their Way (encoding measure for 4th - 12th)
- District writing process (DWP) for skills- and standards-based writing and written expression measures

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

In fall, winter, and spring, a universal screener (FastBridge; Aimsweb+; DWP) is administered to determine students who show risk (i.e., demonstrate reading deficiency). Grade-level teams composed of teachers, administrators, academic coach(es), and assessment personnel review USC data in the context of overall student profile (multiple data sources; CUAs, USC, TCAP, grades,

absenteeism) to determine students with scores < 40th percentile. Students identified as needing tier II/III intervention are given a diagnostic assessment to strategically align need to intervention and progress monitoring measure for gap closure. Teams also use survey level/diagnostic measures to determine if characteristics of dyslexia are present, which guides intervention focus and choice of resources as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law. Student-aligned, skills-based, multisensory, explicit, cumulative, and systematic intervention is provided daily (min. of 30/45 minutes; II/III) with a focus on the greatest area of deficit but encompassing all components of structured literacy. In addition to increased time and greater individual student alignment, Tier III intensity is increased by smaller group ratios and greater interventionist expertise. Students receiving dyslexia-specific intervention have direct fidelity observations, intervention strategies based on the components of structured literacy, and parent letters tailored to document the use of resources as outlined in the Dyslexia Resource Guide.

Students across all tiers receive explicit instruction, with small groups (I/II/III) using research-based materials focused on area of student need (students grouped according to similar need). The Screening to Intervention (S2i) report within FB provides teams with whole- and small-group, and individual student plans that combine performance on broad and narrow reading measures, aligning intervention strategies and PM measures to each. All intervention materials are provided within the assessment platform and are vetted by researchers from the Universities of Minnesota, Georgia, Syracuse, East Carolina, Buffalo, Temple, and Missouri. The district also utilizes resources from Phonics First, Structures, Sound Partners, and the TN Best for All Sounds First Curriculum supplement, and more comprehensive and strategic interventions are provided as tier intensity increases. Effectiveness of interventions, including impacting variables such as attendance and engagement, are discussed at 5-week intervals to determine if changes are warranted (dosage, strength, alignment, etc., according to NCII's Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity).

Tiered intervention blocks are part of the schoolwide schedule. During this protected time, students are engaged in explicit instruction and multisensory strategies that target growth in the identified area of skill/sub-skill need. For example, students who need instruction in phonemic awareness may segment, blend, isolate, manipulate, and delete sounds in words from grade-level text using finger tapping, which supports and provides more access to the knowledge-building units in Tier I instruction. For students who need fluency support, they may receive intervention incorporating use of modeled fluency that gradually releases to student ownership (echo/choral reading), with frequent opportunities for student response and immediate corrective feedback. PM measures are discretely aligned to area of need and gap closure. For example, if a third-grade student is working on phonics, s/he may be progress monitored on nonsense words every week and oral reading fluency (ORF) monthly, allowing teams to gauge intervention effectiveness and gap closure simultaneously.

#### Interventions and Supports for Promotional Pathways

All plans will be collaboratively designed by a student's team, including parent(s), administrator, teacher, and 504 or IEP team (if applicable). When attendance or truancy is a factor, interventions aimed to remove this barrier will be included within the plan. At a minimum, parents will be notified

three times during the school year of student progress. See Parent Notification Plan section below for full description.

#### Fourth Grade Pathway

Students promoted to fourth grade based on a pathway will be offered the option of participating in a Learning Loss Bridge Camp (90% attendance with adequate growth on post-test) or High Dosage Tutoring (HDT; 1:3 ratio for minimum of 2x/week for 30 minutes) for the school year. Learning Loss Bridge Camp offers increased opportunities for small group instruction to address learning gaps and includes 4 hours of reading and math instruction, 1 hour of intervention, and one hour of physical activity. Teachers use high-quality instructional materials (Benchmark Advance) and students' specific data to plan for intervention and instruction. Strategic focus on data profiles allows for a more diagnostic and responsive approach. Smaller class sizes increase student opportunities to respond, allowing teachers to individualize, intensify, and accelerate student learning. High Dosage Tutoring offers increased opportunities for small group instruction to quickly remediate existing gaps while simultaneously increasing access to Tier I standards and content. This increased cohesion across tiers of instruction maximizes teacher planning time, reduces the cognitive load for students (e.g., strict alignment to knowledge-building within Tier 1 content), and allows for full use of the high-quality instructional materials.

#### Fifth Grade Pathway

For students who did not meet adequate growth requirements on the 4th grade TCAP, schools will convene a conference with the parent(s), administrator, and ELA teacher to determine promotion or retention. If the decision is to promote, students will be provided interventions and academic support through the RTI2 Framework in 5th grade. Instructional strategies will include those described in the beginning paragraphs of this response. If the decision is to retain, an Academic Remediation Plan will be developed in collaboration with the parent(s) to include intervention through the RTI2 Framework and academic supports in the 4th grade (retention year).

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

CMCSS notifies parents in grades K-5 if their student shows risk for a significant reading deficiency (evidenced by scores <40th percentile) upon completion of each universal screening period (fall, winter, spring). Student performance is communicated in parent-friendly language via parent letter (Home Literacy Report) and the FastBridge Family Report (graphic depiction), which provides a clear explanation of skill gaps and the depth/extent of student needs, as well as students who meet or exceed grade level expectations. Parents are informed of the intervention strategies that will be utilized and the amount of time each day the student will participate in tiered intervention.

This letter also informs parents of the importance of reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade. There are two additional letters for parents of 3rd and 4th grade students that include the student's projected achievement level in ELA and information on the promotion pathway to grade 4. The district explains to families how students are assessed and what a "significant reading discrepancy" means and parents are notified at 5-week intervals (after data chats) of student progress (i.e., effectiveness of intervention). Parent notification letters include notation of any changes being made

if progress is less than expected to close gaps (evidenced by progress monitoring graphs and USC scores), as well as recommended no-cost activities that will support student need in the identified growth area (tailored by skill deficit, not by individual child).

### **Professional Development Plan**

New Kindergarten - fifth grade teachers have the opportunity to participate in the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the TDOE. Completion certificates are provided by the state and teachers are responsible for uploading to their TN Compass account. Any K-5 teacher is welcome to revisit the training to refresh their learning.

Teachers, teacher residents, educational assistants, administrators, and assessment personnel have additional professional learning opportunities through summer district training (June 3-6 and July 15-18, 2024) provided by district content experts. These professional development opportunities are focused on structured literacy and not MSV strategies or resources.

PD presentations and content are peer reviewed by the CMCSS professional learning team. District and school level leaders use the Knowledge and Foundational Literacy Instructional Practice Guides to gauge teacher competency. All instructional staff assigned to Learning Loss Bridge Camp or High Dosage Tutoring will complete the Department's TN ALL Corps training.