

Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 19, 2021

Updated: July 3, 2023

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

CMCSS has an integrated 120 minute literacy block for grades K-2 that is aligned to the Tennessee ELA Standards. During this literacy block, there is a designated portion of time (45-50 minutes daily) dedicated to explicit foundational skills instruction. We use the Phonics First Foundations for Reading and Spelling program as the primary source of instruction for phonics, word recognition, and word composition. This program is based on the Orton Gillingham approach. The program has five main components: a three part drill (auditory, visual, blending) of individual phonograms, new sound introduction, syllabication, red word (sight word) review and new word introduction (to include sentence dictation), and oral reading fluency. The instructional process provided in the Phonics First program is explicit, systematic, cumulative, and multi-sensory. It includes clear & accurate pronunciation of sounds, the use of visual aids, explanation of rules for the sound(s) & spelling patterns, modeling, guided, and independent practice.

We also integrate foundational skills instruction provided in our state approved curriculum, Benchmark Advance. This instruction includes lessons and activities that build print concepts and phonological awareness, provide additional phonics practice, develop sentence composition skills, allow opportunities to build fluency, vocabulary work, and comprehension development. Benchmark Advance provides multiple types of texts to include decodable, word study, and shared reading texts which allow students to immediately apply the out of text foundational skills instruction they received to an authentic text. Benchmark Advance also provides teachers with guidance on how to embed daily writing instruction that is connected to the texts read throughout the unit. This allows students the opportunity to apply their word and sentence composition skills, as well as demonstrate their understanding of print concepts.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Our district has an integrated 90 minute literacy block for grades 3-5 (30 minutes for foundational literacy skills instruction) that is aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards. Teachers use an integrated approach to explicitly teach word work with affixes, roots, as well as explicitly teaching fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. These skills are embedded in daily teaching to produce cohesion of the standards. Teachers also embed writing instruction connected to the texts utilized from Benchmark Advance.

For example, our 3rd grade has a three-week unit on animal adaptations. Students' prior knowledge is activated at the beginning of the unit, and then students closely read complex texts related to the topic. Students are taught to closely read these texts with integration of the ELA standards while also activating cognitive skills to visualize, evaluate important information, and make connections within a text to create a standard of cohesion. Students will continue to revisit texts related to the content to practice fluency by repeated reading. Vocabulary words such as environment, predator, prey, and habitat, are explicitly taught throughout this unit. Students also have daily dedicated word work related to specific graphemes, affixes, and roots followed by guided practice with encoding and decoding words that contain those specific word parts. These words come from the texts within the unit that all connect to the enduring understanding of how animals survive in their respective environments. Students will then have a writing prompt that assesses not only their knowledge of the content, but application of the writing standards, as well as the word and sentence composition standards explicitly taught throughout the unit.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

The district supplements Benchmark K-5 Advanced in K-2 with Phonics First Foundations for Reading and Spelling and is pursuing a waiver for its inclusion on the instructional materials list.

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

Our district uses FastBridge as a Universal Reading Screener for students in K-5. Our 3rd grade students will also be given the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener.

FastBridge (Illuminate Education) for skills- and standards-based reading and encoding measures; district writing process (DWP) for skills- and standards-based writing and written expression measures. Below is a breakdown of how FastBridge aligns to each element of the Say Dyslexia law: Phonological Awareness (Onset Sounds, Word Segmenting, Word Rhyming) Phonemic Awareness (Onset Sounds, Word Segmenting, Word Blending) Alphabet Knowledge (Letter Names) Sound / Symbol Recognition (Letter Sounds) Decoding (Nonsense words, Decodable Words, Oral Reading Fluency) Rapid Naming (Arkansas Rapid Naming or Mississippi Lexercise) Encoding (Words Their Way, AUTOreading encoding/FastBridge) The Universal Screening is the start of the dyslexia screening process; however, dyslexia screening requires additional diagnostic measures outside of the USC process for a comprehensive picture of student strengths and weaknesses. The district has an in-depth process for identifying students through the USC for additional screening.

