

**Sequatchie County Schools**  
**Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: June 1, 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 Expeditionary Learning/LearnZillion, 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 incorporates a structured systematic literacy approach that is the primary form of instruction that strengthens and addresses student's needs.

The K-2 foundational curriculum is a daily, one-hour block that uses a structured phonics approach. Students make letter-sound connections that provide further support in reading and writing. At the end of second grade, students are able to independently read grade-level texts.

Griffith Elementary School has 120 minutes dedicated to the ELA block K-2. During the first hour, the K-2 Foundational Skills Block is implemented. The foundational skills instruction is broken down into two parts: whole group instruction and small group differentiated instruction. During whole group instruction, the teacher provides 15-20 minutes of explicit instruction where students are engaged in an instructional practice of a newly introduced phoneme, grapheme, spelling pattern or skill. The teacher introduces students to the new skill, models examples, and provides a "work time" opportunity for students to apply their new learning. After whole group instruction, students will have 45 minutes to apply and practice these instructional practices through purposeful independent activities or small teacher led groups aligned to the lesson, student's needs, and Tennessee standards. The independent student practices include activities focused around fluency, "word work," writing, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary and comprehension.

The scope and sequence of the curriculum is based on research of effective instruction. Each lesson has an intentional sequence of Instructional practices (simple routines such as Chaining or Spelling to Complement Reading), each of which builds on the learning from the previous lesson and connects to the next lesson's learning. For example, at the beginning of the second semester, students will be introduced to the concept that every syllable has a vowel and identify two, three, and four phoneme words they have been working on as closed syllables. They will learn how to break a word into two syllables (CV, VC) to decode efficiently. After several weeks of practice, students will be introduced to long vowel sounds via the spelling pattern of an open syllable. The cycle will begin with single-syllable words and then moves to two-syllable words. Following these

lessons, students will be introduced to another spelling pattern for long vowel sounds: “silent e” (CVCe). Because this is the first of four cycles that work with this pattern, the focus in this cycle is on one-syllable words. These lessons provide students with multiple opportunities to apply a number of words through reading and writing.

Cycles 12 & 13

bas-ket, dis-cuss, mag-net

Cycle 14

me, mo-ment, ze-ro, si-lent

Cycle 15

flame, plane, make

Cycle 16

bike, slike, hole, nose

Cycle 17

flute, huge, Pete, eve

Our improvements for next year are to provide time and support for teachers to engage in structured intellectual lesson preparation for upcoming units and lessons. Teachers will analyze the Tennessee State foundational standards, prepare for instruction, observe trends and respond to data to support student learning.

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

Our district uses an integrated literacy block for grades three through five grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Our district adopted Expeditionary Learning/LearnZillion for Grades 3-5 ELA curriculum.

The 3-4 curriculum consists of 90 minutes and 5th grade 70 minutes of comprehensive, explicit instruction focusing on ELA standards for each grade level. Within the first hour of instruction, students are within a literacy module that explicitly teaches reading comprehension, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills. While building knowledge around complex text, foundational skills are embedded within the instruction. All foundational skills instruction includes morphology, grammar, spelling, writing and fluency. Through these foundational practices, students are able to apply their knowledge and skills in order to read, write and build comprehension skills around a complex text.

The remaining 30 minutes of the ELA block is dedicated for students to have the opportunity to practice foundational skills within a complex text. Daily instruction includes independently, in small groups or with the teacher. Some of the areas of focus are independent reading, rereading complex texts from the module with a specific focus, such as; inferencing, fluency, speaking and listening, writing, and grammar usage and mechanics, word study and vocabulary.

For example, students in 4th grade are now beginning their module study on Animal Defense Mechanisms. Throughout the module, students will be building knowledge around animal defense mechanisms in order to write an informative piece on one specific animal of their choice. Within the module, students will participate in close reads, read alouds and independent reading of a complex text. They will draw inferences as they research, make observations and synthesize new information. In the first hour of the ELA block, lesson 8 has students participating in a read aloud to determine the supporting details in order to understand the main idea of the text. In this lesson, students will also use a diagram in a text to provide additional information in understanding of the text. Embedded within the lesson is an opportunity for students to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words by using affixes and roots. Through explicit instruction, the teacher will guide students in breaking a word apart to find the base or root word along with the prefix or suffix and determine the meaning of the word. Students will also practice these same standards/skills within the 30 minute foundational block. With guidance from the teacher in small groups, students will practice with a Fryar Model to determine the meaning of suffix al, ed, and ial. Students will also practice around another complex text on animal defence mechanisms in order to determine main idea, vocabulary, fluency, writing and speaking and listening.

Our improvements for next year are to provide time and support for teachers to engage in structured intellectual lesson preparation for upcoming units and lessons. Teachers will analyze the Tennessee State foundational standards, prepare for instruction, observe trends and respond to data to support student learning.

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

LearnZillion - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

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

LearnZillion - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

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

Our district uses EasyCBM for the Universal Screener in grades K-5 and progress monitoring. This universal screener is on the state approved list. EasyCBM complies with the dyslexia screening requirements.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

In the Fall, K-5 students are given a universal screener (EasyCBM) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are "at-risk". The RTI team (made up of an administrator, grade level teachers, and the interventionist) review the data to determine which students score below the 25th percentile. Those students demonstrating need are classified as in need of Tier 2 or 3 instruction. Those students who are identified as needing intervention are given a diagnostic assessment to determine specific deficits. The results from this assessment are used to place them in a small group for intervention to narrow the skills gap. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for up to 60 minutes in their area of greatest deficit.

We have research-based options for reading intervention support available to our students who are “at-risk” and/or who have been identified with a significant reading deficiency. Our newly adopted curriculum, EL Learn Zillion, contains numerous assessments and remediation strategies the classroom teacher can use in addition to the intervention provided for any student.

Data teams meet every 4.5 weeks to determine if a change in intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance and engagement) as part of the decision making process before a change is made to the programming or provider.

Our students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students are also screened using additional survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs that meet the law’s requirements. Our district uses a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified of the explicit, systematic, sequential, phonics-based instruction and is considered a strong support for students.

Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that make them stronger and fill in the skills gap.

### **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 the district’s school complete the fall universal screening. Students’ scores are communicated in a parent-friendly (native language, if necessary) 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 4.5 week data team meetings. In the parent notification/communication, data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress 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). These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times annually and are shared in grades 4 annually.

Additionally, the ELA curriculum contains parent letters in the younger graders that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the coming week that will inform and equip parents to work with the child. Families can better understand how to support their student/s through questions about their texts and through awareness of what foundational skills their child/ren are learning.

### **Professional Development Plan**

November 23, 2020 - K-2 teachers participated in a 3 hour training on the foundational skills block with TNTP. The training focused on whole group instruction and differentiated small groups centered around foundational skills,

April 12 & 14, and May 4, 2021 - Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade teachers participated in a 3 hour training on the foundational skills block with the Instructional Coach. The training focused on intentional planning, preparation of independent learning based on assessment data, differentiated instruction and activities aligned to building phonics skills, phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension.

April 2021 - Pre K-5 teachers in our district will participate in Week 1 of the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. This training will focus on foundational reading development and instruction centered around the phonics-based approach to reading. We will ensure that participating educators earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 at the end of May.

May 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 Pre-K through second. We have also provided an opportunity for any district interventionists, special education teachers and elementary instructional coaches to attend. This training will focus on best practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and vocabulary.

In addition to the above trainings, our K-5 teachers will continue to receive training through the following: PLC's, Coaching Cycles, and Academic Walks with TNTP and the SECore office.