

Tullahoma City Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last updated: August 11, 2023

Approved: June 7, 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

Our district is committed to delivering robust literacy education through Benchmark Advance, a comprehensive foundational skills curriculum. This curriculum is deeply rooted in the latest findings of reading science and meticulously aligned with Tennessee's ELA standards, approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission.

Comprising all essential elements of a solid literacy program, including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, vocabulary building, comprehension strategies, and fluency development, our ELA instructional sessions span 90-120 minutes (45 minutes of foundational literacy) in all K-2 classrooms. Within this timeframe, students engage in whole and small-group activities, receiving explicit and personalized instruction that caters to diverse learning styles through a multi-sensory approach.

Moreover, our curriculum is designed to ensure vertical alignment across grade levels, encompassing reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills. To bolster our phonics instruction, we have incorporated the Bridge to Reading (Heggerty) program, reinforcing our commitment to fostering strong literacy foundations.

Throughout the academic year, students undergo comprehensive assessments using tools like the iReady Diagnostic, enabling educators to effectively tailor instruction to individual needs. Formative assessments, including weekly and unit tests, fluency checks, comprehension assessments, and ongoing observation, further inform instructional adjustments. Additionally, students identified as Tiers 2 or 3 receive targeted monitoring and support through various assessment measures.

Our commitment to comprehensive literacy education extends beyond Grades K-2, with the implementation of aimswebPlus benchmarking as our Universal Screener across K-8 and specialized screening tools such as the Early Warning System in high school to identify students who may benefit from additional support, particularly those exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia.

We will continue implementing Benchmark Advance, Heggerty/Bridge to Reading, and iReady to ensure fidelity in our instructional practices. We will support educators through professional

learning sessions facilitated by our ELA and math academic coaches, supplemented by district-wide and external learning opportunities.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

In our district, we're committed to providing a robust literacy program tailored for grades three (3) through five (5), deeply rooted in the latest research in reading science and meticulously aligned with Tennessee's ELA standards. After careful consideration, we selected Benchmark Advance as our curriculum, a choice endorsed by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission.

Within our integrated ELA block, students engage in 60-90 minutes of comprehensive ELA instruction daily (30 minutes of foundational skills), following evidence-based methodologies including instruction in morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. Benchmark Advance stands out for its comprehensive phonics instruction, offering:

- A purposeful scope and sequence combined with spiral review and repetition.
- Regular application to real-world reading and writing experiences.
- Built-in differentiation to maximize instructional time.
- Both print and digital phonics resources.

The curriculum's scope and sequence for foundational skills development progresses as follows:

- Grade 3: Emphasis on mastering multisyllabic words and various syllabic types.
- Grade 4: Focus on syllable types and morphology.
- Grade 5: Exploration of morphology, especially Greek and Latin roots.

To ensure continuous progress and personalized support, students undergo iReady Diagnostic assessments three times a year. This data empowers teachers to provide targeted, diagnostic instruction. Additionally, ongoing formative assessments, including weekly and unit tests, fluency and comprehension checks, and regular observations, inform instructional adjustments. Students identified as Tiers 2 or 3 receive additional monitoring and support through alternative assessment measures.

Our dedication to faithfully implementing Benchmark Advance and iReady remains unwavering. As we look ahead, we are committed to refining our screening practices by seamlessly integrating aimswebPlus screeners throughout our system. While aimswebPlus has been successfully utilized with our third graders in the past, iReady has served as our Universal Reading Screener (URS) for all other grades. In the upcoming academic year (2024-2025), we will transition to using aimswebPlus as our URS screener while continuing to rely on iReady as our benchmark and diagnostic assessment tool.

By combining these screenings with iReady and Benchmark Advance, we will enhance our ability to identify student needs and accelerate their learning journeys. This integrated approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of each student's strengths and areas for growth, enabling us to provide targeted support and foster academic success.

