

## RePublic Schools

### Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: June 24, 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**

N/A - RePublic Schools does not serve K-2 scholars.

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

At Nashville Prep and Liberty Collegiate Academy, 5th grade scholars spend 100 minutes in literacy class each day. Instruction includes morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, and we ensure that our instruction of foundational skills meets the needs of scholars at various grade levels. Our schools use the Achievement First curriculum, which includes foundational skills instruction as part of its instruction. The Achievement First curriculum is based on evidence-based practices in order to effectively teach foundational literacy skills. Research shows that students are able to show highest levels of academic growth when they have access to the opportunity to perform grade-level work; using the Achievement First Literacy curriculum allows us to ensure that scholars have access to rigorous work that is aligned to grade-level standards. Additionally, our curriculum promotes scholar academic growth by putting the academic lift on scholars. Our teachers focus on asking scholars questions rather than immediately providing answers, and scholars have the opportunity to participate in literary discussions and Socratic seminars that push them to grow academically. The Achievement First curriculum has strong standards alignment, is rigorous, and is aligned to our mission to prepare students for college and beyond, and the outstanding results that Achievement First scholars have achieved provide a demonstration of the curriculum's effectiveness. It also allows for effective instruction related to grammar, spelling, writing, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Next year, both Nashville Prep and Liberty Collegiate Academy will transition to a newer version of the Achievement First curriculum. Rather than students participating in one 50-minute literacy block and one 50-minute composition block, instruction will take place over one 100-minute block, with literacy blocks occurring at the beginning of each unit and composition units occurring at the end of each unit. Additionally, the curriculum will include more diverse texts in order to ensure that our pedagogy is culturally responsive. It will include an additional focus on building disciplinary knowledge for scholars by including a targeted focus on vocabulary building to ensure that scholars are able to access rigorous texts, and curricula will be vertically aligned across all grades in the middle school. Additionally, next year, we will have Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), which will allow us to provide targeted guided reading instruction to scholars who are below grade level to build foundational

literacy skills. For scholars who are already on grade level, we will continue our practice of ensuring that scholars have access to opportunities to independently read books that are at or above their reading level. To support these practices, for next year, we have hired two reading interventionists per campus to work solely with scholars who need reading support and who do not currently have IEPs (and therefore do not receive specific services from Student Supports Teachers). We have also purchased MAP Skills, a computer-based product that reinforces phonics and reading skills and provides students with support that is aligned to students' RIT scores from MAP tests. To support foundational skills instruction, we use evidence-based supports including Fastbridge Learning and EasyCBM. Both Fastbridge and EasyCBM allow teachers to screen for foundational literacy skills. Information gleaned from screening processes provides teachers with important data regarding which scholars may need additional supports in developing and mastering foundational skills.

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

N/A

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

Approved waiver for other materials

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

At Nashville Prep and Liberty Collegiate Academy, we use the Achievement First curriculum for our instructional materials.

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

At both Nashville Prep and Liberty Collegiate Academy, we use the NWEA MAP Reading Assessment as our universal screener. This assessment is given three times each year: in August, in December, and in May. We also screen for reading skills using EasyCBM and Fastbridge Learning. We also use the Orton-Gillingham as a dyslexia screener.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

At Liberty Collegiate Academy and Nashville Prep, we use the evidence-based curriculum Leveled Literacy Instruction to identify and support students who struggle with reading. Using this curriculum, scholars are evaluated every few weeks, and groups based on reading level are flexible. When a student is not showing adequate progress, we intervene by changing the frequency, duration, and the material itself. When the data deems it necessary, we also have used Orton-Gillingham as a Tier III intervention to support struggling readers. Additionally, the Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) Benchmark Assessment to scholars reading substantially below grade level, per the NWEA MAP. This test identifies a scholar's "just right" reading level based upon their reading comprehension and accuracy. While the Lexile band provided by NWEA MAP is helpful, it does not give a guided reading teacher enough information to know the specific interventions that are necessary to help a scholar grow. We therefore began administering and relying on the F&P because it tells a guided reading teacher precisely the issues to address in a guided reading intervention to ensure that the scholar is growing. NWEA MAP and F&P scores are used to determine placement in

intervention groups. At Nashville Prep and Liberty Collegiate Academy, all scholars participate in an intervention block which provides targeted instruction based on a scholar's level of academic achievement and reading fluency. Intervention schedules that are created for scholars are aligned with expectations outlined in the RTI2 manual and interventions are evidence-based and differentiated based by Tier II and III. Students participate in intervention 4 times per week for 50 minutes during each intervention block. Students who are identified as "at-risk" receive special support depending on their academic needs. For example, many "at-risk" scholars participate in read-aloud groups rather than independent reading groups. This provides scholars with extra support with fluency, decoding, and reading comprehension. Throughout these processes, we complete progress monitoring to ensure that we are frequently evaluating scholars' progress and whether or not our approaches need to change.

