

Hawkins County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: October 21, 2021

Approved: June 12, 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

Hawkins County School District is using a foundational skills curriculum through Benchmark Advance 2021 that is ingrained with our Tennessee State ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Benchmark Advance 2021 uses systematic explicit instruction, spiral review, and authentic reading and writing activities with lessons that are research-based. The ELA block is a specified 150 minutes including a 90-minute block of uninterrupted instruction. Each day foundational skills are taught explicitly for 60-80 minutes of instruction and interwoven throughout read-alouds, grade-level texts, decodable texts, literacy center activities and writing instruction during the remaining ELA block in K-2.

The instructional time includes lessons and activities that increase phonological awareness and provide practice of phonemic awareness, phonics, encoding, decoding, high frequency, and fluency skills as well as building background knowledge, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing skills. Lessons include teacher modeling sounds, students practicing sounds, students using spelling-sound correspondences with practice, students blending sounds with practice, and then students moving to independently using sounds, letters, and words in their reading and writing. Lessons also include built-in repetition and review of skills taught in the previous 4-6 weeks. A sample lesson from the first nine weeks of Kindergarten includes phonological awareness, focused on phoneme isolation with the sound of /s/. Then students move to the sound spelling for /s/ and blending of the sound with previously taught consonants and vowels, in this case, /a/. Students then apply that skill to their decodable reading text and writing tasks.

Looking ahead to our next year of implementation of our foundational skills curriculum, we will further the training in our curriculum as well as in the Science of Reading to expand our instructional knowledge to improve our classroom practice. Also, more work is warranted in small group time during literacy centers with explicit instruction and quality practice activities that support our foundational skills.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Hawkins County School District provides a 120-minute literacy block for grades three through five, aligned with Tennessee's ELA standards. Our curriculum, Benchmark Advance 2021, approved by the State Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission, meets State Board of Education requirements. The curriculum's vertical and horizontal alignment fosters deeper knowledge-building and vocabulary strengthening. Using an evidence-based approach, students practice and apply foundational skills daily. They spend 60 minutes on close reading, analyzing, and comprehending complex texts that build content knowledge and vocabulary in science, social studies, and literature. Group discussions and text evidence citation enhance their listening, reading, writing, thinking, and speaking skills. Students receive foundational instruction (30 minutes) in fluency, morphology, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and writing, with multiple opportunities to practice and apply these skills, ensuring coherence and connection.

For example, our third-grade students recently completed a unit on weather and climate, which included reading complex texts such as a poem about clouds. The lesson began by activating students' prior knowledge/experiences and identifying the central message. Students were reminded that a poem's central message is often communicated through the author's language and details. They chorally read the first stanza together, then highlighted the word "encircle" while the teacher modeled using our curriculum's Reading Big Words Strategy and knowledge of hard and soft "c" sounds to decode it. The students repeated, spelled, and defined the word using context clues. They highlighted and decoded several other vocabulary words similarly. Students independently read and annotated the remaining stanzas, identifying words and phrases that revealed the central message. They paired up to practice fluency by rereading the poem and discussing the author's message. Finally, students wrote a response supported by textual evidence.

This unit exemplifies how foundational skills are seamlessly integrated into our curriculum to reinforce and enhance literacy development. By focusing on phonics through decoding vocabulary words with hard and soft "c," students build their decoding and word recognition abilities. Choral reading and paired rereading foster fluency, enabling students to read with better accuracy, expression, and understanding. Vocabulary development is emphasized as students highlight, define, and use context clues to understand new words. Comprehension skills are honed through annotation and discussion, allowing students to engage deeply with the text and extract its central message. Finally, by translating their understanding into written responses, students strengthen their ability to support ideas with textual evidence. Over the past three years, we have implemented this program with fidelity. We are beginning to see measurable progress. Students are improving reading fluency, vocabulary retention, and comprehension skills.

Next steps: We will continue refining our approach by incorporating increasingly complex texts and diverse genres in future units. We will also provide additional professional development for teachers to ensure consistent and effective implementation of foundational skills strategies. This revised plan will help solidify current skills and expand students' literacy capabilities, preparing them for more advanced studies.

Additional Supports

Hawkins County is dedicated to improving student literacy. Schools designated as level 1 or 2 often face significant challenges in promoting literacy among their students and for those in specific subgroups. Improving student literacy requires a comprehensive approach tailored to the needs of various student subgroups. Below you will find key supports that will be put into place for our identified schools and subgroups.

- **Assessment and Data Review:** Conduct regular diagnostic tests/assessments to identify students' literacy levels and specific areas needing improvement.
- **Analyze assessment data** to identify trends, gaps, and subgroup performance.
- **Provide ongoing professional development** for teachers on evidence-based literacy instruction strategies, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and differentiated instruction.
- **Offer specialized training** for teachers working with English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, focusing on targeted instructional techniques and interventions.
- **Promote differentiated instruction strategies** to cater to the varying abilities and learning styles within each classroom.
- **Intervention:** Provide Tiered Interventions for targeted student support.
- **Tutoring:** Community Partnership/Project On-Track Tutoring that provides high dosage-low ratio tutoring services.
- **Scheduling:** School schedules are set to maximize time spent in Foundational Skills, Listening and Learning, and Writing.
- **Evidence-Based Curriculum:** Hawkins County Schools provides a district-wide, evidence-based literacy curriculum that is aligned with state standards and tailored to meet the needs of all students.

