

## **Etowah City School**

### Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: April 25, 2023

Approved: May 15, 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 reviewing the master schedules for K-2 at Etowah City School, these grade levels spend at least 60 minutes per day of the 90-minute ELA block on foundational skills, the primary form of instruction. Instruction is through the Benchmark Advance reading curriculum which was chosen from the TN state approved list. Within this curriculum, which is based on the current Tennessee state ELA standards, foundational skills are taught through explicit and systematic instruction based on the Science of Reading. It also includes a purposeful scope and sequence with spiral review and repetition cycle, frequent application to real reading and writing experiences, and built-in differentiation. Within each lesson, foundational skills instruction is provided within categories such as metacognitive, comprehension, vocabulary, shared reading, phonics/phonemic awareness, small group reading, and independent reading. Also included are explicit instruction and student practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Skills lessons provide explicit and systematic foundational skills instruction within a mini lesson. Other skills such as vocabulary and fluency are often taught within a text that is used to also teach specific content knowledge. Students have daily opportunities for independent reading where they can practice newly learned strategies and skills using decodable texts at their instructional levels. Small group reading provides a time for appropriate scaffolding and monitoring of student progress.

All K-2 teachers have completed the first week of online training for Reading 360, with the vast majority also completing the second week of in-person training. Many of them are incorporating the curriculum (TNFSCS) into their daily instruction at some level within small groups or R.T.I.

For next year, we will continue working on unit and lesson level preparation. Our focus will be on intellectual preparation to be certain that our lessons are taught at the highest level. We will also continue with our weekly designated PLC time for teachers to collaborate.

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

In reviewing the master schedules for 3-5, these grade levels spend a minimum of 45 minutes per day of the 90-minute ELA block on foundational skills instruction. We are using the Benchmark Advance reading curriculum chosen from the TN state approved list. Within this curriculum, which is

based on the current Tennessee state ELA standards, foundational skills are taught through explicit and systematic evidence-based instruction based on the Science of Reading. It also includes a purposeful scope and sequence with spiral review and repetition cycle, frequent application to real reading and writing experiences, and built-in differentiation. Within each lesson, foundational skills instruction is provided within categories such as morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, and fluency. Some lessons provide explicit and systematic foundational skills instruction within a mini lesson. An example of this might be a grammar lesson on concrete and abstract nouns, which would be explicitly taught but then supported and practiced within a text. Other skills such as vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are often embedded within a text that is used to also teach specific content knowledge.

Students have daily opportunities for independent reading where they can practice newly learned strategies and skills using both decodable texts and texts at their instructional levels. Small group reading also provides a time for appropriate scaffolding and monitoring of student progress. Daily mini lessons in writing are also provided by the teacher followed by independent writing practice.

3-5 grade teachers have completed the first week of online training on Reading 360. Some teachers have incorporated the TNFSCS into their daily English Language Arts R.T.I. instruction.

For next year, we will continue working on unit and lesson level preparation. Our focus will be on intellectual preparation to be certain that our lessons are taught at the highest level.

### **Additional Supports**

Our district will have a targeted focus on literacy improvement as we support our school and student subgroups in many ways. Supports will be provided to teachers as well as students.

Teachers will take part in weekly Professional Learning Communities which will provide valuable time for collaboration allowing for instructional coherence and dedicated time to explore strategies to support our various student subgroups. During this time, teachers will also focus on lesson and unit preparation for strong foundational skills instruction. Individualized support for teachers will be provided by the instructional coach to zero in on student subgroup growth and achievement. The school's principal will conduct classroom walk-throughs and provide feedback to teachers to help strengthen classroom literacy instruction. In addition, a new principal will be leading our school next year.

Individual subgroups will receive targeted literacy supports. Tutoring and R.T.I. will be provided daily for those who are at risk or significantly at risk in reading. We will closely monitor this group along with the identified subgroups we are focused on. During this small group time, students will work to improve their knowledge of grade level standards during tutoring or work to improve their specific deficit areas during R.T.I. Summer learning camp will also be provided for any students who are not performing on grade level and need additional supports. Summer camp will provide an additional two hours daily of English Language Arts instruction and one hour of intervention time.

