

## **Oak Ridge City Schools**

### Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: December 14, 2023

Approved: June 7, 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**

Oak Ridge Schools uses EL, a literacy curriculum that is aligned to TN state standards, was rated green on EdReports and was approved through the state's textbook adoption process for our K-3 students. EL's Skills Block uses a structured phonics approach, grounded in the Phase Theory of Dr. Linnea Ehri. The Skills Block continuum is designed from grades kindergarten to grade two, focuses on specific behaviors related to the types of letter-sound relationships students can make as they learn to read and write, and is aligned to grade-level standards. K-2 students have 120 minutes daily for ELA instruction. 60 minutes are dedicated to explicit and systematic foundational literacy skills instruction which includes whole group, grade-level direction instruction and practice. Instruction includes activities that build phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and sentence composition. Some teachers have supplemented phonological and phonemic awareness using TN's Sounds First curriculum. All teachers received training on this curriculum supplement during the 2021-2022 school year. Small group instruction during skills block is differentiated to meet the needs of students and provide students with additional practice on grade-level skills. For example, during the third term, students in first grade are learning about "silent e". The first cycle with this pattern is dedicated to understanding how the 'e' can change CVC words with a short vowel sound, to CVCe words with a long vowel sound. Students engage in activities such as spelling to complement reading, interactive writing, and they have ample time to practice their new code knowledge using the curriculum's decodable readers. There are four cycles, or four weeks of instruction on this pattern using all vowels, including a cycle that teaches about dropping the "silent e" when adding inflectional endings.

The remaining 60 minutes of the ELA block are dedicated to building language skills, knowledge about the world, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing through high-quality, content-rich literary and nonfiction texts.

As part of our high-quality instruction materials implementation plan, teachers received training through an outside partner, Better Lesson, on implementation success. We use learning walks to continue to reinforce and refine strong literacy instruction.

### **Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5**

Oak Ridge Schools 3rd-grade teachers also use EL, a curriculum that is aligned to TN standards, was green on EdReports and was approved through the state's textbook adoption process. Third-grade students have a 2-hour integrated ELA block. All strands of the ELA standards are formally taught and assessed. Foundational skills are authentically applied throughout the ELA block in reading high-quality, complex texts and writing in response to texts. Students spend most of the ELA block reading, discussing, and writing about texts that help them to build knowledge about the world in EL modules. The second hour is spent in small group, differentiated learning with their teacher and peers. This provides students with the opportunity for peer-to-peer interactions as they closely read their core texts, practice fluency, learn vocabulary, including morphology, grammar, and writing about texts.

In term 3 for example, third-grade students read multiple texts about the importance of clean water. They learn about access to water, demands on water, and water pollution. Throughout this module, students learn how authors use reasons to support points. They read a variety of texts on this topic and contrast the different ways authors present points. Then they use their learning to create a PSA about why and how we can all protect the world's water supply. During ALL Block, students engage in learning and activities that increase their academic vocabulary such as analyzing the words organism and constructing. They set fluency goals and engage in language dives using a passage from "Real Lives: Angola, Africa". Students who need additional support work with their teacher to fill gaps in word recognition and spelling.

Fourth and fifth-grade teachers use Guidebooks, a curriculum that is aligned to TN standards and was approved through the state's textbook adoption process. Fourth-grade students have a 90-minute ELA block, while fifth-grade middle school students have an 80-minute ELA block or split reading and language arts classes. Foundational skills are authentically applied throughout the ELA block as they read high-quality, complex texts and write in response to texts. Students spend most of the ELA block reading, discussing, and writing about texts that help them build knowledge about the world in the Guidebook's units. Students meet in small groups with their teacher to focus on foundational skills and writing instruction using the curriculum's foundational skills support lessons and writing videos.

In term 4 for example, fourth-grade students engage in a unit on hurricanes. Targeted small group support includes learning about inflectional endings, rereading an excerpt from one of the texts in the hurricane unit, and then practicing fluency with another excerpt that includes multiple words with inflectional endings.

As part of our high-quality instruction materials implementation plan, teachers received training through an outside partner, Better Lesson, on implementation success. We use learning walks to continue to reinforce and refine literacy instruction.

