

## **Marion County Schools**

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: November 2, 2023

Approved: June 4, 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 Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts, 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. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (60 minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. Marion County Elementary Schools have literacy blocks that are 120 to 150 minutes daily in grades K-2 with the 60 minute daily designated block for foundational skills instruction. The foundational skills instruction contains activities and practices that teach the following foundational skills: phonological awareness (recognize rhyming words, blend and segment compound words, blend, segment, and count syllables, blend and segment onset-rime, blend, segment, and count phonemes, segment compound words, and isolate individual phonemes) and phonics (identify individual letter sounds, decode regular words, decode words with common rime families, identify sounds for letter combinations, decode one-syllable words with letter combinations, identify common spellings for long and short vowel sounds, know and apply final -e conventions, read words with r-controlled vowels, read words with l-controlled vowels, read words with inflected endings, read words with prefixes and suffixes, read two syllable words with various syllable types, read multi-syllable words, and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis in text). Fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary are also components of explicit instruction.

The scope and sequence of the curriculum is based on research of effective instruction for struggling readers. The guidelines for the sequencing of skills is: teach pre-skills before the new skill or strategy is presented, introduce high-utility skills before less useful ones, introduce easy skills before more difficult ones, separate strategies and information likely to be confused, introduce new information at a realistic rate, and provide adequate practice and review. For example, students learn basic letter-sound correspondences for consonants and vowels and the VCe rule before they are required to decode words with the VCe pattern in them.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the continued designated time for teachers to collaborate within their schools and across the district as they solve problems of practice and as they internalize the instructional plan through unit and lesson preparation. Student work analysis will be emphasized when making data-informed instructional decisions.

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

Our district has an integrated literacy block for grades three through five grounded in reading science aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. The district adopted Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts for Grade three and Open Up Expeditionary Learning for grades four and five. The curriculum materials 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 120 minutes in third grade, 105 to 120 minutes in fourth grade, and 90 to 120 minutes in fifth grade of ELA instruction. All daily instruction includes components of knowledge-building 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. The 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, our 3rd graders completed the unit on Light and Sound. The unit integrates the skills of spelling, dictionary skills, grammar, and morphology with the scientific knowledge of light and sound. Students will review and learn spelling with "a\_e", will become proficient in the application of guide words, will learn conjunctions as a part of speech, and learn new suffixes. The integration of the above skills will be learned while increasing the students' knowledge of light and sound.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the continued designated time for teachers to collaborate within their schools and across the district as they solve problems of practice and as they internalize the instructional plan through unit and lesson preparation. Student work analysis will be emphasized when making data-informed instructional decisions.

### **Additional Information**

The district will support/provide the following:

- Quarterly Advisement meetings with school admin and designated district supervisors, Kimberly Shurett (Jasper Elementary) and Kim Headrick (Jasper Middle School), to review data and instruction.
- Support from external consultants in ELA (NIET) and Math (IP)
- Support from the CORE Office
- Additional administrator support for Jasper Middle School from a consulting firm, InspirED.
- Intentional and timely walkthroughs in both ELA and Math with support on crafting feedback to educators
- Instructional Coaches designated for K-5 ELA
- Purchase of HQIM in both reading and math with additional purchase of curriculum support individualize online learning for students
- High-dosage low ratio tutoring before and after school
- Summer Learning Camps for rising K-9

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

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

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

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts – grade 3

Open Up Expeditionary Learning – grades 4-5

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

Our district administers the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) to students in grades K-5.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

Marion County intervention structures and supports are aligned to the TN RTI2 Manual. In the fall, Marion County 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 grade-level ELA teachers and principals review the universal screening data as well as student behavior, classroom performance, TCAP results, prior intervention outcomes (if applicable), and/or teacher observation data to determine placement, intensity, and scheduling of students into Tier III or Tier II intervention or Tier 1 instruction/enrichment. Students classified as Tier II or Tier III are given diagnostic/survey level assessments to determine specific deficits in order to best assign students to small group intervention that will narrow skill gaps. Students who are placed in Tier III receive the most intense intervention daily for at least 45 minutes and are progress monitored weekly. Students who are placed in Tier II receive intervention daily for at least 30 minutes and are progress monitored every other week.

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 (SPIRE, Foundations, Wilson, Sonday, etc.) become an option. School-level Data teams meet every 9 weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. A data team can be called at 4 ½ weeks if needed. Attendance and student engagement are included as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or the provider.

Students receiving Tier II or Tier III intervention receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students are also screened using survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who do demonstrate characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs/strategies that are explicit, systematic and cumulative, multi-sensory, language-based, and aligned to student need. The instruction should be grounded in foundational reading skills

which may include phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, sound-symbol recognition, decoding, encoding, and rapid naming.

Intervention takes place daily during 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 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 0-40th percentile) immediately after district 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 no-cost activities for families to support learning at home, a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade and includes information on the promotion pathway to grade 4.

The district defines how students are assessed and what a “significant reading deficiency” means for families. Parents are subsequently notified of their child’s progress, or lack of progress, after the first data team meeting. In the parent notifications/communication, data teams note the intervention(s) and 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.

Additionally, the ELA curriculum contains family 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 their child(ren). 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**

Teachers in our district 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:

- All teachers employed by the Marion County Board of Education who teach K-5 reading must complete all requirements for Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series, asynchronously, before being placed in a K-5 ELA classroom. This focuses on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. We ensure that all educators earn a completion certificate.
- July – Our district recommends Course 2 of the Early Reading Training for all teachers in grades PreK through 5 who have not already completed this course. Each summer we offer

to host the cohort-based in-person training offered as Week 2 of the Early Reading Training. This week emphasizes practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics fluency, and vocabulary. The participating teachers include interventionists, special education teachers, and elementary instructional leaders.

- In conjunction with the 360 Early Literacy Training series, PreK-5th grade teachers will receive the following literacy professional development: PLCs, Coaching Cycles, focused professional development from district, vendor, and Academic Walks using the IPGs for both knowledge and foundational skills.