

Hancock County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 27, 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 uses a foundational skills curriculum grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee Reading Standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and we allot a certain amount of time for foundational skills (60 minutes daily) in grades K-2. The instructional time includes activities that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary 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, the students apply the skill in independent practice.

For example, in the second nine weeks, students will be able to decode regularly spelled cvc words (as seen below). Students have the opportunity to use their word analysis skills when using decodable texts that are aligned with the sounds taught in explicit instruction.

Our improvements for next year will be continued designated time for teachers to collaborate as they solve problems of practice.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Our district has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 that is grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. The curriculum used is approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Teachers use the 90 minute integrated ELA block to embed morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, and fluency strategies into comprehension skills. The 90 minute block of instruction consists of an evidence-based approach that applies foundational skills within the daily lessons. All daily instruction includes components for knowledge-building for 60 minutes per day and 30 minutes of foundational skills practice which includes morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, and fluency. Very few skills are taught in isolation in grades three through five. Most skills are introduced and embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection. Explicit support is provided for fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Our improvement plans for next year are grounded in providing foundational skills instruction that is evidence-based. Professional learning communities will take place to allow teachers to collaborate

and refine their teaching practices. Teachers will improve their practices by participating in coaching sessions that focus on strategies for foundational skills.

For example, in the second nine weeks, students will be able to decode multi-syllable words (as seen below). Students have the opportunity to use their word analysis skills when using decodable texts that are aligned with the sounds taught in explicit instruction. Our improvement plans for next year are grounded in providing foundational skills instruction that is evidence-based. Professional learning communities will take place to allow teachers to collaborate and refine their teaching practices. Teachers will improve their practices by participating in coaching sessions that focus on strategies for foundational skills.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

McGraw Hill - K-5 Wonders

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

McGraw Hill - K-5 Wonders

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

In the fall, students are given a universal screener (STAR Renaissance) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are “at risk” for having a significant reading deficiency. Our principal, along with grade level teachers and the RTI school-level coordinator review the universal screener data to determine which students score between the 0-10th percentile (Tier III) and 11-25th percentile (Tier II). Students (0-25th percentile) are given a diagnostic assessment to determine specific skill deficits. These students receive 45 minutes daily 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 intervention with a comprehensive, strategic intervention, which at our school is SPIRE. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia.

Intervention Structure and Supports

In the fall, students are given a universal screener (STAR Renaissance) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are “at risk” for having a significant reading deficiency. Our principal, along with grade level teachers and the RTI school-level coordinator 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 intervention. 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. 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 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 SPIRE) become an option. Data teams meet every 4.5 weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing 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. Families are notified that the SPIRE curriculum is used to support those students, as it 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 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 instruction using the SPIRE program.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

All parents, K-5, receive a parent-friendly report that explains what their child scored on the universal screener. These reports outline the areas the student is deficient in and areas of excellence. Parents who have students in grades K-5 who have been identified as "at-risk" after completing the universal screener are given a written notice immediately after the fall universal screener. This notice will inform the parents of the importance of third grade reading proficiency. We also identify "at-risk" students in grades 4-5 and communicate the deficiency with the parents after each universal screener. Specific strategies that parents can complete at home for intervention are suggested. Strategies that are recommended are activities that can be completed at home without any cost to the parent or guardian. The parents are given details on what action steps of intervention the school will be providing for the student based on the skill gaps and student needs that were identified on the universal screener. Continuous communication is in place for students who are not showing adequate progress. Parents are also communicated with three times a year after each benchmark and twice a year during parent-teacher conferences. Several parents may be communicated with more often depending on individual student needs. Literacy Night is an event held once a year that provides parents the opportunity to visit the school and engage in learning with their child. Parents are able to take-away many learning strategies that could be used at home.

Communication between parents and the classroom teacher takes place through classroom newsletters, communication apps and phone calls. Specific academic skills are communicated on a weekly basis.

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 PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

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