

Warren County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated May 24, 2022

Approved: June 20, 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

Our district uses Benchmark Advance which is a foundational skills curriculum grounded in the science of reading and aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards. Benchmark Advance is an approved curriculum by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction with an integrated approach with a 45-60-minute block of time for grades K-2. This instructional time includes activities that build metacognitive, comprehension, vocabulary, shared readings, and phonological awareness/phonics mini lessons.

In Warren County, all elementary schools have a minimum of 120-minute literacy block, with a 60-minute focus on foundational skills. The block includes Heggerty's Phonological Awareness lesson in PreK-2 before moving into the curriculum. The foundational skills are then integrated within a knowledge-building portion of the curriculum. The foundational block of time begins with a shared reading. During shared reading, the teacher reads the story/rhyme aloud to the students then the students read with the teacher focusing on fluency. In addition, vocabulary is discussed, grammar (ex. Punctuation), emphasizing previously taught phonics skills (circle short i words in the reading), and a short writing (ex. My favorite character from the story is...). The next component in the block is the phonological awareness/phonics mini lessons. The teacher begins with phonological awareness using the sound that will be taught in the phonics lesson. The teacher then explicitly teaches the sound, the students practice by orally blending and segmenting the sound, the teacher models how to write the sound (or dictate a sentence in grades 1-2), then students apply the skill in their decodable reader. Activities in small groups are designed to reteach/reinforce the foundational lessons. The phonics lessons are followed by the first reading of the grade level text. The teacher models the reading and models metacognitive strategies and focuses on vocabulary and fluency which are essential for comprehension. Benchmark Advance incorporates teaching foundational skills through explicit and systematic phonics instruction that will build for a successful transfer.

The scope and sequence is researched-based and purposeful that includes a spiral review with repetition cycle, frequent application to real reading and writing experiences, and built in

differentiation for efficient use of instructional time. K-1 focuses on building the foundation skills and grade 2 begins the transition of multisyllabic words. For example, one example of a phonological awareness/phonics lesson in the first-grade curriculum states the students will know how to decode consonant digraphs (th, sh, ng, ch, tch, wh, inflectional ending -ing and -es), consonant blends, and short vowels. Students will work with phoneme identification, spelling-sound correspondences, blending words with digraphs and/or blends with elkonin boxes/mats, reading words with digraphs in their decodable text, and a handwriting practice page that emphasizes the new learning.

Our improvements for next year are implementing the high-quality instructional materials the district adopted to focus on implementing research-based instruction and supporting teachers in this transition. Focus will be on the delivery of explicit instruction and integrating the instruction into authentic practice through unit planning. With this in mind, we will focus on unit and lesson planning in a collaborative environment with district ELA coaches.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Our district has an integrated literacy block for grades three through five grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. The district adopted Benchmark Advance for grades 3-5. The curriculum materials are selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundations foundational skills within daily lessons, our students receive a total of 90 minutes third through fifth grade of ELA instruction. All daily instruction includes components for knowledge-building for about 60 minutes each day (text sets focus on one concept in each 3-week unit to build knowledge and vocabulary) and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing for at least 30 minutes per day. The foundational component in grades 3-5 focus on building word curiosity and increased talk about words that leads to active and improved word learning, frequent and strong application to authentic reading, and tools to tackle increasingly new and complex words while reading. Third grade will continue with multisyllabic words and syllable types from second grade. Third grade will focus on syllable types and morphology. Fifth grade will take it deeper to focus on morphology with Greek and Latin roots. The adopted curriculum also engages students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection. For example, our fourth-grade students completed a unit on Government in Action. The unit integrates modal auxiliaries, form and use the progressive tense, commas and quotations in direct quotes, open syllables, vowel teams, vowel-r syllable patterns with the knowledge of government and citizenship roles from towns, state, and federal level. The integration of the foundational skills will be learned while increasing the students' knowledge of government. Our improvement for next is grounded in the implementation of the high-quality materials and the integration of literacy skills and knowledge and planning in a unit concept. In addition, teachers will be provided professional development focused on foundational skills as part of the Early Literacy training provided by the state of Tennessee.