By implementing a strategic plan that includes all of the supports listed, Hawkins County Schools can effectively support all schools in increasing literacy scores and moving students closer to reading on grade level by the end of third grade.

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

Hawkins County Schools has adopted Benchmark Advance for ELA core instruction; however, we supplement the core curriculum utilizing the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum. This supplement allows Hawkins County to enhance foundational skills during daily instruction, placing greater emphasis on phonological awareness and advanced phonemic skills essential for success up to second grade.

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

Hawkins County Schools has a district RTI² plan aligned with the TN Framework for RTI² to support “at risk” students. The District RTI² Coordinator supports individual schools with implementation of the district plan by providing interventionist training, individual school support as needed, and support at school-level 4.5 Week Data Meetings. Assistance also includes support at special education S-Team meetings, review of new intervention programs, and facilitation of District RTI² Committee meetings.

The District RTI² Committee composed of the district coordinator, supervisors, special education consultants, academic coaches, and school psychologists meet three times per year to facilitate district support of our district RTI² plan. Hawkins County Schools universally screens all students three times per year. Students who flag for risk will receive further diagnostic and survey-level assessments to determine specific deficits and identify students who display characteristics of dyslexia.

After universal screening, school interventionists schedule school team data review meetings to determine students with a significant reading deficiency or at-risk for a significant reading deficiency. The school team consists of the interventionist, classroom teachers, principal, and other personnel as appropriate (speech teachers, guidance counselors, SPED staff, school psychologist, etc.). This team creates a student intervention plan documenting student deficit, the placement of the student in an appropriate intervention to address the deficit, and progress monitoring measure and frequency.

Placement in intervention is determined by multiple sources of data including, but not limited to, the following: aimswebPlus, diagnostic and survey-level assessments, classroom grades and performance, CASE, and TCAP. Upon analysis of all data, students may be placed in Tier II or Tier III intervention based on student skill deficit. Students identified as having characteristics of dyslexia are placed in a dyslexia specific intervention. Student skill deficits are addressed with research-based strategies or programs (Voyager, 95% Group phonics, Sidewalks Intervention, QuickReads, Sounds Sensible/SPIRE, Sound Partners, Sondag). Tier II intervention provides 30 minutes of daily intervention with progress monitoring at least every other week. Tier III intervention provides 45 minutes of daily intervention with progress monitoring weekly. School data teams meet every 4.5 weeks to look at student progress monitoring data and rate of improvement (ROI) to determine student progress. Based on progress, students may continue, change, or discontinue intervention.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

After each aimswebPlus benchmark period (3 times each school year), parents receive a home literacy report informing them of their child’s participation in the universal screener, with student

scores and a report showing student score percentile in relation to national norms. This easily shows parents if the student has a significant reading deficiency, is at-risk of a significant reading deficiency, or is working at grade-level. This report also indicates student areas of deficit by including checkboxes to indicate where students have particular areas of struggle. The home report notifies parents of their student's placement in tiered intervention, number of minutes the student will spend in daily intervention, frequency of progress monitoring, and that they will receive progress updates quarterly.

Additional information included in the report describes the importance of reading on grade level by the end of third grade, promotion pathways to 4th grade, no-cost ways to support reading at home, and links to resources on dyslexia. After each school's 4.5-week data meeting, parents receive a letter that includes: a progress monitoring graph, update on student progress toward individual goals, and any changes made to the intervention plan.

In addition to the above, parents of students identified as having characteristics of dyslexia through the universal screening process receive a letter providing them with information about dyslexia and resources available to them. If the student also meets the criteria for an ILP-D, the parents will receive a letter notifying them of eligibility and asking for parent agreement.

Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, 3rd grade students who receive "approaching" or "below" on the English Language Arts (ELA) section of the TCAP assessment are able to get important learning supports from their school for free to ensure they are ready to move on to the 4th grade. These supports include retake opportunities, summer learning camp, and school provided tutoring. Hawkins County Schools will notify parents if their student is identified for retention and will provide information to them about the pathways that are available to their student to be able to move to 4th grade, including free summer camps and/or tutoring supports.

Professional Development Plan

As of June 2023, all previously hired Hawkins County teachers had been trained in the Science of Reading from the TDOE Reading 360 training. The summer of 2023 focused on providing the Science of Reading for new hires and on additional training for K-5 in our adopted ELA Benchmark Advance 2021. This program was adopted for all K-5 teachers.

Hawkins County Schools ELA coaches provide additional professional development on the following courses using Benchmark Advance:

- Exploring Foundation Skills for ELA K-2
- Supporting Reading Mini Lessons and Collaborative Conversations ELA 3-5
- Exploring Small Group Lesson Instruction in ELA K-5

All Pre-k teachers receive professional development and training on the adopted series Connect4Learning. Pre-K teachers also receive asynchronous training throughout the school year from Connect4Learning. The Access for All Learning Network provides training in the new adopted series.



During the school year, teachers participate in professional development at the school level. These meetings consist of analyzing district and school level universal screener data and utilizing that data to improve Tier I instruction as well as making sure that Tier II and Tier III supports are providing targeted instruction for those students. Teachers also meet monthly to analyze classroom data and prepare lessons for upcoming units.