

Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: June 1, 2021

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 a foundational skills curriculum grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission and/or approved charter. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (90 minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. This instructional time includes activities that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary work (“word work”). During that instruction, teachers explicitly teach a sound, the students practice the sound aloud (learning how to produce pure sound), the teacher models writing the sound, the students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, then students apply the skill in independent practice (small group or individual).

The first 45 minute rotation consists of a small group of learners (8 or less); with a teacher utilizing an evidence-based Direct Instruction program, and comprehensive K-5 ELA curriculum that has been shown to improve reading performance for a wide range of students, including special education populations. Our schools use Reading Mastery to systematically teach key foundational literacy skills and how to read, comprehend, and write narrative and informational text of increasing complexity—while building oral language fluency skills. We have found the systemic, direct instruction approach has helped us achieve phenomenal growth in grades K-2. Reading Mastery supports teachers in motivating learning, transforming teaching with greater efficiency, and achieves substantial results for our children.

The second rotation lasts 45 additional minutes. During this time students are engaged in Read Aloud and Reading Comprehension lessons. We have found that as students increase in their abilities to automatically recognize words through robust phonics instruction, they also increase in the amounts of mental energy they can devote to understanding complex ideas and vocabulary. Kindergarteners learn the alphabetic principle and print concepts as their teachers model reading and writing through daily Read Aloud and Shared Reading lessons.

We supplement our phonics and reading comprehension blocks with explicit phonemic awareness lessons with Heggerty’s curriculum. The kindergarten curriculum, for example covers all consonants, short vowels, digraphs, blends, and rime patterns, with long vowel words being introduced in the

later weeks of this curriculum. By comparison, the yellow book also goes further into long vowels and introduces R-controlled vowels, special vowel sounds, and multisyllabic words.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Our district has an integrated literacy block for grades three (3) through five (5) grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Our curriculum materials are rigorous, high quality instructional materials that have led to growth year over year.. During the integrated ELA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons, our students receive a total of 90 minutes of ELA instruction.

Of the 90 minute instructional block, our students spend approximately 60 minutes per day with foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing. Our adopted curriculum also engages students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Approved waiver for other materials

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Approved waiver for other materials

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

Our district will continue to refine our current instructional materials as outlined and approved through our existing charter; however, we have chosen to supplement in several ways. Our district will begin the process of integrating Heggertys (our current phonemic awareness program) with the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement to further address foundational skills in daily instruction for students who are most at risk. We will begin to use the daily sounds-first activities as our daily warm up in all elementary schools across the district. Students also have an extra set of “at-home” decodables. We have encouraged and assisted our families to order the “at-home decodables” through the state’s free ordering website. The at-home decodables allow our students another round of practice with their families. The at-home decodables provide our families with the sounds-supports to connect school and home practice, which adds additional reinforcement to daily lessons.

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

We currently use Easy CBM as a universal screener. We will also consider the Tennessee Universal Screener once it becomes available.

Intervention Structure and Supports

In the fall, FPA students are given a universal screener (Easy CBM) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are “at-risk”. Our grade-level teachers, RTI Leads, Deans of Academics, and principals review universal screener data to determine which students score

between the 0-25th percentile. Those students demonstrating need are classified as in need of Tier II or Tier III instruction. Students classified as Tier II or Tier III are given a diagnostic assessment to determine specific deficits in order to best assign students to a small group with an intervention that will narrow skill gaps. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 45 minutes in their area of greatest deficit.

At Freedom Prep, we have research-based options for reading intervention support available to our students who are “at-risk” and/or who have been identified with a significant reading deficiency. Our recently adopted ELA computer based learning program (iReady) contains an assessment and remediation guide in which teachers can find activities that directly address skill gaps. Teachers can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students. If that intervention is not proving to be effective, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as Wilson Phonics and/or Reading Mastery) become an option. Data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change in the 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 provider. Our students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies.

Freedom Prep uses a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified of their child’s involvement in Wilson Phonics, an Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and informed of how the program is considered a strong support for students with dyslexia. Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that make them stronger in that skill. For example, students who need instruction in comprehension may read a new text and answer scaffolded questions, all related to the knowledge-building unit they are studying in Tier I instruction. For students who need decoding support, they may receive intervention using the Reading Mastery or Wilson Phonics.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Our district notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child is “at-risk” for or has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-25th percentile) immediately after the district’s schools complete the fall universal screening. Students’ scores are communicated in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. The parents are told what intervention their student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive services. This is coupled with a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade. The district defines how students are assessed and what a “significant reading deficiency” means. Parents are subsequently notified of their child’s progress, or lack of progress, after the 4 ½ week data team meetings. In the parent notifications/communication, data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data as well as recommended activities (that do not require purchased resources) that will support students in the area of deficit (activities are not tailored by child, but tailored by skill deficit generally). 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 the younger grades 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 child(ren) are learning

Professional Development Plan

Teachers at Freedom Prep 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 2021 – All teachers of grades in grades Pre-K through five will engage in Week 1 of the Early Literacy 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 participating educators earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 work in June.

July/August 2021 – Our district has registered for the cohort-based, in-person training offered as Week 2 of the Early Literacy Training series for all teachers in grade Pre-K through second. The participating teachers will also include interventionists, special education teachers and elementary instructional coaches. This week will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

We plan to include grade three through five during the summer of June 2022.