

Smith County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

First Approved: May 14, 2021

Approved: June 25, 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

In grades K-2, Smith County uses Amplify's CKLA curriculum including the skills and knowledge strands. There are 60 minutes devoted to the foundational skills strand and 60 minutes to the knowledge strand of CKLA. The CKLA curriculum is aligned with the TN literacy standards in all curriculum areas. The foundational skills strand in CKLA is the primary focus in grades K-2. This includes explicit instruction and student practice in fluency, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension. In addition, the TN foundational skills supplement and Heggerty's materials are also provided for additional support.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Smith County uses the Wit and Wisdom curriculum in ELA for grades 3-5. This curriculum is aligned with the TN standards and contains an embedded, evidence-based approach to teaching foundational skills. The Wit and Wisdom lessons span over 90 minutes each day with 30 minutes dedicated to foundational skill instruction which is embedded through the deep dives, the writing tasks, and vocabulary discussions. Wit and Wisdom takes an integrated approach to literacy, as the work students do with reading, thinking, speaking, morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, and fluency building all tie into the module's topic or essential question. Wit and Wisdom uses a specific portion of each lesson to explicitly provide a deep study of pertinent vocabulary, standards-aligned style and conventions connected to the core lesson, fluency practice, and comprehension building.

Additional Supports

The schools and subgroups listed as level 1 or 2 according to TVAAS data are top priorities in our district. Two of our three schools that measured low TVAAS data received high achievement measures. These two schools will be assisted in the focus of growing students individually according to their needs. The principals and literacy leaders will hold data conversations with teachers and students at each benchmark window. Students will be constantly aware of their progress. Teachers will also receive support with interventions to help fill any gaps in the students' learning. Our interventionist will be assisting with individualized interventions for these students as well. Our level 2 school also has a lower level of achievement so while using the above plan with this school as well,

we plan to also focus on strengthening the tier one instruction through the support of our literacy specialist and distinct instructional coach by using individual coaching cycles with teachers and establishing a more frequent walk through the schedule for classroom visits. This school has also decided to focus on the improvement of the RTI program to ensure all students are receiving appropriate tier 2 and tier 3 interventions. This has been a result of a change in the school-level administration this past year. Lastly, for our subgroups, we plan to build off of the RTI improvement at the school listed above to ensure all students are receiving their individualized intervention. Additionally, we have partnered with the AALN Grant opportunity through the University of Tennessee to build a stronger bridge between special education and general education. We are working to improve the collaborative efforts of these teachers through additional planning opportunities. We hope fostering a more collaborative team approach will enable our students to be better served by both departments.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Great Minds Wit and Wisdom

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Smith County uses the Tennessee Foundational Skills Supplement for additional instructional needs in grades K-2. Heggerty's Kindergarten and Primary Phonemic Awareness and Foundational Skills Material

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) K-5

Intervention Structure and Supports

Our RTI² framework is a three-tier model (TDOE) that provides an ongoing process of instruction and interventions that allow students to make progress at all levels, particularly those students who are struggling or advancing. When our Tier I (core) instruction is functioning well, 80-85 percent of the student population is successful. Tier II would represent 10-15 percent of the student population while only 3-5 percent should need Tier III interventions. The majority of our tier II and III interventions are closely tied to foundational skills and skill level assessments are used in the tier group interventions to help specifically pinpoint where students need the most support to fill any deficiencies in the learning path. In Tier I, all students receive research-based, high-quality, general education instruction on grade level standards that incorporates ongoing universal screening and ongoing assessment to inform instruction. In Tier II, intervention is implemented when assessment indicates that a student is not making adequate gains from Tier I instruction alone. In addition to Tier I instruction, students are provided small group interventions designed to meet their specific

needs. These students are progress monitored weekly or every other week using a tool that is sensitive to measuring changes in the student's individual skills. In Tier III, more intensive interventions are provided to students who have not made significant progress in Tier II, who are more than 1.5 grade levels behind, or who are between the 0-15th percentile. These students are progress monitored weekly or every other week using a tool that is sensitive to measuring changes in the student's skills.

