

Elizabethton City Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: April 27, 2023

Approved: May 17, 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

In Elizabethton City Schools, students from Kindergarten through Second grade dedicate an average of 60 minutes each day to Foundational Skills instruction. This instruction is anchored within the Tennessee State Standards, serving as the overarching framework for all classroom activities. The curriculum for these grades relies on High-Quality Instructional Materials provided by Amplify, Skills and Core Knowledge, or CKLA.

Within the daily English Language Arts (ELA) block for Kindergarten through Second grade, students receive focused and explicit instruction, coupled with ample opportunities for practice, in various aspects of language acquisition. This includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Elizabethton City Schools prioritizes the professional development of its elementary teachers, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deliver early reading instruction. Participation in the Tennessee Early Reading Foundational Skills training has been instrumental in shaping the approach to early reading skills instruction within the district.

Moreover, the utilization of the Early Literacy Networks Grant has played a pivotal role in further enhancing Foundational Skills instruction and sustaining the implementation of High-Quality Instructional Materials across Elizabethton City Schools. All instructional efforts are closely aligned with the Tennessee state standards, ensuring coherence and consistency in educational delivery.

Ultimately, Foundational Skills instruction serves as the cornerstone of the curriculum, with daily lessons designed to provide explicit instruction and practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, laying a solid foundation for students' language development and literacy skills.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Elizabethton City Schools dedicates an average of 64 minutes daily to Foundational Skills instruction for students in grades three through five. This instruction adheres to the Tennessee State Standards, which serve as the guiding framework for all classroom activities. In 2020, the district adopted High-

Quality Instructional Materials, Benchmark Advanced, for these grades, which were subsequently implemented during the 2020-2021 school year.

Each day, the English Language Arts (ELA) block for grades 3-5 is structured to provide explicit instruction and student practice in various components of reading, including morphology, fluency, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, writing, and comprehension. An evidence-based approach is employed to deliver effective instruction utilizing our adopted High-Quality Instructional Materials. This structured approach involves several key elements:

- Read-Aloud sessions to engage students and promote comprehension.
- Mini lessons focusing on metacognitive skills, comprehension strategies, vocabulary development, word study, grammar, and language.
- Small group reading activities and independent reading, with opportunities for individualized support and conferencing.
- Mini lessons on writing skills to enhance students' writing abilities.
- Independent writing time with opportunities for conferencing to provide personalized feedback.

In line with a commitment to continuous improvement, elementary teachers in Elizabethton City Schools participated in the Tennessee Early Reading Foundational Skills training. Our goal is to ensure sustainability with this training by providing teacher support throughout the year.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance

Supplemental Instructional Materials

We use the following supplemental materials: Advanced Word Study: Accelerated learning of multisyllabic word reading and morphology - used in Grades 3-5

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

We administer the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, aimswebPlus, to our students in grades K-5.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Students in grades K-5 undergo Universal Screening three times per year to assess their academic progress. The screenings are strategically timed: Fall, Winter, and Spring utilizing the AimswebPlus assessment tool. Each elementary school employs at least two interventionists, one for English Language Arts (ELA) and one for math, who collect and analyze student data from multiple sources and provide individualized intervention. Students scoring below the 25th percentile on these

screenings undergo further assessment using tools such as the Spelling Inventory, PASS, PWRS, S.P.I.R.E, and WADE to pinpoint reading deficiencies and determine appropriate interventions.

Data teams composed of teachers, interventionists, school counselors, and administrators convene to analyze student data and decide on intervention strategies tailored to each student's specific skill deficiencies. Students then receive 45 minutes of tiered interventions daily, during which other school activities are suspended to ensure focused intervention. TIER II intervention, provided in small groups, is delivered by classroom teachers or designated TIER II interventionists for students below the 25th percentile, while TIER III intervention for students below the 10th percentile is administered by interventionist.

