

## Meigs County Schools

### Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 12, 2021

Updated: June 21, 2023

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

The Meigs County School district uses a foundational skills curriculum grounded in the science of reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. The curriculum provides explicit, systematic, sequential, and evidence-based instruction of grade level foundational skills including: alphabetic principle, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, word composition, fluency, sentence composition, grammar, and conventions. The materials, questions, and tasks provide regular practice and spiral review to address the acquisition of print concepts, including alphabetic knowledge, directionality, function, structures and text features. Instructional opportunities are frequently built into the materials for students to practice and gain decoding/encoding automaticity; this includes prosody and reading fluency in oral reading. The curriculum contains built in differentiation strategies also.

Materials include explicit sequence of instruction. They also support ongoing and frequent assessment (formative or summative) to determine student mastery and to inform meaningful differentiation of foundational skills, including a clear and specific protocol as to how students performing below standard on these assessments will be supported. This curriculum has a designated block of time (120 minutes) for instruction in grades K-2. Here is an example of the block breakdown by minutes:

K -Whole Group

Phonemic Awareness- 30 (including circle time)

Phonics-30

Comprehension - 25

Writing-30-45

Small Group - 15-20 additional mins with additional PA, Phonics, Comp, and Writing activities

1st Grade-Whole Group

Phonemic Awareness - 10-15

Phonics - 30

Comprehension - 30

Writing/Grammar-20

Small Group - 15-20 additional mins with additional PA, Phonics, Comp, and Writing activities

2nd Grade- Whole Group

Phonemic Awareness-5

Phonics - 20

Comprehension-30-45

Writing/Grammar - 30-45

Small Groups - 15-20 additional mins with additional Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Comprehension, and Writing activities

During instruction, teachers use the Say, Spell, Read, Write routine where the teacher explicitly teaches a sound, students practice the sound in whole group, the teacher models writing the sound, the students write the sound, then students apply the skill in independent practice (small groups or individual).

For example, in first grade during the second nine weeks(Unit 4), students will know how to decode consonant digraphs th, sh, ng. Students learn to blend the sounds together to say the word, then blend and build on the word by changing letters through modeling, pocket charts, letter tiles, etc.. Ex. sing--replace the s with an r to make ring. Then students have the opportunity to practice using decodable texts that are aligned with the sounds taught in explicit instruction. These decodable texts are available for at home practice through ebook and print. The curriculum also establishes routines for explicit instruction with corrective feedback strategies and built in differentiated strategies.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in opportunities for teachers to continue to refine student application through independent practice, whether it be small group or individual. We also want to improve in designing opportunities for reading and writing conferences within our instructional plans.

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

The Meigs County School district has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 grounded in the science of reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block, students receive 2 hours of ELA/SS instruction, with a minimum of 90 minutes devoted to ELA specifically. However, often the SS is embedded to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection. The materials address foundation skills to build comprehension and provide questions and tasks that guide students to read with purpose and understanding, making connections between acquisition of foundational skill, and making meaning during reading. They provide coherently sequenced questions and tasks

to support students in developing literacy skills. The culminating tasks require students to read, discuss, analyze, and write about texts while participating in a volume of reading to build knowledge. All daily instruction includes components for knowledge-building and apply that knowledge as they listen, read, write, think, and speak daily for about 60 minutes. The other 30 minutes includes foundational skills instruction that includes, fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing. Nothing is taught in isolation. All skills are embedded within the lesson and spiral review opportunities are available to allow students to succeed in mastery.

For example, in 4th grade, Unit 3 is about Government. In the first week, students share prior knowledge of government. In vocabulary lessons, teachers provide explicit support for vocabulary needed to access and comprehend complex texts throughout the unit. Domain-specific vocabulary words such as Congress, governors, and elect are introduced and displayed. General academic vocabulary words using vocabulary routines established within the curriculum such as structure, maintain, crisis, federal, funds, and prosper are also introduced to students. The teacher sets a purpose for the first read as students engage in reading a complex text. Students then summarize and distinguish between important/unimportant details during guided practice. Next, students have the opportunity to plan, research, draft, revise, and edit an Informative/Explanatory Essay about a problem the government helps solve utilizing the problem/solution text structure and using text evidence to support their answer. Students use the practice of distinguishing important/unimportant details when identifying problem/solution. Students use their word knowledge and vocabulary skills as they engage in group discussion and writing tasks. Foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of the block and is dedicated to developing students' holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in opportunities for teachers to refine student application through independent practice, including implementation of small groups to emphasize continued application of foundational skills. We also want to improve in designing opportunities for reading and writing conferences within our instructional plans.

