

Nashville Classical Charter Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: September 19, 2023

Approved: June 14, 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 Nashville Classical, Kindergarten through second grade scholars spend 140 minutes in foundational literacy instruction daily. Scholars participate in three literacy blocks a day. The first whole group block is called “Language Arts”. This block uses the standards-aligned, TN-approved Core Knowledge Language Arts Skills curriculum. During this block, teachers focus on introducing and practicing phonics skills, phonemic awareness, and fluency. In a typical Language Arts lesson, teachers begin with a warmup drill to review phonemic awareness, phonics, and/or fluency skills. Teachers follow the CKLA activities with fidelity. Scholars practice a variety of skills to reinforce sound-spelling patterns, phonemic awareness skills, and fluency (accuracy and automaticity) practice. Scholars then practice reading the sound in context using decodable texts. During this time, teachers model and prompt scholars for correct decoding and fluency using phonics-based feedback only. Then, scholars discuss the decodable text by answering comprehension questions. Finally, scholars practice known spelling patterns by spelling words with previously taught sounds, blends, and digraphs (encoding).

The second K-2 literacy block at Nashville Classical is called Listening and Learning. This block uses the Core Knowledge - Knowledge curriculum designed to introduce scholars to rigorous read alouds and build their background knowledge on a variety of subjects. Vocabulary is an important part of this block. Scholars are explicitly introduced to new Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary words and words with multiple meanings they will encounter within the text. Listening and learning also provides the foundation for the final literacy block at Nashville Classical - writing. Scholars in Kindergarten through second grade are taught an explicit writing lesson and given time to practice writing each day. Scholars are encouraged to “use the sounds they know” to spell unknown words phonetically during this block, creating a strong connection between Language Arts lessons and writing practice. Writing instruction includes developmental, formative, and summative tasks inspired by the Hochmann method, which was described in the book, *The Writing Revolution*. While this robust literacy program has a proven track record of success, we’re still eager for more of our scholars to be independent readers by the time they leave second grade.

Next year, these improvements will largely focus on improving our foundational skill instruction during intervention blocks. To do this, we'll use data from our universal screener to intentionally select foundational skills to practice that scholars need support with and then use researched based intervention curricula to target those skills. Our instruction is aligned to the TN State Standards.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

At Nashville Classical, third through fifth grade scholars spend between 70-120 minutes in foundational literacy instruction daily. Scholars participate in three literacy blocks a day. The first whole group block is called "English Language Arts". This block uses the Fishtank curriculum, for which we have obtained a waiver. During this block, teachers spend 60 minutes engaged in reading of a high-quality, grade-level novel and in embedded foundational literacy practice, including fluency/decoding, morphology, grammar, writing, and more. The Fishtank ELA curriculum is an open-source curriculum that was rated green on EdReports for alignment to the science of reading. It was also endorsed by the Knowledge Matters Campaign for its knowledge-building scope and sequence that presents students with substantive, rich content, and lacks "fluff." Both of these endorsements represent alignment to the science of reading, to the research behind the TN Literacy Success Act, and other similar curricula on the approved list (Wit and Wisdom, Amplify ELA, EL Education, etc.).

The second 3-5 literacy block at Nashville Classical is called Humanities and this is where students engage in explicit writing instruction and/or social studies instruction. Scholars in third through fifth grade are taught an explicit writing lesson and given time to practice writing each day. Writing instruction includes developmental, formative, and summative tasks inspired by the Hochmann method, which was described in the book *The Writing Revolution*. While this robust literacy program has a proven track record of success, we're still eager for more of our scholars to be reading on grade level.

Next year, these improvements will largely focus on improving our foundational skill instruction during intervention blocks. To do this, we'll use data from our universal screener to intentionally select foundational skills to practice that scholars need support with and then use the updated RTI manual to leverage core curriculum during interventions. Our instruction is aligned to the TN State Standards.

Additional Information

To improve achievement and growth for all students in addition to better serving our most vulnerable students, we are expanding access to Tier II for scholars up to the 50th percentile. Additionally, we are tracking scholars' Rate of Improvement (ROI) on aimsWeb for those in RTI, so we can monitor impact and adjust course. We are also changing our instructional materials for Tier II to increase the coherence with our Tier I program. Finally, we have set milestones and quantitative goals for the instructional quality and aimsWeb targets for courses and cohorts of scholars and have introduced goals broken down by sub-groups, with the goal of increasing growth and achievement for our most vulnerable students. Our '23-'24 K-5 data, specifically K-2 aimsWeb SGP/NPR and TCAP success rates for grades 3 and 4 indicate that our approach is and will be successful.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (K-5)

