

## **Memphis Merit Academy Charter School**

### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 29, 2021**

**Updated: March 20, 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**

Memphis Merit Academy Charter School utilizes Expeditionary Learning curriculum which is aligned with TN State standards. Each lesson plan has the aligned TN standard that is addressed in each lesson for Grades K-2. In EL each module in grades K-2 is composed of two one-hour blocks of content-based literacy (Module Lessons and K-2 Labs) and the third hour of structured phonics (K-2 Reading Foundations Skills Block). Together, these three hours of curriculum teach and formally assess all strands of the Language Arts standards for each grade level.

In each of their literacy rotations students are engaged in foundational literacy skills appropriate to their grade band. Students engage in a combination of phonemic awareness practices during the Lifelong Readers oral drill. Students are explicitly taught letters, sounds, blends, digraphs, word families, and other phonemes to allow them to be successful in decoding text. After the introduction of the skill and/or sounds they practice with fluency sentences and reading stories that are infused with the same skills to allow them to apply their decoding skills. After reading they are asked to define key vocabulary and answer text centered comprehension questions after reading.

In their second small group they focus heavily on grade level standards mastery. Students are given a do now prior to the lesson, during the lesson students are listening and reading grade level text. They are looking at key vocabulary, practicing their fluent reading, and then asked comprehension questions to follow. At the end of each lesson teachers give an exit ticket aligned to the standard to assess mastery after the group is done. Students also are engaged in small group reading twice a week to practice their decoding skills and fluently read at grade level. A combination of comprehension questions and teacher guided prompting allow for the students to sharpen comprehension skills and show they understood what they have read.

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

Memphis Merit Academy Charter School utilizes Expeditionary Learning curriculum which is aligned with TN State standards. Each lesson plan has the aligned TN standard that is addressed in each

lesson for Grades 3-5. In EL each module in our grades 3-5 curriculum consists of two one-hour blocks of content-based literacy instruction. Together, these two hours of curriculum teach and formally assess all strands of the Language Arts standards for each grade level.

In one of their literacy rotations they focus heavily on grade level standards mastery based in informational text. Each day they are working with grade level nonfiction text, discussing text features, content specific vocabulary, and writing in response to text. As they write in response to text they are provided with academic feedback focused on comprehension of content, spelling, & grammar. Students are given a do now prior to the lesson, during the lesson students are listening and reading grade level text, then are given an exit ticket to assess standards mastery at the end of each rotation.

In their second small group they focus heavily on grade level standards mastery in fiction. Students are given a do now prior to the lesson, during the lesson students are listening and reading grade level text. They are looking at key vocabulary, practicing their fluent reading, and then asked comprehension questions to follow. At the end of each lesson teachers give an exit ticket aligned to the standard to assess mastery after the group is done. Beginning in 3rd grade and then continuing through 4th and 5th grades students will shift from traditional small group reading to novel studies where teachers prep with a text based approach. Looking to see the variety of standards that are addressed in each of the books. A combination of comprehension questions and teacher guided prompting allow for the students to sharpen comprehension skills and show they understand what they have read. After reading, students will respond to text. As they write in response to text they are provided with academic feedback focused on comprehension of content, spelling, & grammar.

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

LearnZillion - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

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

LearnZillion - K-5 Expeditionary Learning

### **Additional Information about Instructional Materials**

Memphis Merit Academy Charter School also leverages Uncommon Schools curriculum (waiver approved with 2018 charter application to Shelby County Schools) for grades K-5. Memphis Merit Academy Charter School will leverage IMSE, Institute for Multi-Sensory Education, for Orton Gillingham foundational literacy skills training and instruction. Memphis Merit Academy will also utilize I-Ready and I-Ready Toolbox for reading intervention instruction.

**Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements.**

The Universal Reading Screener selected is the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, aimswebPlus, for students in grades K-5 and is given three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring).

We will use a triangulation of data to determine Tier groups for RTI<sup>2</sup> placement to compare data for placement of our students in the RTI<sup>2</sup> model. We review the benchmark data within one week of administration; students performing at or below the 24th percentile in one or more areas will then receive further assessment with easyCBM so that we can determine scholar placement of Tiers for instruction and intervention. MMA will monitor scholar reading levels through the administration of STEP, Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress at least 4 times per year.

**MMA's Approach to Dyslexia Screening Process**

Step 1. MMA will administer a nationally normed assessment, as a part of the universal screening process three times a year. In addition, MMA will administer EasyCBM to further triangulate data and determine student deficiencies and areas of focus for intervention. The assessment areas will also include assessment of basic reading, reading fluency, and written expression.

Step 2. MMA RTI<sup>2</sup> data team will consider the results of the universal screener, other classroom-based assessments, teacher observations, grades, formative assessments, summative assessments, and other relevant family medical history or information.

Step 3. MMA RTI<sup>2</sup> data team will identify "at risk": students based on the multiple sources of data, survey level and/or diagnostic assessments to determine student intervention needs. The assessments will measure phonological and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, rapid naming, and encoding skills.

Step 4-5. RTI<sup>2</sup> team makes decisions about interventions, accommodations, and etc. Parent notification will be made after the screening process and the intervention plan with Tiered Instruction will be implemented based on student deficit areas associated with the characteristics of dyslexia.

