

## **Decatur County Schools**

### Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: June 20, 2023

Approved: June 17, 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**

The Decatur County Schools District uses HMH Into Reading with a foundational skills curriculum grounded in the Science of Reading and is aligned to the Tennessee ELA Standards that was approved by the State Textbook and Instructional Materials Team. Kindergarten through 2nd grade students are taught in a self-contained classroom in Decatur County. Each teacher has a two-hour, uninterrupted ELA Block. The ELA Block includes a thirty-minute foundational lesson for whole group plus thirty-minute rotations of small groups where Foundational skills are explicitly taught. So, K-2 receives 45 minutes or more of Foundational skills instruction and practice daily with: phonological awareness and phonics skills appropriate for each grade level. Explicit and systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, encoding, vocabulary, and comprehension provides students with the critical building blocks to become confident, independent readers and writers. Using the Start Right Readers, students apply what they have learned about phonics and fluency to reading decodable texts. These texts contain only previously taught phonics elements and high-frequency words, and they feature a connected storyline or topic across the week's texts to build students' interest and anticipation. Students develop and deepen their comprehension of increasingly complex texts with interactive read-alouds. Teachers explicitly teach academic words from the texts and reinforce word-learning strategies in the context of reading. Vocabulary is taught using Topic Words to build Knowledge. Key Academic Vocabulary is taught in the modules along with the word meaning clues. Students are taught vocabulary strategies and develop text comprehension during the modules, which is assessed through retelling the story and matching pictures of vocabulary words.

Our improvements for the upcoming year are centered around the designated times for the teachers to collaborate to plan and work in PLCs as teachers continue to internalize the instructional planning through unit-level and individual lesson plans and continue to implement the high-quality instructional materials within their classrooms.

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

The Decatur County School District uses HMH Into Reading in grades 4 and 5 and Wit & Wisdom in grade 3 with foundational skills curricula grounded in the Science of Reading and is aligned to the Tennessee ELA Standards as approved by the State Textbook and Instructional Materials Team. Third through Fourth students are departmentalized, and each ELA teacher has a one hour and forty-five-minute ELA Block and Fifth Grade students have a one hour and twenty-five minute ELA Block. The Block includes a thirty-minute Foundational lesson for the whole group. Additional time for isolated teaching of Foundational Skills is also used throughout the ELA Block. So, 3rd - 5th receives 45 minutes or more of Foundational Skills instruction and practice daily that is embedded with fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Listening Comprehension instruction with Teacher Read-Alouds are conducted. Students are involved with-in activities where they engage and respond as they compare selections. The morphology of both curricula is paired with knowledge and skills. Grammar use of the conventions is taught, such as, parts of a sentence, kinds of sentences, quotations, etc. Foundational skills with decoding and spelling are a key component. The Writing Workshop is an essential piece where the teacher incorporates instruction with the writing process, such as a personal narrative. In the Narrative the student plans and generates ideas, organizes, drafts, revises, and edits, then is ready to publish and present their finished product. Writing skills are taught through daily whole and small group instruction.

Our improvements for the upcoming year in 3rd - 5th are also centered around the designated times for the teachers to collaborate for planning and work in PLCs as teachers continue to internalize the instructional planning through unit-level and individual lesson plans as they continue to implement the high-quality instructional materials within their classrooms.

### **Additional Information**

One of our Elementary Schools was targeted (TSI) for Economically Disadvantaged. The District and School Administration will work together to monitor the student subgroups data as it is collected frequently during the year using Aimsweb and CASE assessments. The Administration will use checklists and conduct walk throughs and Literacy Walks to target Tier 1 instruction to be sure all students, including those who are ED, are receiving grade appropriate standards, only HQIM are being used and differentiated instruction or grouping is utilized for those in need, particularly those in the ED TSI identified subgroup. RTI will also be monitored closely to target the ED TSI subgroups for adequate Progress Monitoring.

