

## **Obion County Schools**

### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 22, 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 EL, which is a foundational skills curriculum grounded in the Science of Reading 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. This instructional time includes activities that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary work (“word work”). During that instruction, teachers explicitly teach a sound, the students practice the sound aloud (learning how to produce pure sound), the teacher models writing the sound, the students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, then students apply the skill in independent practice (small group or individual). In conjunction with the EL curriculum, Heggerty is also used as a supplemental tool to teach phonics.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the continued designated time for teachers to collaborate as they solve problems of practice and internalize their planning using the district’s state approved high-quality materials. In addition, teachers will be provided ongoing grade-level professional development with an emphasis on best practices in foundational skills that will build on the Early Reading Training provided by the state during the spring and summer.

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

Our district has an integrated literacy block for grades three (3) through five (5) grounded in the Science of Reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Our curriculum materials are Learn Zillion Guidebooks, which were 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 90-100 minutes of ELA instruction. Although the daily 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 they listen, read, write, think, and speak) for at least 50 minutes per day and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing for at least 40 minutes per day. Our adopted curriculum also

engages students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, which are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection.

For example, the fifth grade curriculum contains a unit on immigration. They begin the unit by activating prior knowledge and learning about the history of immigration, tenements, and how America became a melting pot. The daily lessons contain high quality, complex, informational and fictional texts that are read independently and/or aloud. After a brief review of the previous day's learning, the lesson is standards driven. Teachers may teach essential vocabulary while students unpack vocabulary that is individualized to them. Students may also summarize the content, discover themes, participate in a Socratic seminar, or write constructed responses to demonstrate their learning. As an example, in one lesson students have a "Text Talk" where they discover how the title of the book relates to a chapter. Students use "Think-Pair-Share" to synthesize vocabulary, quote from the text, explore the main idea. Students finally write a constructed paragraph where the effective use of syntax must be demonstrated. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of the learning block and is dedicated to developing students' holistic literary approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

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

LearnZillion - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

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

LearnZillion - 3-5 Guidebooks

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

Our district has adopted an approved ELA curriculum that contains foundational skills instruction for grades K-5. Grades K-2 use EL and grades 3-5 use Guidebooks, both through LearnZillion. In addition to the curriculum, our district uses Heggerty Phonemic Awareness in grades K-2 for sounds-first activities as our daily warm-up in all elementary schools.

We also plan to use the decodable readers from the state's Foundation Skills Curriculum for additional support to supplement our adopted K-2 curriculum. We will encourage our families to order the "at-home decodables" through the state's free ordering website. These decodables will provide our students with additional practice with their families and the families with the sounds-supports to connect school and home practice with additional reinforcement to daily lessons. Our district also participates in ReadyRosie and Ready4K.

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

Our district has been using Aimsweb for our universal screener. We will consider switching to the state's universal screener once it is made available.

## **Intervention Structure and Supports**

All students in grades K-8 that fall at or below the 25th percentile as indicated through our universal screener are identified as at-risk and receive reading intervention. For students that are above the 25th percentile, we also provide intervention in some situations. After evaluating information from the teacher and/or parents, if students exhibit difficulties with one or more reading skills, then they will also receive reading intervention. Students who are placed in RTI groups receive small group instruction and intervention. Our school district uses various programs based on the needs of the students. Examples of these programs include SPIRE, Barton Reading and Spelling, EL Foundation Skills, Easy CBM, and the Wilson Reading System. Our interventionists also use many reading resources available online through a variety of websites.

Our RTI program provides daily reading interventions for students identified as Tier II or Tier III. Tier II students are generally students who fall between the 10th and 25th percentiles. Our school system provides 45 minutes of RTI for students in grades K-5 with a small group ratio of 1:5. Tier III students fall at or below the 10th percentile and receive at least 45 minutes of intervention with a small group ratio of 1:3. Generally, students are progress monitored every two weeks. Based on needs, some students are monitored weekly. All interventions are systematic, research-based and target the students' identified area(s) of deficit. Students and parents are aware of their goals and kept informed of the progress that students are making. Data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. The data team looks at progress monitoring data and other variables (attendance, engagement) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or provider.

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

Upon completion of the fall universal reading screener, parents of K-5 students are notified by letter if their child is considered at-risk or has a reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-25th percentile). 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. Our initial communication (attached as an artifact) will explain the importance of being able to read by the end of third grade, provide a list of reading intervention activities that are available at no cost for families, and will list the reading interventions provided by the school. We will also provide a webpage dedicated to free reading resources for families arranged by grade level.

Parents are notified of progress at least every 4.5 weeks by letter, have the opportunity to speak directly with teachers/interventionists at two conferences during the year, and may schedule a time to discuss reading deficiencies, goals, and progress as needed. Each of our schools have data teams that meet every 4.5 weeks and discuss student progress. Student needs and/or progress can be discussed in detail by request. Communication goes out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times annually and are shared in grades 4 and 5 annually.

## **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/May 2021 – Most teachers of grades K through five, as well as interventionists, administrators, instructional coaches, and special education teachers, will asynchronously engage in Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series. 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.

May 24-28, 2021 & July 19-23, 2021 – During these weeks, our district is hosting the cohort-based, in-person training offered as Week 2 of the Early Literacy Training series for all teachers in grades K through five. The participating teachers will also include interventionists, special education teachers, and instructional coaches. 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 any teacher unable to complete the training during the summer of 2021 in a 2022 summer cohort.

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

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

Teachers will participate in half day collaborations at the end of each nine week's grading period. Teachers will share student work and instructional strategies. Teachers will also complete unit- and lesson-prep protocols for the upcoming unit.