

Sullivan County Schools
Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 18, 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

Sullivan County elementary schools use Core Knowledge Language Arts as the foundational skills curriculum.

CKLA is grounded in the science of reading and is aligned with the TN state ELA standards. Students in grades K-2 receive a minimum of 120 minutes of tier 1 instruction each day. Foundational skills work is the primary piece of instruction, focusing on phonemic awareness, practice with phonics, word work (vocabulary), and fluency while also building comprehension skills. During the "skills" block, teachers use an explicit, systematic approach to teaching phonics. For example, the teacher explicitly teaches a sound (being careful to use pure sound), students practice that sound, the teacher models the "picture" of that sound (the letter), and the students use a code chart for writing and applying the skill. This practice segue's into decoding more sophisticated diagraphs, blends, and clusters as student are able to learn and use common spellings and decode text aligned with the sounds they have been taught. Our plans for next year include explicit training for new (or new to ELA) teachers who entered the field during the pandemic, allowing these teachers to come together and internalize the foundational skills instructional procedures with teachers who have been practicing these methods for an extended time. Plans also provide for collaborative time for teachers to spend in unit and lesson prep. Specific training for leaders will focus on Core Action 3 of the IPG, helping them understand what it means for students to own the learning and how that should look in practice.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Sullivan County's elementary schools use an integrated literacy curriculum in grades 3-5. This curriculum is aligned with the TN state ELA standards and the materials were selected from the list of materials approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Students receive 90 minutes of reading instruction daily, using an evidence-based approach and applying the foundational skills within the daily scope of the work. Each day, students engage in complex texts, reading, listening, writing, and discussing worthwhile text and applying the foundational skills through vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension practice. The lessons for grades 3-5 look a little different, but typically include 45-60 minutes of knowledge-building work (reading, listening, writing, speaking) with the remaining time spent in vocabulary, morphology, grammar,

spelling, fluency, and comprehension practice. This holistic approach to reading instruction prepares students for real-life application of skills that will be necessary for future success in school and beyond.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

Sullivan County Schools is committed to providing the highest quality reading instruction possible. With approximately 60% of our K-2 teachers participating in the early reading training this summer, we look forward to utilizing Sounds First as a daily warm up for PreK-2 classes. The Foundational Skills materials will also be used for students in tier 3 intervention, replacing the use of Sound Sensible for our students who struggle most. Additionally, we also plan to provide increased at-home reading opportunities for students beginning in the fall, including access to decodable print for daily practice and other practice activities.

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

Sullivan County elementary schools use AimsWeb Plus as the Universal Screener, three times each year. This is also the tool used for progress monitoring. The PASS and PWRS assessments are also administered when students exhibit specific indicators for dyslexia.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Sullivan County students take three universal screening benchmarks (AimsWeb). The first benchmark is administered the first month of school to determine students' need for intervention services. This universal screening data is analyzed by teachers, leaders, and interventionists to determine each student's proficiency in reading and math. Students who score between the 0-25th percentile are identified as "in need of tiered intervention". Diagnostic assessment is given to these students, resulting in specific data regarding exactly which skills need remediation and to what degree. Those who score below the 11th percentile are placed into Tier 3 intervention groups and those who score between the 11-25th percentile are placed into Tier 2 intervention groups. These tiered groups are designed to address the specific skill deficits indicated through the universal screener. Groups are then formed which typically are composed of 5-7 students needing the same or similar remediation. Once at-risk students are identified, they're placed into groups, then research-based options for remediation and support are used to address the skills-gaps. Our language arts curriculum includes an Assessment and Remediation guide that provides explicit activities and lessons specifically designed to address gap skills. Every 2.5 weeks, students are progress-monitored (AimsWeb) to determine rate of improvement (ROI). Every 4.5 weeks, data teams analyze the progress of each student. Data meetings are spent looking at AimsWeb scores, student progress and other possible issues (attendance, engagement, etc). During this meeting,

discussions include various options: i.e. change in the intervention facilitator, change in intervention program/tool, and the addition of services. Students who continue to demonstrate lack of progress, take survey-level assessments to determine characteristics of dyslexia. Decisions made during data team meetings are communicated with families and implemented with fidelity until the next data team meeting when the process repeats. Students presenting several characteristics of dyslexia receive intensive intervention services using approved programs, as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law. Families of students showing characteristics of dyslexia are contacted and a plan for intervention is designed. Sullivan County Schools use SPIRE as one research-based tool for support when a student is suspected of having dyslexia. SPIRE is based on an Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic and explicit phonics-based instruction and offers strong support for these students. Each school's master schedule includes 45 minutes/day for specific, explicit intervention (RTI) instruction. During RTI time, students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention groups work on tasks specifically designed to meet them at their individual skill level and support them toward grade level mastery. To create the smallest possible intervention groups and allow for maximum ability to individualize instruction, every available teacher and assistant works to facilitate tiered intervention groups during RTI periods. This system allows focus to be directly on skill deficits and student progress, allowing the greatest potential for gap closure and mastery.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Sullivan County schools notify parents in grades K-5 if their child scores in the "at-risk" percentile range of 0-25th percentile in reading or math as soon as schools complete the fall universal screening. The student's are communicated in parent-friendly language with a clear explanation of student skill gaps. A basic explanation of the extent of the student needs is included, as well. Parents are told about the intervention services their student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive those services. Also included is information about the importance of being able read on grade-level by the end of 3rd grade. There is a brief description of how students are assessed and what a "significant reading deficiency" means. After each 4 ½ week data team meeting, parents are provided information about their child's progress, or lack of progress,. In this communication, data teams note any changes being made if, based on progress monitoring and universal screening data, the child is not showing sufficient progress. Parents are also provided with information regarding no-cost, skill-specific, activities they can do at home to support their child in the area of deficit. These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times annually and annually in grades 4 and 5. Our ELA curriculum includes parent letters for grades K-2 that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the coming week. These will help parents better understand what foundational skills their child(ren) are learning, as well as how to support them through questions about the texts used during the daily read-aloud.

Professional Development Plan

Professional learning for PreK-5 teachers in Sullivan County will center around the free Reading 360 Early Literacy training developed and led by the Tennessee Department of Education. K-2, special education, ESL teachers will also participate in this training, focused on foundational reading development and a strong phonics-based instructional approach. Following this training, teachers

will continue to practice, collaborate, and apply this learning throughout the upcoming school year. A more complete description of our professional learning opportunities are described below.

In April, teachers will participate in week one of the Early Literacy Training, focusing on foundational reading development and strong phonics-based strategies. Once completed, teachers will move into week two of the Early Literacy training.

In July, we will host two cohorts of teachers to complete week two of the Early Literacy training. During this training, teachers will learn practical strategies for implementing explicit, systematic phonics instruction, as well as fluency practice and vocabulary work.

Throughout the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year, teachers and leaders will continue to practice these skills while also collaborating to refine unit and lesson prep procedures, and effectively analyze student benchmark and screener data to plan for intervention supports. Leader learning will focus on Instructional Practice Guide/Literacy - Core Action 3, learning the look-fors that indicate best practices and working in small groups to gather walkthrough data and analyze next best-steps.

Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Teachers and leaders in Sullivan County Schools have used the Instructional Practice Guide for literacy walkthroughs for the past three years. This work has been calculated and methodical as we worked through Core Actions 1 and 2; this year, we will begin focusing on Core Action 3. We will also begin looking at writing and how we can support teacher learning with regards to writing instruction while learning to embed writing into the curriculum, creating additional "time" for this work.