

## **Chester County Schools**

### Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: May 10, 2021

Approved: May 22, 2024

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 grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission (CKLA Foundational Skills). This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (45 minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. This instructional time includes activities that build phonological awareness, 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 (learning how to produce pure sound), the teacher models writing the sound, the students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, and then students apply the skill in independent practice (small group or individual).

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the continued designated time for teachers to collaborate as they solve problems of practice and as they internalize the instructional plan through unit-level and lesson-level preparation. We also have begun and will continue the work using the Foundational Skills Instructional Practice Guide with our teachers to provide continual feedback towards improving foundational literacy skills instruction. We also use this tool for teachers to plan and collaborate within their grade levels and in vertical planning with other grades.

### **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 curriculum materials are selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission (Grade 3-CKLA, Grades 4-5-Wit & Wisdom). During the integrated ELA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons, our students receive 90 minutes of ELA instruction with 30 minutes of foundational skills instruction. 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 that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing

for at least 30 minutes per day. Our adopted curriculum also engages students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection.

For example, students may be learning literacy skills using a novel. Students begin by activating background knowledge and reading independently and/or aloud. After the daily read-aloud of a complex text, the students may internalize the content using the think-pair-share method, unpack essential academic vocabulary, respond to a series of scaffolded questions, and write a response to an inferential question that requires students to provide evidence from the text to support their answer. Foundational skills are embedded in all aspects of the 90-minute instructional block, which is dedicated to developing students' holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

### **Additional Supports**

We have planned additional supports to address subgroup and school literacy improvements.

- Administrators will use TVAAS data to determine the needs of each subgroup of students for their individual school. Students with the greatest need will be placed with the teachers who have shown evidence of growing those students.
- The district is providing intensive training to all teachers and administrators about RTI<sup>2</sup> A and B.
- The district is forming a district team and school teams for each of the target schools and the protocol documents used for each progress monitoring meeting. Training is centered around analyzing multiple forms of data for each student and providing the appropriate supports (Tiers I, II, and III).
- We are also providing training to all teachers and administrators in professional learning communities (PLCs). These PLC conversations will be focused on unit and lesson planning, student work, and extra supports to provide access to the materials for all students.
- We plan to provide tutoring in 4th grade during the school day with ELA teachers at least 3 times a week for those students in need.
- Teachers in RTI<sup>2</sup> and tutoring will be using high-quality instructional materials approved by Tennessee.
- The district also plans to offer an after-school tutoring program for students identified as needing additional support. This program will occur 3 days a week immediately after school. Effective teachers will be selected to work with small groups during this time using high-quality instructional materials and formative assessments. Student progress will be tracked and reported to administrators and the district leadership team at data chats that occur after each benchmark throughout the school year.
- The district plans to support and provide feedback in each area by using the instructional practice guide (IPG) provided by the state. This data will then be shared throughout the year to teachers and administrators to guide instructional practices for all subgroups of students. Administrators will also be using the IPG when conducting walkthroughs in classrooms and providing teachers with feedback.

- The district will use the IPG data and other sources of data to form goals for each new school year in literacy for each school and subgroup. Professional development will also be based on the data collected throughout the year.
- The district will track progress by reviewing IPG data, benchmark data, RTI<sup>2</sup> data, and other forms of data. There will be meetings with administrators, teachers, and students after each benchmark to discuss goals and to see if goals are being met for all subgroups of students at each school.

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2**

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5**

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts—3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
Great Minds Wit and Wisdom—4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grades

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

We administer the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, aimswebPlus, to our students in grades K-5.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

In the fall, winter, and spring, students are given a universal screener to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency, scoring below the 15th percentile, or are “at-risk” scoring between the 16th and 40th percentile. Our teachers and administrators review the universal screener data and other data points to determine which students fall into these categories and need additional support. Those students showing need are classified as needing Tier II or Tier III instruction. Students classified as Tier II or Tier III are given a diagnostic assessment to determine specific deficits to best assign students to a small group with an intervention that will narrow skill gaps. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 45 minutes in their area of greatest deficit.

We have research-based options for reading intervention and support available to our students who are “at-risk” and/or who have been identified with a significant reading deficiency. Our adopted ELA curriculum 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 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 (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. 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 a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia.

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. We also provide tutoring in 4th grade for at least 30 minutes a day three days a week on skills. 4th grade ELA teachers are responsible for providing this instruction. This ensures we meet the state requirements for the 3rd grade remediation law.

### **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 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 and information on the pathway to 4<sup>th</sup> 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-3 three times annually and are shared in grades 4 and 5 annually or when there is any change in the student's RTI program.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Teachers in our district have participated in the free Reading 360 Early Reading Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. We ensure any new K-5 teachers in our district have completed Course 1 of the Early Reading Training prior to teaching. Our plan for providing PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

March 2024 – All teachers of grades K-5 collaborated in grade level and vertical teams for training on the instructional practice guide. This training focused on foundational reading development and instruction and was grounded in a phonics-based approach.

July 2024 – Our teachers have a day of in-service designed around grade level and vertical planning with student work and curriculum. This day will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

September 2024 – Administrators, the ELA supervisor, and the Southwest CORE ELA consultant will do walkthroughs using the IPG and providing that data to teachers.

October 2024 – Teachers and leaders will review reports at the district, school, and classroom levels to determine both trends and deficits and individual student data to inform classroom practice, to build and meet the needs of RTI groups.

November – 2024 Administrators, the ELA supervisor, and the Southwest CORE ELA consultant will do walkthroughs using the IPG and providing that data to teachers.

January 2025 – Teachers and leaders will review reports at the district, school, and classroom levels to determine both trends and deficits and individual student data to inform classroom practice, to build and meet the needs of RTI groups.

February 2025 – Administrators, the ELA supervisor, and the Southwest CORE ELA consultant will do walkthroughs using the IPG and providing that data to teachers.

March 2025 – A professional development day is planned for all ELA teachers to meet and discuss instructional practice guide data and analyze student work.

April 2025 – Teachers and leaders will review reports at the district, school, and classroom levels to determine both trends and deficits and individual student data to inform classroom practice, to build and meet the needs of RTI groups.