

Union 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 has a dedicated foundational reading skills block for grades K-2 rooted in the science of reading and standards-aligned for Tennessee English Language Arts. Our curriculum materials, Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) are selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. K-2 students will spend 60 minutes each day engaged in direct systematic foundational skills instruction aligned to CKLA's research-driven scope of system of foundational skills. Each day, students engage in 3-4 "mini lessons" aligned to the systematic scope and sequence of foundational skills in order to allow them adequate time to both learn and practice new skills that ultimately result in fluent reading, comprehension, and writing skills. The CKLA scope and sequence includes direct instruction and aligned student practice in phonics, grammar, spelling, and writing. There are four guiding principles for the CKLA skills strand:

Explicit Phonics: Explicit, systematic phonics instruction is a more effective way to teach decoding than "whole language" or whole word methods

Synthetic Phonics: Synthetic phonics (or linguistic phonics), in which instruction is oriented from sound to letter, is an especially powerful way to teach phonics.

Repeated Oral Practice: Repeated oral practice and oral reading are proven methods of improving fluency.

Intensive Practice: Intensive practice with skills-aligned texts is essential in order to build reliability and automaticity in reading.

Additionally, CKLA engages students in ongoing reading fluency and comprehension practice with decodable readers aligned to the skills students are learning to derive meaning from text and to produce the written word. These readers increase in length and complexity as students develop their reading and spelling skills.

Our improvement for next year will be to ensure that teachers have continued support through TNTP and Literacy Coaches to accelerate student learning and maximize the potential of their instructional materials. This includes a designated time for teachers to collaborate as they plan lessons. Teachers will continue to use and internalize the module preparation protocol and lesson preparation protocol.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Union County has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 anchored in the science of reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards.

Our curriculum materials in Grades 3-5, Wit & Wisdom, are selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons, our students receive a total of 90 minutes of core ELA instruction each day. Although the daily routine is not the same each day, all daily instruction includes components for knowledge-building (to build and improve the ability to comprehend complex texts and apply that knowledge as they listen, read, write, think, and speak) for about 60 minutes per day and foundational skills instruction for 30 minutes per day that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, and spelling. The fluency, vocabulary, and morphology skills are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection.

A core lesson sequence in grades 3-5 Wit & Wisdom includes a framework of text-specific content questioning to engage students in the module content and in the process of reading complex texts. Students engage in daily work around reading, understanding, and analyzing complex text. Students articulate their learning through speaking and writing about their knowledge of the topic of study. Students also have regular practice examining the crafts of writing, speaking and listening through Craft Questions: students develop responses to the texts they read and grow their critical thinking skills. Some daily lessons give students targeted fluency practice through activities such as reader's theatre, poetry readings, and student-led declamations. In addition to directly addressing grade level reading, writing, speaking and listening standards, Core lessons provide embedded instruction in grade level foundational reading skills such as spelling, language, and vocabulary.

Additionally, each day, students participate in isolated practice with grade level foundational reading skills in Deep Dives. The Deep Dives focus on vocabulary, morphology, and language conventions germane to the core lesson.

Grades 3-5 foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of this 90-minute block and is dedicated to developing students' holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

Our improvement for next year will be to ensure that teachers have continued support through TNTP and Literacy Coaches to accelerate student learning and maximize the potential of their instructional materials. This includes a designated time for teachers to collaborate as they plan lessons. Teachers will continue to use and internalize the module preparation protocol and lesson preparation protocol.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Great Minds - 3-5 Wit and Wisdom

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

Our district uses Aimsweb and the Shaywitz Dyslexia Screener in K-5 to determine at-risk students.

Intervention Structure and Supports

In the fall, students are given a universal screener (Aimsweb Plus) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are “at-risk”. Our principals, RTI teachers, and grade-level teachers review the 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. The students are given a diagnostic assessment to determine specific deficits in order to best assign students to a small group with an intervention that will narrow skill gaps. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that make them stronger in that skill. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 45 minutes during a grade-level time just for RTI, as depicted in the master schedule, while others participate in enrichment activities.

