

Monroe County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: June 27, 2022

Approved: June 18, 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

Monroe County Schools has adopted and purchased Benchmark Advance as our K-2 ELA curriculum. This curriculum provides explicit and systemic foundational instruction, is aligned to the Tennessee Academic ELA standards, and is approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Benchmark Advance is anchored in a purposeful scope and sequence with spiral review and repetition cycle and works to develop independent readers and writers by applying foundational skills to authentic reading and writing experiences. The curriculum also provides built-in differentiation and scaffolding to meet the needs of all students. Whole group, small group, and individual instruction and tasks are grounded in foundational skills embedded throughout the ELA block. Students receive explicit instruction in print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, word study, vocabulary, decoding, and encoding through read-alouds, shared readings, mini-lessons, small focus groups, and daily writing tasks.

The Benchmark Advance daily planner time for explicit phonemic awareness/phonics instruction within a 150-minute reading block. Our K-2 teachers participated in the 2-week Early Reading Training offered by TDOE in spring/summer 2021. After this training, in conjunction with teacher input, our district decided to use the Benchmark Advance for the knowledge and writing portion of the ELA block and use the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement for the required 45-minute foundational block, which align to the TN Academic standards for ELA.

All schools' daily master schedules and individual teacher schedules contain a 150-minute English Language Arts block, 90 minutes of which is uninterrupted, with 45 minutes designated to foundational instruction using the TNFSCS. All students will continue to receive integrated ELA instruction from the same teacher, eliminating departmentalizing K-2 classes. The district has purchased additional TNFSCS (Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement) supplemental materials for grades K-3 in addition to the free TNFSCS materials provided by the Tennessee Department of Education. In August 2023, K-2 teachers began using the TNFSCS assessments and data four times per year to help target students' strengths, deficits, and areas of need. The district collects all TNFSCS assessment data for accountability and to assess further areas of support.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Monroe County Schools has adopted and purchased Benchmark Advance as our 3-5 ELA curriculum. This curriculum provides explicit and systemic foundational instruction, is aligned to the Tennessee Academic ELA standards, and is approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Benchmark Advance is anchored in a purposeful scope and sequence with spiral review and repetition cycle and works to develop independent readers and writers by applying foundational skills to authentic reading and writing experiences. The curriculum also provides built-in differentiation and scaffolding to meet the needs of all students. Whole group, small group, and individual instruction and tasks are grounded in foundational skills that are embedded throughout the entire ELA block. Students in grade 3-5 receive explicit instruction in word study/morphology, vocabulary, vowel patterns, grammar skills, spelling, fluency, and comprehension through read-alouds, shared readings, mini lessons, small focus groups, and daily writing tasks (at least 30 minutes daily).

The Benchmark Advance provides embedded foundational skills throughout the literacy block. The daily planner allotted 10 minutes for read-alouds, 60 minutes for reading & word study, and 50 minutes for writing and grammar within a 120-minute reading block. In the 2021-2022 school year, all 3-5 ELA teachers participated in the 2-week Early Reading Training offered by TDOE. After the training, it was determined that the TNFSCS model would be best used in these grades as a supplement to small groups. Third grade teachers have decodable readers to use for this purpose, and additional TNFSCS materials have been purchased. In August 2023, third grade teachers began using the TNFSCS assessments to help target student deficits and areas of need.

Additional Supports

Our district contracted Deborah Williams, data analysis specialist, this past spring to provide more extensive data analysis PD to district leaders and school administrators. In the upcoming year, she will work with administrators and teachers in our level 1 and 2 schools for more targeted intervention. We are restructuring our district and school data teams and procedures with additional leadership provided from our new district data instructional coach, who will offer extra targeted support.

School administrators have rearranged faculty members to different grade levels and subject areas next year and will provide Educator Support Plans for struggling teachers needing additional support. Our district curriculum team (ELA coach, elementary supervisor, school administrators, and school lead ELA teacher) will provide additional targeted literacy learning walks in classrooms needing additional support, with actionable feedback and PD to follow. Each school will turn in a revised RTI plan to include strategic grouping, instructional strategies, and focused lessons/learning targets based on summative & district formative assessment data.

Our exceptional education director has been working with Summer Roberts to revamp the department and offer additional PD to exceptional education teachers, and our district ELL lead teacher will continue to work with classroom teachers to offer focused support.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement (TNFSCS)

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

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus): Grades K-5

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

Intervention Structure and Supports

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade are given a universal screener (AIMs Web Plus) three times per year. School RTI² teams meet after each screening period to determine which students are “at- risk” in reading based on universal screening and other data (state test scores, grades, attendance, teacher observations, etc.). These students then receive tiered interventions in a small group setting with a qualified interventionist to address reading deficiencies and to help close the achievement gap. Based on these data meetings, students flagged for moderate interventions receive 30 minutes of a Tier II reading intervention. For Tier II, our district uses one of two interventions that focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, sight-word fluency, vocabulary, passage fluency, comprehension, and writing:

- 1) SIPPS by Collaborative Classroom is a research-based program that provides systematic and explicit instruction focusing on basic reading skills.
- 2) My Sidewalks is a research-proven reading intervention that provides explicit instruction incorporating basic reading skills. Both interventions provide placement and skills assessments that help identify deficiencies and measure growth.

