

Robertson County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

First Approved: November 14, 2023

Approved: June 11, 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

Robertson County Schools adopted Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) in grades K-2, a foundational skills curriculum grounded in the science of reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA state standards. This high-quality curriculum provides explicit instruction and student practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Robertson County elementary schools have a literacy block with 150 to 180 minutes daily in grades K-2. K-2 students spend 60 minutes each day in direct, systematic foundational skills instruction aligned to CKLA's research-driven scope and system of foundational skills. Students engage in 3-4 "mini lessons" to allow them adequate time to both learn and practice new skills that ultimately result in fluent reading, comprehension, and writing skills. The CKLA scope and sequence includes direct instruction and aligned student practice in phonics, grammar, spelling, and writing. There are four guiding principles for the CKLA skills strand:

- **Explicit Phonics:** Explicit, systematic phonics instruction is a more effective way to teach decoding than "whole language" or whole word methods.
- **Synthetic Phonics:** Synthetic phonics (or linguistic phonics) in which instruction is oriented from sound to letter, is an especially powerful way to teach phonics.
- **Repeated Oral Practice:** Repeated oral practice and oral reading are proven methods of improving fluency.
- **Intensive Practice:** Intensive practice with skills-aligned texts is essential to build reliability and automaticity in reading.

Additionally, the CKLA skills lessons engage students in ongoing reading fluency and comprehension practice. Through decodable readers aligned to the skills students are learning, students can make meaning from text and produce the written word.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Robertson County Schools uses Amplify's Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) in grades 3-5, a high-quality curriculum grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the

integrated ELA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons, students receive 120 to 150 minutes of instruction. All daily instruction includes components of knowledge-building for about 75 minutes per day and researched-based foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing for at least 30 minutes per day. The adopted curriculum also engages students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection. Instruction within the CKLA curriculum for 3-5 guides educators in developing strong readers, writers, and thinkers.

Daily lesson sequences in grades 3-5 CKLA may include briefly activating prior knowledge and reading independently and/or aloud. After the daily read-aloud (or independent reading in on-grade level, complex text), the students may summarize the content (through a think-pair-share model), unpack the most essential vocabulary (“word work”), respond to a series of scaffolded questions, and write a response to an inferential question that requires students to use evidence from the text to support their answer. In vocabulary lessons teachers provide explicit support for vocabulary needed to access the complex text. In one lesson, the students study the root “port” as in import, export, portable, etc. Students use their word knowledge as they engage in group discussion and writing activities. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of this 90-minute block and is dedicated to developing students’ holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

Additional Supports

Robertson County Schools is dedicated to improving student literacy. Schools and teachers will receive targeted support from the district office to ensure necessary resources and supports are in place as we focus on identified student subgroups. This level of support will include:

- Learning walks with administrator teams and academic coaches using the instructional improvement cycle.
- Professional development will be planned based on the trends from learning walks.
- A district K-12 mentor coach will work with new teachers to establish a culture for learning in classrooms.
- Academic coaches and teacher leaders will provide models of effective instruction.
- In K-5 schools, high-dosage tutoring will be provided for students as needed.
- Data analysis from standards-based grading will provide the district data on instructional needs of our K-2 students.
- In addition to district supports, designated schools will work with the Core office personnel to develop plans to address growth in identified subgroups.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (K-5)

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (K-5)

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

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) Grades K-5

Intervention Structure and Supports

Robertson County Schools provides a multi-tiered approach that uses a data-driven, problem-solving model to identify and ensure that all students are provided the support needed to access grade level content. Schools actively work to identify students who may need intervention. Students are screened for decoding and encoding concerns through the universal screening process including phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, sound-symbol recognition, and rapid naming.

Students in grades K-5 complete the universal screening process three times a year. School-based teams review screening data after each administration. After the initial screener, school data teams review other relevant student data to gain more information to identify students at risk. Additionally, students identified as at-risk are assessed using survey-level and diagnostic assessments to determine specific intervention needs. After the data review students are placed into enrichment, reteaching/remediation, Tier II, Tier III, or skills-based intervention.

