

Giles County 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

Giles County's K-2 teachers use Amplify's CKLA as their core curriculum for literacy instruction. Students in this grade-band spend 135 to 175 minutes each day immersed in literacy experiences, with a minimum of 60 minutes focused on daily explicit foundational skills development. Amplify's CKLA curriculum is built on research grounded in the science of reading and is fully aligned to the Tennessee ELA Standards as approved by the state of Tennessee Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission.

The CKLA curriculum has a two-strand design for kindergarten, first, and second grade: (1) Skills Strand and (2) Knowledge strand. Each strand has its own distinct block of literacy instruction (minimum of 60 minutes of skills and 60 minutes of knowledge). During the daily Skills strand, foundational skills are the primary focus of instruction and are taught in an explicit, systematic, comprehensive, sounds-first approach that builds over time. Daily explicit foundational skills instruction and student practice activities center around phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, spelling, grammar, handwriting, the writing process, vocabulary, and comprehension. This instruction is accompanied by 100% decodable readers that contain only the sound-spelling patterns and sight words students have been taught to date. Students interact with these phonetically controlled, decodable texts in order to build decoding and word-level automaticity. In order to ensure automaticity and fluency, the Skills strand of CKLA supports children's acquisition of the written code of English (including spelling patterns, grammatical rules, and conventions) through daily explicit and systematic instruction, practice, and application of those skills in meaningful activities, with built-in remediation supports.

A paper published by the Core Knowledge Foundation titled, "CKLA Curriculum: Links to Research on Teaching and Learning" states that, "Research consistently demonstrates that explicit phonics instruction has important, lasting benefits to children's reading accuracy, and this is one of the most emphasized aspects of phonics instruction for children struggling to learn reading. CKLA's systematic phonics component, the Skills strand, embodies many dimensions of systematic instruction by: 1) explicitly teaching the 150 spellings for the 44 sounds of English in an intentionally sequenced progression from Kindergarten through Grade 2 (progressing from the most common, least ambiguous spellings in Kindergarten to the least frequent, most confusing sound spellings in Grade 2), 2) including a variety of features designed to minimize confusion and maximize practice

and application of each sound spelling (consistent with research that such an approach leads to significant benefits in efficiency and accuracy within children’s learning), and 3) emphasizing the use of systematic, mastery-oriented practice.”

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the continuation of designated time for teachers to collaborate around unit and lesson preparation protocols so that they can make the necessary shifts from planning (gathering resources) to preparation (internalizing the major unit and lesson goals for foundational skills.) We also want to continue to immerse our teachers in job-embedded professional development grounded in cognitive science, the science of reading, a sounds-first approach to foundational literacy, print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and the TN Academic Standards for ELA.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Giles County’s third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers use Amplify’s CKLA as their core curriculum for literacy instruction. Students in this grade-band spend 90 to 120 minutes each day immersed in literacy experiences. Amplify’s CKLA curriculum is built on research grounded in the science of reading and is fully aligned to the Tennessee ELA Standards as approved by the state of Tennessee Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission.

