

Montessori Elementary Highland Park

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

First Approved: May 29, 2021

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

At Montessori Elementary at Highland Park, foundational literacy instruction begins in PreK which provides the child with more exposure to phonemic awareness and phonics at a younger age. However, MEHP uses a foundation skills curriculum for K-2nd grade as adopted by Hamilton County which is on the state's adoption list of approved publishers. MEHP will also provide a supplementary curriculum using Voyager Passport, a comprehensive supplemental reading intervention program that provides readers with explicit instruction, corrective feedback, and more time on task to master critical reading skills. Using the Montessori Method, teachers will plan and incorporate foundational skills as a primary form of instruction for all grade levels with a focus on K-2 grades for 75 minutes daily. Explicit instruction, along with guided practice in phonological awareness (using daily phoneme awareness lessons as well as phonemic games), phonics (lessons and modeling with teacher with sound/letter recognition practice in making the pure sound), word study, vocabulary work, building fluency (monitored and assessed with a teacher), and comprehension skills. Teachers will model critical thinking skills while extending high level questions to help students analyze concepts and themes, evaluate the text and perspective of the author, and develop their own work using information and accessing prior knowledge. MEHP teachers provide lessons individually and in small groups. An example of Individual instruction might be the teacher modeling an activity such as tracing a letter, naming the sound, and then allowing the child to apply the skill and practice the work. An example of small group instructions may include explicit or modeled instruction discussed and practice together. The teachers observe when the children are ready to practice independently and will continue to observe, evaluate, and guide the practice work as needed. Instruction and sequencing for students who are above, on, or below grade level will be given to ensure each child is able to consistently move forward in reading skills. Additionally, text study, word work, vocabulary and fluency skills will each be tailored to individual needs using the district provided text.

The instruction will be supplemented with extra text from the Freckle reading program, Voyager Passport, and Freeleaf Publishing online material. Additional lessons and support will be given to students below grade level in classroom interventions. Freckle, Montessori Reading Remediation Pathway and other classroom materials can also provide additional resource materials needed for

implementing instruction at the child's independent reading skill level. If remediation is needed in phonemic awareness or phonics interventions, the teacher will provide the foundational skills instruction in the classroom during the set time (75 mins minimum in each class) using Montessori Language based materials such as Sandpaper Letters and Movable alphabet while using explicit instruction and progressive sequencing.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

MEHP 3rd-5th grade classrooms will integrate literacy block based instructional time in reading science; aligned to TN state ELA standards. This curriculum is provided by Hamilton County Schools and is on the State's adoption list of accepted publishers. The integrated ELA block consists of an evidence-based instructional approach for incorporating foundational literacy skills in daily instruction. While the blocks can be shifted based on either morning or afternoon time periods, the instruction during the blocks will be consistent. The literacy block will include (but is not limited to) the study and function of words, grammar, syntax, word structure (morphology), spelling patterns, word building and studies of word usage. Additionally, our supplemental curriculum allows students to explore a variety of text and is grounded in non-fiction. Fictional stories of all genres will also be included as students explore comprehension, absorb vocabulary and practice fluency skills. While the foundational literacy instructional block is 90 minutes, additional times in the classroom are spent on exploration with text in other areas of study. Cultural Studies, historical studies and extended work into science will provide rich exposure both within and beyond the TN state standards. Within the literacy block and throughout the other areas of the class students will use comprehension, vocabulary enrichment and fluency skills that will be monitored and assessed consistently by the teacher. For example, when third graders are studying the cultural customs and geographical locations of Indigenous People through European Exploration (prior to 1585), they will explore a variety of comprehension skills, use graphic organizers to collect information, discuss and work with vocabulary for deeper understanding, respond to scaffold questions, and provide evidence-based answers from the text. Modeling and supports are given with each student. Students are stretched and guided to go further than their current skill or grade level standard to develop their own desire to learn independently. For example, vocabulary studies within the text can lead to suffix, prefix and root word studies with multiple variations and progressive word work. Also, materials and text can be adapted to each child to support fluency skills for practice in reading.