### **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.**

EasyCBM is the screener used for students in grades K-2 and 4-5. Our 3rd grade students will be given the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (Aimsweb). Both screeners comply with RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

In the fall, winter, and spring students are given a universal screener (EasyCBM or Aimsweb) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are "at-risk". Our grade-level teachers, interventionists, and principals review the universal screener data to determine which students score between the 0-25%. Those students demonstrating need are classified as in need of

Tier II or Tier III instruction. Students classified as Tier II or Tier III are given a diagnostic assessment (such as the PASS test) to determine specific deficits in order to best assign students to a small group with an intervention that will narrow skills gaps. Tier 3 students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 45 minutes in their area of greatest deficit. Tier 2 students receive daily, small group intervention for 30 - 45 minutes in their area of greatest deficit.

We have research-based options for reading intervention support available to our students who are “at-risk” and/or who have been identified with a significant reading deficiency. Our recently adopted ELA curriculum, Benchmark Advance contains an assessment and reading intervention in which teachers can find activities that directly address skills gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI students based on their individual diagnostic test. If that intervention is not proving to be effective, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as, but not limited to, Exact Path and/or Really Great Reading) will be utilized. Data teams meet at least every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. If there is a concern expressed by a parent or any member of the team, meetings will be held as needed. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, engagement,, etc.) as part of the decision making process before change is made to the programming or provider. Progress reports are given to the family every three weeks.

Our students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students are also screened using additional survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who do demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs (such as, but not limited to, Really Great Reading) that meet the law’s requirements. Our district uses a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics. Families are notified which curriculum (such as, but not limited to, Really Great Reading) is used to support those students, as it is based on the approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and is considered a strong support for those students.

Interventions take place daily during a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that make them stronger in skill deficits. For example, students who need instruction in comprehension may read a new text and answer scaffolded questions using interventions that includes teacher guided corrective feedback responses and comprehension questions or they may use readers and questioning from the Benchmark intervention system. For students who need fluency support, they receive intervention through Benchmark Advance. We also use sources such as EPIC for classroom and at home learning to encourage the development of skills.

Our K-3, RTI, and special education teachers will be taking part in the Read 360 training, completing two weeks of training with the foundational skills materials.

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

The Meigs County district notifies all parents of students in K-5 regarding screening results as well as, if their child is "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-25th percentile) immediately after the district's schools complete the fall universal screening. Communication to parents is also given after the winter and spring universal screenings. 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. Parents are told what areas that the student needs intervention and what interventions are provided. In our communication with parents, information is provided on the importance of a child being able to read by the end of third grade.

The district defines how students are assessed and what "reading intervention" means. Parents are notified of their child's progress, or lack thereof at least three times per year upon completion of benchmark screening. Data teams meet at least every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. If there is a concern expressed by a parent or any member of the team, meetings will be held as needed. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, engagement,, etc.) as part of the decision making process before change is made to the programming or provider. Progress reports are given to the family every three weeks. In the parent notification, recommended activities/suggestions (that do not require purchased resources) are given to parents to support students in the area of deficiency.

Additionally, teachers notify, communicate with parents weekly through newsletters to outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains that students will be studying.

## **Professional Development Plan**

Teachers in our the Meigs County Schools district will participate in the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Our plan for providing PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

April 2021- All teachers in grades PreK through 3, with third grade ELA content teachers only, special education, elementary reading interventionists, and elementary instructional coaches will participate in Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series, asynchronously. This training will focus on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach using sounds first. We will ensure that participating educators earn a completion certificate prior to beginning Week 2 training at the end of May.

May 2021- Our district has requested to be a host site for Week 2, in person training, of the Early Literacy Training series for all teachers in grades PreK through 3, with third grade ELA content teachers only, special education, elementary reading interventionists, and elementary instructional coaches. If the maximum of 50 seats are not filled, we will include grades 4-5 ELA content teachers. This week of training will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.



Summer 2021- If grades 4-5 ELA content teachers cannot participate due to maximum numbers, the district will encourage them to have the week 1 of the asynchronous Early Literacy Training series completed by the end of the summer.

We plan to have all remaining PreK-5 teachers and any new hires trained by the end of summer June 2022.