

**Gibson County Special Schools**  
**Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 18, 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 Benchmark Advance, 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. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (60 minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. Gibson County Special School District elementary schools have literacy blocks that range from 120 to 150 minutes daily in grades K-2 with the 60 minute daily designated block for foundational skills instruction. The foundational skills instruction contains activities and practices that teach the following foundational skills: phonemic awareness (sounds first), phonological awareness (recognize rhyming words, blend and segment phonemes, count phonemes, segment compound words, and isolate individual phonemes), and phonics (identify individual letter sounds, decode regular word, decode words with common rime families, identify sounds for letter combinations, decode one-syllable words with letter combinations, identify common spellings for long and short vowel sounds, know and apply final -e conventions, read words with -r controlled vowels, read words with -l controlled vowels, read words with inflected endings, read words with prefixes and suffixes, read two- syllable words with various syllable types, read multi-syllabic words, and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in text).

Fluency, vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension activities and strategies are included in the Benchmark Advance curriculum as "mini" lessons. Applying grade level phonics to increase reading accuracy and automaticity is a strong component of Benchmark Advance. Benchmark Advance includes explicit reading comprehension instruction making inferences and explaining their thinking behind inferences, determining central ideas and key details of text, analyzing text, interpreting language, understanding point of view, and building knowledge from content rich nonfiction.

The Benchmark Advance curriculum has a purposeful scope and sequence with a spiral review and a repetition cycle. The Benchmark Advanced literacy solution is based on the complex text building knowledge, the foundational skills building for successful transfer, and the responsive teacher teaching to reach each learner.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in building district-wide grade level collaborative opportunities where teachers can perfect their craft by solving common problems. Using available data to guide and inform the collaboration, teachers will design and implement action plans. Results of the implementations backed by classroom data will be analyzed at the next collaboration to help refine their plans.

### **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 aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. The district adopted Benchmark Advance for grades three through five which is from the curriculum materials approved by the Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons, our students receive a total of 120 to 150 minutes in third grade, 120 to 150 minutes in fourth grade, and 100 minutes in fifth grade. Although the daily schedule is not the same every day, all daily instruction includes at least 30 minutes of foundational skills instruction that incorporates fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing. All daily instruction also includes components of knowledge-building for about 60 minutes per day. Benchmark Advance engages students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary skills are not taught in isolation, but are integrated within each lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection.

For example, our third grade curriculum includes a unit on animal adaptations. The unit integrates the skills of main idea key details, vocabulary skills of using context clues, writing skills, and grammar with the scientific knowledge of how living things survive in their environment. Students develop fluency in the foundational skills of short vowels and long vowels a, o, u (pattern CVCe), the grammar skills of regular nouns and verbs, subject/verb agreement, forming simple sentences, and speaking and listening skills.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in building district-wide grade level collaborative opportunities where teachers can perfect their craft by solving common problems. Using available data to guide and inform the collaboration, teachers will design and implement action plans. Results of the implementations backed by classroom data will be analyzed at the next collaboration to help refine their plans.

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2**

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5**

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

### **Additional Information about Instructional Materials**

Our district adopted an approved curriculum for ELA instruction; however, we have chosen to supplement in K-2. We use Heggerty Phonemic Awareness and the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum to further address foundational skills in daily instruction. These supplements allow us to focus more deeply on phonological awareness and advanced phonemic awareness skills that are

crucial all the way through second grade. We use the daily sounds-first activities as daily warm up in all elementary schools across our district.

**Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements.**

AIMSWEB

Written Expression Universal Screener

**Intervention Structure and Supports**

Gibson County Special School District provides reading intervention for students who are identified as at risk based on universal screening data as well as classroom performance. GCSSD administers AIMSWEB three times a year (fall, winter, and spring) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are "at risk". The RTI data team consisting of the principal, ELA teacher, RTI coordinator, and interventionist review universal screening data to determine which students score between the 0 and 25th percentile. TCAP results, CASE results, and classroom performance are also considered. During RTI Data Team Meetings, students are placed in appropriate instructional or intervention groups. Students placed in Tier II receive an additional 30 minutes of focused instruction and are progress monitored weekly. Tier III students receive an additional 45 minutes of focused instruction and are also progress monitored weekly.

Intervention is focused on specific deficit skills as determined by our diagnostic screeners: Phonological Awareness Skills Screener and Phonics and Word Reading Survey. Our district utilizes a variety of tools from our approved resource list (see below) to provide students the specific intervention needed. RTI Data Team Meeting are conducted every 4.5 weeks to evaluate student progress and either continue the intervention, change the intervention, or change the Tier placement.

We have research-based options for reading intervention support available to our students for Tier I, Tier II, Tier III instruction. Ours recently adopted ELA curriculum contains an assessment and remediation guide in which teachers can find activities which directly address skill gaps. The resources below are used in Tier I, II, and III to meet the needs of students as determined by their data.

Florida Center for Reading Research

Reading A-Z

Sound Symbol Recognition

Phonemic Awareness book

Kindergarten Binder

West Virginia Phonics

SRA Kits

Reading A-Z



Florida Center for Reading Research

Decoding Skills 95% Group Blending

95% Group Multisyllable Routine

West Virginia Phonics

My Sidewalks

SRA Kits

Rewards

Florida Center for Reading Research

Reading A-Z

West Virginia Phonics

Encoding Skills 95% Group Blending

95% Group Multisyllable Routine

My Sidewalks

Rewards

SRA Kits

West Virginia Phonics

FluencyAlphabet cards

Sight words cards

Phrase cards

Sentence Cards

Florida Center for Reading Research

My Sidewalks

Rewards

SRA Kits

Be a Better Reader

Reading A-Z

West Virginia Phonics

Comprehension

My Sidewalks

Rewards

SRA Kits

Be a Better Reader

Reading A-Z

Rapid Naming

Rapid Naming Generator

SPIRE

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

The Gibson County Special School District notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child is "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by the student scoring in the 0-25th percentile) immediately after district schools complete the fall universal screening. Student 's scores are communicated in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student's skill gaps and the depth and extent of student's need. 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 first 4 1/2 week data team meetings. In the parent notification/communication, data teams note the interventionist(s) and changes to be made if the child is not showing significant progress as evidenced by the 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, Benchmark Advance, our ELA curriculum, contains parent letters in the younger grades that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the coming unit that will inform and equip parents to work with their child(ren). (It is available in multiple languages.) 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**

K - 5 teachers in our district plus Sped and ESL teachers will participate in the free optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training Series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education.

April/May/June 2021 - teachers of grade PreK - 5, Sped, ESL 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 phonics-based approach. We will ensure that participating educators earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 work.

Week of July 19, 2021- Our district has registered for the Cohort-based, in-person training offered as Week 2 of the Early Training series for teachers of grades PreK - 5, Sped, ESL. The participating teachers will also include interventionists and elementary instructional coaches. This week will emphasize practical classroom experience of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

A series of collaboration opportunities for teachers attending the Reading 360 foundational literacy course to extend their learning as they implement foundational skills will be available in September with future meetings to be determined. During the GCSSD district-wide professional development days, we will have break out sessions for teachers in K-5 on foundational literacy, our Foundational Literacy Plan, and our ELA curriculum best practices.

In conjunction with the Early Literacy Training Series and the other opportunities described above, PreK-5 teachers will also receive literacy professional development through coaching cycles with our literacy coaches, and academic walk throughs with the IPG.