**RTI<sup>2</sup> Reading Intervention Structure**

Intervention Schedules. Memphis Merit Academy students receive hybrid instruction - both direct and computer based RTI Instruction, Monday through Friday. Tier II students receive 30 minutes of

skills targeted instruction and Tier III students receive 45 minutes. See the following intervention schedules below:

**Artifact 3a. INTERVENTION SCHEDULE -Tier I Core Instructional Time Requirements**

K-2--3-5 Language Arts

170 minutes daily

120 min. Literacy Block (uninterrupted)

30 min Writing

20 Read Aloud

170 minutes daily

120 min. Literacy Block (uninterrupted)

30 min Writing

20 Close Reading

Math

120 min. Daily

120 min. Daily

**Artifact 3b. INTERVENTION SCHEDULE -Tier II and II Core Instructional Time**

**Requirements**

Frequency/Duration

Computer Intervention Time

Small Group Intervention Time

Progress Monitoring

Tier 2

10th-24th percentile

30 min per day

5 days per week

90 minutes/week

Three 30 min sessions

60 minutes/week

Two 30 minute sessions

Bi Weekly

Tier 3

0-9th percentile

45 min per day

5 days per week

90 minutes/week

Two 45 min sessions

135 minutes/week

Three 45 minute sessions

Weekly

Tier 2 and Tier 3 scholars will receive intervention with the following ratios:

Tier 2 and 3 Intervention Ratios

Grade Levels

Tier 2

Teacher to Student Ratio

Tier 3

Teacher to Student Ratio

K-5

1:8

1:5

Evidence-Based Curriculum. The evidence-based intervention being used is an Orton-Gillingham based curriculum provided through IMSE, Institute for Multi-sensory Education.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

Description of Support for At Risk Students

Students identified as at risk for significant reading deficiency engage in the following amounts of reading intervention daily based on reading skill deficits identified through the Universal Screening process and receive the following instruction:

Tier II: 30 minutes per day

Tier III: 45 minutes per day

Additional Targeted Intervention focused on Foundational Literacy Skills

Edgenuity -digital platform focused on literacy based on student deficits

After School tutoring provided by licensed teachers

MMA uses Orton Gillingham as a research based intervention that uses a multi-sensory approach while focusing on developing phonological awareness. MMA's Tiers of Instruction are differentiated on several levels: intensity of instruction, amount of time, teacher ratio, and level of progress monitoring.

When delivering instruction MMA uses direct instruction of lessons from I-Ready Toolbox and IMSE lessons to deliver intervention for Reading and Math. Teachers will utilize the online platform, teacher toolbox resources, in combination with the strategies gained from Orton Gillingham training through IMSE to ensure survey level instruction for all tiered instruction. Both I-Ready and IMSE provide regular practice in foundational literacy skills and reading comprehension on the daily basis in small groups. These programs will provide opportunities for teachers to address individual scholar reading levels based on nationally normed assessments and universal screeners. Scholars will engage in regular practice with complex text and academic vocabulary while applying foundational literacy skills in all lessons. The RTI2 data team will meet monthly to review progress monitoring data for all scholars in all Tiers of instruction.

In addition to RTI, students will be participating in additional targeted intervention small groups based on identified deficit areas each day. Interventionists will use a combination of IMSE, Edgenuity, Reading Mastery and Life Long Readers to address the needs of the students.

### **Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports**

Parent Notification Plan (Home Literacy Reports)

After each universal reading screener, parents are given a parent letter detailing: their scholars' reading specific deficit area(s) and what that entails. Parents receive parent communication monthly around the progress of their students' gains during a 4 week period. Parents receive, every 5-6 weeks, student progress around Tier I literacy instruction being measured by the STEP assessment. Parents are provided a letter that details: student STEP level and how it correlates to being below, at, or above grade level and specifics on what parents can do at home to support students in literacy.

Memphis Merit Academy Charter School notifies scholars in kindergarten through 3rd grade (and will continue as grades are added to the school) of "at risk" status or identification of concern for reading deficiency (demonstrating mastery of skills from 0-25th percentile and classified as Tier II or Tier 3 in RTI2 for reading) at the summation of the universal screening process in the form of the parent letter and notification on the scholar's progress report and report cards. The parent letter will utilize parent friendly language, provide resources, and next steps for supporting their scholar on their individual reading level. MMA parents are informed in this letter of their child's reading level, deficiencies, plan of action for the school to support their child and resources to support their child at home. We emphasize to each family the importance of third grade reading proficiency. We explain children who are reading on grade level by third grade are more likely to graduate from high

school, enter and complete post-secondary programs, and remain gainfully employed later in life. MMA is dedicated to providing each child with the support they need to reach these outcomes.

### **Professional Development Plan**

#### PD Plan for Teachers

All Lead Teachers K-5 are enrolled in the Reading 360 training through the state of TN on foundational skills beginning summer 2021. All K-3 (4-5 in future years) will complete Week 1 virtually and Week 2 in person through resources provided by Reading360 Initiative, 35 hours of IMSE Orton Gillingham training, 16 hours of STEP literacy training provided by the University of Chicago beginning summer 2021, and internal professional development on foundational literacy skills based on Great Habits, Great Readers by Paul Bambrick, A. Settles, and J.Worrell, and Lifelong Readers led by Emily Hoefling.

Memphis Merit Academy instructional leadership team will conduct ongoing support to teachers in foundational literacy. Additionally, all teachers will participate in STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress) Training to align with MMA assessment windows at least 4 times per year to deepen knowledge on reading for K-3 and learn what strategies to implement to allow them to be successful. To support RTI2 teaching all RTI teachers will engage in Orton Gillingham training through IMSE this summer.

Moreover, teachers will engage in weekly planning and data team meetings to continue to develop their skills in foundational literacy strategies. Teachers will practice and plan to incorporate strategies to improve literacy instruction.

### **Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

In addition to 120 minutes of focused literacy instruction, students receive Read Aloud /Close Reading (Reading Comprehension) and Writing in response to narrative and informational text.