

Perry County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: May 16, 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

Perry County uses McGraw-Hill, Wonders (2020) for grades K-2. It's a foundational skills curriculum grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Wonders is research-based, engaging, and designed to teach the rigor, intent, and depth of the TN standards while teaching the whole child. Wonders is a flexible program that focuses on foundational skills, developing close reading skills, differentiating instruction with scaffolded support, engaging students digitally, and informing instruction through assessment. It builds firm foundations for literacy while integrating science, social studies, and powerful literature. K-2 teachers have at least 90 minutes of daily instructional reading time. K-2 spends 45 minutes on foundational skills instruction including phonics (decoding and blending), phonemic awareness, print, word recognition, fluency, and written expression. As a supplement, teachers incorporate Heggerty. This program serves to expand students' phonemic awareness. During instructional time teachers use activities that build phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension, writing, and vocabulary or word work.

For example, students in kindergarten learn the phonemic awareness of individual letters. They learn sounds, recognize, and learn to write the letters, and begin blending words phonemically. As students learn more letters, they learn more words and use them in sentences. Students practice sentences by reading and writing them. In grade 2 students begin responding to literature, both verbally and through written expression. Narrative and opinion writing samples are taken throughout the first semester. Additional reading practice is incorporated in a 20 to 30 minutes literacy block where science connections are made. The decodable readers reinforce phonics instruction and offer opportunities for students to practice fluency independently in school and home. Wonders engages students in work around fluency, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. These skills are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection. The stories contain unfamiliar words that allow the students to practice the use of context clues for vocabulary extension and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing. New vocabulary with each story is reviewed throughout the week

of the new story, and daily questions over comprehension are discussed with individual students, partners, and in groups.

The weekly test for first grade covers fluency in the student workbook, reading, writing companion. Students partner read circling words ending in *ing*. Example of vocabulary question; "Which word is a stronger way to say turns around?" Whirls. For phonemic awareness, the teacher says, "pick the picture with the medial sound of short i. Choices are wig, dog, and cup. Phonics check: choose the word that names the picture. phone, farm, fern. Comprehension questions include main idea, character, setting, inferencing, an example in Curt and Herbie in Space. "Why does Curt want to tell his family about the class trip?"

In K-2, our RTI interventionist also tries to reinforce skills being taught in tier I, and through weekly parent newsletters (homework sheets) to inform parents of standards and skills being taught in the classroom for reinforcement at home.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Perry County adopted Wonders from McGraw Hill for 3rd-5th grades. Wonders is aligned to Tennessee ELA standards and approved by the Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Wonders is grounded in research by building strong foundational skills. Our 3rd-5th grade classes are departmentalized, and students receive 85 to 120 minutes each day of ELA instruction (30 minutes of foundational skills) and are embedded fluency, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, writing, morphology, and comprehension during the block. Foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of the literacy block.

In grades 3 and up, a weekly phonics lesson helps students decode multisyllabic words and is integrated with reading instruction. Skills are embedded within the lessons. Students apply their learning in decodable readers, practice building and blending words with the target skill, and work with spelling words containing the target sound-spelling. The lessons include components for knowledge-building through comprehension of complex texts. Students listen, read, write, think, and speak about the text. They correctly use the weekly vocabulary in their writing. Importance is placed on the vocabulary each week, so students have a correct comprehension of the story. Additional reading practice and knowledge-building through comprehension of complex texts are incorporated in 30-45 minutes in Science and Social Studies. Teachers model the writing process daily and keep a running record of each child's progress.

Very few skills are taught in isolation in grades three through five. Most skills are introduced and embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection. Additional reading practice is incorporated in science and social studies each day. Explicit support is provided for fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The teachers make connections between the disciplines when possible as an important transition takes place in 3rd grade. Students transition from learning to read in kindergarten through 2nd grade, to reading to learn in 3rd grade. Third grade is an important marker for reading proficiency. Children who are reading on grade level by third grade are more likely to graduate from high school, enter post-secondary programs, and remain gainfully employed later in life. Our fifth-grade students engage in enriched vocabulary units. This includes

using context clues, analogies, and sentence/story writing, and consistently using journals and writing outlines for each type of writing (narrative, informative, opinion).