In addition to the foundational literacy block, MEHP will use CKLA, /Core Knowledge Language Arts, a literacy curriculum grounded in the Science of Reading. By combining knowledge-building and research-based foundational skills, teachers will help students become strong readers, writers, and thinkers. Science and Social Studies instructional blocks will be used to enhance fluency skills, vocabulary building, and comprehension through group discussions, think-pair-share, independent reading, and various other instructional strategies. Finally, all areas of the classroom will use writing to provide opportunities for students to explain what they know. However, with science and social studies we will incorporate graphic organizers, writing with evidence-based responses, independent and guided research, and independent and guided writing.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Imagine Learning EL Education (formerly LearnZillion Expeditionary Learning)

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Imagine Learning Guidebooks (formerly LearnZillion)

Supplemental Instructional Materials

FlyLeaf, Montessori Literacy Materials, CKLA, Voyager Passport and Freckle

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5

i-Ready Suite K-5

We also administer the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) to students in third grade for the Spring Benchmark.

Intervention Structure and Supports

MEHP will have assessed the needs of our students and begin the process of providing support using RTI². Students below the national or state norms for their grade level or are otherwise defined as at-risk in developing reading success, will be given extra instruction. Students in the 0-40% will be identified based on the universal screener and will be placed in either Tier 2 or Tier 3. These 2 -3 Tier students will be given a diagnostic assessment to determine their individualized instructional needs. Students identified in Tier 2 will be given an additional 30 minutes of instruction in small groups. With MEHP's foundational literacy block being 75 min., and with our attention to individualized instruction, we anticipate this Tier 2 time of 30 min. to be intense instruction and will allow for further practice of skills within the classroom literacy block of 75 min. When 45 mins of instruction for Tier 3 is needed, the master calendar will be adjusted to accommodate those students by either 15 mins before or after the allotted 30 mins already on the schedule.

During these RTI² times, the instruction we use will be identified as highly successful for both students at-risk and students of diverse backgrounds. MEHP will adopt the district ELA curriculum that allows teachers to access remediation materials for skills gaps with students, as well as use the Montessori Reading Remediation Plan and Freckle. Voyager Passport will also be used during literacy block as an effective way to provide targeted intervention for students who need extra support. RTI Blocks are included and noted on the master schedule. Data teams meet frequently and use progress monitoring data to inform decisions about duration, material, and intensity changes when a student is not showing progress.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

MEHP has scheduled a meet the teacher/orientation before school commences to ensure parents and guardians are partners in their child's education. We are reaching out via email, calling posts, individual phone calls as well as providing online resources to help parents better understand foundational skills and reading readiness. In addition, we have an ongoing plan to help parents

understand the Montessori method and how each child can become a lifelong independent learner with solid reading skills.

After universal screeners are completed in August, parents and guardians will be notified of their child's scores and if they will be receiving interventions should the score be in the 0-40th percentile. Student's scores and letters are in parent friendly language and will be translated into Spanish for parents identified as Spanish speaking. Letters will inform parents of their child's intervention time and examples of skills that will be covered. Our letters will provide a clear explanation of skill gaps and the depth and extent of student need and information about how those gaps will be addressed during intervention. Our parent letter includes no-cost activities for families to support learning at home and information on the importance of 3rd grade reading proficiency and 4th grade promotion pathways. We will communicate with parents through these home literacy reports three times a year in grades K-3 and annually in grades 4 and 5.

Professional Development Plan

Beginning with the 2024 – 2025 school year, All MEHP teachers must receive Montessori Training. Teachers have already enrolled in the online program and will progress through the manuals which include everything from theory to practice. Teachers will participate in 5 days of in-service trainings during the months of July-August. They will also attend professional development sessions conducted by our full time Academic Chief Officer (ACO)/Instructional Coach every Tuesday throughout the school year. The Coach/ACO will conduct weekly (60 min.) sessions for foundational literacy review as ongoing professional development. Professional development sessions centered around RTI will also be held weekly during Thursday PLC's.

Our teachers have completed the early reading training in foundational literacy skills instruction, and we have a plan for any new teachers to complete this training as well.