The CKLA curriculum is built around an integrated literacy design for grades 3-5 (integrating a Skills Strand and a Knowledge strand, an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons). This integrated literacy block meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons. In third grade, the curriculum continues to develop the grammar, spelling, and morphology skills that were the foundation of the K-2 Skills strand; however, the content of the Knowledge strand begins to integrate into the Skills strand in more systematic ways, and the focus of the Skills strand shifts from decoding to building language through grammar, spelling, and writing. Third grade continues to finish out the language code that is considered foundational. There also continues to be daily read-alouds, but students are responsible for reading independently about the topics introduced during those read-alouds. This serves as a bridge toward the curriculum design in fourth and fifth grade. In grades 4-5, instruction moves away from the two-strand model toward a single, integrated literacy block. The focus shifts to fluent reading for meaning-making with an instructional emphasis on increasing efficiency and skill in the integration of word-level and text-level skills (as research shows are characteristics of proficient readers). While the overall schedule is not the same each day, all daily instruction includes components for knowledge-building (to build and improve the ability to comprehend complex texts and apply that knowledge as students listen, read, write, think, and speak about texts) for around 60 minutes and foundational skills instruction (which includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing) for at least 30 minutes each day. Students are provided with daily opportunities to practice and refine code as well as build knowledge. Amplify CKLA engages students in grades 3-5 in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The skills necessary for these major components of reading are not taught in isolation; they are embedded within each lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion and connection. Teachers have sidebar supports, as well as fluency and decoding and encoding remediation guides, to assist students who may struggle with foundational skills or need additional assistance and support.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the continuation of designated time for third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers to collaborate around unit and lesson preparation protocols so that they can make the necessary shifts from planning (gathering resources) to preparation (internalizing the major unit and lesson goals). We also want to continue to immerse our teachers in job-embedded professional development grounded in the integration of foundational skills and knowledge-building (integrated literacy instruction) and the TN Academic Standards for ELA.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

To further support students' foundational literacy skills acquisition, Giles County's PreK-2 teachers also utilize the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement to address foundational skills in daily learning opportunities. As stated on TDOE's Foundational Skills website, "this supplemental resource follows evidenced-based research and was carefully crafted in order to build a solid foundation for Pre-K through grade two early literacy. This supplement uses a systematic and explicit approach to instruction so that all students can gain the foundational skills necessary to become proficient readers." Our teachers use the sounds-first activities during their morning meetings as daily foundational skills warm-ups. All PreK-2 teachers participated in the seven-module course from Student Achievement Partners prior to the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year in order to increase their understanding of how to effectively implement the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement and increase their knowledge of how phonological awareness and phonics connect to early reading. Through this learning experience, our teachers learned the key components of foundational skills, were trained in the "science of reading", gained knowledge on phonological and phonemic awareness, distinguished between strong and weak student practice opportunities, gained understanding of why assessment is critical, and learned how to support this work through high-quality instructional materials.

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

AimswebPlus and the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener

Intervention Structure and Supports

Giles County's RTI² district screening process is used to identify students who are "at-risk" for or have a significant reading deficiency and provide them with continuous support. In the fall, winter, and spring all students are administered a universal screener (aimswebPlus and the TN Universal Reading Screener) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are "at-risk" for having one and measure skills relevant for identifying characteristics of dyslexia. These areas include phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, sound/symbol recognition, decoding skills, encoding skills, and rapid naming.

Grade-level RTI teams (consisting of teachers, school administrators, and RTI coordinators) review universal screener data following each administration of the assessment. Students who score between the 0-25th percentile for early literacy (grades K-1) and reading (grades 2-12) are identified as having deficits in specific skills areas of reading and are considered “at-risk”. Students who fall between the 10th-25th percentile on the universal screener receive explicit, systematic, targeted, high-quality interventions through Tier II for 30 minutes each day. Students showing significant deficits in specific areas of reading who fall below the 10th percentile on the universal screener receive extended, intensive, explicit, systematic, targeted, high-quality interventions through Tier III for 45 minutes each day. A student identified as being unable to read on grade level is provided with daily tiered intervention that is research-based, multisensory, systematic, sequential, cumulative, and explicit. Intensity of the interventions can be increased through length, frequency, and duration of implementation. Students who score at or below the 25th percentile in basic reading, reading fluency or written expression, are further assessed using survey-level/diagnostic assessments to drill down to determine specific deficits and inform intervention needs. Specific deficits are identified that may be markers/characteristics of dyslexia. Students are assigned to small groups (that meet daily during their grade-level specified RTI time) with an intervention that will narrow skill gaps in their area of greatest deficit. Tier II students are progress monitored bi-weekly, and Tier III students are progress monitored weekly.