Students do weekly fluency checks in class with their reading partner, individual, and in class groups. They are encouraged to practice each week with the fluency sheet at home with someone.

In the fall students will be able to decode multi-syllable words. Students can use their word analysis skills when using decodable texts aligned with the sounds taught in explicit instruction.

Our improvement plans for the upcoming school year will be centered around the purchasing of approved research-based materials that can be used throughout the day with small groups that receive high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring. Another improvement across our district is the hiring of a full-time literacy coach that will support our teachers and give feedback to them as needed. Also, during our collaborations in weekly PLC meetings, teachers will continue to internalize the instructional planning through weekly Lesson Preparation Protocols and Unit Preparation Guides as they continue to implement the HQIM within the classroom.

We have tried to reinforce the importance of reading on grade level by third grade and keep parents/guardians well informed on the third-grade retention law and their options.

Additional Information

Perry County Schools is committed to improving student literacy.

- Perry County received extra support in the 2023-24 school year from an ELA consultant from the Core Office and will continue in 2024-25. We worked on HQIM walk-throughs, lesson prep, and unit prep.
- We purchased an evidence-based assessment prep tool, Mastery Connect, in 2022-23. We've seen improvement in our scores from using Mastery Connect (Case). K through 12th grade uses this program.
- In the 2023-24 school year, we hired a district Math Coach.
- For the 2024-25 school year, we hired a district Literacy Coach.
- For 2024-25, we hired full time district ESL coordinator.
- A positive to note is our SWD increased their LRE in General Education.
- We continue to strengthen our summer learning and bridge camp.
- All teachers PreK through 5th will be encouraged to attend the Early Reading Training week 2 (in-person) training. 100% PreK through 5th grade teachers have completed week 1, on-line (asynchronous), and several completed week 2 in 2021.
- We will be adding an after-school program at Lobelville Elementary through Save the Children. Linden Elementary presently has an after-school and before school program to tutor and help with homework. We also provide a meal and bus service.
- This year we began family reading night and workshops to help parents understand more about the curriculum and learn about the third-grade retention law.
- All tutors are teachers or teaching assistants that have completed week 1 of the Early learning Reading 360 in a 1:3 ratio setting.

- Perry County Save the Children has a kindergarten readiness coordinator for our district, and she works with forty 4-year-olds and their families. She meets every other week with the child to work on skills and activities to be successful in kindergarten. She also has a monthly family meeting at one of the elementary schools. Families work on activities together with their children. For example, in December each family built and decorated a gingerbread house. They provide mini libraries throughout our county such as city parks, laundry mats, and ball parks.
- We will set up training for new staff/teachers and a refresher training with McGraw-Hill for July 30th on Wonders, Wonder Works kit, and SRA Reading Mastery.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

McGraw Hill Wonders

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

McGraw Hill Wonders

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness is used as supplemental materials in grade K-2, tier I. Heggerty Phonemic Awareness is a curriculum that focuses on teaching students to be automatic decoders of print by providing consistent and repeated instruction in understanding and manipulating individual sounds in words.

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

Each fall students are given a universal screener, Aimsweb, to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are "at risk". Our testing team and RTI Team review the universal screener data to determine which students are "at risk" with scores below the 40th percentile in addition to reviewing other student data points. Those students are classified at risk and need Tier II or Tier III intervention. The students scoring 0-15th percentile are placed in Tier III intervention groups and the students scoring 16-40th percentile are placed in Tier II intervention groups. The intervention teacher then administers the Aimsweb survey level assessment to drill down and the PASS test to identify specific deficits. An intervention program is then chosen from our list of approved interventions by each interventionist to best address skill deficits.

