Unicoi County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 13, 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 Amplify CKLA, 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.

The Skills Strand provides comprehensive instruction in foundational reading skills, such as phonological awareness, phonics, and word recognition; language skills, including conventions of English, spelling, and grammar; reading comprehension; and writing instruction enabling students to develop the reading skills required to meet Tennessee's academic standards.

The Knowledge Strand is centered around complex narrative and informational read-aloud texts and focuses on background knowledge and vocabulary acquisition, analysis of complex text, and speaking and listening enabling students to develop the reading skills required to meet Tennessee's academic standards.

Grades K-2 Time Instruction includes 60 minutes of instruction in the skills strand, 60 minutes of instruction in the Knowledge strand, and a flexible amount of additional independent or group reading time.

Principles of Instruction for CKLA K-2 Lessons:

Explicit foundational skills and language instruction

Maximizing vocabulary acquisition through contextualized, content-based, and constant exposure

Building background knowledge for strong comprehension

Fostering "wonderful conversationalists"

Building analysis and expression in reading and writing

Unicoi County Schools is also a participant in the Early Literacy Network, supporting teachers and leaders in the implementation of high-quality instructional materials through ongoing professional learning in both strands of literacy instruction: knowledge building and foundational skills. Within

the network, our local K-2 teachers collaborate with others across the state sharing resources and strategies focused on early literacy.

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 reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Our Amplify, CKLA curriculum materials are approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. The integrated ELA block meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons. Students receive a minimum of 90 minutes of ELA instruction in grades 4-5 and 120 minutes of instruction in Grade 3.

In Grades 3–5 students move fluidly between reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language activities. Through these activities, students continue to build background knowledge, with an increasing emphasis on individual and small group interaction with complex text enabling students to develop the reading skills required to meet Tennessee's academic standards.

Principles of CKLA 3-5 Instruction

Analysis and Expression in Reading and Writing

Fostering "wonderful conversationalists'

Explicit language instruction

Rich variety of texts and contexts

Maximizing vocabulary acquisition through contextualized, content-based, and constant exposure

Continuing to build background knowledge for strong comprehension

Regional Implementation Network Mentor: Unicoi serves as mentor-district working, serving as a thought-partner with participant districts around the implementation of high-quality learning experiences for all children. Support may include 1)District Network Webinars and Walkthroughs using the TN Instructional Practice Guide

2) Leader Network Walkthroughs using the TN Instructional Practice Guide, and 3) Professional learning for teachers on CKLA Amplify materials.

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

CKLA Research Base: https://amplify.com/research/amplify-ckla-research/

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) is built on decades of early literacy research that demonstrates the importance of wide-ranging background knowledge and explicit and systematic instruction in foundational skills.

Research Base: https://amplify.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CKLA_The-research-behind-the-knowledge-based-approach-to-reading-comprehension.pdf

Efficacy and Impact: https://amplify.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CKLA_OrangePaper-ImpactBrochure_120319_v3.pdf

Teaching and Learning: https://amplify.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CKLA_Curriculum.pdf

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI[2] and Say Dyslexia requirements.

i-Ready Diagnostic Screener a nationally normed diagnostic assessment given three times, serves as Unicoi County's universal screening tool to measure basic academic skills in reading and in math for students in grades k-8. After the universal screener is given, as outlined in the Tennessee RTI[2] and Tennessee Code Annotated §49-1-229, the identification process begins.

Students are identified based on the results from iReady as:

Mid or Above Grade Level

Early on Grade Level

One Grade Level Below

Two Grade Levels Below

Three or More Grade Levels Below

Students who are in the "Two Grade Levels Below" and "Three or More Grade Levels Below" are flagged for the possibility of "a significant reading deficiency" and RTI Intervention. Grade level data meetings at each school led by the school Interventionist determine if students are eligible to be referred to RTI based on identifying students scoring below the 25th percentile (national norms or relative norms if a large number of students within the school are below the 25th percentile) from the universal screener, attendance history, past retention, classroom work samples, and other relevant assessments. If students need intervention, teachers complete a referral form, then students are given Aimsweb Curriculum-Based Measures (CBM) to provide another data point.

Based on all of the above information, a decision is made by the RTI team to determine if students receive the intervention. Once students are in RTI, they (k-8) take the AimswebPlus benchmark assessment. Students who receive a score of IA in a category are given a Survey Level Assessment (SLA) to determine student needs. In addition, students in grades 3-5 are given the Phonics and Word Reading Survey (PWRS), and students in k-2 (unless needed in another grade level) are given

the Phonological Awareness Skills Screener (PASS). This data enables us to identify and target specific student needs

https://i-readycentral.com/download/?res=14907&view_pdf=1

Intervention Structure and Supports

Our district RTI² structure follows Tennessee's RTI² framework and implementation guide to serve students who need extra support to meet the demands of Tennessee State Standards. We rely on multiple data points to make decisions about students entering and moving within the tiers and aligning interventions to the needs of the students.