School-based RTI teams monitor student progress every 4.5 weeks to examine student achievement and gauge the effectiveness of the intervention. Decisions are made regarding students’ instructional needs based on multiple data points taken in context over time. The RTI teams determine if a change in intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. Other variables (including student attendance, student engagement, and fidelity checks) are also analyzed as a part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming, provider, duration, or intensity and nature of interventions. Families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia receive written communication of the specific area(s) in reading their child is having difficulty in, as well as receive information about the specific intervention that will be provided daily and ideas for at-home supports.

Other district supports provided by the district for students who struggle with reading include before and after school tutoring, LEAPS afterschool programs, and summer learning camps.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Giles County notifies parents of students in grades K-5 if their child is “at-risk” for or has been identified as having a significant deficiency in reading (as evidenced by those students scoring between the 0-25th percentile in reading on the aimswebPlus universal screener). Families receive written communication immediately following the completion of the district’s fall universal screening (also following the winter and spring screening as needed for children who fall below the 25th percentile who had not previously done so.) Student scores are communicated in parent-friendly language to provides a clear explanation of skill gaps and specific area(s) of reading their child is having difficulty in (phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, sound/symbol recognition, decoding skills, encoding skills, and/or rapid naming). The depth and extent of student needs are detailed along with details on the specific intervention that will be

provided daily, including the amount of time for services and the name/description of the specific program that will be utilized. This is accompanied with a description of the district's goal and importance of students being able to read proficiently by the end of third grade and a list of ideas/activities for at-home reading intervention support.

The district explains the process of how and why students are assessed for reading proficiency and defines what is meant by being "at-risk" of having a "significant deficiency in reading." Families are updated of student progress after every 4.5 week RTI data meeting is held with school-level stakeholders. Through parent written notification and/or in-person communication, RTI data teams make detailed notes of any changes that are being made to the intervention, programming, provider, or the intensity and nature of the intervention if the student is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by universal screening/progress monitoring data. The team also discusses/shares ideas for recommended in-home support activities (those that do not require any purchased resources) with the child's family. These support activities are specifically tailored to the child's area of reading skill deficit. Family communication occurs a minimum of three times annually for all students in grades K-5 (after each universal screener benchmark period). For students who are identified as "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency, family communication occurs a minimum of six times annually (after each universal screener benchmark period and 4.5 week RTI data team meeting).

Additionally, our adopted ELA curriculum contains family letters that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for each week of learning. Teachers send these communication letters weekly to continuously inform families of learning goals and targets for literacy. These letters provide family members with at-home ideas for working with their child outside of school to support the targeted skills and knowledge goals. This communication provides families with opportunities to better understand how to support their child(ren) through specific questions and activities (that do not require any purchased material) about their texts and through an awareness of what foundational skills their child(ren) are learning.

Professional Development Plan

Teachers in our district have/will continue to participate in professional development that deepens their understanding of foundational skills instruction and is grounded in the science of reading research through the following plan:

July 2020 - All PreK-2 teachers, RTI coordinators, Title teachers, ESL teachers, and general education assistants completed the seven-module course from Student Achievement Partners on the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement. Participants learned how phonological awareness and phonics connect to early reading, the key components of foundational skills, the "science of reading", gained knowledge on phonological and phonemic awareness, distinguished between strong/weak student practice opportunities, gained understanding of why assessment is critical, and learned how to support this work through HQIM.

May 2021 - All K-2 teachers, 3-5 ELA teachers, and K-5 general education assistants, reading interventionists, RTI coordinators, ESL teachers, special education teachers and assistants will participate asynchronously in week 1 of the TDOE's Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series. This

training will focus on foundational reading development/instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. Participants must earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 work.

July 2021 - Our district will host the cohort-based, in-person week 2 training of this series. Teachers from K-5, ESL, special education, and interventionists will learn practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

August 2021 - Pre-K teachers/assistants, 3-5 math/science/social studies teachers, and new K-5 teachers will engage in the Reading 360 Early Literacy Series.