

Blount County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: June 30, 2022

Approved: May 24, 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

Blount County Schools uses foundational skills curricula (Foundations, Wit and Wisdom, and Heggerty) grounded in the science of reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. K-2 classrooms meet and often exceed the recommended daily 150 minutes of Tier 1 ELA instruction with a minimum of 45 minutes of foundational skills instruction. Instruction is delivered through both explicitly and systematically teaching foundational “skills based” competencies (Foundations) and knowledge-based competencies (Wit & Wisdom). Those competencies are then seamlessly linked through intentional planning and practice. The use of decodable readers (Geodes) allows for this practice to be grade appropriate and directly aligned to the scope and sequence of foundational standards while also building knowledge.

Tier 1 instruction is driven by on-grade level standards. Teachers deliver instruction by strategically grouping students appropriate to the demands of the task. This may be either a whole or small group.

Clarity for the 150+ minutes is as follows:

- 15 minutes - Deep Dive Wit & Wisdom (Foundational Skills Based)
- 45 minutes - explicit Foundations instruction (Foundational Skills Based)
- 30 minutes - small group instruction and independent practice (Foundational Skills Based).
- ** 15 minutes** Kinder and 1st Grade only - Heggerty PA Curriculum (Foundational Skills Based)
- 60 minutes - core instruction in Wit & Wisdom (Knowledge based)

All ELA Instruction is grounded in foundational skills instruction which is the primary form of instruction in K-2. Reading, Writing, Speaking & listening are interconnected and built upon foundational skills.

Foundations utilizes Orton-Gillingham Principles of Instruction to teach foundational skills. These principles include:

- Explicit (Clearly explaining content)
- Systematic (Sequential and Cumulative)

- Multi-Sensory, engaging multiple learning modalities
- Repetition, multiple opportunities to practice
- Immediate feedback

Skills taught to mastery: (Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Sound Mastery, Phonics, Vocabulary, High Frequency Words, Fluency, Comprehension, Foundational Writing Components (handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization).

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Blount County Schools has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards, that includes instruction in morphology, spelling, writing, fluency, and grammar. Our curriculum materials are selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During a 90-minute block of ELA instruction daily the curriculum integrates all domains within the TN State Standards including supports for comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary as well as an evidence-based approach to teach foundational literacy skills standards for a minimum of 30 minutes each day.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Approved waiver for K-2: Great Minds Wit and Wisdom

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Great Minds Wit and Wisdom

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness (K-1st)

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-3 and iReady to students in grades 4-5.

Supplemental Screeners

iReady Suite for K-3

TN Universal Screener (aimswebPlus) for 4th and 5th Grade(s)

Intervention Structure and Supports

In the fall, students are given a universal screener (Aimsweb/iReady) to determine which students have a reading deficiency or are "at risk." Our grade level teachers, principals, and members of the school's data team will review universal screener results, grades, formative assessments, summative assessments, classroom performance, and teacher observations, in addition to any other relevant information of students. Those students who are classified as in need of intervention support will be given a survey level assessment to determine specific deficits and assigned appropriate small group intervention. Students receiving Tier II instruction will receive a 30-minute small group intervention

time to address their area of need. These students are progress monitored on their specific area of deficit at minimum two times per month. Students receiving Tier III instruction will receive a 45-minute small group intervention time to address their area of need. These students are progress monitored on their specific area of deficit each week.

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 reading deficiency. Our universal screener and benchmark assessments provide teachers with a detailed developmental analysis that provides teachers with a skill specific guide, and activities that directly address skill gaps. Data teams evaluate progress monitoring data at 4 ½ week intervals to inform decisions about duration, material, and intensity changes when a student is not showing progress.

Our students receive systematic and 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, and ongoing progress monitoring probes to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention that meets the requirements of the “Say Dyslexia Law”. Families are notified of which intervention program is prescribed. Our district utilizes the Wilson Reading Systems Intensive intervention and the SPIRE curriculum to support those students, as they are based on the Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic and explicit instruction and are 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 in a systematic way using research-based strategies with activities and assignments that support their skill deficit. For example, students who need instruction in phonics and phonological awareness will practice alphabetic principles, letter sound fluency, and word work.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Blount County schools has developed a specific and extensive parent communication plan that sets expectations for all schools, K-5. Parent communication is timely and is written in a family-friendly format. It specifically explains each reading domain assessed, individual student skill progress over time, current instructional needs and next steps for skill practice, including no-cost home activities for families. This notification also emphasizes the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade as well as identifies 4th grade promotion pathways.

In addition to the letter sent 3 times per year after each benchmark assessment, the school-based support team meets to review all student data and to identify students who may be at risk. After a school-based team has reviewed multiple sources of data in the screening process and identified skill deficits in need of intervention, parents receive notification of the student’s performance. The notification addresses specific areas of deficits, including those associated with the characteristics of dyslexia. Once identified, parent notification indicates that the student will receive additional skill-based group intervention daily in the specific area of need using a research-based reading intervention program with fidelity, that addresses basic reading skills (e.g., phonics, phoneme

segmentation fluency, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness), reading fluency, and/or reading comprehension.

For example, if a student demonstrates weaknesses in phonological awareness inconsistent with developmental expectations and requires interventions, the parent notification identifies the area of weakness targeted in intervention (i.e., phonological awareness) and the intensity level of the intervention (e.g., Tier 2, an additional 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week, in a small group setting in addition to core instruction). This ongoing communication, at least every 4.5-5 weeks, informs the parent(s) of the student's progress in skill development through tiered interventions, any changes in the intervention, and any additional concerns identified.

Professional Development Plan

Teachers in Blount County Schools have completed the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training Series developed by the TN Department of Education.

Our plan for providing PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

- June- K-5 teachers- A plan is in place for any new K-5 teachers to our district to complete the Early Reading Training within the 2024-2025 school year.
- Each year our district will deliver training to current K-5 teachers focused on foundational skills understanding and instruction as outlined below.
- Our district will also offer multiple day trainings for new ELA teachers and Instructional Assistants focused on building knowledge of foundational skills and the use of our district's HQIM to implement quality foundational skills instruction. This training will be followed up by on-site coaching and support.

Fall 2024:

- Wilson Foundations training for all new K-2 teachers
- Geodes (Foundations/Wit and Wisdom Decodable Readers) Small Group training for all new K-2 teachers
- 3rd-5th Grade ELA Foundational Skills Refresher
- New Instructional Assistant Foundational Skills training
- K-2 New Teacher Foundations Follow-up Training Day and On-Site Coaching visits

Spring 2025:

- K-2 Teachers Foundational Skills Next Steps/Instructional Refinement
- K-2 New Teacher K-2 New Teacher Foundations Follow-up Training Day and On-Site Coaching visits
- New Instructional Assistant Small Group/Geodes Training