

Bells City School

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: August 20, 2021

Approved: May 23, 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 a foundational skills curriculum, Benchmark Advance, which is grounded in the science of reading 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.

These lessons/resources were designed using the following guideposts to the science of reading and the principles of structured literacy:

- **Decoding:** The phonics sequence offers a logical, research-based pathway through the key phonics skills, moving from easier to more complex skills and separating confusing sounds and letters. The curriculum has a review and repetition cycle built in to accelerate students' mastery.
- **Systematic and Explicit Instruction:** In which students are directly taught letter-sound connections (introduction, modeling, blending) and guided to apply those skills in reading and writing using common structured literacy techniques - both multisensory and multimodal.
- **Daily Application** to reading and writing: daily decodable text reading, including rereading of previously read stories to build fluency. These texts are instructive, engaging, and comprehensible. Students write in response to their reading.
- **Vocabulary and Content Knowledge:** the curriculum is organized in three-week knowledge strands that deepen vocabulary and content knowledge.

Benchmark Advance systematically provides students with a strong foundation in literacy. Foundational skills instruction begins on the very first day of school and continues each day as students move from phonological awareness to phonemic awareness, to phonics, and into a connected text. The curriculum includes explicit instruction and student practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Our curriculum allows for a minimum 45-60 minutes of daily foundational instruction and depends on if students need additional instruction for reteaching. The daily systematic and explicit instruction includes phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, sound-spelling correspondences, blending/building words, spelling, high frequency words, and word automaticity. The curriculum is designed for gradual release from teacher to student as students master content and has built in immediate review and learning supports for learners who may struggle with the content taught.

Our improvements have included more training on implementing the curriculum, teacher collaboration, and participation in the foundations curriculum in the summer. We will continue to prioritize training and ensure that all staff have completed the Reading 360 Course 1.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance uses an evidence-based approach to continue teaching foundational skills instruction in grades 3-5 but they morph into word study lessons. Instruction is aligned to the TN state standards and includes morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, and fluency with explicit supports, for fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. They begin by teaching phonics to support intermediate readers with decoding multisyllabic words, as those are the types of words they encounter in the texts in grades 3-5. These lessons, also, explicitly teach lessons on prefixes and suffixes, Greek and Latin root words, as well as morphology and the six syllable types, allowing the emphasis shift to how words work. Students will learn a specific skill and apply it to familiar text from the mini reading lessons. Then they co-construct learning into an anchor chart and spell words using that skill. They then apply that skill to an unseen text, which is a word study read. Independent practice is provided with online games and paper/pencil practice from the phonics and high frequency words and grammar and spelling activity books. This allows students to grow as readers and writers.

Our curriculum allows for a minimum of 30 minutes of daily foundational instruction and more time spent would depend on students who need additional instruction for reteaching. The daily systematic and explicit instruction includes and supports daily metacognitive, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, word study, and Grammar/Language mini lessons. The curriculum has a review and repetition cycle built in to accelerate students' mastery.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance

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

All children receive high quality grade level curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom (Tier I) from a Tennessee state approved curriculum. In addition to strong core instruction in a high expectations environment, as aligned in the RTI² framework, students who qualify for needing extra support are assigned to Tier II or Tier III based on data from universal screeners, data team meetings, and teacher input. The district administers a nationally normed, skills-based universal screener as part of the universal screening process. The universal screener is administered to all students, three times a year, to determine whether students demonstrate the skills necessary to achieve grade-level standards. The district currently uses Aimsweb to assess students. As a result of universal screenings, students may be identified as needing targeted intervention (Tier II or Tier III) in addition to the high-quality instruction they are receiving in Tier I. Tier II and Tier III will provide progress monitoring in the students' area of deficit addressing skills gaps. After benchmark testing occurs, data teams meet with grade level instructors to make student centered intervention decisions to plan for intervention that meets the needs of students. When students do not make any progress, teams meet to discuss intervention plans and adjust based on the deficit that has been identified. Data teams work through scenarios that include, changing the intervention, changing of placement, and/or consulting with other departments to make student centered decisions.

Students who have been identified as needing Tier III intervention receive the recommended 45 minutes daily. Students who have been identified as needing Tier II intervention receive the recommended 30 minutes daily. Tier III is progress monitored every week and Tier II progress monitors every 2 weeks. Interventions address specific student skill gaps and progress monitor these specific gaps.

Tier III uses the Sonday System Curriculum for Intervention. The Sonday System is a comprehensive line of materials designed to help educators provide multisensory reading instruction to students from pre-K through 8th grade reading levels. Using proven Orton-Gillingham methods, the Sonday System is simple, quick to implement, and highly effective. Also, built into the Benchmark Advance Curriculum, is daily re-teaching lessons for students who are struggling with new learning, this includes EL, special education students, and students who may or may not receive intervention services. Tier II occurs in the classroom with a grade-level or classroom teacher and Tier III occurs in the RTI classroom with an interventionist. We, also, assign extra staff, as the schedule allows, to work one on one with students in grades K-2. Another resource is that students who need additional support may be enrolled in the after school intensive learning program.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Communicating with parents/guardians is of utmost importance in gaining the support and understanding of parents. For communication purposes the following will be sent home to K-5 parents at the end of each benchmarking testing period, 3 times per school year:

- Parent letters (if their child qualifies for services) The district used the sample report in the RTI² Manual and created a report to send home to parents.

- Testing reports (to all parents of students who tested) This is an aimsweb created data report that provides a clear explanation of the skill gaps and the depth of student need.
- Home Literacy Reports are written in parent friendly terms that shows how the student scored on the assessment. This report includes skill gap analysis, grade equivalency, student score compared to national norms, and the student’s current reading level. We also include information about how student skill gaps will be addressed during intervention and no-cost activities for families to support learning at home.
- We provide information on the importance of 3rd grade reading proficiencies and the 4th grade promotion pathways.
- The district will include additional literature and host opportunities to train parents on the new literacy law, the importance of reading proficiency in third grade, and the impact it has on students.
- The district will host no cost, family literacy opportunities during open house, the back-to-school bash, during parent teacher conferences, and additional events will be scheduled as needed by stakeholders.
- The district will also send important resources and information to parents as they become available.
- The district will create an ELA Resources page on the school/district website and promote this using school letters, school meetings, and social media.
- Parents are always encouraged to meet with Interventionists or other Administrators during parent meetings and parent teacher conferences if they have questions or concerns. Interventionists will be available at school functions to discuss testing, intervention, instruction, and home reports.

Professional Development Plan

All teachers in grades K-5 completed the one-week early literacy training, hosted by the state, during the spring or summer of 2022. The Reading 360 Early Literacy Training (Week 1) was asynchronous and consisted of online, self-paced modules. The district will ensure that any new K-5 teachers will complete the training.

The district also participated in ELA training during the summer of 2021 with Benchmark Advance.

Our current PD plan for foundational literacy is as follows:

June/July	Foundational literacy PD with Benchmark Advance and Grade Level/ Subject Area Common Planning
August-May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher collaboration for ELA unit- and lesson-level preparation, weekly in common planning • Monthly grade level meetings focused on literacy • Partner with Northwest Core or State for ELA consulting and foundational literacy skills support, as provided by the State

September January May	Analysis of district universal reading screener data Teachers and leaders will review reports at the district, school, and classroom levels to determine both trends in deficits and individual student data to inform classroom practice, to build and meet the needs of RTI2 groups.
May	Refresh: Reading 360 Early Reading Training for K-5 teachers