

Sevier County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: May 30, 2023

Approved: June 14, 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

Daily foundational skills instruction in Grades K-2 in Sevier County is implemented through a combination of structured curricula, professional development opportunities, and ongoing support for teachers.

1. Curriculum Implementation: Sevier County utilizes two main foundational skills curricula: Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) supplemented with Really Great Reading materials. CKLA provides a structured approach to foundational literacy instruction, with a focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Really Great Reading serves as a supplemental curriculum to reinforce these skills. Both Primary curricula follow a systematic scope and sequence, ensuring that students receive comprehensive instruction in foundational literacy skills grounded in the science of reading.
2. Structured Instructional Blocks: The ELA block is structured to provide dedicated time for foundational skills instruction. In grades K-2, this block is 120 minutes long, with a recommended extension to 150 minutes. During this time, students engage in both foundational skills instruction and content knowledge-building activities. In CKLA, for example, students receive 60 minutes of daily foundational skills instruction, with an additional 60 minutes allocated for content knowledge-building activities.
3. Evidence-Based Strategies: Teachers employ evidence-based instructional strategies to explicitly teach foundational literacy skills. These strategies are informed by the Science of Reading and are designed to meet the diverse needs of students. Activities focus on areas such as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension.
4. Integration Across Subjects: The curricula are designed to integrate foundational literacy skills across subjects and activities. For example, phonics skills taught in CKLA are reinforced through spelling exercises, decodable readers, and writing activities. This integration provides students with multiple opportunities to apply their learning in context.

5. Professional Development: Teachers participate in regular professional learning opportunities to deepen their understanding of foundational literacy instruction. Initiatives like the Keys to Literacy Academy and partnerships with vendors to provide teachers and leaders with training focused on high-quality instructional materials and standards-aligned instructional optics in K-2 foundational reading skills and ELA/literacy. This ongoing professional development ensures that teachers have the knowledge and skills to effectively implement the curricula.

6. Feedback and Assessment: Sevier County conducts annual surveys to gather feedback from teachers and schools regarding instructional needs, professional development, and curriculum effectiveness. This feedback informs decision-making and helps identify areas for improvement or additional support.

Overall, foundational skills instruction in Sevier County is implemented through a coordinated effort that emphasizes structured curricula, evidence-based strategies, ongoing professional development, and feedback-driven decision-making. This comprehensive approach aims to provide students with the foundational literacy skills they need to succeed academically.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

In the 2020-2021 school year, the Sevier County School System began full implementation of Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) in grades 3-5, marking a significant shift in literacy instruction. Daily foundational skills are integrated into the ELA block and supported within the curriculum.

1. Integrated Content Knowledge-Building and Literacy Block: CKLA supports an integrated approach to content knowledge building and foundational literacy instruction in grades 3-5. The curriculum is aligned with Tennessee's ELA academic standards, ensuring consistency and alignment with state requirements.

2. ELA Instructional Block: The Sevier County Board of Education mandates a 120-minute block of ELA instruction in grades 3-5. The adopted curriculum, Amplify CKLA, provides 120 minutes of instruction daily with a minimum of 30 minutes for foundational skills instruction. Within this block, content knowledge-building ELA instruction focuses on vocabulary development, speaking and listening skills, and comprehension. Foundational literacy standards are seamlessly integrated into the ELA block rather than being addressed in isolation.

3. Varied Components of Instruction: Students engage in various components of ELA instruction, including fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing. These components are integrated into lessons and units, providing a cohesive learning experience for students.

4. Sample Lesson Structure: A sample 5th grade lesson might include activating prior knowledge, small group reading, vocabulary instruction, word work, grammar, morphology, and writing. Students actively engage with complex texts through activities like think-pair-share, where they attend with precision to the text and discuss vocabulary words explicitly taught within the context of the content.

5. Teacher Support and Professional Learning: Teachers receive ongoing support and professional learning opportunities to facilitate literacy instruction through CKLA. This support includes participation in regular professional learning sessions and involvement in initiatives such as the

HQIM Literacy Implementation Network and the TN DOE's Reading 360 Initiative. Administrative support is also provided through training on the TN Instructional Practice Guide walk-through tool.

6. Annual Needs Assessment: An annual ELA needs assessment is conducted to identify the needs of schools and teachers regarding ELA instruction. This assessment drives decisions regarding support for teachers, ensuring that resources and professional learning opportunities are aligned with the evolving needs of educators and students.

