

## **Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary**

### **Rocketship United Academy**

#### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: June 3, 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**

Students in K-2 spend 180 minutes in Humanities instruction, which is focused on Literacy and Social Studies skills. In these grade levels, foundational skills are the primary form of instruction and our district uses a foundational skills curriculum grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. During this instructional block, 50 minutes is dedicated to foundational skills that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary work.

40 Minutes = Phonics Block: Letter Formation, Decoding, Shared Reading

10 Minutes = Language Block: Spelling, Sentence Composition, Vocabulary

Each phonics lesson begins with students practicing phonemic awareness skills, including rhyming, substitution, deletion, manipulation to develop a foundation in phonological awareness. Then teachers provide explicit phonics instruction of individual sound-spelling patterns. Sounds are introduced verbally through a narrative story that has many exposures to the sound in practice. Then, students engage in oral practice of the sound, including additional phonemic awareness practice with the target sound. After multiple opportunities to practice the sound, the teacher introduces the letter symbol associated with the sound and a corresponding picture card, as a visual cue. To support encoding, the teacher then models writing the sound and students practice writing the sound on a whiteboard, while the teacher circulates the room to provide feedback. To demonstrate mastery of a sound, teachers provide spelling words with the target sound spelling for students to write. Finally the lesson culminates in a shared reading experience, where students can develop strong fluency and comprehension, by applying their knowledge of sound spellings, decoding strategies, and high frequency words.

For example, in Grade 1 during weeks 33 through 38, students will study consonant blends. As a result, students will be able to learn and use the most common spellings for each sound-spelling pattern. Then, students apply their knowledge of sound-spelling relationships to listen, segment, and write words with the target spelling. After encoding words with the new sound, students use their decoding skills to read a shared text that also includes focus high frequency words. For

independent practice, students apply these skills when using decodable texts that are aligned with the sounds taught in explicit instruction.

Vocabulary instruction is present throughout the instructional block. For example, high-frequency, or Tier I Words are taught during shared reading and increase in complexity. Another opportunity to develop vocabulary is during the language block, as students use their knowledge of root words and context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the continued designated time for teachers to collaborate as they solve problems of practice, analyze data to make instructional decisions, and as they internalize the instructional plan through lesson-level preparation.

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

Our district has a Humanities block for grades three (3) and four (4) grounded in both Literacy and Social Studies. Our curriculum materials are designed by our internal curriculum team and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Students receive a total of 180 minutes of ELA instruction, in which foundational skills are integrated within daily lessons.

The Humanities block includes components for knowledge-building, which includes the skills needed to make meaning of complex texts, as well as apply that knowledge through discourse and written expression. To achieve this, students spend 180 minutes engaging in Thematic Unit instruction for reading and writing, Close Reading, and Guided Reading, and Language instruction. At least 30 minutes per day are focused on foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing across each component of the Humanities block. Our 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, so that students have opportunities to practice skills in the context of content instruction.

Language Block is an opportunity to teach explicit vocabulary acquisition, sentence composition, and word composition. While many students have command over English conventions when speaking verbally or in conversation, the language block supports students in understanding the grammar rules and conventions, so that they can apply their understanding when reading complex texts and composing words or sentences.

Cultivating strong foundational skills is essential for the Close Reading component of the block, as students use their accuracy and fluency skills to understand a variety of text types. During Close Reading, students analyze texts at the word, sentence, paragraph, and passage level and different levels of questioning are used to establish deep meaning of the text.

The Thematic Unit component of the Humanities block provides another opportunity for students to sharpen foundational skills. For example, our third grade students engage in a Thematic Unit focused on Colonial America, that is aligned to the "Early American and Tennessee History" strand of the Tennessee Social Studies Standards. They begin by briefly activating prior knowledge and connecting the topic of the Read Aloud to the broader context of the unit. Teachers use comprehensible input and questioning to help students access and process the texts. After the daily read aloud of a complex text, the students may summarize the content (through partner discussions

and class discourse) and unpack the most essential vocabulary. Teachers engage students in a mini-lesson focused on transferrable comprehension skills that support the meaning making process.

