

Cumberland County Schools
Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 26, 2021

Updated: June 27, 2022

Updated: June 20, 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

Cumberland County students in kindergarten through second grades receive a total of 120 minutes of literacy instruction daily. They receive 60 minutes of foundational skills daily. In the foundational skills instruction, we try to protect and ensure it is uninterrupted. We provide comprehensive instruction and foundational reading skills: phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, language skills, spelling and grammar, reading comprehension, and writing instruction. Students also receive a 60 minute block of the knowledge instruction strand daily. The knowledge strand teaches background knowledge, comprehension, vocabulary, analysis of complex text, and speaking and listening skills.

Cumberland County Schools utilize Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA). 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.

We plan to visit each classroom monthly to ensure the curriculum is being taught with fidelity and meeting the expectations, especially the times. The visits will be completed by building administrators, literacy coach, and instructional supervisor.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Cumberland County has an integrated literacy block for grades third through fifth in the science of reading and aligned to the Tennessee English Language Arts standards. Our curriculum materials CKLA, 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 at least 80-90 minutes of ELA instruction each day. Although the daily schedule 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 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 skills and are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection.

A daily lesson sequence in grades 3-5 CKLA may include briefly activating prior knowledge and reading independently and/or aloud in partners or whole group. After the daily read aloud (or independent reading in on-grade level, complex text), the student may summarize the content (through a think-pair-share model), unpack the most essential vocabulary (“word work”), respond to a series of scaffolded questions with both discussion and writing and write a response to an inferential question that requires students to use evidence from the text to support their answer. Students also receive vocabulary instruction where teachers provide explicit support for vocabulary needed to access the complex text. In some lessons, the students may study the root words to understand how they can use parts of words to determine meaning. Students use their word knowledge as they engage in group discussion and writing activities. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of the 90-minute block and dedicated to developing students’ holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

We plan to visit each classroom monthly to ensure the curriculum is being taught with fidelity and meeting the expectations, especially the times. The visits will be completed by building administrators, literacy coach, and instructional supervisor.

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 RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements.

The Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (AimswestPlus) is our universal reading screener. This screener complies with RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements and is given three times during the school year.

In the fall, students are given the universal screener to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are “at-risk”. Our response to intervention and instruction (RTI²) coordinators and classroom teachers 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 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. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 45 minutes in their area of greatest deficit.

Our students receive explicit instruction in their areas of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. Any student in kindergarten through second grade with identified deficits in Basic Reading or Fluency, are given an additional screener to identify any possible 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 notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified of the specific intervention used to support their students

Intervention Structure and Supports

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 targeted skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI² group of students. If that intervention is not proving to be effective, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as Lexia and Wilson Reading, Foundations, Fast ForWord) become an option. Data teams meet monthly to determine if a change in the intervention is warranted. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, behavior, engagement) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or provider.

Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI². When students are in their RTI² 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.

Additional Information about the CKLA Assessment & Remediation Guide (ARG): The Assessment and Remediation Guide 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 List:** The ARG includes word 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 and feedback.
- **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 in 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 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 a record of student progress.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

After the initial universal screener is given at the beginning of the school year, a Tier Enrollment Letter is sent home for students in grades kindergarten through eight identified as having a significant reading deficiency or “at-risk” for a significant reading deficiency. With the Tier Enrollment Letter a copy of the students report from the universal screener is sent as well as the child’s intervention plan. After each data team meeting, parents are sent a RTI² Progress Letter and the child’s progress report. Reports will be sent home after each screener (all three times) for grades kindergarten through eight. Adjustments will be made as needed throughout the school year based on student progress. For the 2021-2022 school year, Cumberland County Schools will develop a Parent’s Guide to Understanding the universal screener report to accompany the Tier Enrollment Letter and Intervention Plan. The guide will assist parents in understanding what the report means in parent-friendly language.

The Director of Schools will address in the welcome to the new school year letter, the importance of reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade. Cumberland County Schools has and will continue to send home screening reports from each universal screener to assist all parents, especially in grade kindergarten through second to monitor their student’s progress of proficiency by the end of 3rd grade. In the past many schools have had reading/literacy activities to promote the importance of reading. For the 2021-2022 school year, schools will have a literacy corner on their individual school websites to provide no-cost reading activities to families to support their child at home. Activities will be changed monthly. We hope to be able to invite families back into the school for reading/literacy activities in the 2021-2022 school year.

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 professional development for kindergarten through fifth grade teachers is as follows:

- April 2021-All teachers of grades in kindergarten through fifth grade 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. We will ensure that participating educators earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 work in June/July.
- 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 in grades kindergarten through five. The participating teachers will include special education teachers and English Second Language teachers.

This week will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

Teachers in kindergarten through fifth grade will participate in ongoing PLCs throughout the 2021-2022 school year focused on effective internalization and delivery of their CKLA lessons using internalization templates developed in partnership with the LIFT network.

Teachers in kindergarten through fifth grade will participate in an in-service opportunity provided by TNTP/LIFT. Topics will be differentiated and developed based upon areas of refinement from walkthroughs utilizing the LIFT Instructional Planning Guide (IPG).