Our schools conduct universal screenings three times each school year using Aims Web Plus as our universal screener. As a result of universal screenings, students may be identified as needing targeted intervention (Tier II) in addition to the high-quality instruction they are receiving in Tier I. Research-based interventions are used to support students in the area(s) in which they are struggling. Research-based interventions are teaching strategies or methods that have been proven effective in helping children learn. WonderWorks, FCRR, CKLA Assessment Remediation Guide, Read Well, West Virginia Phonics, Read Naturally, Touch Phonics, Moby Max, and Corrective Reading are examples of our intervention support programs. Progress monitoring is a way for teachers to take a snapshot of how children are doing on a specific skill. It shows how well the intervention is working. It includes formal and informal assessments. Progress monitoring helps determine whether an intervention is successful or needs to be changed. This information is shared with parents regularly. When progress monitoring indicates that the intervention is no longer needed, the child continues to receive support from the general education curriculum (Tier I). When progress monitoring shows that a child is not responding to the intervention, another approach or intervention may be tried. If a higher level of support is needed, students may be given a more intensive intervention that further focuses on the supporting skills they need to be successful learners (Tier III). Students who do not respond to Tier III interventions may be referred for special education. School Level Support Teams use progress monitoring data to evaluate student progress in interventions and if necessary, make appropriate adjustments. Teams use universal screening benchmark assessment and progress monitoring data to evaluate student progress in interventions and if necessary, make appropriate adjustments to, from, and between tiers.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Upon completion of our district's universal screener for students in grades K-8 that is administered three times per year, we identify students who require remediation based on scoring below their current grade level. Students are placed in intervention groups based on student data and their percentile rank that falls below the grade level achievement. Students who fall below the 16th percentile and indicate a need for intervention based on multiple forms of data are referred to Tier III interventions that are provided for one hour each school day using a research-based intervention program. Students who fall between 16-40 percentile and have student data that indicates a need for intervention, are referred to Tier II interventions that are provided for thirty minutes each day using a research-based intervention program.

Students are placed in intervention groups based on their percentile rank that falls below the grade level achievement. Students who fall below the 16th percentile are referred to Tier III interventions that are provided for one hour each school day using a research-based intervention program.

Students who fall between the 16th- 40th percentile are referred to Tier II interventions that are provided for thirty minutes each day using a research-based intervention program.

Parents are told which tier their child will be served in and how long the services will be provided each day, explaining their child's skills gaps and how they will be addressed in the home literacy report letter and again through parent-teacher conferences. Home literacy reports are sent to K-3 families three times per year and annually for grades 4-5. When communicating with parents/guardians our district provides information about the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade and information on the pathways to 4th grade. Also, provided are no-cost ways in which parents can support literacy skills at home through a variety of resources located on the Best for All TDOE website and the local board of education's web page.

Smith County also has a literacy law summary brochure that is updated annually with the latest information for parents. These brochures are given to parents at the beginning of the school year, the school's open houses, parent-teacher conferences, and other partner involvement opportunities throughout the school year. There is contact information in the brochure for parents to reach out with any questions. This information addresses not only the importance of reading proficiency in 3rd grade but also the 4th-grade promotion pathway information. District personnel are often on hand at parent events to help answer questions. Information about individual areas of need (letter naming, letter sounds, word parts, decoding, etc.) will be included in the individualized student letters to parents. This will give more specific information about the skill area the student needs strengthening and the intervention that is being provided to address this skill area. Each school's literacy leader also sends out frequent school updates that include ways parents can help their children at home.

Additionally, the CKLA curriculum contains Home Letters in K-2 that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domain topics for the coming week and inform parents about ways to support and enhance their child's learning experience. They are given questions to ask their child about the text they are listening to and reading and are given ways to support the foundational skills their child is learning that week. We have recently shared an opportunity for families to share interactive decodables through the state's website. This opportunity provides students with a way to practice skills at home with their parents.

Professional Development Plan

Teachers in Smith County participated in the TDOE Reading 360 Early Literacy 2-week Training during the past three years. Teachers in grades 3-8, EL teachers, Sped teachers, Title teachers, Learning Leaders, administrators, and other related arts teachers attended Secondary Literacy Training. This free training is provided by the Tennessee Department of Education. Week one early literacy training focuses on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. Week two emphasizes practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. New teachers to our district also complete week one of this training.

Smith County participated in the TDOE Early Literacy Network for 2 years (2021-22 and 2022-23) and continues to receive ongoing training in early literacy throughout the year through the work of our district literacy specialist. Smith County will continue to participate in the TDOE HQIM Literacy Implementation Network to strengthen literacy skills in grades 3-5. School administrators and district leaders will participate in academic walkthroughs using the IPG to strengthen instructional practices and work to strengthen literacy learning that is reflected in student work. Other professional learning opportunities include weekly teacher grade-level meetings, district PLCs, vertical alignment team meetings, and district-focused sessions. Smith County is a part of the AALN collaborative network that provides training in student learning differentiation for both general education and special education teachers.

Additional Comments

The district-identified Literacy Anchor Teachers, one per grade level, provide district-level support and professional development for teachers in collaboration with the District Literacy Instructional Coach and the Supervisor of Instruction. They will lead literacy PLCs, model excellent instruction using the curriculum, lead in collaborative preparation to deliver instruction and serve as a literacy advisory team in the district. Our goal is to build capacity in literacy leaders in the district to lead their colleagues toward continuous improvement in literacy instruction in classrooms across Smith County.