

## Union City Schools

### Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 17, 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 a foundational skills curriculum called CKLA that is based on the Science of Reading and is aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. There are three major dimensions of the research-based CKLA program: (1) the two-strand approach to instruction in K-2 (2) the language-based and knowledge driven approach to building children’s capacity with complex text and vocabulary, and (3) the importance of explicit and systematic phonics instruction to build automaticity with the written code. Our students in grades K-2 receive 60 minutes of Knowledge instruction and 60 minutes of Skills instruction to make up their Literacy Block. This instructional time includes explicit instruction and student practice in activities that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary work (“word work”). The two-strand design refers to the fact that the CKLA program is organized around two distinct blocks of language arts instruction, each with its own set of activities, materials, and goals. In the Knowledge strand, oral language and listening comprehension skills are honed through interactions with complex, knowledge-based texts. In the Skills strand time is dedicated to building decoding and word-level automaticity within controlled decodable texts. Our effective phonics instruction includes systemic ordering of phonetic targets that progress in number and complexity over time, systemic practice in which children have intentionally designed opportunities to apply and use the sound-spellings they are taught and systemic instructional planning whereby methods of instruction are consistent and progress depending on students’ learning. CKLA read-alouds are also an important tool that is used across grades to build children’s independent capacity for understanding and analyzing complex text. The read-aloud experience is specifically designed to integrate key messages about successful reading from cognitive, developmental, and applied research bases.

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

Our district uses a foundational skills curriculum called CKLA that is based on the Science of Reading and is aligned to Tennessee ELA standards for grades 3-5 literacy instruction. Our curriculum materials are selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block that meets daily, students in grades 3-5 receive at least 75 minutes of instruction through an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills. The instructional block also includes explicit supports for fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In Grade 3, the program continues to develop skills (grammar, spelling,

morphology), but the content of the Knowledge strand begins to integrate in the Skills strand in more systematic ways. There are still almost-daily read-alouds, but students also read independently about the topics introduced during the read-alouds. This serves as a bridge toward the program design in Grades 4 and 5, where instruction moves away from the two-strand model toward a single, integrated language arts block. By Grades 4 and 5, the focus is on fluent reading for meaning making and the emphasis instructionally is on increasing efficiency and skill in the integration of word and text level skills, as occurs with proficient readers. Although Grades 4 and 5 do not have two distinct strands of materials, the premise of the CKLA design-building both knowledge and skills-is consistent across all grade levels. This program is designed to take a systematic and explicit approach to teaching the English code. Student writing instruction is embedded within the program. The program's integrated approach to instruction, practice and extension, and progress monitoring/individualization creates a systematic instructional approach designed to support all learners.

### **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

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

The program our school uses for universal screening is Aimsweb Plus.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

In the fall, students are given a universal screener (AIMSWEB) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are "at-risk". Our interventionists, grade-level teachers, and principal review universal screener data to determine which students score between the 0-25th percentile. Those students demonstrating need are classified as in need of Tier II or Tier III instruction. Students classified as Tier II or Tier III are assigned to small groups according to their skill deficits based on AimsWeb Benchmark Subtests. Students receive daily, small group intervention for at least 45 minutes in their area of greater 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 recently adopted ELA curriculum, 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. If that intervention is not proving to be effective, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as Orton-Gillingham) become an option. Data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change or the person providing the intervention is warranted. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, 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. Our school uses a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Our school notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. We plan to implement the Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and is considered a strong support for those students. Families of Tier II & Tier III students will receive a notification letter if there has been identified as needing additional help with reading skills based on the universal screener. This letter has suggestions to support students with these skills at home.

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 in that skill.

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

Our school 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 school’s complete the fall universal screening. This notification to parents will provide a clear explanation of skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. The gaps will be addressed during intervention times using specific reading strategies focused on deficit skills. The academic gaps will be monitored weekly and individualized for each student. Our school plans to communicate in parent-friendly language a clear explanation of Tier II and Tier III student progress, or lack of progress, after the 4 ½ week data team meetings. The school sends home parent notifications three times a year (after each benchmark) if their child has been identified as a Tier II or Tier III student. The letter will explain the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade and suggestions for ways to support their child’s literacy skills at home. It will also have no-cost activities that parents can utilize.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Teachers in our district will participate in the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Our plan for providing PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

May 2021- All teachers in grades K-5 that teach literacy will engage in Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series, asynchronously. The is training will focus on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. We will ensure that participating educators earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 work in July.

July 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 K-5. The participating teachers will also include interventionists and special education teachers. This week will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.