

Capstone Education Group
Cornerstone Prep – Lester, Cornerstone Prep - Denver, & Cornerstone Prep School

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan
Last Updated: September 20, 2023
Approved: May 10, 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

Kindergarten through second grade students spend a minimum of one hour in foundational skills instruction daily. CEG uses Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA). This is known as our "Skills Block" in our state approved Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum. Throughout the course of this hour, students receive explicit instruction and practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

The CKLA program is a foundational skills curriculum grounded in research based best practices and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. The Skills Block uses a structured phonics approach, grounded in the Phase Theory of Dr. Linnea Ehri, which describes behaviors related to the types of letter-sound connections students are able to make as they learn to read and write. The lessons and assessments explicitly address the Reading Standards: Foundational Skills, as well as Language standards associated with spelling and letter formation.

The CEG ELA approach serves not just to promote foundational skills, but to develop student's knowledge, perspective, and character to deeply understand themselves and the world around them. As our ELA program aims to ensure command of reading, writing, speaking, and listening of complex text and ideas, our literacy approach demands that different parts of the ELA block serve different purposes in enhancing student proficiency: Shared reading, language, writing, and independent reading are all designed to meaningfully promote a cohesive literacy program aligned to TN State standards. The Knowledge Strand component of the ELA block uses rigorous texts for the purpose of building vocabulary, comprehension, and knowledge through domains on various themes. Each strand follows a read aloud lesson format where the teacher reads the text to students and asks questions to provide opportunities for active class discussion. Students also have an opportunity to respond to the text orally and through various writing tasks. By the end of grade 2, students have learned all the sound-spelling correspondences in the English language and are able to navigate grade-level text independently.

Next year, CEG teachers will receive professional development through Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) that will ensure that teachers are able to use data to correctly place students in groups for small group instruction. This data will allow teachers to address individual foundational skills needs. CEG will provide teachers with additional training and guidance on ensuring all lessons are aligned to TN State Standards.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Our district has an integrated literacy block for 3rd – 5th grade aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. The district adopted Imagine Learning: EL Education 2.0 curriculum. The curriculum materials are selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons, our students receive a total of 90 to 120 minutes of ELA instruction. All daily instruction includes components of knowledge-building for about 60 minutes per day and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing for at least 30 minutes per day. The adopted curriculum also engages students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection.

The CEG ELA approach serves not just to promote foundational skills, but to stretch student's knowledge, perspective, and character to deeply understand themselves and the world around them. As our ELA program aims to ensure command of reading, writing, speaking, and listening of complex text and ideas, our literacy approach demands that different parts of the ELA block serve different purposes in enhancing student proficiency: Shared reading, language, writing, and independent reading are all designed to meaningfully promote a cohesive literacy program aligned to TN State standards. In ELA, the core instructional routines include a standards-based curriculum, text-based questions and discussion, and vocabulary active practice. Data will be used to determine small groups for instruction.

During the summer, teachers in grades 3-5 will have the opportunity to participate in the state's Foundational Literacy training. Building on the learning from this training, network leaders will strengthen the teachers' understanding of the role of the foundational literacy standards in students' ability to grapple with complex texts and tasks.

Additional Supports

In order to effectively plan instruction to address Unique Learning Needs (ULN) the school will provide systems and structures for all teachers (i.e., General ed, EL, Special Education) to collaboratively internalize units, analyze student work products, lessons, and in the development of ILPs and IEPs. These structures are consistent with the CEG Blueprint and will include data meetings, PLCs, and PDs specifically designed to foster the time for collaborative planning, making sound instructional decisions, and improving academic supports to address ULN. Deans of Instruction and/or school leaders will be facilitators providing guidance/agenda based on relevant data. Additional content for collaborative planning will come from Learning Walks designed to respond to instruction, pacing guides of the curriculum, and network support.

Each week, school leaders will observe teachers and provide them with a score/performance level and feedback in the Teacher Observation Tracker. The observation should focus on the identified domain/indicator of that week or coaching cycle. After each week, the observations will also include any relevant or previous indicators. Feedback will be delivered either face-to-face or via email. By mid-year, all teachers should have a minimum of 3 per quarter in the Teacher Observation Tracker from the DOI and/or principals. By the end of the year, all teachers should have a minimum of 12 scores in the Teacher Observation Tracker. The average of this data will be shared with staff during mid-year and end-of-year meetings.

