

Marion County Schools
Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: April 27, 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 Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts, 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. Marion County elementary schools have literacy blocks that range from 120 to 180 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: phonological awareness (recognize rhyming words, blend and segment compound words, blend, segment, and count syllables, blend and segment onset-rime, blend, segment, and count phonemes, segment compound words, and isolate individual phonemes) and phonics (identify individual letter sounds, decode regular words, 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-syllable words, and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis in text).

The scope and sequence of the curriculum is based on research of effective instruction for struggling readers. The guidelines for the sequencing of skills is: teach preskills before the new skill or strategy is presented, introduce high-utility skills before less useful ones, introduce easy skills before more difficult ones, separate strategies and information likely to be confused, introduce new information at a realistic rate, and provide adequate practice and review. For example, students learn basic letter-sound correspondences for consonants and vowels and the VCe rule before they are required to decode words with the VCe pattern in them.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the transition from lesson planning to lesson internalization. The adoption of the high quality instructional material has changed how teachers prepare for instruction. Teachers are no longer having to gather resources, they are internalizing the quality material and preparing to implement it in their classroom.

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 Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts for Grade three and Open Up Resources Expeditionary Learning for grades four and five. The curriculum materials 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 to 180 minutes in third grade, 120 to 150 minutes in fourth grade, and 60 to 120 minutes in fifth grade of ELA instruction. All daily instruction includes components of knowledge-building for about 60 minutes per day and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing for at least 30 minutes per day. The 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.

For example, our 3rd graders completed the unit on Light and Sound. The unit integrates the skills of spelling, dictionary skills, grammar, and morphology with the scientific knowledge of light and sound. Students will review and learn spelling with "a_e", will become proficient in the application of guide words, will learn conjunctions as a part of speech, and learn new suffixes. The integration of the above skills will be learned while increasing the students' knowledge of light and sound.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the implementation of the high quality materials and the integration of literacy skills and knowledge. Teachers will be provided professional development focused on integrated literacy instruction.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Open Up - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

Additional Instructional Materials Information

Amplify-Core Knowledge Language Arts was adopted for K-2 as well as grade 3. Open Up-Expeditionary Learning was adopted for grades 4-5.

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

EasyCBM is our universal screener in grades K-5 for benchmarking and progress monitoring and is on the state approved list. EasyCBM complies with RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements. The screener is used to assess reading and math in the fall, winter, and spring for grades Kindergarten through 5th grade.

Intervention Structure and Supports

RTI² Reading Intervention Structure:

Marion County Schools utilizes Fountas and Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention for reading intervention in grades K-5 for students either identified at-risk for a significant reading deficiency or identified with a significant reading deficiency. Universal screening data as well as student classroom performance, TCAP results, prior intervention outcomes (if applicable), and teacher observation data is used during RTI Data Team Meetings to determine placement, intensity, and scheduling of students into Tier III, Tier II, Remediation, or Enrichment. Students who are placed in Tier III receive the most intense intervention daily for at least 45 minutes and are progress monitored weekly. Students who are placed in Tier II receive intervention daily for at least 30 minutes and are progress monitored every other week. The universal screener and diagnostic assessment will determine the specific deficit the student will be provided support and progress monitored on. Students receiving Tier II or Tier III intervention will be provided a focused intervention on Letter Naming, Letter Sounds, Phoneme Segmenting, Word Reading Fluency, Passage Reading Fluency, or Reading Comprehension. RTI Data Team Meetings will be conducted every 4.5 weeks to evaluate student progress and either continue the intervention, change the intervention, or change Tier placement.

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 district 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 first 4 ½ week data team meetings. In the parent notifications/communication, data teams note the intervention(s) and 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 their child(ren). 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 in our district 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:

April 2021 – All K-2 teachers 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.

June 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 K-2nd. The participating teachers will also include interventionists, special education teachers, and elementary instructional leaders. 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 the following grades during the summer of June 2022: PreK, 3rd, 4th, and 5th.

In conjunction with the 360 Early Literacy Training series, PreK-5th grade teachers will receive the following literacy professional development: PLCs, Coaching Cycles, focused Professional Development from district, vendor, and Instruction Partners, and Academic Walks using the IPG.