### **Additional Supports**

Oak Ridge Schools is dedicated to improving student literacy. Our plan to support our schools and specific subgroups include:

- We will use the IPG to identify areas for improvement.
- Teams will engage in intellectual prep for units and lessons.
- PLCs will analyze student work based on an agreed upon success criteria that meets the rigor of the standards.
- We will continue to use a flexible small group model to support students in mastery of grade-level essential standards.
- Oak Ridge Schools uses a variety of literacy materials to support students. Primary intervention materials for K-5 include the Sonday System and 95 Percent Group PLL. Other resources are available and vary by individual school to support literacy improvement.

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2**

Imagine Learning EL Education (formerly LearnZillion Expeditionary Learning) K-3

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5**

Imagine Learning EL Education (formerly LearnZillion Expeditionary Learning) K-3

Imagine Learning Guidebooks (formerly LearnZillion) 4-5

### **Supplemental Instructional Materials**

Oak Ridge Schools uses a variety of materials to support students. Primary intervention materials for K-5 include the Sonday System and 95 Percent Group PLL. Other resources are available and vary by individual school.

Schools have access to an ELA decision-making guide that provides a list of resources based on the literacy area need. Supplemental materials for foundational skills are aligned to the science of reading.

### **Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements**

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) for grades K-4  
STAR Literacy Suite for grade 5

### **Supplemental Screeners**

- PASS
- PWRS
- 95% Group (PASI and PSI)
- Sonday System
- EL curriculum benchmarks

Schools have access to an ELA decision-making guide that provides a list of resources based on the literacy area need. Supplemental materials for foundational skills are aligned to the science of reading.

## **Intervention Structure and Supports**

Oak Ridge Schools uses aimswebPlus as our Universal Screener for grades K-4 and STAR for grade 5. K-2 students also take the EL curriculum Benchmark Assessment three times a year on areas such as phonological awareness, letter ID and letter sounds, decoding, encoding, and fluency. AimswebPlus is used for progress monitoring.

95% Group uses PASI and PSI to determine foundational skill gaps and prescribe the instructional path. All classroom teachers in K-4 will also have access to Amplify Reading, a supplemental, adaptive computer-based program that also provides teachers with small group lesson plans based on the needs of students identified within the program.

Reading Specialists, certified teachers, and paraprofessionals deliver instruction during RTI periods. Tier 3 students receive the most intense intervention. Each day they receive 45 minutes of direct instruction in a small group with weekly progress monitoring. Tier 2 students receive 30 minutes of daily, direct instruction intervention in small groups with bi-weekly progress monitoring. The academic areas in which students receive explicit instruction and progress monitoring are determined by assessment results and classroom performance and address specific skill gaps.

Oak Ridge intervention schedules are aligned with the expectations as outlined in the state RTI<sup>2</sup> Framework. RTI teams meet every 4.5 weeks to review data and evaluate intervention materials and placements. Multiple stakeholders such as classroom teachers, Reading Specialists, guidance counselors, and administrators make up the RTI teams. Progress monitoring data, grade-level classroom data, and intervention observational data are shared and discussed to determine if students are making progress. If there is limited progress, the RTI team makes a collective decision about what changes need to occur to meet the needs of students such as a change to duration, material, or intensity of the intervention.

## **Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports**

Knowing that early and intensive intervention is critical when children experience reading difficulties, Oak Ridge Schools provides parents with access to information about the importance of their child being able to read on grade level by third grade. We have provided parents with access to resources such as TDOE's newly released, Interactive Decodable Book Series.

Oak Ridge Schools notifies parents after the universal screener if their child will be receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention. The notification letters, sent three times a year K-8, provide parents with a brief description of the Tiers, the time spent daily in intervention, and the frequency of when progress is communicated. The notification letters provide information about the specific reading skills for which their child needs support, the importance of third grade reading proficiency, free resources families can use to support their child at home, and ways to get more information about RTI or the "Say Dyslexia" law. Parents are notified if their child's intervention services are discontinued or changed. Our district also has a Family Guide to RTI that shares information with parents such as what the RTI framework is, what it looks like, its key components, and ways parents can support at home. We also provide information on the pathway to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.



Our district holds parent conference days twice a year for teachers to share information with parents about their child's progress in reading and math.

### **Professional Development Plan**

During 23-24, we focused on Teacher Clarity and Success Criteria. We are building on that with PD focused on student Ownership of Learning.

All teachers new to ORS that have not completed the required Early Reading training will be required to complete it by December 2024.

Teachers new to grades K-3 will attend an EL Curriculum training on July 12, 2024, which includes best practices for foundational literacy and how to implement the Skills Block portion of EL.