

## **Lenoir City Schools**

### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 21, 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 (EL Language Arts) that is 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.

The 60-minute Skills Block is divided into two major chunks:

15–20 minutes: Whole group instruction

40–45 minutes: Differentiated small group instruction (including independent work time)

During whole group instruction (15-20 minutes), our teacher explicitly and systematically model and facilitate group practice with new phonological/ phonemic awareness, phonics and word recognition, decoding and encoding, and fluency skills. During this time students engage in familiar instructional routines that are used consistently over one or more modules that addresses grade-level standards, ensuring that all students have access to grade-level instruction as a whole group.

During differentiated small group instruction (12-15 minutes per group), teachers work with a group of students to teach new material, reteach, or extend based on students' needs. The teacher meets with approximately three groups per day. Students reading below grade level meet with the teacher every day. Students reading at or above grade level meet with the teacher one or two times per week.

Each day, students who are not working with the teacher engage in purposeful independent rotations. Students engage in a combination of the following each day:

**Accountable Independent Reading:** This is a time for students to choose from a variety of texts based on interest and/or reading goals. Teachers can use this time, possibly during a rotation or between rotations, to observe and/or confer with students about their reading proficiency goals and to monitor fluency and comprehension.

**Word Work:** This is a time for students to analyze words and word parts.

**Writing Practice:** This builds students' ease with the skills and habits needed to generate ideas on paper—everything from letter formation to spacing to knowing how to begin a sentence and continue a thought.

**Reading Fluency:** Fluency involves lots of rereading. Teachers use a variety of familiar texts from the Skills Block or from existing classroom libraries for fluency work. Teachers give students texts that are familiar and/or easily decodable for a given phase.

Our approach is based on the research of Dr. Linnea Ehri, one of the nation's foremost experts on how the brain maps sounds and letters. It is consistent with the research supporting a sounds-first approach to foundational skills, including directly teaching phonemic awareness skills, directly teaching the spelling-sound patterns of English in a clear sequence so that students move systematically through the phases of reading and spelling development, and using texts that reflect the spelling-sound patterns and high-frequency words that have already been taught (decodable texts).

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

Our district has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Our curriculum materials (EL Language Arts) 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 foundational skills within daily lessons, our students receive a total of 120 minutes of ELA instruction, with at least 60 minutes devoted to foundational literacy instruction.

The 120-minute block is divided into two chunks:

60 minutes: Module Lessons

60 minutes: Additional Language and Literacy (ALL) Block

During Module Lessons students, instruction includes components for knowledge-building (to build and improve the ability to comprehend complex texts and apply that knowledge as they listen, read, write, think, and speak) and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, and spelling. The fluency, vocabulary, and morphology skills are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection. Some examples of the foundational skills instruction embedded in the Module Lessons include: Teachers provide explicit vocabulary instruction in almost every K-5 lesson (e.g., unpacking academic vocabulary in a learning target, focusing on vocabulary words in text); students learn to analyze the morphology of words; students are exposed to and analyze complex sentence structures in written and spoken language; students engage in frequent Language Dives about the meaning and purpose of a compelling sentence from a complex text followed by practice using the language structures; students practice reading text fluently, receive peer or teacher critique, and then perform or record that text for a broader audience.

During the ALL Block, students engage in more practice and reinforcement of the learning in module lessons. This is where time is dedicated to achieving mastery of foundational literacy skills. There are

five components of the ALL Block. Each day in the 3-5 ALL Block, students rotate through three of the five components:

Accountable Independent Reading/ Volume of Reading: Content-related reading and free choice reading

Additional Work with Complex Text: Rereading complex text from the module with a specific focus

Reading and Speaking Fluency/ Grammar, Usage & Mechanics: Practice with oral reading, speaking with expression, and grammar rules

Writing Practice: Writing fluency practice; quick-writes; additional practice with specific skills

Word Study/ Vocabulary: Structural analysis of specific words; vocabulary work from module content

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

LearnZillion - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

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

LearnZillion - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

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

Our district has adopted an approved curriculum for ELA instruction; however, we have chosen to supplement in several ways. Our district will use the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement to further address foundational skills in daily instruction. This supplement allows us to focus more deeply on the phonological awareness and advanced phonemic awareness skills that are crucial for success all the way through second grade. We will use the daily sounds-first activities as our daily warm up in grades K-2. Teachers also have access to additional decodable texts in our LCES book room including texts from Phonics Plus and Flyleaf Publishing as well as digital access to CKLA digital decodable text. These texts are used at school for additional practice and during independent reading and fluency practice, which provides additional reinforcement to daily lessons.

