

Polk County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 18, 2021

Updated: August 9, 2022

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

In the Polk County School System, foundational skills instruction is the primary method to teach reading. In grades K-3, the amount of time devoted to literacy instruction is 90 minutes per day, with foundational skills scheduled for at least 45 minutes. In grades 3-5, the amount of time for ELA instruction is usually 80 minutes (varies by school and can be up to 90 minutes). Grades K-3 emphasize all elements of the foundational skills—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Grades 3-5 begin to shift more to vocabulary and comprehension, with the other foundational skills taught as necessary embedded in their ELA time. Instruction and curriculum are aligned with TN Standards. Teachers emphasize the five components of literacy instruction: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. We also incorporate work in morphology, grammar, spelling, and writing.

In SY21-22, we will be able to collaborate more on our scheduling, resources, strategies, etc. as we are able to institute again our PLCs and county-wide grade level meetings. In these discussions, we will examine our practice in teaching foundational skills and discuss whether our 3-5 teachers are continuing to emphasize them (especially fluency) as necessary.

We have submitted samples of schedules from each of our three elementary schools (South Polk, Copper Basin, Benton) that are representative of what the entire grade at that school teaches.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

In the Polk County School System, foundational skills instruction is the primary method to teach reading. In grades K-3, the amount of time devoted to literacy instruction is 90 minutes per day, with foundational skills scheduled for at least 45 minutes. In grades 3-5, the amount of time for ELA instruction is usually 80 minutes (varies by school and can be up to 90 minutes). Grades K-3 emphasize all elements of the foundational skills—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Grades 3-5 begin to shift more to vocabulary and comprehension, with the other foundational skills taught as necessary embedded in their ELA time. Instruction and curriculum are aligned with TN Standards. Teachers emphasize the five components of literacy instruction: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and

comprehension. We also incorporate work in morphology, grammar, spelling, and writing. An evidence-based approach is used to teach foundational skills in all grades, including 3-5. Teachers use explicit support to teach foundational skills, with particular emphasis in the lower grades on phonics and fluency and stronger emphasis in the upper grades on comprehension and vocabulary. Our literacy instruction is aligned to Tennessee ELA Standards, and our curriculum materials are approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. We use these materials as explicit supports for our fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction in grades K-5.

In SY21-22, we will be able to collaborate more on our scheduling, resources, strategies, etc. as we are able to institute again our PLCs and county-wide grade level meetings. In these discussions, we will examine our practice in teaching foundational skills and discuss whether our 3-5 teachers are continuing to emphasize them (especially fluency) as necessary.

We have submitted samples of schedules from each of our three elementary schools (South Polk, Copper Basin, Benton) that are representative of what the entire grade at that school teaches. We clustered our grades in K-3 and 4-5 because we have departmentalization at the 4-5 level with self-contained classrooms in grades K-3.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - K-2, 4-5 Into Reading, Tennessee

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - K-2, 4-5 Into Reading, Tennessee (Grades 4 and 5)

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

In SY19-20, the Polk County School System went through the adoption process to select ELA textbooks and instructional materials used to teach students to read based on foundational literacy skills. The materials were from the list approved by the State Board. We adopted HMH Into Reading TN for grades K-5. We were granted a waiver for 3rd grade HMH materials; however, the State Board of Education eventually did add this grade to their approved list.

At this time, we do not use any supplemental foundational skills resources. We chose to work fully from our newly adopted materials to see if there would be a need for additional resources. In SY21-22, if we decide to incorporate supplementals into our instruction, they will align to Tennessee state standards and fully address phonological awareness and phonemic awareness.

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

Our Universal Screener is the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener. It meets the dyslexia screening requirement established in 49-1-229 and the universal screening requirements in the Tennessee RTI framework manual. It is administered three times a year to K-8 students in

three windows established by administrators using timeframes recommended by the department.

The data is collected, analyzed, and then used to establish supports for students falling into Tier 2 and Tier 3. The results of the reading screener will be submitted to the department.

Also, if we feel we need additional screening to provide more data for dyslexia or other areas, we will use the state universal screening option.

Intervention Structure and Supports

The Polk County School System follows the intervention structures as outlined in Tennessee's Response to Instruction and Intervention. Screeners are administered three times a year to identify at-risk students. Students who need interventions (having a significant reading deficiency as defined by universal screening data and an equating process or through TCAP data) are placed in Tier 2 or a Tier 3 instructional support for the specified amount of time. Reading interventions are provided to students based on identified needs from screeners and periodic progress monitoring. Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction is provided/overseen by certified teachers using approved research-based materials, and progress monitoring on a regular basis takes place. Periodic data meetings are held to discuss student progress and whether changes in interventions are needed in duration, material, and intensity if no progress is taking place.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Beginning SY 2021-2022, the Polk County School System will provide Home Literacy Reports to notify and engage parents and families in the student's literacy progress. The Home Literacy Report will be sent within two weeks after each administration of the universal reading screener to the family of K-3 students (annually for grades 4-5) having a significant reading deficiency as defined by universal screening data and an equating process or through TCAP data.

This report will include the following:

1. The students' scores explained in parent-friendly language
2. Explanation of the student's skills gaps and the depth and extent of student need
3. Information about the importance of a student being able to read proficiently at the end of the third-grade level.
4. Reading intervention activities that the parent may use with their student at home to improve reading proficiency provided at no cost to the family

5. Information about the specific reading interventions and supports that the school system recommends for that student, including what is being provided through the RTI process.

If the student has the characteristics of dyslexia, this Report will include information and resources concerning this reading problem.

Professional Development Plan

The Polk County School System will provide professional development for teachers in grades K-5 and other interested teachers (ESL and special education, for example) to allow teachers to be trained in foundational literacy skills instruction. PD will be entrenched in a phonics-based approach and absent of cueing or MSV strategies. Some training that we are participating in/arranging in the future include the online modules and in-person foundational skills training provided by the SDE, dyslexia information, HQIM training based on recent SDE webinars, local PLCs and meetings by grade level.

See the Literacy PD Calendar for more details.

Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

After the online modules and in-person training we are participating in, we will know what to emphasize more in our instruction. One of our focuses in literacy instruction will be to ensure our teachers are following the research.