To support our educators, we're offering professional learning sessions during the summer and throughout our in-service days at the start of the 2024-2025 school year. Together, we strive to create a vibrant and effective learning environment where every student can thrive.

Additional Information

The district leadership team, which includes the curriculum director, sped director, director of schools, our student services director, and all of our school administrators, have collaborated on our LEA plan and strategies that will be included for our students with disabilities and our economically disadvantaged students. We are bridging gaps between the RTI Tier support and resources, as well as our ESL and SPED programs. This continuity and coherence to our HQIM and teaching practices will strengthen the support and learning acceleration of all students.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance

Supplemental Instructional Materials

We are supporting our HQIM with Bridge To Reading/Heggerty for strong explicit Sounds First instruction. We have additional resources that support our learning acceleration and RTI programming, which may include SPIRE, Sounds Sensible, Visualizing & Verbalizing, Orton Gillingham, Sidewalks Intervention, FCRR, and ReadWell. Our core supports that are utilized within classrooms for literacy are Benchmarks Advance and Heggerty.

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

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) for grades K-5

Supplemental Screeners

Other screening tools used to drill down to identify deficits include SPIRE diagnostics, DIBELS, and PWRs/PASS, which are provided through TDOE training.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Students identified at-risk for a significant reading deficiency or identified with a significant reading deficiency are provided intervention daily. Trained staff provide additional time to students requiring Tier 2 interventions above Tier 1 instruction. Remedial interventions may include SPIRE, Sounds Sensible, Visualizing & Verbalizing, Sidewalks Intervention, FCRR, and ReadWell. Tier 2 groups meet for at least 30 minutes each day and are monitored every other week. Tier 3 interventions are in addition to Tier 2 and are longer and more intense than Tier 2. These groups meet for at least 45 minutes each day and are monitored weekly. Trained RTI staff work with our students to provide quality research-based instruction. Progress monitoring is done with aimswebPlus and iReady to target and assess specific deficit areas.

Intervention teams meet with stakeholders to discuss progress or lack of and adjust as needed regarding duration, materials, and intensity. Interventionists are involved in leadership team meetings as well as PLCs at the schools.

Here are examples of the interventions that are used with students who have characteristics of dyslexia:

- Phonological Awareness: Seeing Stars, Sounds Sensible (K SPIRE program), and Orton Gillingham
- Phonemic Awareness, Alphabet Knowledge, Sound Symbol Recognition: Seeing Stars, Sounds Sensible (K SPIRE program), Orton Gillingham, and SPIRE
- Decoding Skills: Seeing Stars, Sounds Sensible (K SPIRE program), Orton Gillingham, SPIRE, LindaMood Bell, and Rewards
- Encoding Skills: Seeing Stars, Sounds Sensible (K SPIRE program), Orton Gillingham, SPIRE, and Rewards
- Rapid Naming (Fluency): Orton Gillingham, SPIRE, LindaMood Bell, and Rewards

Students who have characteristics of dyslexia are progress monitored bi-weekly with aimswebPlus, iReady, and/or EasyCBM, assessed three times a year on the iReady diagnostic assessment and the URS Screener, and assessed every 3-4 weeks on iReady Growth Monitoring. Data team meetings occur each quarter, and student growth/needs are discussed. Changes of intervention are made at that time based on student needs. The RTI Interventionists keep data records on all students served.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Our district plans to notify parents by sending home a letter that will use parent-friendly verbiage and includes details of the Diagnostic 1 results from the iReady and the aimswebPlus reading universal screener, as well as any other data collected from common formative assessments.

This information can be shared using the iReady Family Report. For example, "We have recently completed the benchmark testing in Tullahoma City Schools. The iReady test is our district's diagnostic assessment, and it is administered three times a year. This benchmark test is helpful when determining if your student is on grade level for reading and math and if they may need additional help in reading.

