

Macon 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

Macon County has adopted Benchmark Advance as our HQIM for ELA. This curriculum is aligned with Tennessee ELA standards. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary source of instruction at the K-2 grade level. Each of our schools has a dedicated Literacy block for 120 minutes daily. At these grade levels, teachers have routines around phonological awareness, phonics/word study, and encoding practice along with fluency every day. There is a supplemental program used by two schools for phonological awareness in addition to the phonological practice our adopted textbook series includes. Benchmark Advance provides a wide variety of materials for teachers to use during explicit instruction as well as student practice materials. Teachers have access to several online tools within the series such as ePocket charts to assist in their explicit instruction when introducing the sounds and letter correspondences. Teachers also utilize the Frieze cards and Sound Spelling Cards in explicitly teaching students correct sounds, letter correspondences, and about syllable types when decoding and encoding words. Teachers begin lessons with a phonological component by just identifying a single phoneme. Teachers then identify the grapheme(s) associated with the sound. Teachers explicitly build words with a gradual release of students building words as well as decomposing the words. Sound as well as letter manipulation in both the phonological area and phonics side are practiced. Kindergarten students are introduced to closed syllable and open syllable single syllable words. First grade students are explicitly taught closed, open, VCe, vowel team and r controlled vowel syllable types in single syllable words moving to two syllable words as the year progresses with both decoding and encoding. Second grade covers all syllable types and moves into multisyllabic word decoding. There are many opportunities for fluency practice from explicit instruction by the teacher modeling to individual student practice with words, phrases, sentences, and stories. Vocabulary development and comprehension work are embedded into the lessons for both explicit instruction and student practice opportunities.

Some improvements our district is looking forward to for next year is an increase in our teacher knowledge of foundational literacy skills. While our instruction is mostly explicit, this is an area that our teachers do seek support and refinement on. 100% of our K-2 teachers are signed up for the TN Early Foundational Skills Reading Training for both weeks of training. Our district is also concerned that the kindergarten curriculum could need added support to ensure we are truly using a sounds first approach. Our professional development is already scheduled throughout the year to continue

to refine our teacher knowledge of literacy skills as well as provide collaborative time for unit and lesson preparation to be best prepared for the students in our classes.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Macon County has adopted Benchmark Advance as our HQIM for ELA. This curriculum is aligned with Tennessee ELA standards. Each of our schools has a dedicated Literacy block for 120 minutes daily. During this block, teachers use evidence-based approaches to teach integrated aspects of literacy. There is minimal time spent on phonological awareness but is present as determined by student need. Phonics and word study skills are explicitly taught by teachers and students are also given practice opportunities in both decoding and encoding with these skills. Then throughout the lesson phonics, word structure, grammar, and writing skills are embedded. Fluency practice is built into lessons with shared reads and small group texts as well as individual practice. Comprehension application and vocabulary acquisition are also woven throughout the knowledge-building lessons each day. From third grade through fifth grade students are engaged in complex texts daily while building content knowledge and using the foundational skills needed for reading. Writing in response to texts and using text evidence is a key component when students are building knowledge. Students are also engaged in meaningful conversations about texts with routines and structures that are modeled and facilitated by the teacher.

Some improvements our district is looking forward to for next year is an increase in our teacher knowledge of foundational literacy skills. While foundational literacy skills are integrated throughout the lessons at these grades, teachers have sought support to deepen their knowledge of foundational (phonics, morphology, etymology) skills. 85% of our 3rd-5th grade teachers are signed up for the TN Early Foundational Skills Reading Training for both weeks of training this summer. Our professional development is already scheduled throughout the year to continue to refine our teacher knowledge of literacy skills as well as provide collaborative time for unit and lesson preparation to be best prepared for the students in our classes.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