Tier II Structure: Grade level data meetings led by the school interventionist are held every 4 ½-5 weeks to determine/discuss possible referrals of students who are possibly at-risk of having a significant reading deficiency based on the universal screener. Grade level data meetings are followed by a meeting with the RTI team to determine who is eligible for RTI. Students placed in Tier II receive small group instruction with the goal of a 1:5 group ratio and receive 30 minutes of direct instruction with trained personnel using a systematic, research-based intervention that targets the identified needs based on the universal screener and Aimsweb assessment. Students are progress monitored bi-weekly to determine progress. If there is a lack of progress in Tier II after four data points, students' performance as a whole student is discussed by the RTI team meeting. Attendance, possible trauma, and other factors beyond intervention will be explored before a change of the intervention and/or other variable is changed. If a change of intervention is needed, it can include a change of instructor, time of intervention, length of intervention, change of group, or change of the intervention itself.

Tier III Structure: Students enter Tier III after receiving Tier II intervention for 8-10 weeks with no progress made after a change of intervention in Tier II, or students who are below the 10th percentile may enter Tier III. An ROI (Rate of Improvement) is completed for Tier II students to determine if there is progress before changing the Tier. Students are progressed monitored bi-weekly to determine if there is a lack of progress in Tier III. After four data points, students' performance as a whole is discussed by the RTI team meeting. Attendance, possible trauma, and other factors beyond intervention will be explored before a change of the intervention and/or other variable is changed. Once in Tier III, students receive a more intense intervention than what was received in Tier-II that includes 45 minutes of instruction from our school interventionist with the goal of a 1:3 group ratio. Once there are 8-10 data points after a change in intervention, a GAP analysis is completed to determine if students may be referred for SPED.

Personnel/Materials: There are Interventionists at all schools who oversee, guide, and deliver the components of Tennessee's RTI² framework and dyslexia identification within their building. Instructional Assistants at three/four elementary schools follow the Interventionist's schedule to accommodate more students and/or subjects. Comprehensive, strategic interventions (Orton Gillingham, Sound Partners, mClass) may be utilized. Additionally, our ELA curriculum (Amplify CKLA) contains an assessment and remediation guide in which teachers can find activities that directly address skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Our district notifies parents of students who are found to be "at-risk" for a significant reading deficiency immediately following the 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. Parents are given information about 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.

Grades K-2 parents will be notified of universal screening results three times annually

Grades 4-10 parents will be notified after the first universal screening

Parents are also provided free activities they can use to support student learning at home. In addition to sending the results, mid-term grades and RTI progress reports are sent every nine weeks that further inform the parent of student progress. Parents are able to access student grades through Skyward and are able to access iReady progress through the student login. Additionally, the ELA curriculum (Amplify, CKLA) contains parent letters in the younger grades 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 an awareness of what foundational skills their child(ren) are learning.

Professional Development Plan

Unicoi County Schools teachers will participate in the Tennessee Department of Education sponsored state's early literacy courses. This course on foundational literacy skills instruction is available, at no cost, to teachers in kindergarten through grade five (K-5) and includes training in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Upon completion of the course, teachers demonstrate their knowledge through a competency-based and performance-based assessment. Nationally trained experts from TNTP have developed online self-paced modules as well as a week-long in-person training.

In addition, all teachers have participated in onboarding and ongoing implementation support provided through Amplify's Professional Development team. Teachers and administrators receive ongoing feedback and support through Literacy Learning Walk using the Tennessee Instructional Practice Guide. This occurs two-three times annually.

Unicoi County has established a Teacher Leader and Collaborative model to provide ongoing supports and structures for teachers as evidenced through our professional learning plan.

Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Early Literacy Network: Unicoi County Schools will extend and support teachers through participating in the Early Literacy Networks which will focus on solving similar problems of practice,

share resources, and develop implementation support strategies focused on early literacy. This effort will provide additional support for the implementation of skills and knowledge-building curricula in grades K-2.

ongoing spiraled professional learning for teachers in leaders in both knowledge building and foundational skills

training for scaffolded supports, intervention programming design, and data use for students at-risk or with a significant reading deficiency

Regional Implementation Network Mentor: Unicoi serves as mentor-district working, serving as a thought-partner with participant districts around the implementation of high-quality learning experiences for all children. Support may include 1) District Network Webinars and Walkthroughs using the TN Instructional Practice Guide, 2) Leader Network Walkthroughs using the TN Instructional Practice Guide, and 3) Professional learning for teachers on CKLA Amplify materials

https://drive.google.com/file/d/13h_1WVGuIB7r1Q3CUeLEUDx_JQrUncOs/view?usp=sharing