

Hickman County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 18, 2021

Updated September 1, 2023

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 the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement for our foundational skills curriculum. This curriculum is approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission and is aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards and to the research of the Science of Reading. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction. Students in grades K-2 spend a minimum of 45 minutes per day in foundational skills instruction which includes activities that build phonological awareness and provides phonics practice and fluency practice, in addition to comprehension and vocabulary work (“word work”). During that instruction, teachers explicitly teach a sound, the students practice the sound aloud, the teacher models writing the sound, the students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, then students apply the skill in independent practice (individually or in small groups).

For example, during the second quarter of first grade, students will learn how to decode separated digraphs (for example, like and same) and vowel digraphs (for example, seed and boat) and will be able to learn and use the most common spellings for each sound. Students have the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge of this learning when using decodable texts that are aligned with the sounds taught in explicit instruction.

Our district also uses McGraw Hill Wonders for our reading curriculum. This curriculum is approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission and is aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards and to the Science of Reading. Students spend 45 minutes per day listening and responding to read alouds and reading and answering comprehension questions both orally and in writing. Students also participate in small group instruction during this time with the classroom teacher on strengthening their reading skills.

As a supplement, students will also incorporate the knowledge component of the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program into their learning experience. The program serves to expand students' understanding and vocabulary across the realms of literature, history, geography, and science.

Our improvements for next year include providing a continued, designated time for teachers to collaborate while becoming more deeply knowledgeable about this curriculum and its impact on our instructional practices (for example, refining opportunities which allow students to develop and practice writing skills). Teachers will also internalize the instructional plan through unit-level and lesson-level preparation.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

In grades 3-5, our educational structure involves teacher departmentalization, with students benefiting from dedicated 90-minute literacy blocks each day. Our curriculum resources have been meticulously chosen from the state's approved list by the Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. We utilize the Great Minds - 3-5 Wit and Wisdom curriculum. While the allotted time for literacy remains constant, the daily schedule adapts to the specific lessons.

Each day's curriculum is designed to foster knowledge-building and includes explicit instruction, offering students ample opportunities to apply what they've learned through reading, writing, critical thinking, verbal communication, and attentive listening tasks. Our selected materials also immerse students in the intricacies of morphology, vocabulary acquisition, fluency, and comprehension. These aspects are seamlessly woven into the curriculum, avoiding isolated teaching.

Students engage with reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills in a cohesive manner. Each module seamlessly integrates strands of standards throughout, facilitating students' success as they leverage their expanding background and vocabulary knowledge related to the module's subject. This integrated approach empowers students to flourish, allowing them to apply and enhance their skills across various areas.

The materials provide thorough instruction and diagnostic support in fundamental concepts such as print understanding, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, syntax, and fluency. This progression follows a clear and logical path. These foundational skills are not only pivotal but also integral elements of an all-encompassing reading program. This program is intricately crafted to nurture adept readers who have the capacity to understand a wide array of texts across various genres and fields.

In the upcoming school year of 2023-2024, our agenda includes offering our educators in grades 3-5 comprehensive professional development. This training will encompass unit planning, lesson planning, and the effective application of instructional strategies geared towards fostering student growth and academic accomplishments.

Furthermore, we will concentrate on introducing a district-wide writing plan. This initiative involves crafting a structured framework and sequence for writing instruction across grades K-12. This plan will not only be devised but also put into action for the collective benefit of our students.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

McGraw Hill - K-5 Wonders

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Great Minds - 3-5 Wit and Wisdom

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

To meet the requirements of the Tennessee Literacy Success Act, our educational strategy entails the adoption of specific curricula tailored to different grade levels. In the foundational years of grades K-3, we have embraced the McGraw Hill Wonders curriculum. Moreover, our district's

commitment to literacy excellence extends to the comprehensive implementation of the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement resources. This commitment is evident across the spectrum of grades, ranging from kindergarten through second grade. A particular highlight of this initiative is the complete inclusion of Sounds First instruction, underscoring our dedication to nurturing strong foundational skills in our young learners.