Intervention Structure and Supports

In fall, winter, and spring, a universal screener is administered to determine students who show risk (i.e., demonstrate reading deficiency). Grade-level teams composed of teachers, administrators, academic coach(es) and assessment personnel review USC data in context

of overall student profile (multiple data sources; CUAs, USC, TCAP, grades, absenteeism) to determine students with scores < 25th percentile. Students identified as needing tier II/III intervention are given a diagnostic assessment to strategically align need to intervention and progress monitoring measure for gap closure. Teams also use survey level/diagnostic measures to determine if characteristics of dyslexia are present, which guides intervention focus and choice of resources as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law. Student-aligned, skills-based, multisensory, explicit, cumulative and systematic intervention is provided daily (min. of 30/45 minutes; II/III) with a focus on the greatest area of deficit but encompassing all 5 pillars of reading. In addition to increased time and greater individual student alignment, tier III intensity is increased by smaller group ratios and greater interventionist expertise. Students receiving dyslexia-specific intervention have direct fidelity observations, intervention strategies based on the Orton Gillingham Approach (OGA), and parent letters tailored to document use of resources as outlined in the Dyslexia Resource Guide.

Students across all tiers receive explicit instruction, with small groups (I/II/III) using research-based materials focused on area of student need (students grouped according to similar need). The Screening to Intervention (S2i) report within FB provides teams with whole- and small-group, and individual student plans that combine performance on broad and narrow reading measures, aligning intervention strategies and PM measures to each. All intervention materials are provided within the assessment platform and are vetted by researchers from the Universities of Minnesota, Georgia, Syracuse, East Carolina, Buffalo, Temple, and Missouri. The district also utilizes resources from Phonics First, Structures, and Heggerty, and more comprehensive and strategic interventions are provided as tier intensity increases. Effectiveness of interventions, including impacting variables such as attendance and engagement, are discussed at 4.5 week intervals to determine if changes are warranted (dosage, strength, alignment, etc., according to NCI's Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity).

Tiered intervention blocks are part of the master schedule. During this protected time, students are engaged in explicit instruction and multisensory strategies that target growth in the identified area of skill/sub-skill need. For example, students who need instruction in phonemic awareness may segment, blend, isolate, manipulate, and delete sounds in words from grade-level text using finger tapping, which supports and provides more access to the knowledge-building units in Tier I instruction. For students who need fluency support, they may receive intervention incorporating use of modeled fluency that gradually releases to student ownership (echo/choral reading), with frequent opportunities for student response and immediate corrective feedback.

PM measures are discretely aligned to area of need and gap closure. For example, if a third grade student is working on phonics, s/he may be PMed on nonsense words every week and ORF monthly, allowing teams to gauge intervention effectiveness and gap closure simultaneously.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

CMCSS notifies parents in grades K-5 if their student shows risk for a significant reading deficiency (evidenced by scores <25th percentile) upon completion of each universal screening period (fall, winter, spring). Student performance is communicated in parent-friendly language via parent letter and the FastBridge Family Report (graphic depiction), which provides a clear explanation of skill gaps and the depth/extent of student needs. Parents are informed of the intervention strategies that will

be utilized and the amount of time each day the student will participate in tiered intervention. This letter also informs parents of the importance of reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade.

The district defines how students are assessed and what a “significant reading discrepancy” means and parents are notified at 4.5 week intervals (after data chats) of student progress (i.e., effectiveness of intervention). Parent notification letters include notation of any changes being made if progress is less than expected to close gaps (evidenced by PM graphs and USC scores), as well as recommended no-cost activities that will support student need in the identified growth area (tailored by skill deficit, not by individual child).

Professional Development Plan

Kindergarten - fifth grade teachers have the opportunity to participate in week one of the Early Literacy Training series developed by the TDOE. Our plan for providing PD will focus on structured literacy and not MSV strategies or Calkins resources. Additional district PD options for K-5 teachers (below) are designed to be a community of practice aimed at deepening participant knowledge and providing feedback on implementation of strategies across all tiers, which will be monitored via walk-throughs, self-reflections, fidelity checks, coaching cycles, and feedback on implemented lessons. *PD plan has been peer-reviewed by district leaders to ensure all criteria were met. K - opportunity to complete week 2 training of the TDOE Early Literacy Training 1-2 - opportunity to complete week 2 training of the TDOE Early Literacy Training or one week of foundational skills training with either ECRI/CORE followed by 4 additional days throughout the year as part of a grant (AIR). Training focuses on the 5 pillars of reading as identified by the National Reading Panel. K-5- Lead teachers participate in a monthly course over the 5 components of reading [K-2 facilitated by District Early Learning Coordinator; 3-5 by a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT)] to be redelivered to all teachers.

Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

CMCSS is working with American Institutes for Research [AIR], Instructional Research Group [IRG], School Readiness Consultant [SRC] on a longitudinal research project evaluating training in multi-tiered systems of support and resources for reading in the early grades. The project is running from January 2021 - December 2026.