

Polk County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: August 9, 2022

Approved: May 24, 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

In the Polk County school system, foundational skills instruction is the primary method to teach reading. In grades K-2 the amount of time devoted to literacy instruction is at least 90 minutes per day, with foundational skills scheduled for at least 45 minutes. Grades K-2 emphasize all elements of the foundational skills—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Instruction and curriculum are aligned with TN Standards. Teachers emphasize the five components of literacy instruction: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. We also incorporate work in morphology, grammar, spelling, and writing.

In SY 24-25, we will continue our emphasis on foundational skills and bring in more PLC work on both the school and district level. We will also provide more training and professional development on interventions for characteristics of dyslexia in all tiers. We will analyze our URS data to determine weaknesses in instruction and curriculum and discuss means of improvement.

We submitted samples of schedules from each of our three elementary schools (South Polk, Copper Basin, and Benton) representing what the entire grade at that school teaches. We have strong collaboration in many grades so that all the teachers adhere to the same schedule.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

In the Polk County School System, foundational skills instruction is embedded for students in grades 3-5. The ELA instruction time is usually 75 minutes (varies by school and grade) with at least 30 minutes dedicated to foundational skills. Grades 3-5 begin to shift from basic foundational skills to more vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, with the other skills taught as necessary in their ELA time. Instruction and curriculum are aligned with TN Standards.

Teachers in these grades continue to emphasize the five components of literacy instruction: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension. We also incorporate more work in morphology, grammar, spelling, and writing in these grades. We use data from TCAP, URS, and other benchmarks to inform us of our weaknesses and strengths. We use research to provide us with evidence-based approaches to teach these foundational skills. Our curriculum materials are

approved by the State Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. We use these materials as explicit supports for our fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction in grades K-5.

We submitted samples of schedules representing what the entire grade at that school/district teaches. Our K-2 grades are mostly self-contained with more departmentalization in grades 3-5.

Additional Supports

Polk County is dedicated to improving student literacy. In the upcoming school year, we will focus on improving literacy in our identified schools and subgroups. In SY 24-25, we will continue our emphasis on foundational skills and bring in more PLC work on both the school and district level. We will also provide more training and professional development on interventions for characteristics of dyslexia in all tiers. We will continue to analyze our URS data, TCAP, data, and benchmark assessment data to inform our instruction.

Our support plan is as follows:

- Supervisors and coaches will collaborate with principals at identified schools to analyze student and subgroup data and pinpoint problem areas in ELA.
- We will work with teachers in the identified schools on effective strategies and methods to provide support to those students and subgroups in their specific ELA areas of need. This support will be monitored, and ongoing data will be routinely analyzed for effectiveness indicating student improvement in literacy.
- We have ELA HQIM; therefore, teachers will be provided additional professional development in using these materials with lesson internalization as an emphasis. Principals will work closely with teachers throughout the process.
- We will monitor and analyze our support structures, such as RTI and special education, to ensure that they are effective in assisting these schools and students/subgroups in making progress.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading

We have an approved waiver for grade 3 HMH.

Supplemental Instructional Materials

We supplement with Heggerty, SPIRE, materials from Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR), and materials from Tennessee's Best for all Central.

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

We administer the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, aimswebPlus, to our students in grades K-3 and administer iReady to students in grades 4-5.

Supplemental Screeners

We also use the iReady screener as a supplement for students in grades K-3.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Our Universal Screener is the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener. It complies with RTI² and Dyslexia laws. It meets the dyslexia screening requirement established in 49-1-229 and in SB7003/HB7002 and the universal screening requirements in the Tennessee RTI² framework manual (August 2023). It is administered three times a year to K-5 students during state-recommended windows. The data is collected, analyzed, and then used to establish supports for students falling into Tier 2 and Tier 3. Students identified as having characteristics of dyslexia are provided interventions in all tiers as needed. The results of this screener are submitted to TDOE.

The Polk County School System follows the interventions structures as outlined in Tennessee's Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual. Students who need interventions (having a significant reading deficiency as defined by universal screening data, crosswalks, TCAP data, and other assessments) are placed in Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 instructional support for the specified amount of time. Reading interventions are provided to students based on identified needs from screeners and periodic progress monitoring. These interventions are aligned to the skills gaps. Differentiated Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction is provided/overseen by certified teachers using approved research-based materials. Students are progress monitored on their specific skills gaps on a regular basis. Regular data meetings are held to discuss student progress and whether changes in interventions are needed in duration, material, and intensity if no progress is taking place.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

In SY 24-25, the Polk County School System will provide Parent Notification/ Home Literacy Reports to notify and engage parents and families in the student's literacy progress. The Home Literacy Report will be sent within two weeks after each administration of the universal reading screener to the family of K-3 students (three times each year K-3 and annually for grades 4-5) having a significant reading deficiency as defined by universal screening data and an equating process or through TCAP data.

This home literacy report will include the following:

1. Student scores explained in family-friendly language.
2. Explanation of the student's skills gaps and the depth and extent of student need.
3. Information about the importance of a student being able to read proficiently by the end of third grade and a statement about 4th grade promotion pathways under § 49-6-

- 3115(a)(1) for students in grade 3 with an achievement level of “approaching” or “below” on the ELA portion of the student’s most recent TCAP test.
4. Reading intervention activities that the parent may use with their student at home to improve reading proficiency provided at no cost to the family.
 5. Information about the specific reading interventions and supports that the school system recommends for that student to address skills gaps, including what is being provided through the RTI process.

If the student has the characteristics of dyslexia, this report can include information and resources concerning this reading deficiency.

We will use the sample letters provided by the TDOE to ensure that all required areas are addressed in family notification.

Professional Development Plan

The Polk School System will provide professional development for teachers in grades K-5 and other interested staff (special education and paraprofessionals, for example) to allow teachers to be trained in foundational literacy skills instruction. PD will be entrenched in a phonics-based approach with no provision for cueing or MSV strategies.

- Nearly 100% of our staff has participated in both Course I and Course II of the early reading training. Any staff member (or those new to the district) who needs to participate will be given the opportunity to complete these courses during the summer.
- We will offer Secondary Literacy Training Courses I and II for teachers.
- We will provide training on dyslexia interventions. These sessions will be offered in school- and county-level PLCs, webinars and zoom meetings.
- We offer IXL training to elevate teaching and learning.
- Other sessions will focus on lesson internalization with our HQIM and how to better deliver solid literacy instruction.