

Robertson County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 14, 2021

Updated: November 14, 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

Robertson County Schools uses Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts in grades K-2, 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. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (60 minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. Robertson County elementary schools have literacy blocks that range from 150 to 180 minutes daily in grades K-2 with the 60 minute daily designated block for foundational skills instruction.

The foundational skills instruction contains activities and practices that teach the following foundational skills: phonological awareness (recognize rhyming words, blend and segment compound words, blend, segment, and count syllables, blend and segment onset-rime, blend, segment, and count phonemes, segment compound words, and isolate individual phonemes) phonics (identify individual letter sounds, decode regular words, decode words with common rime families, identify sounds for letter combinations, decode one-syllable words with letter combinations, identify common spellings for long and short vowel sounds, know and apply final -e conventions, read words with r-controlled vowels, read words with l-controlled vowels, read words with inflected endings, read words with prefixes and suffixes, read two-syllable words with various syllable types, read multi-syllable words, and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis in text) fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The scope and sequence of the curriculum is based on research of effective instruction for struggling readers. Guidelines for the sequencing of skills are: teach preskills before the new skill or strategy is presented, introduce high-utility skills before less useful ones, introduce easy skills before more difficult ones, separate strategies and information likely to be confused, introduce new information at a realistic rate, and provide adequate practice and review. For example, students learn basic letter-sound correspondences for consonants and vowels and the VCe rule before they are required to decode words with the VCe pattern in them.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the transition from lesson planning to lesson internalization and prepping for instruction. The adoption of high-quality instructional material has changed how teachers prepare for instruction. Teachers no longer gathering resources; they are internalizing the quality material and preparing to implement it in their classroom.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Robertson County Schools uses Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts in grades 3-5, 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. 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 120 to 150 minutes. All daily instruction includes components of knowledge-building for about 75 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.

For example, our fourth-grade students are now beginning the domain on The American Revolution. They begin by briefly activating prior knowledge and read independently and/or aloud. After the daily read-aloud (or independent reading in on-grade level, complex text), the students may summarize the content (through a think-pair-share model), unpack the most essential vocabulary ("word work"), respond to a series of scaffolded questions, and write a response to an inferential question that requires students to use evidence from the text to support their answer. For example, in vocabulary lessons teachers provide explicit support for vocabulary needed to access the complex text. In one lesson, the students study the root "port" as in import, export, portable, etc. Students use their word knowledge as they engage in group discussion and writing activities. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of this 90-minute block and is dedicated to developing students' holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

Our improvements for next year are grounded in the transition from lesson planning to lesson internalization and prepping for instruction. The adoption of high-quality instructional material has changed how teachers prepare for instruction. Teachers are no longer gathering resources; they are internalizing the quality material and preparing to implement it in their classroom.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

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

EasyCBM is our universal screener in grades K-5 for benchmarking and progress monitoring and is on the state-approved list. EasyCBM complies with RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements. The screener is used to assess reading and math in the fall, winter, and spring in grades K-5.

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

Intervention Structure and Supports

Robertson County Schools actively works to identify students who may need intervention. Students are screened for decoding and encoding concerns through the universal screening process including phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, sound-symbol recognition, and rapid naming. Students in grades K-8 complete the universal screening and data review process in reading, math, and writing three times per year. Students in grades 9-12 are screened using the early warning system and then referred to the universal screening high school proficiency tests if deemed necessary. School data teams review the results from the skills-based screener as the first filter to look for students who may demonstrate one of the characteristics of dyslexia. After this initial screener, school data teams review other relevant data on the student to gain more information from classroom data, benchmark assessments, and state testing results to identify students at risk. Additionally, students flagged through the first two review procedures are assessed using survey-level and diagnostic assessments to determine specific intervention needs. All students are placed according to their results into enrichment, remediation, tier 2, tier 3, or skills-based intervention.

For students identified as needing an intervention to address a characteristic of dyslexia, the intervention programs address decoding and encoding skills, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition as well as rapid naming skills according to the individual needs of the students.

Students placed in remediation are given reteaching and practice opportunities on standards. They are monitored using common formative assessments, classroom data, and progress monitoring by school data teams to determine if they are making adequate progress or need additional support through tier 2 or tier 3. Students placed in tier 2, tier 3, and skills-based intervention are provided intensive, systematic instruction that addresses the foundational reading skills identified as deficit areas for each student. Interventions occur five times per week, with times ranging from 30 to 45 minutes each session. Students in the intervention are progress monitored at least bi-weekly on instructional level probes and monthly on grade level probes. Students and teachers review these results as they are completed to monitor each student's individual goal.

School data teams meet every 4.5 weeks to determine if there is adequate progress towards each student's goals. The team then recommends continuing the current intervention, making a change, or considering a special education referral. If the team does not see progress and changes have been implemented without success, the student is referred to the support team for a possible psychoeducational assessment. If a student qualifies for special education services and the team determines skills-based intervention to be the LRE, the student can receive this intervention in the special education setting to address the academic deficits more intensely.

All district-level interventions have been reviewed and determined to be valid and reliable. The students are placed in interventions aligned to their specific skill deficits. The programs are systematic, cumulative, explicit, multi-sensory, aligned to address deficiencies, and language based.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Our district notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child is “at-risk” or has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-25th percentile) immediately after the district's schools complete 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 the student needs. The parents are told what intervention their students will receive and the amount of time they will receive services each day. This is coupled with a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade.

The district defines how students are assessed and what a “significant reading deficiency” means. Parents are subsequently notified of their child’s progress, or lack of progress, after the 4.5-week data team meetings. In the parent notifications/communication, data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress, as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data. Also included are recommended activities that do not require purchased resources for supporting student deficits (activities are not tailored by child but tailored by skill deficit generally). Students are actively involved in the process by setting goals and charting progress within the intervention program and the progress monitoring results. These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times annually and are shared in 4th and 5th grades annually.

Additionally, the ELA curriculum contains parent letters in the younger grades that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the coming week that will inform and equip parents to work with the child. Families can better understand how to support their student(s) through questions about their texts and awareness of what foundational skills their child(ren) is learning.

Professional Development Plan

Robertson County Schools Pre-K through grade 5 teachers had the option to participate in the Early Literacy Training, Weeks 1 and 2. To date, 104 teachers will attend Week 2 training in the district the week of June 28th and 65 teachers will attend Week 2 training the week of July 5th. Additionally, 75 teachers have signed up to complete Week 1 only. Teachers participating include classroom teachers, EL and SPED teachers, interventionists, and academic coaches.