

Cheatham County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: June 20, 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

The CCSD uses the Benchmark Advanced curriculum, as the primary form of instruction, which has a designated block of 60 minutes daily for foundational literacy skills instruction. Cheatham County Schools use a foundational skills curriculum grounded in science of reading 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 for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. This instructional time includes activities which include explicit instruction and student practice that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary work ("word work"). During that instruction, teachers explicitly teach a sound, the students practice the sound aloud (learning how to produce pure sound), the teacher models writing the sound, and the students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound. Students apply the skill in independent practice (small group or individual). We are not planning on making changes for next year.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Cheatham County School District has an integrated literacy block for grades three (3) through five (5) grounded in science of reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Our 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 90-120 minutes (about 2 hours) of ELA instruction. Although the daily schedule is not the same at each school, all daily instruction includes components for knowledge-building (to build and improve the ability to comprehend complex texts and apply that knowledge as they listen, read, write, think, and speak) for about 60 minutes per day and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing for at least 30 minutes per day. Our 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. We do not plan on making changes next year to this plan.

Additional Supports

Cheatham County is dedicated to improving student literacy. We plan to focus on supporting our identified school by incorporating the following:

- Our district is using the IPG and our Core partnership with the TDOE to collect data to continue 9-week cycles of continuous improvement. Our identified school is a focus with these learning walks.
- We are also partnering with Instruction Partners, an outside vendor, to make sure our identified school and all schools and subgroups are moving the needle in student literacy growth and achievement.
- Finally, all schools are meeting weekly in collaborative planning sessions to unit prep, lesson prep, and to evaluate data. These meetings are often centered around specific school and subgroup growth and needed next steps.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance

Supplemental Instructional Materials

The Cheatham County School District uses the Heggerty Phonics Program as a supplement, which aligns with the Tennessee Academic Standards and has a focus on a sounds-first instructional approach.

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) K-5

This screener complies with RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements. The CCSD uses aimswebPlus as the universal screener for reading. We give universal screening assessments three times a year, in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. We also use it for our progress monitoring in Tiers II and III of RTI². The screener is listed in the Tennessee RTI² framework manual as a compliant curriculum-based measure.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Three times a year, students in grades K-5 are given a universal screener (aimswebPlus) to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are “at-risk”. Our school-level data teams review multiple data sources, including the universal screener data, to determine which students have or are at risk for reading deficiencies and need Tier II or Tier III intervention. Students tentatively identified as needing Tier II or Tier III interventions are given diagnostic/survey

assessments to determine specific deficits. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 45 minutes in their area of greatest deficit.

Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level time in each school's master schedule designated exclusively for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and tasks that bridge gaps in their specific skill of need.

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 adopted ELA curriculum contains an assessment and remediation guide in which teachers can find activities that directly address skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students. If that intervention is not proving to be effective, more intensive, strategic interventions (such as 95 percent Group) become an option. Data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change in the intervention is needed. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, engagement, student history) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or teacher.

Our adopted ELA curriculum contains an assessment and remediation guide in which teachers can find activities that directly address skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students. If that intervention is not proving to be effective, more intensive, strategic interventions (such as 95 percent Group or University of Florida Literacy Institute materials) become an option.

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 that meet the law's requirements. Our district uses 95 Percent Group, a research-based supplemental program as intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified through the Progress Monitoring Reports that the 95 Percent Group curriculum is used to support those students, as it is aligned with the International Dyslexia Association's elements of effective reading instruction for students with dyslexia. The program is also characterized as explicit, systematic, sequential, multi- sensory, phonics-based instruction aligned to meet the individual needs of students.

Data Team members meet every 4 –5 weeks or as needed to determine if a change in the intervention is needed. The Data Team members also look at other variables (attendance, engagement, student history) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or teacher. 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 that meet the law's requirements. Our district uses 95 Percent Group, a research-based supplemental program, as intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia.

All Cheatham County elementary and middle schools utilize a 45 minute, daily, intervention block. Each school has a dedicated RTI teacher who runs the program at that school. The district also has an RTI coordinator who supervises all intervention programs to make sure we are compliant and that students receive an equitable experience.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

In Cheatham County Schools, parents are notified via Home Literacy Report letter if their children (1) score at or below the 15th percentile on the universal reading screener with a significant reading deficiency, (2) score between the 16th and 40th percentiles with a possible risk for a significant reading deficiency. Letters are sent home immediately after each universal screening for reading, three times a year. We have a letter for grades K-3 and a letter for grades 4-8. 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. We explain the importance of being able to read on grade level by the end of 3rd grade and information on the pathways to 4th grade. The parents are told what intervention – if any – their student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive intervention.

We also recommend no cost activities that parents can do at home with their children to support the area of deficit. Parents are provided additional resources, including a link to the free online early reader decodables (in the K-3 letter), a link to the videos that target foundational skills for students in grades Pre-K-2 (in the K-3 letter), suggestions of ways to support their child's literacy skills at home, and the Dyslexia Overview for Parents pdf provided by the Tennessee Department of Education and STEP, if appropriate. We also post these resources on our district website. Parents are subsequently notified of their child's progress, or lack of progress, approximately every 5 weeks after data team meetings. In the parent progress report, student progress monitoring scores are shared. Data Team members note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data. 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.

Professional Development Plan

In compliance with the Tennessee Literacy Success Act, CCSD educators holding a license with an endorsement that allows them to teach reading in grades K-5 completed at least one approved foundational literacy skills course by August 1, 2023. Additionally, teachers will continue to engage in collaborative planning with foundational literacy for ongoing job-embedded professional development. Any new teachers to our district also complete this early reading training.

Our teachers receive weekly PD in our schools during of their planning times. These sessions often included discussion and training in regard to foundational literacy skills instruction. We also partner with the TDOE Core office to conduct routine IPG walks in our foundational literacy skills instruction in order to collect data to create future professional development opportunities. All new teachers are also required to participate in additional PD, in which foundational literacy is included. All teachers also have 3 days of PD in their schools at the beginning of each year, where refreshers are



given to all ELA teachers. We remain heavily focused on providing K-5 teachers with FLS PD next year as well.