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

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading: Grades K-2

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

Great Minds Wit and Wisdom: Grade 3

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading: Grades 4-5

### **Supplemental Instructional Materials**

SPIRE, Benchmark, Lexia

## **Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5**

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

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

Students in Decatur County are screened using the universal reading screener. Students who are identified as having a significant reading deficiency or "at-risk" for a significant reading deficiency using the screener are served through RTI<sup>2</sup> Tier II or Tier III. The students in Tiers II and III are pulled during their RTI block and served by Interventionists for 45 minutes and progress monitored weekly for Tier III and every other week for Tier II. The SPIRE program and SRA materials are used at the two elementary schools. SPIRE is primarily used at the middle school. The Universal screening data, as well as student's TCAP scores, prior intervention data, classroom performance and teacher observation data are used during the RTI Data Team Meetings to determine the students' needs for placement. The Universal screener and diagnostic assessments will determine the specific deficits for the student, and they will be provided supports and progress monitored on these areas. These Tier II and Tier III students will be provided a focused intervention on Letter Naming, Letter Sounds, Phoneme Segmenting, Word Reading Fluency, Passage Reading Fluency, and Reading Comprehension. RTI Data Team Meetings are conducted every 4 1/2 weeks to determine the student's progress and any needs for change of the intervention or Tier placement. Tier I students work on skills needed on an individual basis with the teacher and/or instructional programs, like IXL. We hope to incorporate more "hands on" enrichment activities during this RTI time for the upcoming school year.

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

Students in Decatur County who are identified as "at-risk" or Tier II and Tier III will have Home Literacy Reports sent home after each administration of the universal screener, the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, which is given three times per year. Parents of K-5 students are notified immediately after the completion of the Fall Universal Initial Screener if their child is "at risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-40th percentile). The communication letter is in parent friendly language and clearly explains the student's skill gaps and needs. The notification explains what intervention the student will receive and the amount of time each day that the student will receive the RTI services. The letter describes the importance of being able to read proficiently by the end of the 3rd grade and the promotion pathways. The district explains how students are assessed and what a "significant reading deficiency" means. Every 4 1/2 weeks data team meetings are conducted, and parents receive notification of their child's progress or lack of after each meeting.

The parent notification/communications include the data teams notes of intervention(s) and any changes that are being made if the child is not showing adequate progress from evidence by progress monitoring and the universal screening data as well as recommended activities that will support the students in their area of skill deficit. The parents receive these Progress Monitoring

reports twice per quarter, as the student is served in RTI. The teacher also keeps up with a Student Checklist to monitor the supports provided during the school year for students to help form the strong educational base needed for future academic success.

Parents are made aware of the importance of reading proficiently by the end of 3rd Grade and the Retention Law through various communications, including Home Literacy Reports. A letter explaining the TCA 49-6-3115 that was passed in 2021 which requires 3rd grade students to achieve a level 3-4 on the end of year assessment (TCAP). The parents of students that may be at risk receive notification through a letter and a phone call. The promotion pathways are explained so that everyone understands the importance of the end of year State Tests. In addition, 4th grade students that moved on from 3rd grade through a pathway to 4th grade must complete the requirements set forth in that pathway agreement and make adequate growth on the end of year assessment in 4th grade or possibly face retention then.

Parents are informed of no-cost activities that families can incorporate to support learning at home and they are listed on the home literacy report sent home with the students. We provide the high dosage with low student ration tutoring for those targeted, and we also offer afterschool tutoring at both elementary schools and the middle school.

### **Professional Development Plan**

The State Department has been conducting Foundational Literacy Skills training since the Summer of 2021 and continues today. The State has opened the one-week (virtual) early reading training for anyone who wants to participate. The principals at our two elementary schools required everyone in Pre-K through 5th to participate in this week one training, since ALL K-5 teachers are required to have at least one week of Foundational Skills Training. The district monitors everyone to make sure they have completed the week one virtual training in grades Pre-K – 5 including new teachers. We also have participants that signed up for week two training.

It is our plan to utilize the principals and participating lead teachers to conduct PLCs within each school on Foundational Literacy Skills for the upcoming school year. The Administrative Staff will monitor the use and effectiveness of Foundational Skills taught in the classrooms during Literacy Walks, quarterly, using the Tennessee IPG for Literacy and a template Google Doc for feedback. The lesson and unit plans will be monitored for inclusion of Foundational Skills and their impact as well.

### **Additional Information**

We have participated in several things in the past that we hope will continue to help improve the foundational skills instruction for our teachers in Decatur County. We will continue to use strategies from " The Writing Revolution " book study that we completed and a book study on "The Fresh Look at Phonics" and the "Uncovering the Logic of English." All through which we hope to gain knowledge to help with foundational literacy skills.

We are continuing to utilize strategies that we incorporated from NIET and Ayers Institute trainings to continue to build those foundational skills also for the upcoming school year. We plan to continue



support with Strengths Based Coaching, PLCs, Communicating and Recovering Unfinished Learning and Promoting Academic Equity, Student Engagement, and Inclusive Classrooms.

Our Literacy Focus will be on the new knowledge that we receive during the one- and two-week training sessions on Foundational Literacy Skills to target student's skill deficits earlier and provide support and/or remediation to help students to master each grade level.