Conversely, during the writing block student's work on a sustained writing project aligned to the same genre and have the opportunity to apply their knowledge of the social studies content. Students also integrate knowledge from the Language block, which emphasizes word study, vocabulary development, and grammar. In doing so students more clearly express their ideas and understanding of content instruction. This example demonstrates how foundational skills instruction is embedded and integrated into all aspects of this 180-minute Humanities block and is dedicated to developing students' holistic Literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

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

Approved waiver for other materials

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

Approved waiver for other materials

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

In previous school years, Rocketship has used the DIBELS assessment as the universal reading screener. This year, we have assembled a team to research and make recommendations on the universal screener that we plan to adopt in upcoming school years.

In consideration, is the continued use of DIBELS, the Tennessee universal screener, and MAP Reading Fluency- NWEA. We plan to make our final decision once the Tennessee universal screener is released in Summer 2021. The final decision will be compliance with the dyslexia screening requirements established in § 49-1-229 and Tennessee's RTI<sup>2</sup> framework manual. The selected screener will also be administered to all students in at least three assessment windows yearly.

Although we are planning to select a state approved screener, we want to make a decision that is best for students. Given that we utilize the NWEA-MAP as an existing test in our suite of assessments, we are interested in using the MAP Reading Fluency- NWEA assessment as a universal screener as it will provide a clear correlation to between the two assessments, it will fully integrate into our existing data analysis platforms, and we believe that the quality of the dyslexia screener will help inform our approach to reading intervention for any students identified to potentially benefit from dyslexia-specific intervention.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

Reading intervention is available for all Rocketship students deemed "at risk" for, or identified as having, a significant reading deficiency. After each universal screening window data is analyzed and reading intervention schedules are created. Students participating in Tier II interventions receive an additional 30 minutes daily of instruction through the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) system. These students are also progress monitored weekly. Every four weeks progress monitoring data is

reviewed, and any students that are not making sufficient progress have their intervention plan updated. Updated intervention plans result in a movement to Tier III, and include a combination of increased duration or frequency of intervention time as well as a potential use of an additional curricular resource, such as Phonics for Reading.

General education reading teachers receive weekly, individualized coaching to build teacher skill regarding differentiation in order to ensure that Tier I instruction is accessible to any students receiving tiered supports. Academic Intervention leads facilitate the data meetings, provide reading interventionist coaching, lead weekly school leadership team instructional walkthroughs, and conduct bi-weekly consultation meetings with our Manager of Psychological Services. As noted in other portions of this plan, families of students placed in reading intervention are informed of their student's placement and progress, and also receive resources to support at home.

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

Rocketship Public Schools 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) on the DIBELS assessment, within one week of the schools completion of 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.

Rocketship Public Schools 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 data team meetings every four weeks throughout the school year. 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 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-4 three times annually.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Professional development sessions for K-2 teachers, will focus on developing content knowledge of phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Teachers will then apply their growing content knowledge, by demonstrating and practicing different components of a foundational skills lesson. Another opportunity for K-2 teachers to apply content knowledge of phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency is through guided reading. Rather than focus on MSV or cueing strategies, teachers focus on the specific phonics skills and known sound-spelling patterns that students must apply to decode and read texts fluently. Professional development will begin in the summer, three weeks prior to the first day of school. As universal screener and progress monitoring data is collected, teachers will engage in data analysis and instructional planning cycles. Teachers in our district will engage approximately 86 hours (10.5 business days or 2 weeks) in professional development that is collaboratively designed and facilitated by Rocketship's Humanities Team, Achievement Manager, and Humanities Coaches (bios are attached). All members of this team



are internal Rocketship team members who have developed, taught, coached, and trained teachers using the curricular materials. Working together, this team has supported students in grades K-1 with averaging 1.57 years growth on the MAP assessment. In addition, all teachers in grades K-5 will complete Week 1 of the Reading 360 Early Literacy Series in the summer of August 2022.