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

FishTank—approved waiver for grades 3-5

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Amplify Skills Boost

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) K-5

Intervention Structure and Supports

At Nashville Classical, we provide reading intervention to all scholars who score at or below the 40th percentile on our universal screener and/or have other classroom data that suggests the need for additional support outside of the Tier 1 environment. Scholars who score between the 16th and 40th percentiles are rostered to Tier 2 Reading intervention groups. These scholars receive an additional small group reading lesson each day, approximately 30 additional minutes of daily instruction. Intervention lessons utilize Amplify CKLA remediation materials and Amplify Reading + (K-2) and Fishtank ELA (3-5), which are both grounded in the Science of Reading and target scholars' specific skill deficits in phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, and vocabulary. Scholars who score in or below the 15th percentile are rostered to Tier 3 Reading Intervention groups. These scholars receive two additional small group reading lessons each day, approximately 40 additional minutes of daily instruction. Intervention lessons utilize Reading Mastery curricular materials, a dyslexia-specific curriculum that targets scholars' specific skill deficits in phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, and vocabulary in a multi-sensory approach. In some cases, scholars will meet criteria for an Individual Learning Plan for Characteristics of Dyslexia (ILP-D). These scholars have a composite score that is below the 25th percentile and display deficits in 50% or more of the grade-appropriate subtests identified by the state's Minimum Universal Screening Matrix, which includes the following areas: phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, rapid naming, or encoding. If scholars meet criteria, Nashville Classical notifies the family, seeks parental consent to create an ILP-D and if consent is given, the ILP-D is created outlining Tier 3 dyslexia-specific reading interventions and classroom-level support. Once scholars have been identified as needing Tier 2 or Tier 3 reading interventions (with or without an ILP-D), universal screening data and survey-level assessment data is analyzed to determine each scholar's individual areas of need and intervention groups are designed to improve each student's foundational literacy skills.

All interventions are conducted by high-quality, certified teachers who are closest to each scholar's reading data. All scholars rostered to interventions are progress monitored weekly on their instructional level and monthly on grade-level. A data team reviews scholars' data after six weeks of intervention and progress monitoring. The data team uses this information to make decisions about the following six weeks of intervention. Scholars may receive more, less, or the same amount of

intervention and the skills targeted may change based on the data from progress monitoring. A schedule with interventions highlighted is attached.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Nashville Classical notifies families about their scholars' reading achievement and progress a minimum of five times each year (August, October, December, March, and May). Families of scholars who have been identified with a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by scholars scoring below the 15th percentile) or who are considered at-risk of a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by scholars scoring between the 16th and 40th percentile) are first notified at end of the fall universal screening window in late August, early September. After each universal screening window, scholars' scores are communicated in a family-friendly manner that clearly explains skill gaps and the depth and extent of scholars' needs. Families are informed about the specific interventions their child will receive and the daily duration of these interventions. This information is paired with an explanation of the importance of reading at grade level by the end of grade 3 and details about the promotion pathway to grade 4.

Nashville Classical clarifies how scholars are assessed and what constitutes a "significant reading deficiency." As previously mentioned, data teams meet every 6 weeks to review scholar progress in interventions. Families are then updated on their child's progress, or lack thereof, following the data team meetings. In these communications, data teams highlight any adjustments made if the scholar is not showing sufficient progress, as indicated by progress monitoring and universal screening data. Additionally, they recommend activities that support scholars' deficits, which do not require purchased resources and are generally tailored to the skill deficit rather than the individual child. Additionally, the ELA curriculums in K-5 contains family letters that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the unit that will inform and equip families to work with their children at home. Families can better understand how to support their scholars through questions about their texts and through an awareness of what foundational skills their children are learning. Copies of the Nashville Classical Home Literacy Reports that are sent home to families for on or above grade-level readers and readers who are at-risk for or identified as having significant reading deficiencies are attached. These will be sent after every benchmark assessment in August, December, and May to all scholars in grades K-5.

Professional Development Plan

K-5 Teachers and leaders have a dedicated week for literacy professional development to build the research-based knowledge and skills (unit and lesson internalization) required to leverage our CKLA and Fishtank materials to support all learners. The plan is detailed in the attachment. Teachers and leaders will be required to demonstrate proficiency with core knowledge and skills through three outputs: scored unit internalization, scored lesson internalization, and a practice literacy lesson from unit one.

Our teachers have also completed the Early Reading Training. New teachers to our school also complete this course in foundational literacy skills instruction.