

## **Nashville Classical Charter Schools (East & West)**

### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 30, 2021**

**Updated: June 30, 2022**

**Updated: September 19, 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**

At Nashville Classical, Kindergarten through second grade scholars spend 160 minutes in foundational literacy instruction daily. Scholars participate in a small group literacy lesson and two whole group literacy lessons.

The first small group block is called “Language Arts”. This block uses the standards-aligned Core Knowledge Language Arts Skills curriculum. During this block, teachers focus on introducing and practicing phonics skills, phonemic awareness, and fluency. In a typical Language Arts lesson, teachers begin with a warm up drill to review previously taught letter sounds (phonics) and sight words (fluency). Then, teachers explicitly introduce a new sound and play a game to have scholars identify the sound in the context of words they hear (phonemic awareness). Then, scholars match a “picture of the sound”, or the spelling to the sound (phonics) and practice reading the sound in context using decodable texts. During this time, teachers model and prompt scholars for correct decoding and fluency. Then, scholars discuss the decodable text by answering comprehension questions. Finally, scholars practice known spelling patterns by spelling words with previously taught sounds, blends, and digraphs (phonics).

The third K-2 literacy block at Nashville Classical is called Listening and Learning. This block uses the Core Knowledge curriculum designed to introduce scholars to rigorous read alouds and build their background knowledge on a variety of subjects. Vocabulary is an important part of this block. Scholars are explicitly introduced to new Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary words and words with multiple meanings they will encounter within the text.

Listening and Learning also provides the foundation for the final literacy block at Nashville Classical - writing. Scholars in Kindergarten through second grade are taught an explicit writing lesson and given time to practice writing each day. Scholars are encouraged to “use the sounds they know” to spell unknown words phonetically during this block, creating a strong connection between Language Arts lessons and writing practice. Writing instruction includes developmental, formative, and summative tasks inspired by the Hochman method, which was described in the book *The Writing Revolution*.

While this robust literacy program has a proven track record of success, we’re still eager for more of our scholars to be independent readers by the time they leave second grade. Next year, these

improvements will largely focus on improving our foundational skill instruction during intervention blocks. To do this, we'll use data from our universal screener to “drill down” the specific skills scholars need support with and then use researched based intervention curricula to target those skills. The number of scholars we typically provide interventions for will likely increase after Covid-closures. Our instruction is aligned to the TN State Standards.

See here for a sample master schedule. Literacy blocks are color-coded in yellow.

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

At Nashville Classical, third through fifth grade scholars spend 200 minutes in literacy instruction every day. Approximately 100 of these minutes are focused on embedding foundational literacy skills. Scholars in these grade levels receive four types of literacy lessons each week: LA Skills, Great Books, Social Studies, and Writing.

During the LA Skills block, scholars interact with foundational literacy grade level standards. Teachers explicitly introduce vocabulary, morphology, and fluency skills and standards through a model or guided discourse. Scholars then practice the skills and standards through independent practice. During this time, teachers monitor scholar work to provide prompting and feedback.

During the Great Books block, the focus is on reading authentic, canonical texts that build scholar's readiness to read high school and college level texts. At the beginning of all lessons, scholars participate in a vocabulary lesson where they are introduced to Tier 2 vocabulary words they'll encounter within the text or use as they describe the text. Scholars learn the different parts of speech of the word and practice using the word correctly in context. Scholars and teachers interact with the books in two ways that deliberately builds scholar fluency to increase comprehension. The first is through a Read Aloud. Teachers choose short sections of the text to read aloud themselves. The goal of this time is to model excellent fluency to support comprehension. The second, more commonly used method, is to have scholars read aloud themselves using a procedure we call Control the Game or FASE reading. During these sections of text, scholars read aloud to the class with fluency support and feedback from the teacher.

Scholars at Nashville Classical also participate in Social Studies lessons that explicitly teach foundational literacy skills through texts on historical and social studies topics. We use the Core Knowledge Language Arts Curriculum as the foundation of this course. Scholars interact with new vocabulary words, fluently read texts aloud and independently with coaching from teachers, and discuss topics in comprehension conversations and in writing. The topics scholars learn about during Social Studies lays the foundation for the content of their writing composition pieces as well.

The final literacy block for third through fifth grade scholars at Nashville Classical is Writing. During the dedicated writing block, scholars are taught the writing standards and use the Tennessee writing rubrics to develop their writing skills. Scholars also learn and practice spelling and grammar standards during this block. The skills scholars learn during this dedicated block are embedded in other literacy blocks as well. Our instruction is aligned to the TN State Standards.

### **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 RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements.**

At Nashville Classical, we use the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener as our screener. This assessment is given three times each year.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

At Nashville Classical, we provide reading intervention to all scholars who score below the 25th percentile on our universal screener.

Scholars who score between the 11th and 25th percentiles are rostered to Tier 2 Reading Intervention groups. These scholars receive an additional small group reading lesson each day, approximately 20 additional minutes of daily instruction. Intervention lessons utilize Fountas and Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Instruction and Reading Mastery curricular materials, targeting scholars' specific skill deficits in phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, and vocabulary.

Scholars who score in or below the 10th percentile are rostered to Tier 3 Reading Intervention groups. These scholars receive two additional small group reading lessons each day, approximately 40 additional minutes of daily instruction. Intervention lessons utilize Reading Mastery curricular materials, targeting scholars' specific skill deficits in phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, and vocabulary.

All scholars rostered to interventions are progress monitored weekly (Tier 3) or bi-weekly (Tier 2). A data team review scholars' data after six weeks of intervention and progress monitoring. The data team uses this information to make decisions about the following six weeks of intervention. Scholars may receive more, less, or the same amount of intervention and the skills targeted may change based on the data from progress monitoring.

Intervention times are coded in blue on the master schedule we have attached.

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

Nashville Classical notifies families about their scholars' reading progress a minimum of six times each year. Families of scholars who are "at-risk" for a significant reading deficiency or have a significant reading deficiency are notified after scholars take the universal screener and halfway through each semester. This means families are formally notified five times per year in August, October, December, March, and May. Parent notifications include clear explanations of skill gaps and the extent of student need and information about how the gaps will be addressed. Parent notification includes no-cost activities for families to support learning at home and statements about the importance of third grade literacy.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Nashville Classical deeply believes in and values the impact of strong Professional Development. Nashville Classical teachers spend an average of 20 full days in professional development each year and attend hour-long sessions weekly. During the summer, Nashville Classical teachers return to school three weeks prior to the first day of school. During this time, teachers attend multiple asynchronous virtual professional development sessions on foundational literacy skills via CKLA, which will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Training will not include MSV cueing. These are complemented by in-person foundational skill-focused professional development sessions are complemented by sessions on key “teacher moves” like Checking for Understanding, monitoring independent practice, and ample sessions on creating warm and productive classroom environments. All Nashville Classical professional development sessions include practice for skills taught. This allows session leaders to give feedback before teachers apply the knowledge and skills in a classroom setting. Most professional development sessions are led by Nashville Classical school leaders or external experts with a track record of driving scholar achievement.

In addition, we will participate in the week long asynchronous training offered by the State of TN. All of our K-8 ELA and Literacy leaders will attend this reading training as well as our Gen Ed and Scholar Supports Teachers.