Overall, the implementation of CKLA in grades 3-5 in Sevier County represents a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction, integrating foundational skills within a broader ELA framework and providing robust support for teachers and schools to effectively implement the curriculum.

Additional Supports

The district will support each designated school/subgroup in executing improvement strategies as follows:

1. Assist administrators in reviewing and optimizing current systems to:
 - Align teaching assignments for maximum effectiveness
 - Ensure the master schedule includes necessary instructional time
 - Provide opportunities for collaborative planning by grade level/content area
2. Assign district ELA staff to support targeted literacy efforts, ensuring implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), feedback, and lesson preparation.
3. Utilize instructional coaches for ongoing coaching, PLCs, model lesson development, and professional leave opportunities with lead teachers.
4. Offer high-quality professional development through:
 - Keys to Literacy: Science of Reading Academy (Grades K-6)
 - Really Great Reading (Core K-2, Intervention Grades 3-6)
 - Seven Steps to a Language-Rich Interactive Classroom (K-6, 7-12)
5. Partner with content-based vendors to support ELA curriculum implementation and adjust protocols/resources as needed.
6. Conduct learning walks using the foundational skills IPG and provide actionable feedback to teachers based on best practices.
7. Employ highly effective educators to reduce class sizes and support small group instruction and intervention.
8. Offer extended learning opportunities to close achievement gaps.
9. Prioritize high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring for at-risk students.
10. Facilitate collaboration among teachers, administrators, and district-based support services.
11. Monitor student progress using formative and summative assessments and adjust supports as necessary.

12. Utilize ELA lead teachers to support lesson preparation and ensure understanding of learning expectations.

Progress will be monitored by district leadership through regular collaboration with school administrators, including data analysis. Regular classroom observations and walk-throughs will ensure high-quality Tier I instruction implementation.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Really Great Reading (Core K-2, Intervention Grades 3-6)

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

In Sevier County's K-5 education system, a comprehensive universal screening process is implemented three times a year in reading, writing, and mathematics.

1. Universal Screening: Students in grades K-5 undergo universal screening utilizing the aimswebPlus assessment, which complies with the RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements. This assessment helps identify students who may be at risk and in need of additional support in reading, writing, and math.
2. Tiered Intervention Approach: Based on the screening results and additional data sources, students are considered for tiered intervention, following the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener benchmark scores. Students identified for Tier II and Tier III interventions receive daily intensive small group instruction focusing on their identified areas of need, in addition to core academic instruction (Tier I).
3. Instructional Times and Progress Monitoring: Tier II and Tier III interventions follow the recommended minimum instructional times outlined in the TDOE RTI² framework (30-45 minutes). Students in these tiers are progress-monitored at least every other week to track their growth and adjust interventions as needed.
4. Evidence-Based Intervention Programs: Sevier County's RTI² framework for ELA identifies evidence-based intervention programs, aligned to Tier I instruction, differentiated to address specific areas of academic need, such as phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These programs are implemented daily during designated RTI² time allotments outlined in each school's master schedule.

5. Dyslexia Screening: Students with reading composite scores below the 25th percentile are given additional subtests, and if deficits are identified in 50% of the grade-appropriate subtests, they are screened for dyslexia. This screening process is in compliance with eligibility requirements under the Tennessee Intensive Supports for Schools and Students Act (TISA). Additionally, students who qualify for reading intervention in Tier II, Tier III, or Special Education, or who are referred by a core teacher with sufficient evidence, are administered a dyslexia screener. Students identified as having characteristics of dyslexia are prescribed research-based interventions targeting specific characteristics.

Overall, Sevier County's tiered intervention approach and comprehensive screening processes ensure that students receive timely and targeted support to address their individual academic needs, including potential dyslexia-related challenges.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

In Sevier County, parents are actively involved in their child's academic journey, particularly in fostering literacy skills. During the first grading period, families of students in grades K-3 receive a color tri-fold brochure. This informative brochure emphasizes the importance of reading proficiency by the end of grade 3 and provides insights into the pathways for 4th-grade promotion. Additionally, it highlights available reading intervention activities for families to support literacy skills. These activities are detailed further in the Home Literacy reports provided to families of grade K-3 students, three times a year, who are identified with a significant reading deficiency based on their skills-based universal reading screener composite (at/below the 15th percentile) and to families of grades 4 and 5 students, annually, who score "approaching" or "below" on the English Language Arts portion of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). The Home Literacy Report outlines the importance of being able to read on grade-level by the end of grade 3, reading intervention activities for families, 4th grade promotion pathways under § 49-6-3115 (a) (1) for students in grade 3 and reading interventions provided to the student.