More collaboration with parents will also be a schoolwide expectation to keep parents better informed of their child's current performance level and of ways to help them improve through at home activities that support literacy.

### **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.**

We administer EasyCBM as our universal reading screener for students in grades K-5. We also administer the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, aimswebPlus, to our third-grade students for the spring benchmark.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

All K-5 students are tested with a universal screener (easyCBM) in the fall, winter, and spring. After each administration, district and grade-level teams meet to analyze the testing data. Our District Team then meets to collaborate and provide input about the students under consideration for RTI. This team consists of the principal, instructional coach, Title I supervisor, and special education supervisor. Next, our Grade-level Data Teams meet. At this point, teachers are asked to give input using classroom observations, classroom formative and summative assessments, etc. Teacher input helps to determine which students will receive interventions for Tier II and Tier III. They may also recommend other students for interventions as well.

Students are then placed into Tier groups. These students may also be given the PASS Assessment to help further identify specific deficit areas. An RTI plan is designed and put into place to address each child's specific deficit area along with specific interventions that address that deficit. Progress monitoring is also discussed in this plan to monitor each child's progress in their deficit area. Tier II students are progress monitored every other week and Tier III every week in their deficit area to track their progress. All K-5 grade levels have a 45-minute block of time during each day to conduct RTI.

During their RTI time, the Tier II students are pulled into a small group setting using evidence-based materials from our state approved reading series, Benchmark Advance, or from the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement. Tier II students may also work on reading skills modules from IXL, an evidence-based computer program that addresses their specific reading deficits.

During RTI time, the Tier III students are pulled into a small group and given 45 minutes of direct teacher instruction in their specific deficit areas. The lessons and materials used typically come from the evidence-based interventions provided with our state approved reading series, Benchmark Advance, or from the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement. Teachers may also

focus on reading passages for fluency, high frequency words, phonics and phonemic awareness activities, or close reading activities for comprehension.

Grade level data team meetings occur every 4.5 weeks. During this time, the teachers and RTI coordinator look at each student's progress monitoring data to be sure that the interventions described on their RTI plan are producing positive results to close the gap. If the student isn't making progress, then the intervention plan will be changed. This change could include a different strategy, different materials, or a smaller group setting. It might also be decided that an S-team meeting is necessary to discuss the possibility of special education testing. Progress reports are sent to parents every 4.5 weeks. District Level RTI Teams will meet after each universal screener cycle to review the data and discuss student progress.

During R.T.I. time, tutoring is also offered to students who struggle with reading. The previous year's TCAP data and current benchmark testing data are used to identify these students. If a student is not testing on grade level in reading but has not qualified for an R.T.I. group, then that student will be placed into a tutoring group. These groups are composed of three or less students with individualized instruction to help support student success on their grade level standards. Any students retained the previous year or any 3-5 grade students not proficient on the previous year's TCAP ELA test are also placed in tutoring.

After analyzing the URS data, all students whose composite scores on the easyCBM ELA benchmark assessment fall below the 25<sup>th</sup>ile and any additional students recommended by their teachers are administered additional survey-level assessments to help determine characteristics of dyslexia. After completing the Minimum Matrix and analyzing the data, students below the 25<sup>th</sup>ile and who exhibited a deficit in 50% of the grade-appropriate subtests are determined to be showing characteristics of dyslexia and are eligible for an ILP-D. These students receive intensive interventions as outlined in the Say Dyslexia law using programs (Benchmark Advance, TNFSCS) that meet the law's requirements. The school notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia and lets them know which curriculum is used to support those students. Parents are also notified of additional resources on dyslexia.

If a student is determined to be exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia, collaborative teacher meetings are conducted with each student's current and previous teachers to gather more information and determine the need for an ILP-D. Teachers can provide valuable classroom insight into areas that could support the need for an ILP-D and other areas that do not support this need. The data team and teachers will discuss at length every student who falls into the characteristics of dyslexia category. If it is agreed that an ILP-D is needed to help accommodate the student's needs, a parent meeting will be held to discuss. Parents will be informed of the ILP-D process and asked for their consent to move forward.

