

Blount County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 13, 2021

Updated: June 30, 2022

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

Blount County Schools uses foundational skills curricula (Foundations, Wit and Wisdom, and Heggerty) grounded in the science of reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. K-2 classrooms in our district meet and often exceed the recommended daily 150 minutes of Tier 1 ELA instruction. Instruction is delivered through both explicitly and systematically teaching foundational “skills based” competencies (Foundations) and knowledge based competencies (Wit & Wisdom). Those competencies are then seamlessly linked through intentional planning and practice. The use of decodable readers (Geodes) allow for this practice to be grade appropriate and directly aligned to the scope and sequence of foundational standards while also building knowledge.

Tier 1 instruction is driven by on-grade level standards. Teachers deliver instruction by strategically grouping students appropriate to the demands of the task. This may be either a whole and small group.

Clarity for the 150 minutes is as follows:

15 minutes - Deep Dive Wit & Wisdom (Foundational Skills Based)

30 minutes - explicit Foundations instruction (Foundational Skills Based)

30 minutes - small group instruction and independent practice (Foundational Skills Based).

**** 15 minutes**** Kinder only - Heggerty PA Curriculum (Foundational Skills Based)

75 minutes - core instruction in Wit & Wisdom (Knowledge based)

All ELA Instruction is grounded in foundational skills instruction. Reading, Writing, Speaking & listening are interconnected and built upon foundational skills.

Foundations utilizes Orton-Gillingham Principles of Instruction to teach foundational skills. These principles include:

Explicit (Clearly explaining content)

Systematic (Sequential and Cumulative)

Multi-Sensory, engaging multiple learning modalities

Repetition, multiple opportunities to practice

Immediate feedback

Skills taught to mastery within Foundations: (Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Sound Mastery, Phonics, Vocabulary, High Frequency Words, Comprehension, Foundational Writing Components (hand writing, spelling, punctuation and capitalization)).

Our improvements for next year are focused on strengthening our foundational literacy instruction through administering common assessments for each unit in Foundations, requiring at least 80% of the class to score at least 80%. Teachers will re-teach and follow up if this benchmark is not met before moving on to the next unit's instruction.

We have also purchased and trained all K-2 teachers on the Geodes decodable reader program (books follow the scope and sequence of the Foundations curriculum and the content knowledge of the Wit and Wisdom curriculum) to be used in small groups beginning in the 2021-2022 school year.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Blount County Schools has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards, including morphology, spelling, writing, fluency and grammar. Our curriculum materials are selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During a 90 minute block of ELA instruction daily the curriculum integrates all domains within the TN State Standards including comprehension, fluency and vocabulary instruction as well as foundational literacy skills standards.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Approved waiver for other materials

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Great Minds - 3-5 Wit and Wisdom

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

Blount County Schools uses the iReady Suite as our Universal Reading Screener 3 times per year. For our kindergarten students, we will use the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (Aimsweb). We also use aimsweb Plus to progress monitor students who receive Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

Intervention Structure and Supports

In the fall, students are given a universal reading screener to determine which students have a reading deficiency or are "at risk." Our grade level teachers, principals, and members of the school's data team will review universal screener results, grades, formative assessments,

summative assessments, classroom performance, and teacher observations, in addition to any other relevant information of students who score between the 0-25th percentile. Those students who are classified as in need of Tier II or Tier III will be given a survey level assessment to determine specific deficits and assigned appropriate small group intervention. Students receiving Tier II instruction will receive a 30 minute small group intervention time to address their area of need. These students are progress monitored on their specific area of deficit at minimum two times per month. Students receiving Tier III instruction will receive a 45 minute small group intervention time to address their area of need. These students are progress monitored on their specific area of deficit each week.

We have research-based options for reading intervention support available to our students who are “at-risk” and/or who have been identified with a reading deficiency. Our universal screener provides teachers with a detailed developmental analysis that provides teachers with a skill specific guide, and activities that directly address skill gaps. When an intervention is proving ineffective our data team reconvenes to determine that a more comprehensive, strategic intervention is needed (such as Wilson Reading Systems). Data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change in the intervention is needed. The data team will also review current data to determine if additional changes to Tiered groups are needed (i.e. add new students, dismiss students, and/or change interventionist). The data team also looks at other variables, such as, attendance, engagement, and/or behavior. The data team may also refer to the Blount County Schools decision tree to determine student placement.

Our students receive systematic and explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students are also screened using additional survey level assessments, and ongoing progress monitoring probes to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention that meets the requirements of the “Say Dyslexia Law”. Families are notified that the Wilson Reading Systems Intensive intervention will be used to support those students, as it is based on the Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic and explicit instruction and is considered a strong support for those students.

Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work in a systematic way using research based strategies with activities and assignments that support their skill deficit. For example, students who need instruction in phonics and phonological awareness will practice alphabetic principles, letter sound fluency, and word work.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Blount County schools has developed a specific and extensive parent communication plan that sets expectations for all schools, K-12. Parent communication is timely and is written in a family-friendly format. It specifically explains each reading domain assessed, individual student skill progress over time, current instructional needs and next steps for skill practice, including home activities for families.

In addition to the universal screening letter sent 3-4 times per year after each benchmark assessment, the school based support team meets to review all student data and to identify students who may be at risk (as evidenced by students scoring within the 1st-24th percentile range). After a school-based team has reviewed multiple sources of data in the screening process and identified skill deficits in need of intervention, parents receive notification of the student's performance. The notification addresses specific areas of deficits, including those associated with the characteristics of dyslexia. Once identified, parent notification indicates that the student will receive additional skill-based group intervention daily in the specific area of need using a research-based reading intervention program with fidelity, that addresses basic reading skills (e.g., phonics, phoneme segmentation fluency, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness), reading fluency, and/or reading comprehension.

For example, if a student demonstrates weaknesses in phonological awareness inconsistent with developmental expectations and requires interventions, the parent notification identifies the area of weakness targeted in intervention (i.e., phonological awareness) and the intensity level of the intervention (e.g., Tier 2, an additional 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week, in a small group setting in addition to core instruction). This ongoing communication, at least every 4.5-5 weeks, informs the parent(s) of the student's progress in skill development through tiered interventions, any changes in the intervention, and any additional concerns identified. This notification is also coupled with a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade. Because parent communication is an essential component of RTI2 and reinforces a culture of collaboration, Blount County schools is committed to excellent partnership with parents and families.

Professional Development Plan

Teachers in Blount County Schools complete intensive literacy training as indicated in the attached schedule.

Blount County Schools plans to use the Reading Early Literacy 360 training beginning in June of 2022.

June 2022- K-2 teachers Reading Early Literacy 360 (Week one online)

June 2023- 3-5 teachers Reading Early Literacy 360 (Week one online)