

## **Sullivan County Schools**

### Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: May 18, 2021

Approved: June 18, 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**

Sullivan County elementary schools use Core Knowledge Language Arts as the foundational skills curriculum. CKLA is grounded in the science of reading and is aligned with the TN state ELA standards. Students in grades K-2 receive a minimum of 120 minutes of tier 1 reading instruction each day. Foundational skills work is the primary piece of instruction, focusing on phonemic awareness, practice with phonics, word work (vocabulary), and fluency while also building comprehension skills for a minimum of 45 minutes each day. During the "skills" block, teachers use an explicit, systematic approach to teaching phonics. For example, the teacher explicitly teaches a sound (being careful to use the "pure sound"), students practice that sound, the teacher models the "picture" of that sound (the letter), and the students use a code chart for writing and applying the skill. This practice segues into decoding more sophisticated diagraphs, blends, and clusters as student are able to learn and use common spellings and decode text aligned with the sounds they have been taught. All these skills are used collectively as students practice reading in their readers, using pictures and text to support their comprehension.

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

Sullivan County's elementary schools use an integrated literacy curriculum in grades 3-5. The curriculum is aligned with the TN state ELA standards and the materials were selected from the list of materials approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Students receive daily reading instruction using an evidence-based approach and applying the foundational skills within the daily scope of the work. Each day, students engage in complex texts, reading, listening, writing, and discussing worthwhile text and applying the foundational skills through vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension practice. The lessons for grades 3-5 look a little different, but 30 minutes each day is spent in vocabulary, morphology, grammar, spelling, fluency, and comprehension practice. The remainder of the ELA curriculum block has its focus in knowledge-building work (reading, listening, writing, speaking) This integrated approach to reading instruction prepares students for real-life application of skills that will be necessary for future success in school and beyond.

### **Additional Information**

Through participation in Access for All Learning Network, Sullivan County schools is committed to ensuring access for students with disabilities in Tier 1 instruction through the usage of high-quality instructional materials, preparation of unit and lesson protocols, collaboration between general and special education teachers, and the utilization of the Instructional Practice Guide with a focus on students with disabilities. Intervention strategies used during direct service in a special education setting will be aligned to skills needed in Tier 1 instruction. This work will benefit students in all subgroups, not just students with disabilities.

### **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**

The only supplemental instructional materials used in K-5 is the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement. Teachers utilize these materials during transitions, as mini-lessons, as daily review, etc. using the strategies and routines learned during the Early Reading Training, Course 2 in-person learning.

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

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

Sullivan County elementary schools use AimsWeb Plus as the Universal Screener, three times each year. This is also the tool used for progress monitoring. The PASS and PWRS assessments are administered when students exhibit specific indicators for dyslexia.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

The aimswebPlus) Universal Reading Screener (URS) benchmark is administered to Sullivan County students three times each year. The first benchmark is administered the first month of school, providing one indicator of students' need for intervention services. This universal screening data, along with classroom annotative data and daily formative assessment data, is analyzed by teachers, leaders, and interventionists to help determine each student's proficiency in reading and math. A URS benchmark score in the 0-15th percentile indicates that a student is at "significant risk for a reading deficiency". Through the use of URS data, formative assessment information, classroom observation notes, and information from prior years' records, students are placed into intervention groups based upon their individual needs and deficits. Intervention groups are formed, placing students with the most significant needs into small groups of 4-6 students who need same or similar remediation. Students who score between the 16-40<sup>th</sup> percentiles are placed into Tier 2 intervention groups and those who score between the 0-15th percentile are placed into Tier 3 intervention groups. Again, small groups are formed, and students are grouped based upon the same or similar

need. Teachers provide the small group intervention lessons using the following program components:

CKLA Assessment and Remediation Guide lessons and activities

- mClass and Amplify Boost lessons and activities
- SPIRE lessons and activities

Every 2.5 weeks, students are progress-monitored (AimsWeb) to determine rate of improvement (ROI). Every 4.5 weeks, data teams meet to analyze the progress of each student. Data meetings are spent looking at AimsWeb scores, student progress and other possible issues (attendance, engagement, etc). During this meeting, discussions include various options: i.e. change in the intervention facilitator, change in intervention program/tool, and the addition of services. Students who continue to demonstrate lack of progress take survey-level assessments to determine characteristics of dyslexia.