The test results indicate that (name of student) would benefit from additional help in reading in the area of (teacher to highlight area(s) • Letter names (the alphabet) • Letter sounds and word parts (phonological awareness) • Sounding out words (decoding) • Reading words and sentences in the same way you speak (fluency) • Spelling (Name of student) will be participating in an intervention group with a qualified teacher. Please see the attached copy of the Family Report for details. If you need help understanding or have questions about the report, please contact your school principal."

Each teacher will attach the iReady Family Report. We provide the same information related to our URS screener, aimswebPlus.

Our district plans to implement home literacy reports that will provide information on the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade using parent friendly verbiage: ie. "Third

grade is an important marker for reading proficiency. Children who are reading on grade level by third grade are more likely to graduate from high school, enter and complete post-secondary programs, and remain gainfully employed later in life. We are dedicated to providing your child with the support they need to reach these outcomes and small group instruction is a great opportunity to target the specific gaps in reading skills your child is experiencing." We also provide information on the pathway to 4th grade.

Our district plans to share information on reading intervention activities for families and the reading interventions provided by the school by suggesting the following: ie.

At home you can:

- Read a book together every day
- Practice sounding out words and talking about letters and sounds
- Check out the early reader books (decodables) on Best for All Central [Interactive Decodables](#)
- Practice reading the same words and stories over and over to build fluency.

At school, (name of student), will be participating in reading interventions, including comprehension and writing, in a small group setting with a qualified instructor. The Tullahoma City School system is committed to your child's academic success, and we are glad to have the opportunity to provide your child with the necessary instruction and support he or she may need. You will receive reports on your child's progress at least every four and a half weeks.

Professional Development Plan

A K-5 Reading Coach will work alongside teachers to determine professional learning needs. Various times throughout the year, the coach will seek input from teachers in order to plan worthwhile and applicable professional learning. In addition, the coach will collaborate with building administrators and the Director of Instruction to identify and address areas of need. Job-embedded professional learning is accomplished through the teacher/coach relationship as well.

We have a variety of professional learning opportunities that are available for teachers and educational assistants to attend that will focus on foundational skills. Some examples include:

- Benchmark Advance Webinars;
- BTR/Heggerty (New Implementation and Development) PreK-3;
- iReady for Beginners, iReady Advanced, iReady: Reflections and Next Steps and;
- Supporting Vocabulary Development & Informational Text Comprehension with iReady.

Teachers will be collaborating with the coach this summer to dive deep into the Instructional Practice Guide, our Scopes and Sequences, Standard Analysis through student work, and other specific learning associated with literacy.

All of our PD is organized through our new PD Platform, Mobile Mind. A screenshot of July has been provided.

Teachers who are new to TCS and who have not completed the state early literacy training will be expected to complete the course in 2024.

Additional Comments

We're thrilled about the strides we're making in Tullahoma to bolster literacy and elevate our students' foundational skills. A significant portion of our resources has been allocated to maintaining two elementary coaches funded through Title II across our four schools. We feel that the investment in the foundational years will be a tremendous value for students and teachers.

Additionally, we've invested in Heggerty as a supplementary resource to enrich our Sounds First instruction. Our teachers are excited about this resource and the Director of Curriculum is participating in a Collaborative group that has adopted Benchmark Advance. Many members in this group are using Heggerty as a supplement, so the learning that will be gained from this group is exciting to think about.

Under the guidance of the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, we've formed an Instructional Leadership Team comprising leaders and educators from our schools. To kickstart the year, we'll be conducting walk-throughs using the Foundational and K-12 Reading Instructional Practice Guides (IPGs).

Excitingly, we're also joining the LIN with our South-Central group, eagerly anticipating the growth and knowledge-sharing opportunities it will bring. Nearly all our teachers and leaders have completed early literacy courses, with those remaining set to do so by 2024.

Our efforts thus far have been robust, and we're committed to continuous improvement. As we gain new insights, we're dedicated to applying them to enhance student outcomes. It's inspiring to witness the engagement of numerous individuals in our literacy initiatives, and we're eager to see the positive impact on our students' educational journeys.