

## **McNairy County Schools**

### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 29, 2021**

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**

Grades K-2 60 minutes daily

Foundational skills that are aligned to the TN state standards are routinely taught in a small group setting. Using data collected from various sources, students are placed in a small group for foundational skills instruction. Each group gets approximately 20 minutes with the teacher for explicit instruction in foundational skills that include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through student practice. These students then get 20 minutes of independent practice in a station designed for practicing foundational skills. Additionally, these students get an additional 20 minutes to practice using either a computer program or Ipad or an opportunity to practice foundational skills by reading a decodable text or other appropriate reading options. The adopted foundational skills instructional materials: Our district recently adopted the Benchmark Advance reading curriculum. Benchmark Advance carefully and 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. Picture Cards, Letter Cards, Word Cards, Sound/Spelling Cards, Elkonin Boxes, interactive games, and connected texts are provided as students build a strong foundation and become readers and writers.

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

The 3rd - 5th grade students have 90 minute blocks for ELA with approximately 30 minutes spent on foundational skills through embedded instruction. More is spent during intervention if needed for specific students. Evidence-based approaches are used to teach skills and the Benchmark Advanced curriculum is used for instruction and student practice. Teachers stress background knowledge, comprehension, vocabulary building, fluency, morphology, grammar, spelling, and writing throughout the 90 minute block. The instruction is aligned with TN state standards and designed for maximum student growth and engagement in reading.

#### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2**

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

## **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5**

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

### **Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements.**

Our district uses Aimsweb Plus as our screener. K-1 are screened three times each year and grades 2-5 are screened twice each year.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

Interventions and support available to students:

Our district believes so strongly in providing exceptional interventions to our students that we have teachers in place for the intended purpose of providing foundational literacy skills instruction to the population of students falling below the 25th percentile in ELA. We have a strategic system in place to allow students in the bottom 10th percentile to receive 60 minutes of daily intervention provided by either a classroom teacher via a walk to read program, an interventionist (teachers in place for this specific purpose) or in a small group setting in a classroom with their teacher. Students scoring in the 11th -25th percentile are provided the same services for 30 minutes daily. These interventions are monitored to ensure fidelity of instruction, that it is occurring daily and the appropriate skill deficits are being addressed. Our new Benchmark Advance curriculum offers a comprehensive foundational skills intervention kit that each ELA teacher K-5 received with their classroom set of materials. These materials are also being used by our interventionist. Additionally, our interventionist uses many research based programs to provide high quality foundational skills instruction to our students and to close skill gaps. Included in these are West Virginia Phonics, SPIRE, Read work, Reading A-Z and Sound Sensible. Progress monitoring is used to inform gap closure and progress. Decisions are based on the data and which programs to change or continue utilizing. If a student isn't progressing, the data team will make a tier change or determine what may be needed.

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

Following each universal screening for grades K-5, each school in the district holds data team meetings for the purpose of reviewing data and formulating a plan for improvement. K-3 students are screened three times a year and 4th-5th are screened twice each year. All involved personnel are included in this data review and decision making process. Following this meeting, the parent or guardian of each student who will be receiving additional support, will be notified by a parent-friendly letter of the skill deficit, extent of the student needs, the screener results and the plan of action. This will also include the importance of being able to read by the end of third grade. The letter also includes strategies and free resources to help with reading at home and information related to dyslexia. For the first notification of a student who will be new to the intervention program, parents are asked to attend a meeting to discuss any concerns. For subsequent notifications, we use the standard notification letter. These letters are to be signed and returned to verify parent notification. If our first attempt is unsuccessful, a second attempt will be made and followed up with a phone call.

## **Professional Development Plan**

Professional development plan focused on foundational skills for K-5 teachers: Our district employs two instructional coaches for ELA. These coaches have professional development opportunities planned for the purpose of offering instructional models for our K-5 ELA teachers on foundational skills. Additionally, our coaches are available for small group meetings within our five elementary schools to offer Tier I strategies to improve foundational skills instruction in the regular classroom. District-wide PLC meetings are also conducted that allow for teachers to share in specific grade level meetings about best practices and working with the new series and other new strategies. These PLCs will be occurring each 6 weeks with appropriate protocols in place. Administrators or ELA coaches will be attending these to report out and monitor for effectiveness. Ten teachers will be participating in the Reading 360 training modules during the summer of 2021 and sharing with other teachers during future PLC meetings. The remaining K-5th grade ELA teachers will participate in the Reading 360 training modules during the summer of 2022. This will provide a deep training for foundational skills instruction that is grounded in a phonics based approach. The training will include phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. These Reading 360 trainers have been proven to be experienced and efficient in presenting these modules to teachers. The two literacy coaches will continue to train on methods that address phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Teachers will be observed through the IPG, TEAM evaluations, and peer observations by literacy coaches and other teachers to demonstrate knowledge and competency. An administrator or district leader will attend each PLC. All K-5th grade teachers will have completed a minimum of 30 hours (equivalent to a week) on foundational skill instruction by May 2022. The two district trainers/literacy coaches have both been trained extensively as R2BR coaches by the TDOE, served as ELA teachers and RTI interventionists for over 20 years, and have researched and developed lessons and units focused on the parts of reading instruction that address phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary to help teachers best provide instruction. The two have successfully taught K-2 ELA, served as RTI interventionists, and the past 6 years as literacy coaches for the district. They train teachers through formal workshops, modeled lessons, one-to-one job embedded sessions, and serve the five schools that have K-5 students. They work closely with administrators, district leaders, publishers, and other professionals to search and provide needed information to all stakeholders in the science of reading. They have also trained teachers in other districts and states in ELA instructional strategies and methods to best instruct students.