For students identified as needing an intervention to address a characteristic of dyslexia, the intervention programs used address decoding and encoding skills, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition as well as rapid naming skills according to the individual needs of the students. Students placed in remediation are given reteaching and practice opportunities on grade-level standards. They are monitored using results from common formative assessments, classroom data, and progress monitoring by school data teams to determine if they are making adequate progress or need additional support through Tier II or Tier III interventions.

Students placed in Tier II, Tier III, and skills-based intervention are provided intensive, systematic instruction that addresses the foundational reading skills identified as deficit areas for each student. Interventions occur up to five times per week, with times ranging from 30 to 45 minutes each session based on students' needs. Students in the intervention are monitored at least bi-weekly on instructional level measures and monthly on grade level measures. Students and teachers review these results as they are completed to monitor each student's individual goals and progress.

School data teams meet, at a minimum, quarterly to determine if there is adequate progress towards each student's goals. If a member of the team believes a meeting is required sooner based on student performance data, meetings may be held more frequently. If a student is not making adequate progress within Tier II or Tier III, the team will consider making a change. Changes may include increasing the frequency of the intervention session, changing interventions, changing the intervention provider, changing time of day intervention is delivered, or referring for special education evaluation.

An extra time and support block is included in all schools' daily schedule that provides for enrichment, reteaching/remediation, Tier II, Tier III, or skills-based intervention. Students who are in

Tier II or Tier III RTI groups work on activities and assignments focused on skill deficits. The programs used are systematic, cumulative, explicit, multi-sensory, aligned to address deficiencies, and language based.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Robertson County Schools communicates with parents in grades K-5 the results from universal screenings if their child is “at-risk” or has a significant reading deficiency. Students' scores are communicated in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and extent of the student needs. Parents are notified of the specific reading interventions and supports that the school recommends for their child. Dyslexia information and resources are shared with families of students identified with the characteristics of dyslexia. Parent notifications include a statement about the importance of a student being able to read proficiently by the end of third grade. To support families, no-cost reading activities are included in the notification. Finally, the notification communicates promotion pathways for students in grade 3 who score “approaching” or “below” on the ELA portion of TCAP.

The district defines for families how students are assessed and what a “significant reading deficiency” means. Parents are subsequently notified of their child’s progress, or lack of progress, after the 4.5-week data team meetings are completed. In the parent notifications/communication, data teams note programming and grouping changes if the child is not showing sufficient progress, as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data. Also included are recommended activities that do not require purchased resources for supporting student deficits (activities are not tailored by child but tailored by skill deficit generally). Students are actively involved in the process by setting goals and charting progress within the intervention program and the progress monitoring results. These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times annually and are shared in 4th and 5th grades annually.

Additionally, the ELA curriculum contains parent letters in the younger grades that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the coming week that will inform and equip parents to work with the child. Families can better understand how to support their student(s) through questions about their texts and awareness of what foundational skills their child(ren) is learning.

Professional Development Plan

All teachers have completed the Early Reading Training Course 1 using the asynchronous option in compliance with the Tennessee Literacy Success Act. New teachers will be expected to complete the Early Reading training. We will ensure that teachers successfully earn a certificate of completion for the training.

Robertson County Schools has recommended Course 2 Early Reading training to teachers who may not have already completed this course. This course provides practical classroom application of research findings for phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary instruction.

Through partnerships with TNTP, the LIFT network, and the Early Literacy Network, additional learning on foundational skills instruction grounded in a phonics-based approach has been provided for teachers. Administrators, academic coaches, and teachers will continue to receive training on the foundational skills IPG during administrator and academic coach meetings. Academic coaches will facilitate planning sessions with teachers to support lesson prep that includes foundational skills instruction. Implementation of the CKLA curriculum and foundational skills instruction will continue with support from our TNTP consultant. This training will be delivered to our literacy leaders, full-time classroom teachers, who deliver professional development for teachers on embedded professional development days throughout the year. Additionally, new teachers to the district will be required to attend training for K-2 and 3-5 program overviews of the CKLA curriculum to learn how the components of the CKLA curriculum are implemented in the classroom. Sessions on implementing the CKLA curriculum will also be offered to EL and Special Education teachers.