Decisions made during data team meetings are communicated with families and implemented with fidelity until the next data team meeting when the process repeats. Students presenting several characteristics of dyslexia receive intensive intervention services using approved programs, as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law. Families of students showing characteristics of dyslexia are contacted, the offer is made for the student to be placed on an ILP-D, and a plan for intervention is designed. Sullivan County Schools use SPIRE as one research-based tool for support when a student is suspected of having dyslexia. SPIRE is based on an Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic and explicit phonics-based instruction and offers strong support for these students. Each school's master schedule includes 45 minutes/day for specific, explicit intervention (RTI) instruction. During RTI time, students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention groups work on tasks specifically designed to meet them at their individual skill level and support them toward grade level mastery. To create the smallest possible intervention groups and allow for maximum ability to individualize instruction, every available teacher and assistant works to facilitate tiered intervention groups during RTI periods. This system allows focus to be directly on skill deficits and student progress, allowing the greatest potential for gap closure and mastery.

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

Sullivan County schools notifies all parents in grades K-5 of their child's performance on the Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus). Families whose student demonstrated proficiency on the URS will receive the Home Literacy Report, detailing the screening plan for the year and whether their student scored at or above grade level. If their child scored in the "at-risk" range or significant reading deficiency range, information will be sent home detailing the fact that the student has been placed in intervention and which specific skill deficits showed up in the screening. This information is sent out as soon as schools complete the fall universal screening and again after the subsequent screeners are administered, three times each year. The student's results are communicated in parent-friendly language with a clear explanation of student skill gaps. A basic explanation of the extent of the student needs is included, as well. Parents are told about the intervention services their student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive those services.

Also included is information about the importance of being able to read on grade-level by the end of 3rd grade and information on the pathway to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. There is a brief description of how students are assessed and what a “significant reading deficiency” means. After each 4 ½ week data team meeting, parents are provided information about their child’s progress, or lack of progress. In this communication, data teams note any changes being made if, based on progress monitoring and universal screening data, the child is not showing sufficient progress. Parents are also provided with information regarding no-cost, skill-specific, activities they can do at home to support their child in the area of deficit. These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times annually and annually in grades 4 and 5. Our ELA curriculum also includes parent letters for grades K-2 that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the coming week. These will help parents better understand what foundational skills their child(ren) are learning and how to support them through questions about the texts used during the daily read-aloud.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Professional development is provided through the state's Early Reading Training, Course 1 and Course 2 when available, as well as ongoing professional learning and support via our district ELA coach and the ELA and Early Reading Learning Leaders placed at each elementary school. This year teachers will continue working with the academic coach and learning leader to increase the focus on reading comprehension and the relationship between it, evidence-based discussions, and writing. Much of this focus with teachers hinges on the work we have been doing around Core Action 2 and Core Action 3 in the IPG. In foundational skills PLC's, we have focused very heavily on the use of daily data capturing, as well as constant monitoring of the data generated through the Foundational Skills Assessments used throughout the CKLA Foundation Skills instruction. This data is imperative for making excellent decisions regarding RTI placements, intervention opportunities, and daily instructional moves; teachers meet collaboratively after each unit assessment to input their data and converse around high-quality ways to leverage mastery of each skill for every student.

The work with the AALN cohort will provide monthly Communities of Practice (virtual professional learning opportunities). Through participation in Access for All Learning Network, teachers will learn strategies for ensuring access to all learning opportunities for all students. Also, Sullivan County has a small group of teachers trained in Orton Gillingham practices who will be offering training around daily routines and strategies useful with students demonstrating characteristics of Dyslexia.

As a district, we provide new teachers with mentors who support them through their first year with the CKLA curriculum. These mentors help the new teachers learn and understand the need to use "pure sounds" when teaching phonemic sounds, prepare for unit and lesson success with them, and help record and analyze classroom data with them. Our New Teacher Cohort meets four times each year, focusing on topics related to high-quality best practices for reading, as well as engaging instructional practices and co-teaching/inclusionary methods for providing access to all curriculum for all students.

Finally, completing the Early Reading Training modules is the first task required of a newly hired teacher. Our ELA coach will be supporting them throughout the year as they implement what they've learned and refine their practices. We are planning to register them for the in-person



training at the next available local opportunity. Our district has hosted this training several times and would consider hosting that training again in the future.