Various intervention programs are employed, including S.P.I.R.E., Wilson Reading System, Words Their Way, Sidewalks, and the West VA Phonics Program. Progress monitoring is conducted weekly across grades K-5, and fidelity checks are conducted each semester by building-level administrators. At the four-and-a-half-week mark, data teams reconvene to analyze progress and decide on the continuation, alteration, or termination of interventions, or whether a special education referral is warranted. Regular communication with parents occurs at each four-and-a-half-week check and after each Universal Screening.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Elizabethton City Schools utilizes the ESGI program for grades Kindergarten and one. This tool offers a comprehensive assessment of students' mastery of standard-aligned skills, with detailed reports provided to parents alongside quarterly report cards.

Emphasizing the critical role of reading proficiency by third grade, school administrators and teachers actively communicate this message at various events, including PTO gatherings, school events, parent involvement sessions, and parent/teacher conferences. Each elementary school's handbook thoroughly outlines reading assessments and their significance.

The school system conducts Universal Screeners (AimswebPlus) three times a year for students in grades K-5. Parents receive updates on their child's progress following each screening. Students scoring at or below the 25th percentile in Early Literacy and Reading Composites are identified as at-risk for significant reading deficiencies. Parents are promptly informed of their child's scores through parent-friendly written communication, accompanied by a detailed screening report that includes a clear explanation of skills gaps and the depth and extent of student need. We also provide information on how the gaps will be addressed during intervention. Additionally, parents are provided with an RTI² brochure to aid their understanding of Response to Instruction and Intervention supports. These home reports also include information on the pathway to 4th grade.

Students identified as at-risk receive tiered interventions tailored to their specific skill deficiencies, with progress monitoring weekly. Every 4 ½ weeks, parents receive written updates on their child's progress through parent letters and progress monitoring reports. Interventionists also hold parent conferences to discuss students' reading skill progress.

Elizabethton City Schools offer no-cost reading activities to families to support student learning at home. Collaborating with the Governor's Early Literacy program, ECS has implemented various initiatives, including the Betsy Book Bus, and the Summer K-3 Reading initiative which provided books and resources to students over the summer break. Each elementary school hosts Parent Involvement Activities focused on literacy, such as Make-it, Take-it Workshops, Book and Treat Night, and the Winter Survival Guide, which equips parents with materials and guidance for supporting reading activities at home. Encouraging parental involvement, the schools promote both shared reading experiences and independent reading among children.

Professional Development Plan

Elizabethton City Schools have developed a comprehensive professional development plan for ELA teachers involving a multifaceted approach aimed at enhancing teaching practices and promoting continuous growth. This plan integrates various elements, starting with regular professional learning community (PLC) meetings where teachers collaborate, share insights, and refine their instructional strategies. There is a focus on phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. These PLC sessions serve as forums for exchanging best practices, analyzing student data, and discussing pedagogical techniques.

In tandem with PLC support, the plan emphasizes structured unit and lesson preparation. Teachers engage in workshops focused on curriculum design, differentiated instruction, and assessment strategies grounded in phonics-based approaches. Through these sessions, educators prepare for units and lessons from their High-Quality Instructional Materials that align with standards, incorporate diverse learning modalities, and cater to the needs of all students.

The professional development plan underscores ongoing mentorship and coaching opportunities, where experienced educators provide guidance and feedback to their peers. Through observations and constructive dialogue, teachers refine their instructional practices, cultivate reflective habits, and foster a culture of continuous improvement within the school community.

In addition to all the above, Elizabethton City Schools prioritizes sustaining the Read 360 initiative by ensuring all new teachers complete the Week 1 modules. Teachers are encouraged to also attend Week 2 of the Early Literacy Training. Additional plans are in place for teachers who have already completed Week 1 to refresh their foundational skills instructional strategies by repeating Course 1 of the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training.

Overall, this holistic professional development plan aims to empower teachers with the knowledge, skills, and support they need to deliver high-quality instruction, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes and a culture of lifelong learning.