All of our interventions and schedules are aligned with expectations outlined in the RTI² manual. Our students receive small group intervention each day for 45 minutes. The interventions are evidence-based and are differentiated by tier. Each intervention addresses specific student skills gaps. If an intervention is proving not to be effective for a student, the data team will consider a change in intervention for that student that could include a change to the duration, material, or intensity.

Progress monitoring is completed every 10 days. The classroom teachers meet with the RTI coordinator every 4 1/2 weeks to review student data and discuss concerns to refer to the RTI Team. Our students are assessed in the fall, winter, and spring on Aimsweb.

Tier II and III students are also screened using additional survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. This information is then sent to the parents for permission to create an ILP-D. (25th percentile and below on URS / 50% of subtest on crosswalks) The Say Dyslexia Law information is also sent home to parents and interventionists use programs that meet the law's requirements. We administer the RAN (rapid automatic naming) to kindergarten and first grade. An encoding (spelling) test is given to first through fourth three times a year, and to kindergarten in the winter and fall. Listening comprehension is given in K-2.

We currently use the following intervention materials: Foundations, Wilson, FCRR, Heggerty, Moby Max, SPIRE, SRA Reading Mastery, and SRA Reading Laboratory.

We added a tutor this year as required by the 3rd grade retention guidelines. This tutor is a previous third grade teacher, and she tutors our 4th grade students who chose the tutoring route for promotion and any other students that have repeated a grade.

We also offer participation in the summer learning camp and bridge camp during June to help bridge learning gaps in reading and math. Our district partners with Save the Children to provide before school tutoring and after school tutoring.

All K-5 parents receive a parent-friendly report that explains what their child scored on the URS. It outlines the areas the student is deficient in an area of excellence. More information about this letter can be found in the parent notification section.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Our teachers notify parents in grades K-5 if their child has been identified as having a significant reading deficiency or is at risk following the fall universal screening. Scores are communicated in parent-friendly language. These notifications are also sent home following the winter and spring universal screening.

We require interventionists to notify parents of what Tier their student is placed in and how much time each day they will receive intervention. In the parent letter we provide a clear explanation of the child's skill gaps and the depth and extent of student need. We also provide information about how those gaps will be addressed during intervention. We added a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade and the promotion pathway to 4th grade. Parents are notified every 4 1/2 weeks of their child's progress or lack of progress and if any changes are being made to their child's intervention plan. These Home Literacy Reports are sent home three times each year (K-5) following our universal benchmark screening.

Once students are placed in a tier and a small group for intervention based on their Aimsweb scores and encoding and decoding skills, the interventionists administer the PASS and RAN tests to determine phonemic awareness and phonetic deficits. Interventionists drill down to determine the appropriate intervention level for each student. We currently have the following interventions that

are on the state approved list: Foundations, Wilson, FCRR, Heggerty, Moby Max, SPIRE, SRA Reading Mastery, and SRA Reading Laboratory.

Specific strategies that parents can complete at home for intervention are suggested. Strategies recommended are activities that can be completed at home without costing the parent/guardian. (We participate in the Governor's Literacy Program, Ready4K (Parent/Powered), and posted on our district page the TDOE (toolkits for families) resources such as Understanding Student Testing, Understanding Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2), and A Guide for Parent-Teacher Conferences and Engaging with Your Child's School. We also posted on the district website and school Facebook pages the TDOE resource, Activities for Struggling Readers. The schools had printed copies to hand out to parents during parent-teacher conferences. It listed some simple ways you can practice with your child at home such as preparing to read, focusing on sounds, playing with rhymes, blending sounds, noticing patterns in words, modeling fluent reading, and reading together. Parents are given details on what steps of intervention the school will be providing for the student based on the skill gaps and student needs that were identified by the URS. Continuous communication with parents is especially important. They also receive letters three times a year, after each benchmark. Communication between teachers and parents takes place through newsletters, communication apps, and phone calls.

