

Dickson County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: December 1, 2023

Approved: July 1, 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

Dickson County Schools uses 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. Foundational skills instruction will be the primary reading instruction in grades K-2 with at least 45 minutes designated on teaching and practicing these standards and skills. Our Benchmark Advance curriculum includes explicit instruction and student practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum will be used as needed to supplement our Benchmark materials. Improvements will include using the strategies our teachers learn during the Reading 360 course.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Our district uses a reading program grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Our curriculum materials were selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Our 3-5 ELA block includes lessons focused on knowledge-building, comprehension, foundational skills, and writing. Students will spend at least 30 minutes each day engaged in morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, and fluency instruction and/or practice. The Benchmark curriculum teaches the Tennessee State Standards through knowledge building lessons. For example, the first unit answers the essential question, "How do we respond to nature?" The teacher introduces the unit and activates prior knowledge. Students are instructed on how to reread to identify key details and determine a main idea. Questioning and student practice lead to greater comprehension of the text. Students read a variety of texts both independently (a variety of on grade-level, complex texts) and within the group setting. The teacher will lead the students in building vocabulary throughout the lesson. This first lesson of this unit focuses on the meanings of idioms and how to use similes and metaphors. Each week of the unit has a grammar focus, the first week's instruction and practice is on prepositional phrases. This grammar work is embedded within the texts students are reading for knowledge building purposes. Throughout the first week of instruction, students use the knowledge they're gaining around the essential question to produce an informative essay. Foundational skills are embedded in all aspects of the ELA lesson.

We utilize resources from the 95% Group as well. Our 3rd grade teachers use the Multi-Syllable Word Routines and 4th grade teachers implement the Vocabulary Surge program.

Additional Supports

For our schools with TVAAS data at a level 1, we are offering targeted support through materials, schedules, interventions, and tutoring. Our Instructional Coaches will be working with teachers during weekly collaborative planning. A team from the school along with district personnel (coordinators and directors) will visit classrooms to observe foundational skills instruction utilizing the TN Foundational Skills IPG. Using data obtained from these visits, the Instructional Coach will engage in the Continuous Cycle of Improvement to target specific areas of need. As a district, we promote our HQIM, Benchmark Advance. Additionally, our kindergarten teachers utilize Heggerty to build phonological awareness.

Schools at a Level 1 will also utilize Heggerty in first grade. We have purchased magnetic word building kits to assist lower elementary students in word building. School interventionists will continue to work with students during RTI. ELA classes in the lower elementary grades will be prioritized in the early part of the day with minimal disruptions of the ELA block. TN ALL Corps tutors will work with identified students. Furthermore, our partnership with the United Way will provide afterschool tutoring opportunities for students.

During our fall professional development day (September 3), teachers will work with interventionists to analyze Universal Screener data and review percentile expectations for winter and spring. Our district's Instructional Technology Coach will work with teachers to utilize applications available through Google Classroom to assist students with fluency building. Teachers will work with our district Elementary Literacy Coordinator and collaborate with other district teachers to make future plans and set goals. Goals will be shared with building administrators and monitored throughout the semester.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance

Supplemental Instructional Materials

In Kindergarten, our teachers utilize the Heggerty program for phonological instruction. We also supplement with the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement as needed.

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5

Fastbridge Suite K-5

Our district also administers the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) to students in third grade for the Spring Benchmark.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Dickson County identifies students as "at-risk" for or having significant reading deficiencies through multiple measures such as our universal screener FAST Bridge using measures of Reading, CBMreading English, and Early Reading measures including Word Rhyming, Word Blending, Word Segmenting, Decodable Words, and Nonsense Words. Students falling below the 40th percentile receive skills-based Tier 2 intervention for at least 30 minutes per day. Students falling below the 16th percentile receive skills-based Tier 3 intervention for at least 45 minutes per day. SPED intervention is provided for students with an SLD in reading and SPED intervention follows the IEP.

Progress monitoring of specific skill deficit areas in Tier 2 occurs every other week. Progress monitoring of specific skill deficit areas in Tier 3 and SPED intervention occurs every week. Data teams, referred to as TIER teams, meet every 4 and 1/2 weeks to receive student data, progress, and make intervention decisions on each student. Intervention decisions include appropriate interventions to target the specific skill deficit area, qualified interventionist, duration/ intensity of intervention, and problem solving if the current intervention is not producing the intended result. 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 survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who demonstrate these characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs that meet the law's requirements. Families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia are notified.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Parents are notified of all benchmark scores immediately after the benchmark period. All 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. Specific communication also goes to parents of students "at-risk" or with a "significant reading deficiency" explaining the student's needs. Parents are told the Tier level, amount of time the child will be in intervention each day, the intervention, and the expectation of communication of progress every 4 1/2 weeks. In the parent 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 as well as recommended activities (that do not require purchased resources) that will support students in their area of deficit (activities are not tailored by child but tailored by skill deficit generally). This is included with a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade and information on the pathway to 4th grade. These communications are shared three times a year in K-5.

Additionally, the ELA curriculum contains parent letters in the younger grades that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the coming unit period 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 through an awareness of what foundational skills their child(ren) are learning.

Professional Development Plan

Teachers in our 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:

- Teachers of grades Pre-K through five, along with ELL and SPED educators, will engage 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. We will ensure that participating educators earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2.
- Our district will offer cohorts of in-person training offered as Week 2 of the Early Literacy Training series. The participants will include Pre-K through fifth grade teachers, interventionists, ELL educators, SPED educators, administrators, and instructional coaches. This week will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.
- We offer a host of additional trainings for our teachers as indicated in the submitted professional development calendar.