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 Sonday System 1 and 2) become an option. Data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. The data team also looks at other variables such as attendance and engagement as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or the 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 the Shaywitz Dyslexia Screener to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who do 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 that the Sonday System curriculum is used to support those students, as it is based on the Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonic-based instruction and is considered a strong support for those 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 in that skill. For example, students who need instruction in comprehension may read a new text and answer scaffolded questions, all related to the knowledge-building unit they are studying in Tier I

instruction. For students who need fluency support, they may receive intervention using the Sunday System.

Specific to grades K-2, the CKLA Assessment and Remediation Guide (ARG) provides multiple additional resources for teachers to use as they support students on their path to mastery of grade-level foundational skills:

Sample Lessons: Samples of lessons are provided, as well as lesson templates to guide the planning to build lessons that fit the specific needs of individual students or small groups.

Word/Chaining Lists: The ARG includes words lists and chaining lists that teachers can plan into a lesson for students to use for practicing the mastery of the letter sound correspondences identified as weaknesses.

Activities for Reteaching: The ARG includes activities to be used for reteaching. All of these activities are engaging and designed to be teacher-facilitated. Though there are worksheets for some activities to support structuring instruction, the focus is to provide students with ongoing support.

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 schools complete the 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.

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 ½ week data team meetings. 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-5 three times annually.

Additionally, the ELA curriculum 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

During the 2020-2021 school year, our district is partnering with TNTP to provide teachers professional development in implementing high-quality instructional materials. Next year, we will

continue this partnership and begin phase two which includes moving from routine use of HQIM to refinement of HQIM.

Teachers will participate in the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series. Our plan for providing PD for all Pre-K-5 teachers is as follows.

April 2021 - Teachers will engage in Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series, asynchronously. This training will focus on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. Participating educators must earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 work in June.

June/July 2021 - Our district has registered for the cohort-based, in-person training offered as Week 2 of the Early Literacy Training series for teachers PreK- 5. The participating teachers will also include interventionists, special education teachers, and instructional coaches. This week will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

June 2021 -

TNTP will conduct PD to:

revisit the research and rationale behind the CKLA Knowledge strand, describe best practices to increase student thinking and practice, reinforce best practices for intellectual preparation, and engage in intellectual preparation to prepare to teach Domain 1 of the CKLA Knowledge strand.

reinforce best practices for intellectual preparation when preparing to teach Wit & Wisdom lessons, focusing on the pacing of the lessons and opportunities for student cognitive engagement.

Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

* We exceeded the 500 words on the question referring to our plans for RTI. Below is the additional information.*

CKLA K-2

Games for Reinforcement: The ARG includes games for reinforcement. The games are designed to help students apply and practice targeted skills.

Progress Monitoring Assessments: Resources for progress monitoring are included the foundational skill strand. The data generated by these assessments can guide and inform instruction for individual student progress. Placement and Student Performance assessments are provided in the Teacher Guides. To supplement these, the ARG provides progress monitoring assessments specific to each skill teachers may be targeting for remediation. These assessments can be used diagnostically to inform instruction and systematically to contribute to a record of student progress.

Additional Resources: The ARG also includes additional resources such as comprehension thinking and reading charts, sound articulation cards, decoding strategies, and a concepts of print checklist.

Specific to grades 3-5, Wit & Wisdom materials provide a range of supports for both teachers and students to address specific students' skill gaps and progress monitor for student improvement, including:

Reading scaffolds. Organizing ideas from informational and literary texts establishes student understanding of the main ideas and plot points prior to the consideration of deeper ideas.

Frequent feedback. Students receive ongoing and explicit feedback from peers and teachers.

Scaffolds. Lessons include specific suggestions for how to scaffold instruction, including remediation suggestions.

Extensions and differentiation suggestions. Lessons offer suggestions for how to extend learning for students who already have well-developed skills.