Observation Debrief: All debrief sessions, weekly or bi-weekly, should include glows and grows (no more than 2 of each), specific bite-sized action steps with opportunities for teachers to reflect and practice. When observations are rated, scores should be shared during the debrief.

Teachers, interventionists, and RTI2 Coordinators will engage in professional development provided to support implementation of district adopted intervention materials and updates within the RTI2 CEG Blueprint. A key focus will be addressing needs based on progress monitoring, monitoring with fidelity, and academic support during Tier 1 instruction. In partnership with CORE and TDOE ULN contacts develop a Professional Learning session (s) to build awareness and understanding of relevant actions steps in targeted instructional decision making. Additional support will be provided through PLCs, regular coaching, and data meeting sessions tailored to equip general education teachers with pedagogical practices needed to serve SWDs.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Imagine Learning EL Education (formerly LearnZillion Expeditionary Learning)

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

Capstone Education Group uses NWEA-MAP 3 times per year (August, December, May) for benchmarking and progress monitoring and is on the state approved list. NWEA-MAP complies with RTI2 and Say Dyslexia screening requirements established in § 49-1-229. The screener is used to assess reading and math in the fall, winter, and spring for grades Kindergarten through 5th grade. Students identified as scoring in the bottom fifteen percentile of NWEA MAP are assessed further using the MAP Reading Fluency assessment and are screened for Dyslexia.

We also administer the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) to students in third grade for the Spring Benchmark.

Intervention Structure and Supports

CEG uses NWEA-MAP 3 times per year (August, December, May). This data provides teachers, students, and parents with an accurate assessment of student progress in mastering the basic skills. When administered at regular intervals over time, it is possible to find out whether an individual

student, or an entire grade level, is making satisfactory progress in these basic skill areas. Teachers can use this assessment information for instructional planning for individual students or an entire class. For those students who have been identified as needing Tier II and Tier III interventions, CBM probes are administered through Fastbridges.

Universal screening data from NWEA-MAP as well as student classroom performance, TCAP results, prior intervention outcomes (if applicable), teacher observation, survey assessment data is used during RTI Data Team Meetings to determine placement, intensity, and scheduling of students into Tier III, Tier II, Remediation, or Enrichment. Students who are placed in Tier III receive the most intense intervention daily for at least 45 minutes and are progress monitored at least every other week. Students who are placed in Tier II receive intervention daily for at least 30 minutes and are progress monitored every other week. The universal screener and survey level assessment will determine the specific deficit the student will be provided support and progress monitored on. RTI School Data Team Meetings will be conducted every 4.5 weeks to evaluate student progress, possible movement in placement, changes in intervention, and any new referrals. School data teams also discuss responses to intervention based on fidelity checks.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Our district notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child is “at-risk” for or has a significant reading deficiency immediately after district schools complete the fall universal screening. Students’ scores are communicated in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. The district defines how students are assessed and what a “significant reading deficiency” means. The parents are told what research-based intervention their student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive services. This is coupled with a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade and information about the pathway to 4th grade. We also provide no-cost activities for families to support student learning at home.

These important literacy letters are sent home at least 3 times annually. Parents are subsequently notified of their child’s progress, or lack of progress, after the first 4 ½ week data team meetings. In the parent notifications/communication, data teams note the intervention(s) and any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data as well as recommended activities that will support students in the area of deficit. These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-5 on frequency of data team meetings.

Professional Development Plan

CEG served as a host site, and teachers in our district participated in the Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. A plan is in place for any new teachers to our district to complete the Early Literacy Training before teaching.

Our plan for providing PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

- July – Select leaders, teachers, and interventionists will participate in the yearly Memphis Literacy Conference, presented by the Memphis Literacy Institute. This one-day conference is designed to provide research-based best practices in the Science of Reading for teacher and leader professional development and networking opportunities for K-12 classroom teachers, instructional coaches, program specialists, and administrators.
- Aug. 21-May 22 – All leaders, teachers, SPED, ESL, and interventionists will participate in monthly on-going Foundational Skills PD led by district level leaders.
- During the 2024-2025 school year, ELA, SPED, ESL teachers and leaders will receive ongoing professional development through Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling, commonly known as LETRS initiative. LETRS instructs teachers in what literacy skills need to be taught, why, and how to plan to teach them. And it delves into the research base behind these recommendations. Each session will engage learners in instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. The training is free of MSV or cueing strategies. Teachers are required to demonstrate knowledge and competency of presentation material at the end of each session and in their teaching through live practice, 1:1 coaching, and weekly observations. At the end of the professional development sessions, educators will earn a certificate of completion.