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

Macon County uses AimsWeb+ as our universal screener and progress monitoring tool. Aimsweb+ is on the state-approved list and complies with RTI² and Say Dyslexia.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Macon County has a certified teacher serving as Interventionist in each of our K-5 schools. Every classroom has a dedicated Intervention block each day for Reading Intervention. Students are screened 3 times a year by AimsWeb+. After the Fall Screening, data team meetings are held with

the Interventionist, ESL teacher, Special Education Teacher, Instructional Leader, Literacy Coach, Principal, and classroom teachers to identify at risk students and the best placement. Students are identified as at risk based on results of the AimsWeb+ screener. Typically, students falling below the 10th Percentile are identified as our most vulnerable students and these students begin receiving Tier 3 Intervention in Reading for 45 to 60 minutes with the Interventionists and assistants trained by the certified Interventionist. Students falling below the 25th Percentile receive Tier 2 Intervention with their classroom teacher for 30 minutes. Tier 3 Intervention Programs in Reading that are utilized are 95% Group, SPIRE, MSLE (multi-sensory literacy education), and Saxon Phonics with the strongest focus on their specific skill deficit(s). Tier 2 Intervention students receive skill specific support by programs such as Benchmark Advance Intervention, FCRR, Saxon Phonics, Corrective Reading, Journeys Toolkit, Sidewalks, and Reading Mastery. All Tier 3 and Tier 2 students are given both a phonological awareness (PASS) and phonics and word (PWRS) reading screener to dig deeper into deficit skills. Some Intervention programs have program specific screeners as well. Reading Intervention for both Tier 2 and Tier 3 includes explicit, systematic, and research based instruction. Progress is monitored in the skill areas in which students show deficits. After each 4 ½ weeks of instruction, data teams are held throughout the year. Data team decisions include best placements, group size, parent notification, need for additional supports, analysis of progress monitoring graphs as well as other data including quarterly standards based Benchmark tests, and overall well being of individual students within the RTI framework. Flexibility and awareness of individual student needs are key to these meetings. Parents are notified of progress and appropriate changes are made with placements and Intervention programs as needed. Per the Say Dyslexia law, students displaying characteristics of dyslexia also receive a notification. Those students receiving a letter are in Interventions that are targeting those specific skills in a multisensory, systematic, phonics based, explicit manner (such as SPIRE or MSLE). Our district also screens all kindergarten students for RAN(rapid automatized naming). We use the free download from the Department of Education in Arkansas. Students that receive Intervention displaying characteristics of dyslexia may also be rescreened on RAN as deemed necessary by the data team in other grade levels. Fidelity checks are in place at all schools in Tier 3 and Tier 2 Intervention blocks as well as for all Tier 1 instruction.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Upon initial screening in the Fall with AimsWeb+, families are notified with an initial RTI letter explaining their student's scores and placement the data team decided upon. Specific skills deficits are identified, Intervention level, and time of classes as well as data team information. Every 4 ½ weeks after data team meetings are held, parents receive progress monitoring graphs attached to letters that give information on the student's progress and plans for any changes made for the student. This letter also contains information about specific characteristics of dyslexia that are screened on AimsWeb+ and additional phonics screeners used in the district (such as PASS and PWRS). Parents receive notification every 4 ½ weeks on Intervention progress throughout the year. Parents also receive communication on their Tier 1 instruction in the form of progress reports every mid-quarter and end of every quarter as well as parent-teacher conferences built into the school calendar each semester.

Macon County will need to refine our current parent letters to be more specific for grades K-3 and 4-5 and then provide parents with clear language of the skills assessed. Currently, we use the same

letter for all grade levels and write in specific skills targeted. We will also need to add information about the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade and reading intervention activities for families as those things are not currently in our letters. Parents do receive information about the RTI framework and reading and math Interventions provided at each school in their school-specific handbooks that every child receives.

Our adopted ELA program, Benchmark Advance, does provide parent letters and skill lists with activities and games to send to families for each Unit in grades K-5 that will provide families with what students are currently learning and ideas for support.

Professional Development Plan

Macon County is requiring all K-2 teachers including Special Education, Interventionists, EL teachers, Instructional Leaders, and Literacy Coaches to attend the Reading 360 Literacy Foundational Skills Training held in Spring/Summer of 2021. We have 100% participation in grades K-2. The district encouraged our 3-5 teachers to take part in these courses as well. 85% of classroom teachers in grades 3-5 are participating with 100% of the other staff in these grade levels also participating. The remaining 15% of 3-5 classroom teachers will be completing Week One once it is open to them as well. We were fortunate enough to be able to host three cohorts of the training here in Macon County. In planning for our professional development in the coming year, we have dedicated time at each scheduled time period to revisit, refine, and review the Reading 360 Training. Teachers will also be participating in collaborations at the school level in PLCs around foundational literacy. It is our goal to improve teacher knowledge and work within our curriculum to prepare our students with the skills necessary to be successful readers.