Additional Information

Our district employs four instructional coaches in the K-5 grade bands. These coaches work with their designated schools to help school leaders and teachers implement and understand the instructional shifts in ELA. We have been working on unit and lesson prep over the past several years. This past year we started our work in Student Work Analysis (SWA). This process has been very eye opening for our teachers. Our schools and coaches will continue to work with our CORE ELA consultant in all our schools but a specific focus on our designated schools. In addition, we will be continuing our partnership with NIET. Our NIET consultant works great with our district coaches, our CORE ELA consultant, our school leaders, and our teachers. Our work this year in our district will continue to focus on prepping with teachers, conducting walkthroughs, SWA, and reflective conversation. We are trying to move into more of the continuous improvement cycle format. We have met with all our district leaders, instructional coaches, school leaders, vendors, and CORE support to make sure we are speaking the same language when we work with our school leaders and teachers.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance

Supplemental Instructional Materials

We have added Heggerty's Phonological Awareness to our PreK-2 Foundational Skills Instruction.

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) K-5

Intervention Structure and Supports

For grades K-5, Warren County Schools students are given a universal screener (aimswebPlus), three times a year, to determine which students have a significant deficiency or are at risk. Warren County School grade-level teachers, principals, interventionists, and school psychologists review the data to determine which students score in the 0-40th percentile range. Those students identified as having a need are classified as Tier II or Tier III. Students identified as Tier II or Tier III are given Survey Level Assessments (SLA's) using AIMSWEB Plus to determine the specific skill deficits and appropriate progress monitoring levels.

Students are then assigned to a small group with an intervention that will narrow skill gaps. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for 30-45 min (depending on their Tier level, 30 for Tier II and 45 for Tier III) in their greatest deficit. Warren County Schools uses researched based options for reading intervention support for students who are at risk and/or have been identified with a significant reading deficit. We utilize Lexia for our students with reading deficits in both Tier II and Tier III. The curriculum within the program contains remediation guides and assessments in

which teachers can find activities that directionally address skill gaps. Lexia can be tailored to the needs of each RTI group of students. If that intervention is not proving to be effective, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as SPIRE) become an option.

Data teams meet every 4 1/2 weeks to determine if a change in intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, engagement) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or the provider.

Our students receive daily, explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students, along with students new to the district, are also screened using the PASS and PWRS to determine if they exhibit characteristics of Dyslexia. Students who do demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Dyslexia Law using programs that meet the law's requirements. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified that Lexia curriculum is used to support those students, as it is based on an approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and is considered strong support for those students. *In the representative schedules, RTI is represented as WIN time or Tier Time.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Warren County Schools notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child is at-risk for or has a significant reading deficiency immediately after the fall screener is completed by the district. Student's scores are communicated in parent friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and the extent of the student needs. A letter is sent home to the parents to inform them of the tier the student will be placed in, the frequency of the intervention, the duration of the intervention, and the intervention type. Parents are informed monthly of the student's progress in RTI² by a copy of the student intervention plan which shows progress monitoring level as well as progress. Parents are also given a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of the 3rd grade and information on the pathway to 4th grade. We also offer no-cost activities for families to do at home to support literacy. These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times annually and are shared in grades 4 and 5 annually. Additionally, the ELA curriculum contains parent letters in grades K-5 that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the coming week that will inform and equip parents to work with the child. Families can better understand how to support their student(s) through questions about their texts and through an awareness of what foundational skills their children are learning.

Professional Development Plan

Teachers in our district will participate in the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education.

Our plan for providing PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

- June – All teachers who have not completed this training in grades Pre-K through 5 will engage in Week 1 of the Early Reading Training series, asynchronously. This training will

focus on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. We will ensure that our educators earn a completion certificate.

- July – Our district has recommended Course 2 of the Early Reading Training for all teachers in grades Pre-K through 5 who have not already completed this course. The participating teachers also include interventionists, special education teachers, and elementary instructional coaches. This training emphasizes practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. This course will be completed asynchronously.
- In July, our district coaches will offer a PD for our K-5 teachers that will give an overview of the curriculum (if there are new teachers) and continue our work in unit and lesson prepping and SWA. We will also focus on acceleration vs. remediation in coordination with our tutoring program.
- During our school PD days, the coaches will spend time at their respective schools continuing to dig into the curriculum and growing our teachers in understanding the instructional shifts and putting them into practice. We have seen some improvement in this area especially when we can work with teachers in small groups and complete a cycle of learning. We will also be working with teachers to understand the connection between tutoring and the tier 1 classroom. We will be leveraging Acceleration vs. Remediation.
- We are continuing our partnership with NIET for the 2024-2025 school year to provide coaching and support to our district and school level coaches and leaders.