Parents of students in grades K-5 identified with a significant reading deficiency are kept informed about their child's progress and involvement in tiered intervention programs through regular communication and targeted notifications.

1. Initial Notification: Parents are notified upon the School Level Support (SLS) Team's determination of eligibility for tiered intervention (Tier II or Tier III). An initial parent intervention notification letter is issued to parents when their child is first placed in a tiered intervention program.

2. Home Literacy Reports: After each benchmark assessment, parents are notified if their child is identified as having a significant reading deficiency. This notification occurs three times per year for students in grades K-3 and once per year for students in grades 4-5. The notification letter provides information about reading proficiency, specific interventions, dyslexia resources, no-cost reading activities, and promotion pathways for 4th grade.

3. RTI² Progress Reports: Parents of students receiving tiered interventions also receive RTI² progress reports, typically prior to the end of each six-week grading period. These reports review the progress, or lack thereof, their child is making in the intervention class. The progress report includes

information about prescribed interventions, the amount of time designated for each tier level, and aimswebPlus assessment scores presented in parent-friendly language.

4. **Dyslexia Screening and Interventions:** All students placed in reading intervention are screened for characteristics of dyslexia, and parents are provided with dyslexia-specific resources. Students exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia receive explicit instruction to address targeted skill deficits within the RTI² program. Parents are informed of any tier transitions and receive individual progress monitoring reports.

5. **Continuous Communication and Monitoring:** SLS Teams meet regularly, at least prior to the end of each six-week grading period, to discuss student progress in intervention and make any necessary adjustments. Based on student progress data, adjustments are tailored to address specific skill deficits, with educators providing intensive instruction aligned with the student's needs.

Overall, Sevier County's approach ensures that parents are actively engaged in their child's academic progress, well-informed about interventions and support services, and equipped with resources to support their child's literacy development at home.

Professional Development Plan

In Sevier County, a comprehensive professional development plan is in place to support K-5 teachers in their implementation of foundational literacy instruction. Below is an overview of the professional development opportunities provided.

1. **Keys to Literacy Academy:** beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, K-3 teachers have had the opportunity to participate in the Keys to Literacy Academy. This program offers on-site professional development and training on highly effective strategies for teaching students to read. The academy focuses on equipping teachers with evidence-based practices for foundational literacy instruction.

2. **Reading 360 Early Literacy Training Series:** To further enhance teachers' expertise in foundational literacy, Sevier County has encouraged participation in the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training Series offered by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) for all K-5 educators. This series consists of virtual and asynchronous training sessions, with an optional in-person opportunity for selected courses. Teachers receive training on research-based approaches to early literacy instruction, ensuring alignment with best practices. All teachers have completed the early literacy training, and new teachers are required to complete the training and demonstrate completion of the requirement.

3. **Curriculum Training:** K-5 teachers participated in initial training for Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA), which included direct instruction related to the foundational skills block. Additionally, prior to the start of each school year, curriculum training is provided for new teachers and those transitioning to different grade levels. This ensures that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to effectively implement the curriculum.

4. **Regular Curriculum Updates and Collaborative Planning:** K-5 teachers have ongoing opportunities to participate in regular curriculum updates and collaborative planning sessions. These sessions facilitate discussions on instructional strategies, curriculum alignment, and student progress

monitoring. Teachers collaborate to share best practices and refine their approach to foundational literacy instruction.

5. Coaching and Support: K-5 teachers receive coaching and support sessions focused on the Tennessee Instructional Practice Guide, ensuring that instruction is aligned with state standards and best practices. Additionally, support is provided through partnerships made available through participation in the Early Literacy Network and HQIM Literacy Implementation Network, offering further resources and assistance for effective literacy instruction.

By providing a range of professional development opportunities, Sevier County ensures that K-5 teachers have the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to deliver high-quality foundational literacy instruction, ultimately promoting student success in reading and language arts.