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

When any K-5 student scores in the "at risk" category on the universal screener results, there are several procedures that follow, as far as parent notification. A Parent Letter is sent home to notify parents that from recent testing, their child is experiencing some challenges in reading. It tells the

additional amount of RTI support time each day, discusses the importance of reading proficiently by the end of third grade, and gives some suggestions for no-cost home literacy activities, and online resources on our school's website. Parents also receive a copy of the Student Intervention Plan. This plan tells the specific area of concern, the skill gap to be progress monitored, the teacher, and the amount of daily intervention time. It also includes the research-based intervention the child will receive to address skill gaps. Along with these items, the student's benchmark data sheet from EasyCBM is sent home. It is printed in color to make the bar graphs easier for parents to see and understand.

Every 4.5 weeks, the parents will receive an RTI progress report. One type is a mid-term report. It informs the parents the name of the interventionist, whether it's reading or math, if it's a Tier II or III intervention group, and whether the student is making good – some – or insufficient progress. The additional type of report sent home is the Review of Progress report, sent home after the Grade Level Team meetings. It informs the parents whether the student is making good – some – or insufficient progress. Both reports also provide an additional area to write specific notes that may need to be communicated to the parents.

We have developed a Home Literacy Report that is sent home any time a student is identified with a significant reading deficiency or is at risk of having a significant reading deficiency. This report is sent home three times a year for students in K-5. This document is intended to help parents better understand the depth and extent of their student's needs. It provides a list of ways that parents can support their students at home, which includes visiting our school's website. Our website provides a link that includes all the reading and math computer-based programs that students use at school, so that parents and students can access those easily from home with no cost to them. The Home Literacy Report also includes research on the importance of students being proficient in reading by the end of third grade and information on the pathway to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. This report is posted on the school's website to make it available to all.

All the above-listed forms will be sent home in family-friendly language.

Fourth Grade Promotion Pathways: Parents will receive letters, from the state department of education website, in the fall, winter, and spring to explain the third-grade retention law. These letters will also include a web address to fourth grade promotion resources on the state department website. Parents will receive their student's benchmark data each time their child takes a benchmark test. A third-grade parent meeting will be conducted during a schoolwide open house to inform parents and answer questions about the retention law. Classroom teachers will also conduct individual parent meetings for students at risk of not being proficient on the third-grade ELA TCAP assessment.

### **Professional Development Plan**

All K-5 grade classroom teachers as well as the instructional coach were required to complete the first week of online training for Reading 360. Any new teachers who have joined our system have also been required to complete the online training. This foundational skills training is provided by the TN Department of Education. It is grounded in a phonics-based approach and provided by

trainers with a proven track record of supporting districts. The training includes phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. The training is provided by the Tennessee Department of Education; therefore, it meets all the state requirements.

#### Planned Professional Development:

- June-July 2024: Our district recommends Course 2 of the Early Reading Training for all teachers in grades Pre-K through 5 who have not already completed the training. The course may be completed in person during the summer and asynchronously afterward.
- August 2024: Review of TEAM General Educator Instruction Rubric
- September 2024: Analysis of district universal screener data (Meetings with grade level and district level teams to determine R.T.I. groupings and discuss ways to meet individual student needs.)
- Oct.-Nov. 2024: Unit and lesson level preparation Collaborative time during PLCs to participate in unit and lesson level preparation to strengthen what is being taught and how it is being taught.
- January 2025: Analysis of district universal screener data (Meetings with grade level and district level teams to determine R.T.I. groupings and discuss ways to meet individual student needs.)
- Feb., March 2025: Unit and lesson level preparation (Collaborative time during PLCs to participate in unit and lesson level preparation to strengthen what is being taught and how it is being taught.)
- April, May 2025: Reading 360 Early Literacy Training (Week 1 Online) Any K-5 teacher who has not completed the first week of literacy training will do so at this time.