

Hamilton County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: February 27, 2024

Approved: June 28, 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

All kindergarten through second grade students spend a minimum of one hour in foundational skills instruction daily. This is known as our “Skills Block” in our state approved EL Education curriculum. Whole-group foundational skills instruction is 15 minutes daily. In the remaining 45 minutes, students receive small-group instruction and complete independent workstations based on their independent reading level and focused on building foundational skills. In addition to Skills Block, all K-2 students receive 1 hour of “module” in literacy. The hour in module focuses on listening comprehension, building knowledge through deep vocabulary, and beginning to build reading comprehension skills. Throughout tier 1 literacy, students receive instruction and independent practice daily in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. According to our curriculum, EL, “The K-2 Reading Foundations Skills Block is a one-hour block that uses a structured phonics approach, grounded in the Phase Theory of Dr. Linnea Ehri, which describes behavior related to the types of letter-sound connections students are able to make as they learn to read and write. As such, the Skills Block is meant to ensure that, by the end of grade 2, students acquire the depth of skills they need in the Reading Foundations standards to navigate grade-level text independently. The lessons and assessments explicitly address the Reading Foundations standards, as well as some Language standards associated with spelling and letter formation.”

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

For students in grades 3-5, the 60 minute ALL Block (Additional Language and Literacy) in EL Education focuses on foundational skills such as morphology and vocabulary, with additional work with complex texts, reading and speaking fluency, accountable independent reading, and writing practice. This also includes time spent working on grammar and spelling within the context of writing. Within the 60 minutes of daily ALL Block rotations, students experience explicit supports in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through flexible grouping designed to address individual students’ needs. The daily grouping within ALL Block is heterogeneous (independent workstations) and includes a 20-minute teacher guided instructional rotations that are differentiated for different levels, including English Language Learners (homogenous). ALL Block is one hour a day and the

rotations last for six weeks at a time, so that all students get through the entire rotation. This time includes “flex days” built into the schedule each week. Flex days can be used for additional practice, writing, reteaching, completion of work, and/or assessments.

In addition to ALL Block, all 3-5 students receive 1 hour of “module” in literacy. The hour in module focuses on listening comprehension, building knowledge through deep vocabulary, and build reading comprehension skills. Throughout the two hours of tier 1 literacy, students receive explicit instruction and independent practice every day in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. EL Education provided a correlation document to align their curriculum to TN State Standards. As a district, we have provided teachers with additional training and guidance on ensuring all lessons are aligned to TN State Standards.

Additional Supports

Hamilton County Schools is dedicated to improving student literacy. Of our 40+ elementary schools, 12 either had a school literacy TVAAS of a 1 or a 2 for two years in a row or had a subgroup in this category for two years in a row. Our plans to focus on our identified schools and student subgroups include:

- Provide specific supports for those subgroups and grade-levels that include targeted data meetings, coaching cycles, and additional professional development in the focus of foundational literacy skills and differentiation for specific subgroups.
- Our district has also invested in providing a RTI Leader at every elementary school to focus on intervention, data, and supporting struggling subgroups. RTI Leaders receive monthly training and coaching on providing Orton Gillingham practices to small groups of students and training others in their building on these practices.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Open Up OUR Expeditionary Learning K-5

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Open Up OUR Expeditionary Learning K-5

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) K-3
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Suite 4-5

Supplemental Screeners

Students in K-3 will complete the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimsWebPlus). For grades 4-5, students will utilize the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Suite for reading and math screening.

Intervention Structure and Supports

School level RTI teams review the universal screener data and additional teacher concerns to determine students that are “at-risk” and who have a significant reading deficiency. Students at-risk of and showing significant deficiencies are placed in Tier II and III groups to receive additional instructional time (45 minutes) in their area of greatest deficit. Students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students are also screened to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Each of our school master schedules are reviewed to ensure RTI Intervention takes place daily during a specified grade-level time outside of Tier I instruction. Students in RTI groups work on identified deficits and gaps in foundational literacy skills, grade-level standards and any additional prerequisite skill areas. Both classroom teachers and highly trained intervention teachers lead Tier II and Tier III groups daily. Data teams use progress monitoring data to determine if a change in materials, intensity, or duration is needed when a student is not showing progress.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

All K-5 students found to be “at-risk” for a significant reading deficiency or that have a significant reading deficiency based on the universal reading screener, will receive a letter notifying the family of the reading areas for growth and the extent of the student’s reading needs. These notifications will go out within one week of the school having results from the universal screener to all students scoring between the 0-40th percentile in reading.

Hamilton County Schools’ Home Literacy Letters notate the specific area(s) in which the student is struggling, the importance of 3rd grade reading proficiency, interventions occurring at the school, and provide the family with no-cost tips for supporting the child at home. For all students in grades K-3, we also send home documents that outline pathways to the 4th grade for students that may score in the “approaching” or “below” expectations portion of their literacy TCAP. The Home Literacy Report will go out after each universal screening window (three times a year for all students in grades K-5). Pathways documents go to all K-3 families (regardless of literacy scores).

Professional Development Plan

All teachers in Hamilton County must understand how to teach students how to read. Our Foundational Literacy Skills Professional Development Plan includes training every K-5 elementary teacher and administrator in foundational literacy skills. In addition to the State’s Early Reading Course, all elementary teachers in Hamilton County Schools receive training on how to teach foundational literacy skills within training on EL curriculum. This direct district-level training is paired with coaching from their building-level instructional coach. Instructional coaches receive monthly training in a variety of topics that they then redeliver to school staff. These topics include EL and foundational literacy skills annually. All elementary schools are equipped with a RTI Leader that has received training in Sonday System, our intervention system based on Orton-Gillingham pedagogy. RTI Leaders not only provide direct, small group instruction to the school’s highest-need students, but they also coach and train teachers in their buildings on best practices in intervention and



foundational literacy skills throughout the school year. All training provided to RTI Leaders in monthly meetings is redelivered in their building.