

## **Valor Collegiate Academies**

### **Valor Flagship Academy & Valor Voyager Academy**

#### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 31, 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**

This does not apply to Valor, as we only offer grades 5-12.

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

Our 5th grade curriculum calls for daily, embedded foundational skills instruction that includes components of knowledge and background building with a minimum of 30 minutes of embedded instruction with explicit supports for morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, and fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension.

Our two middle schools have 1.5 core literacy blocks in grade 5. All fifth grade students attend a 54 minute integrated ELA block daily all year. The first semester of 5th grade, they also receive a second 54 minute integrated composition and grammar 4x weekly to provide students with additional instruction in those areas, averaging to 81 min of daily literacy instruction across the year. In addition to the 81 minutes of literacy instruction, students engage in 45 minutes of personalized learning (PLT) time (we call it “literature seminar”), during which time students receive additional personalized reading supports focused on foundational skills.

Both the core ELA course and the second composition and grammar courses of study are aligned to the TN ELA standards and reading science. In grade 5, we use internally designed curricula that draw from Achievement First’s open source curriculum and are supplemented by No Red Ink, revised or organized to align with mastery of the TN ELA standards. Though the daily instructional routine varies, all daily instruction includes components for both knowledge-building (to build and improve the ability to comprehend complex texts and apply that knowledge as they listen, read, write, think, and speak) and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing for at least 30 minutes per day.

The fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection. For example, in our core literacy block, students may activate prior knowledge or briefly build background knowledge needed to build schema for the day’s reading. Then, students likely engage in independent or partner work in a complex, grade level text with a prompt from the teacher - either silently or aloud, making

annotations to make their thinking visible and to help them with literal and deeper comprehension of the text. Through a series of scaffolded questions and prompts, through both discussion and writing, students summarize the core content of the text, engage in textual analysis aligned with the standard(s) of the day, and engage in word and sentence level analysis to build meaning individually, in pairs or small groups, and as a whole group.

Students also receive explicit vocabulary instruction, wherein teachers provide explicit instruction for the Tier 2 or Tier 3 vocabulary words needed to engage fully in the day's lesson or tasks. In some lessons, students may engage in more intensive analysis of morphemes to understand how they can use parts of words to determine meaning, and then use their word knowledge as they engage in their other literacy activities. Note: In 21.22, we are planning to engage in more frequent explicit vocabulary instruction. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in nearly all aspects of these blocks and is dedicated to developing students' holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

Though we consistently analyze student learning data to see where we can improve, we believe this approach (together with our approach to RTI, described below) has been reasonably successful. For example, in each of the last 3 tested years (2017, 2018, and 2019) we have received level 5 TVAAS growth designations at both of our middle schools.

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

Approved waiver for other materials

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

Approved waiver for other materials

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

Valor uses NWEA MAP as our universal screener. Using data gathered from NWEA MAP, we then use Aimsweb Plus with a subset of students to benchmark their progress three times annually. Aimsweb Plus complies with the dyslexia screening requirements established in §49-1-229 and with the universal screening requirements established in Tennessee's RTI<sup>2</sup> framework manual.

#### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

In the fall, students are given a universal screener (NWEA MAP) to determine which students are potentially at risk. Our Managing Director of Schools, RTI coordinators, school principals, school psychologist, and grade level English teachers review data from the NWEA MAP to determine which students' screener score is between the 0-25th percentile. Students demonstrating need and classified as Tier II or Tier III are given an additional reading benchmark (Aimsweb Plus) to further determine appropriate placement in intervention groups allowing us to more strategically group students by need.

Students receive daily, small-group intervention for 45 minutes. This intervention happens in the Lit Sem/PLT blocked outlined on the schedule above. The personalized learning time for students who qualify for RTI is tailored to their specific needs and delivered in student:teacher ratios that reflect

that requirements for Tier II or Tier III intervention. Depending on the identified need, Valor determines the appropriate intervention a student will receive. Students with comprehension deficits receive strategic pre-teaching of text and text features as well as explicit vocabulary instruction on Tier II and Tier III vocabulary words. Additionally, intervention providers include explicit modeling of annotation strategies to help make visible the deep thinking done during reading, and scaffolded questioning. Students also receive explicit vocabulary instruction on Tier II and Tier III words. Fluency practice is embedded within these daily intervention routines. Some students also receive a research-based intervention including Phonics First by Brainspring which is a research-based program that uses the Orton Gillingham approach.

Data teams meet to review progress monitoring data to determine if the student is responding to the intervention and/or if a change in the intervention is necessary. Data teams view this information holistically including evaluating a student's attendance record, engagement in the intervention, and consideration to any other potential formative data students that would indicate a response to the intervention. Data teams meet quarterly (approximately every 9 weeks) allowing time to gather the requisite 8 - 15 data points gathered.

Depending on this view, Valor determines if a change in the intervention or the intervention provider is needed.

In the 2021-2022 school year, students will also be screened on the aimswebPlus Dyslexia screener per Tennessee law requirements.

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

Valor has a robust notification plan wherein we share progress with families and notify of "at-risk" status within existing communications. These communications are intended to supplement our overall communication plan. All communications are provided in two primary languages (English and Spanish) with additional at-risk communications provided in Arabic as well.

The cadence of communication is as follows:

Mid-way through quarter 1: Progress report, beginning of year MAP family report, supplementary communication explaining MAP report and at risk status as well as tier of intervention  
End of Quarter 1: student report card and intervention update

Mid-way through quarter 2: Progress report and intervention update

End of Quarter 2: student report card and mid-year intervention update; mid-year MAP report

Mid-way through quarter 3: student progress report and intervention update  
End-of-quarter 3: student report card and intervention update

Mid-way through quarter 4: student progress report and intervention update

End of quarter 4: end of year report card and end-of year MAP report  
Valor sends home to all families a student report (see Artifact 5) from NWEA MAP.

These reports are very robust and include all instances a student has taken the MAP assessment before during their time at Valor. It also includes very detailed information about which skills

students are strong in and which skills still need development. With this report, Valor also includes a personalized family letter that includes the following information: student RIT score in math and reading, RIT percentile, at risk status for math and reading, skill gaps identified by the NWEA MAP assessment, description of intervention that a student will receive, and no-cost home learning activities for families to engage in should they choose. Specifically, Valor recommends that families monitor their student learning at home by supporting their student in their independent and classwork reading and asking students questions about the texts they are reading.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Teachers at Valor will participate in the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Valor will integrate the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training Series into our professional development calendars we've crafted for the school year.

In June 2021, our plan for providing PD for all 5th grade teachers is as follows: in June 2021 one of our teachers is joining the Reading 360 Week 1 training asynchronously. Our additional teachers in 5th grade on a time-line later determined by the district, but as early as possible) receive the equivalent of one week's foundational skills training by completing the Reading 360, Week 1, asynchronous training modules provided by the State.

### **Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

We are submitting this plan on behalf of both Valor Flagship Academy & Valor Voyager Academy.