In grades 4 and 5, we have thoughtfully integrated the Great Minds Wit and Wisdom curriculum, encompassing not only comprehensive subject matter but also essential foundational skills. It's pertinent to note that both these curricula have been meticulously selected from the state's list of approved materials for adoption.

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

Our district will use the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener with our students and will provide professional learning to all of our teachers and interventionists on the use of those assessments and the data they provide.

Intervention Structure and Supports

In the fall, all students are assessed using Aimsweb to determine which display reading deficiencies or are considered 'at-risk'. Our grade-level teachers, interventionists, and building administrators review the universal screener data to determine which students performed at or below the 25th percentile and those students are classified as needing assistance from Tier II and Tier III instruction. A diagnostic assessment is given to students who qualify for services in Tier II and Tier III to determine specific areas of deficit so that students are placed in appropriate small groups with targeted interventions to close skill gaps. Students receive small group interventions each day for a minimum of 45 minutes in the area of their assessed deficit. Our schools have research-based options for reading intervention support for students who are 'at-risk' or who have been identified as having reading deficiencies. The foundational skills curriculum we currently use contains an assessment and remediation guide which allows teachers to implement specific activities to directly address skill gaps for RTI groups. If that intervention is not sufficiently meeting student needs and closing learning gaps, teachers can use a more comprehensive intervention (such as Heggerty or Wilson Reading) as an option.

School data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks to monitor student progress and to determine the need for changes in interventions or in the personnel providing interventions. The data team takes into account student attendance and engagement as part of the decision making process. 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 myLexia, a research-based supplemental program, as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified that the myLexia from Lexia Learning Systems is a research-based supplemental program which is based on the Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and is considered a strong

support for those students. Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level time in the master schedule which is dedicated solely for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that make them stronger in that particular 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 myLexia program.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Our district notifies parents of students in grades K-5 upon completing benchmark assessments if their child is identified as “at-risk” for significant reading difficulties (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-25th percentile). Student 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 child 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 proficiently by the end of 3rd grade. The district defines how students are assessed and what a “significant reading deficiency” means. Parents receive notification of their student’s progress, or lack thereof, each 4 ½ weeks, after the school data team meetings. That notification includes any changes being made to the student’s programming if significant progress is not being made, as evidenced through progress monitoring and universal screening data, as well as recommended activities that will support students in the area of deficit, which are free of charge to families. These activities are tailored by skill deficit area). These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times per year, after each benchmark, and are shared with parents of students in grades 4 and 5 annually. Additionally, our ELA curriculum contains parent letters in the younger grades that provide families with information regarding the foundational skills and knowledge building for the coming unit that will inform parents as they work with their student. Families can better understand how to support their student through questions about their texts and through an awareness of what foundational skills their child is learning.

Professional Development Plan

All of our administrators and teachers in grades K-2 will complete both the asynchronous and the in-person early literacy implementation summer training provided by TDOE during the summer. This includes all regular education teachers, special education teachers, and interventionists. Additionally, the training has been offered to all teachers and administrators in grades 3-5 and most will be joining in the summer training.

Teachers of grades K-3 who are currently using the McGraw Hill Wonders curriculum will have professional learning during summer and fall to utilize the unit plan protocol and the lesson plan protocol. Teachers of grades 4 and 5 will have similar training as they plan for year two of implementation of Great Minds Wit and Wisdom. This will include time spent in PLCs and in half day or full day planning embedded within the school day to allow teachers to fully meet the intent of the planning guides and to effectively plan for each unit of study.



Our district is participating in the five-year Implementation Network, along with other districts across the state, and the network focus begins at grade 5, so this will allow us to provide targeted professional learning to these teachers based on the insights gained from the use of literacy walks and the Instructional Practice Guide (IPG) Coaching Tool. We have applied to participate in the Early Literacy Implementation Network and hope to be accepted into the network in order to support our teachers in full and effective implementation of the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement which we currently use.