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

There are several ways that we notify parents if their child is "at risk" for a significant reading deficiency. Our Nashville Prep and Liberty Collegiate Academy teachers are expected to maintain regular communication with parents and families. Teachers are expected to communicate with families on a bi-weekly basis, and reading performance information is incorporated into those calls. Additionally, we host quarterly Report Card Pick Up conversations with families that allow us to dive deeper into academic data and performance and goal set for the upcoming quarter. In these conversations, teachers review MAP scores with family members, which provides information regarding scholars' levels of academic performance and how their levels of growth compare to other scholars who are reading at similar levels. They also allow families and school staff members to work together to identify specific supports that the scholar might need at home or in school to support reading growth. We regularly communicate with families about the importance of reading and ways that they can support their scholar's reading growth at home. In our communication to families, we include specific information about no-cost activities and methods for families to support their scholars' reading growth; activities that we highlight include reading at home, using free library resources, and reviewing reading progress goals and reports. In addition to our regular communication with families, we host Literacy Night events to provide families with information about reading at home, questions to ask students when reading together to check for students' understanding, the importance of reading progress goals, activities that families can do together to promote a love of reading at home, and free books to support scholars' at-home reading. At our middle schools, we have communicated to our families an expectation that our scholars read 130 minutes each week to support reading growth. We track scholars' progress on this goal, and we communicate with families if scholars do not meet this goal. Additionally, we communicate with scholars' families if we identify through screening methods that scholars are "at-risk" or exhibiting reading deficiencies. We communicate this information after completing reading screeners to ensure that parents have access to this information in order to support their scholars' reading growth. Our 5th grade scholars receive written communication at minimum on an annual basis through the Home Literacy Report. We ensure that our communication consists of language that is "parent-friendly." We explain the meaning of scholars' scores so that parents are empowered to leverage this information in support of their scholars' growth, explaining existing skill gaps and the depth and extent of scholar need. We also discuss how we will be using this information to address scholar reading gaps both in the classroom and during targeted reading intervention. We

communicate with families multiple times per year in order to make sure that families are informed about their scholar's progress. Once this communication is sent home to families, we regularly communicate with families about reading progress as a result of targeted intervention practices. If the scholar is not making sufficient reading growth, we adjust course as needed by modifying supports or potentially changing the scholar's intervention group.

### **Professional Development Plan**

All 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers at RePublic will complete the Early Reading TN Training series that is approved by the TDOE as part of their professional development. Teachers will complete the Reading 360 coursework asynchronously between August 2021 and December 2021.

At RePublic, we regularly provide teachers with professional development on literacy foundational skills. Each summer, teachers participate in three weeks of professional development to prepare them for the upcoming school year, which includes content-focused development regarding foundational skills. All 5th grade teachers receive development on foundational skills. Throughout the school year, professional development systems are maintained in several ways. First, teachers participate in weekly professional development which includes literacy content development. They also receive development in day-long professional development days which happen several times throughout the year. Finally, they are coached and developed through regular meetings with the Assistant Principal who manages their work. In development meetings, Assistant Principals and teachers have the opportunity to intellectually prepare lessons, focusing on how they can effectively build foundational literacy skills, including phonics and fluency, throughout the lesson. The Achievement First curriculum provides a strong foundation for lessons that develop these skills in students; Intellectual Preparation processes between teachers and Assistant Principals allow teachers to ensure that they are most effectively delivering this instruction. Our participation in the Achievement First Navigator Program allows our network access to skilled coaches that have a track record of success in supporting districts with implementing high-quality and rigorous academic experiences to students. Coaches observe teachers and provide feedback to RePublic instructional leaders on a weekly basis, allowing for data-driven implementation of our literacy curriculum that enables us to best serve our students. Within Literacy, teachers are required to demonstrate knowledge and competency according to established development arcs and rubrics. Using established Navigator Arcs, our teacher development focuses on four "Arcs" of the year that provide strategic development opportunities to teachers throughout the year. All teachers must reach "proficient" benchmarks by the end of the year. The major competencies outlined in the teacher development arcs include: setting a strong classroom environment, preserving independent reading, giving differentiated scholar feedback on work, and leading scholar discussion. Throughout all of these arcs, teachers' levels of knowledge and competency are measured by evaluating student growth and achievement, including scholars' mastery of foundational reading skills as measured by quiz and test data. In addition to scoring at a "proficient" level on Navigator Arcs, teachers are required to be proficient on the RePublic Teacher Rubric, which is research-based. The RePublic Teacher Rubric focuses on ensuring that teachers are providing scholars with academic opportunities that are rigorous, that scholars are focused in class, that scholars are invested in their work, that scholars are doing the academic heavy lifting in class, and that students have the opportunity to improve their work using clear, actionable feedback from teachers. Throughout the

year, teachers receive targeted professional development and feedback from coaches on these topics that support strong literacy classrooms. Finally, teachers are also regularly observed by their coach. These observations allow coaches and teachers to discuss pedagogical strengths and areas for growth, which allows teammates to work together to strengthen our literacy classes. During observations, teachers will often receive live coaching, allowing them to immediately make changes to improve the effectiveness of their lesson.

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

Literacy is considered a priority subject at RePublic Schools. We deeply believe in the importance of providing scholars with a strong foundation in literacy instruction.