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

Our district uses iReady Reading Diagnostic as a universal screener in grades 1-5. Aimsweb is used as the universal screener for Kindergarten and any student in grades 1-3 who score below the 25 percentile on the iReady diagnostic are also screened using the Aimsweb benchmark.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

In the fall, students are given a universal screener (iReady) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are "at-risk". Our grade-level teachers, RTI coordinator, and school administration review universal screener data to determine which students score between the 0-25th percentile. Classroom assessment data and teacher input is considered and those students are also benchmarked using AIMSWEB in order to determine if a student should be classified as Tier II or Tier III. IReady and AIMSWEB diagnostic data, survey level assessment data, and classroom diagnostic data is analyzed 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 30 minutes in their area of greatest deficit. For students in Tier II, teachers use EL Education benchmark assessment data to identify deficits and match students to appropriate activities and instruction from the EL Education differentiation packs that directly address skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students and may include other supplemental research-based resources such as Heggerty phonemic awareness. 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 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.

AIMSWEB screening data is used to determine if a student shows characteristics of dyslexia. Students who do demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs that meet the law's requirements. Our district uses the research-based supplemental program SPIRE as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia, as well as Tier III students. This intervention is provided or directly supervised by the RTI coordinator, a certified specialist. The specialist may also supplement with additional research-based resources to further address specific skills. Students receive Tier III intervention for 45 minutes daily and in smaller groups than Tier II. Data teams meet every 4 1/2 weeks to determine if a change is warranted. Students who do not make progress in Tier III intervention may be referred for a special education evaluation.

### **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. The parents are told what intervention their student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive services. Parents are subsequently notified of their child's progress, or lack of progress, after the 4 1/2 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 will support students. The entire process described in the original response is repeated three times per year for grades K-5. That is after each screener is administered. School personnel communicates the importance of 3rd-grade reading proficiency within each communication (written & oral) with parents. All recommended activities are at no cost to families. The sample letter is used for our district as we just have three schools - so the language for grades K-5 is the same and consistent.

### **Professional Development Plan**

K-2 Teachers were oriented to the EL Education Skills Block curriculum including foundational skill training and specific program implementation over the first two years of implementation.

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

In addition to this, we have partnered with TNTP to engage our teachers in bridge course that will help participants contextualize Course Two learning in the context of Lenoir City's high-quality instructional materials and literacy improvement strategy and leverage the materials presented strategically.

We have also partnered with TNTP to engage our teachers in two PLC inquiry cycles (fall & spring) focused on key acceleration priorities that we identified based on analysis of classroom practice and student work data this year:

K-2 Acceleration Priorities:

Support teachers to strategically use data from curriculum-embedded assessments in the Skills Block to group students and prepare targeted and differentiated instruction and materials.

3-5 Acceleration Priorities:

Improve the literacy experience and outcomes for the large number of English Language Learners (ELLs) served in the district, by fostering authentic and productive collaboration between ELL & ELA teachers to prepare for co-teaching.

Build ELA teachers' capacity to leverage the strategic supports and scaffolds in the EL Language Arts curriculum (ALL Block) to support student success.

The PD plan for the district teachers includes grades K-5. Teachers will participate in the Early Literacy training (both synchronous and asynchronous courses) over the coming months. Monthly PLCs for grades K-2 focus on the foundational skills block and in grades 3-5 foundational skills are included in all block PLC planning. This work is supported by the district literacy coach, school leaders and supporters of instruction, and the technical support partner contracted by the district. This work supports the implementation of HQIM for systematic and explicit foundational skills instruction.

### **Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

Lenoir City Schools has enjoyed a partnership with TNTP in providing technical assistance for sustained and focused professional learning in K-5 literacy. We have also actively engaged in the LIFT network for the past 3 years which has supported our efforts in providing high quality aligned instruction to K-5 students with explicit attention to early literacy foundational skills instruction.