Students who flag for more intensive reading interventions receive 45 minutes of a Tier III reading intervention. These students are placed in one of two programs based on their deficits:

- 1) Students with basic reading deficits are placed in S.P.I.R.E, a research-proven reading intervention program which designed to build reading success through an intensive, structured, and spiraling curriculum that incorporates phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This program incorporates explicit,

teacher-led instruction, consistent lesson structures, and multisensory learning to help students close learning gaps and remediate reading deficiencies. S.P.I.R.E assessments are administered to identify and help interventionists target deficiencies. Unit and lesson assessments monitor growth and skill mastery as students move forward through the program.

- 2) Students whose main deficit is comprehension are placed in My Sidewalks. (See description above.) Students whose data does not flag them for Tier II or Tier III intervention will receive instruction in the classroom to address skills gaps and encourage further reading skills growth during the RTI block.

Students who have been determined to be “at-risk” in reading will also be assessed using various survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students demonstrating these characteristics will be placed in S.P.I.R.E or SIPPS. Both interventions meet the requirements of the Say Dyslexia Law. Parents of students exhibiting characteristics will receive a letter explaining the characteristics of dyslexia, how these characteristics are addressed during the reading intervention, and how they can support their child at home. These parents will also be offered an Individualized Learning Plan for Dyslexia. If parents accept the plan, an ILP-D will be created.

RTI² school data teams meet every 4.5 weeks to review progress monitoring and other data to determine if an intervention change is needed, including decisions about duration, materials, and intensity. Schools in Monroe County strive to adhere to the time structures for all subjects and tiers as delineated in the Tennessee RTI² Plan. Our schools master schedules and teacher schedules reflect these times.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

After each screening period, Monroe County Schools strives to notify parents of skills deficiencies in both reading and math. These letters are written in parent-friendly language and resources are provided to equip parents to work with their children at home. There is a three-part process for notifying parents of their child’s reading strengths and weaknesses, each tier support that may be received, and any characteristics of dyslexia if identified.

The first letters are sent to parents of all students in grades K-5 notifying them of their child’s performance on the reading screening assessments. This letter describes the assessments given at each grade level, their child’s score on each assessment, and how their child’s performance compares to the national norms. The letter further clarifies how the child’s performance correlates with grade level expectations. The importance of reading on grade level by the end of third grade is highlighted, as well as information about the pathways to 4th grade. Furthermore, the importance of a school and parent partnership, parent involvement, and reading practice at home in order to reach that goal are emphasized. No-cost strategies are provided to help parents support their child at home. Links to our district website which provides additional information and resources are also given. The second set of correspondence is sent to parents of students who receive Tier II or Tier III interventions. This letter reviews the screening process and describes the RTI selection process. Parents are informed of their child’s tier placement in both reading and math, and the intervention

is explained. Links to the district RTI site are provided. On the district link, parents will find resources explaining RTI², resources describing both reading and math deficits, as well as reading and math resources to help parents work with their child at home.

Additionally, after students' data has been analyzed by school RTI teams, the team will identify students who may need additional assessments to help identify those who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia as delineated in Tennessee's Say Dyslexia Law and resource guide. Parents of students who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia based on our assessments will receive another letter outlining the many tiers of support their child receives, the rationale behind dyslexia screening, and information describing the dyslexia screening process. The characteristics that their child exhibits will be marked and are explained in parent-friendly language. Links to resources describing each characteristic and strategies to address the deficiencies at home are also provided.

Professional Development Plan

PreK-5th grade classroom teachers, K-8 Special Education teachers, RTI teachers & coordinators, K-5 principals, K-5 assistant principals, district supervisors, and the district ELA Instructional Coach have been trained in the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series offered in the spring/summer 2021. Teachers who are new to our district will be required to complete the training in compliance with The Tennessee Literacy Success Act which requires that all teachers holding a license with an endorsement that allows them to teach reading in grades K-5 complete at least one approved foundational literacy skills course.

District/school leaders, along with lead teachers will conduct literacy learning walks each semester using the TDOE Foundational IPG (Instructional Practice Guide), with specific and actionable feedback provided to teachers. Teachers will collaborate during monthly PLCs (professional learning communities) at the school level to prepare units & lessons and analyze student work, and twice per semester teachers in each grade band will collaborate district wide. Aimsweb benchmark data, along with district TNFSCS (Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement) formative assessment data (fall, winter, spring) will be analyzed continually to guide instruction. Ongoing training and support will be provided by the district ELA instructional coach, curriculum director, building administrators, and lead teachers along with Reading 360 Early Literacy Training videos and TNFSCS model lesson videos (provided by TDOE on Best for All Central) to be used as a refresher and additional support where needed.