In Perry County we have a PreK through fourth grade school, a PreK through eighth grade school, a middle school fifth through eighth, and a high school nine through twelve so our parent notification letters for K-5 are the same.

We held a fall and spring family meeting with parents of third and fourth grade students and emphasized the importance of reading on grade-level. Handouts were given and discussed, including the TN Pathways to Promotion for 3rd and 4th Graders.

Professional Development Plan

We are focused on improving literacy in Perry County and ensure our teachers receive quality foundational literacy skills professional development.

All of our current K-5 grade reading teachers, interventionists, Special Education teachers, and reading tutors have completed week 1 asynchronous Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. This training focuses on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. Beginning May 2024 any new teachers and assistants will have the opportunity to complete the new cycle of the Reading 360 Early and Secondary Literacy Training.

- In our district, of the PreK through 5th grade classroom reading teachers, twelve of the twenty-three reading teachers have completed weeks 1 and 2 of the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training. This training emphasizes practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. They also received a kit of decodable readers for completing the training.

- In previous years, Perry County hosted Early Reading Training for week 2. Teachers that participated in the trainings then came back and trained their peer teachers in their grade level professional learning communities and discussed in their PLCs.
 - This year we are again offering Week 2 in-person Reading 360 Early Literacy training to any teacher K-5 that did not previously complete the training being offered by TDOE. We will continue to have PLCs focused on applying the literacy knowledge learned in Early Reading Training Weeks 1 & 2.
 - We will also provide additional in-person literacy training on our "Wonders" curriculum series.
 - Our principals and assistant principals have worked the past two years with our South-Central Core ELA consultant, on our cycles of continuous improvement with HQIM and ELA IPG Walk throughs, unit and lesson prep protocols, and student work analysis. Perry County will continue working with the TDOE ELA consultant for the 2024-25 school year.
 - My Credentials was purchased in the 2023-2024 school year for extra PD training. It contains modules on the science of reading, HQIM, Learning Loss, and remediation and supports for all readers. These modules will continue to be incorporated as professional development.
 - Overcoming Literacy Learning Loss (Module 1): Developing Readers Using the Science of Reading.
 - Overcoming Literacy Learning Loss (Module 2): Developing and Remediating Students Using the Science of Reading.
 - Overcoming Literacy Learning Loss (Module 3): Remediation and Supports for all Readers.
 - Deploying High-Quality Instructional Materials (Module 1): Introduction to HQIM.
 - Deploying High Quality Instructional Materials (Module 2b): HQIM for Reading.
 - Deploying High-Quality Instructional Materials (Module 3): Implementing your HQIM.
- **Modules 1-6 are all 6-hour trainings*
- September, January, and April 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.
 - Monthly PLCs and RTI Team meetings w/leaders

Grade level collaboration in Reading, progress monitoring data, and current intervention being used. (Teachers meet weekly to collaborate and plan their unit and lesson plans in Wonders.

Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

In the 2024-2025 school year our district plans to employ a full-time, district-wide literacy coach to further support our teachers with implementing the science of reading with research-based programs and best practices to improve student learning outcomes.

Each year we participate in the Governor's Literacy Program. It provides free books packs mailed to the home of students at no charge.



We participate in the Ready4K (Parent Powered) text program.

Perry County partners with Save the Children to have a before school and after school tutoring program. We run buses in the after-school program and feed students a hot meal. The program focuses on reading, math, tutoring, and exercise. They also provide a kindergarten readiness program that works with forty 4-year-olds and parents to get ready for kindergarten. Monthly family nights are held at the two elementary schools, and Save the Children set up mini outdoor libraries for students around the county.

In the last two years we've held family nights for our third and fourth grade parents trying to make them aware of the third-grade retention law and options available for their child. Last year we hired someone to manage the third-grade retention law and tutoring for our district and to track students URS scores, mastery connect scores, help with TCAP ELA retesting, and filing appeals and/or explaining to parents their options.