

Monroe County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 19, 2021

Updated: June 27, 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

Monroe County Schools has adopted and purchased Benchmark Advance as our K-2 ELA curriculum. This curriculum provides explicit and systemic foundational instruction, is aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards, and is approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Benchmark Advance is anchored in a purposeful scope and sequence with spiral review and repetition cycle and works to develop independent readers and writers by applying foundational skills to authentic reading and writing experiences. The curriculum also provides built-in differentiation and scaffolding to meet the needs of all students. Whole group, small group, and individual instruction and tasks are grounded in foundational skills that are embedded throughout the entire ELA block. Students receive explicit instruction in print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, word study, vocabulary, decoding, and encoding through read-alouds, shared readings, mini lessons, small focus groups, and daily writing tasks.

The Benchmark Advance daily planner allots 20 minutes for explicit phonemic awareness/phonics instruction within a 150-minute reading block. After our K-2 teachers participate in the 2 week Early Reading Training offered by TDOE in spring/summer 2021, our district will re-evaluate to see if/how we might utilize the state provided foundational supplement to partner with Benchmark Advance in order to amplify our K-2 foundational instruction piece. Although foundational skills are embedded throughout our K-2 ELA blocks and are the primary focus of instruction, specific blocks of time dedicated for explicit foundational instruction have not been reflected on all master schedules, nor all individual classroom schedules. In the past, not all individual classroom schedules were aligned to their school's master schedule. Though the master schedules met all recommended minimum time requirements, many individual classroom schedules did not meet the recommended/required minimum times as outlined by the district and TDOE RTI2 Manual.

Our improvements for next year will be grounded in our district's High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) vision: Plan with purpose and utilize the adopted HQIM (Benchmark Advance) with fidelity. We will be transitioning from the Planning Phase of our HQIM Implementation Plan to Phase I with the support of the East Core Office. Improvements will also be made as K-2 teachers will be trained in the science of reading (Early Literacy Training), equipping them with knowledge, strategies, materials, and support to strengthen foundational skills. We will also ensure that all students receive their integrated ELA instruction from the same teacher. Changes will be made that

will eliminate departmentalizing K-2 classes to ensure required times for the ELA block are met. Changes will also be made in accountability protocols with administrator and teacher assurance documents surrounding the alignment of master schedules and individual teacher schedules to district and state guidelines (see supporting documents). Fidelity will also be monitored through school-level and district-level learning walks, school-level PLC's, and district-wide grade level collaborations.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Monroe County Schools has adopted and purchased Benchmark Advance as our 3-5 ELA curriculum. This curriculum provides explicit and systemic foundational instruction, is aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards, and is approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Benchmark Advance is anchored in a purposeful scope and sequence with spiral review and repetition cycle and works to develop independent readers and writers by applying foundational skills to authentic reading and writing experiences. The curriculum also provides built-in differentiation and scaffolding to meet the needs of all students. Whole group, small group, and individual instruction and tasks are grounded in foundational skills that are embedded throughout the entire ELA block. Students in grade 3-5 receive explicit instruction in word study/morphology, vocabulary, vowel patterns, grammar skills, fluency, and comprehension through read-alouds, shared readings, mini lessons, small focus groups, and daily writing tasks.

The Benchmark Advance provides embedded foundational skills throughout the literacy block. The daily planner allots 10 minutes for read-alouds, 60 minutes for reading & word study, and 50 minutes for writing and grammar within a 120-minute reading block. After our 3-5 grade teachers participate in the 2 week Early Reading Training offered by TDOE in spring/summer 2021, our district will re-evaluate to see how we might incorporate the strategies learned into the literacy block. We would also like to possibly purchase some of the K-2 supplemental foundational kits for our 3-5 grade teachers to provide extra support for students who might need it. Although foundational skills are embedded throughout our 3-5 ELA blocks and are the primary focus of instruction, it has been a challenge to meet district and state recommended/required blocks of time because our 5th grade students have been following the middle school schedule. Also, in the past, not all individual classroom schedules were aligned to their school's master schedule. Though the master schedules may have met most recommended minimum time requirements, many individual classroom schedules did not meet the recommended/required minimum times as outlined by the district and TDOE RT12 Manual.

Our improvements for next year will be grounded in our district's High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) vision: Plan with purpose and utilize the adopted HQIM (Benchmark Advance) with fidelity. We will be transitioning from the Planning Phase of our HQIM Implementation Plan to Phase I with the support of the East Core Office. Improvements will also be made as 3-5 grade teachers will be trained in the science of reading (Early Literacy Training), equipping them with knowledge and strategies that will support and reinforce foundational skills. We will also ensure that all students receive their integrated ELA instruction from the same teacher and will try to increase the amount of time allotted for 5th grade students' literacy blocks. Changes will also be made in accountability protocols with administrator and teacher assurance documents surrounding

the alignment of master schedules and individual teacher schedules to district and state guidelines (see supporting documents). Fidelity will also be monitored through school-level and district-level learning walks, school-level PLC's, and district-wide grade level collaborations.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

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

Monroe County Schools uses the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener as our universal screener for reading. All students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade are screened three times per year. This screener complies with RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade are given a universal screener three times per year. School RTI² teams meet after each screening period to determine which students are "at-risk" in reading based on universal screening and other data (state test scores, grades, attendance, etc.). These students then receive tiered interventions in a small-group setting with a qualified interventionist to address reading deficiencies and to help close the achievement gap.

Students between the 10th and 25th percentiles receive 30 minutes of a Tier II reading intervention. For Tier II, our district uses one of two interventions that focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, sight-word fluency, vocabulary, passage fluency, comprehension, and writing: 1.) The Small-Group Differentiated Teaching Model is based on books by Beverly Tyner. Lesson plans and word studies help interventionists implement strategies to ensure student growth. Level assessments help interventionists to place students in the correct level and to target deficiencies. 2.) My Sidewalks is a research-proven reading intervention that provides explicit instruction. Placement and skills assessments are given to help identify deficiencies and measure growth.

Students below the 10th percentile receive 45 minutes of a Tier III reading intervention. These students are placed in one of two programs based on their deficits: 1.) S.P.I.R.E, a research-proven reading intervention program, is designed to build reading success through an intensive, structured, and spiraling curriculum that incorporates phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This program incorporates explicit, teacher-led instruction, consistent lesson structures, and multisensory learning to help students close learning gaps and remediate reading deficiencies. S.P.I.R.E assessments are administered to identify and help interventionists target deficiencies. Unit and lesson assessments monitor growth and skill

mastery as students move forward through the program. 2.) My Sidewalks.(See description above.) Students above the 25th percentile will receive instruction to address skills gaps and encourage further reading skills growth during the RTI block.

Students who have been determined to be “at-risk” will also be assessed using various survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students demonstrating these characteristics will be placed in S.P.I.R.E, our most intensive intervention meeting the requirements of the Say Dyslexia Law. Parents of students exhibiting characteristics will receive a letter explaining the characteristics of dyslexia, how these characteristics are addressed during the reading intervention, and how they can support their child at home.

RTI² school data teams meet every 4.5 weeks to review progress monitoring and other data to determine if an intervention change is needed. Schools in Monroe County strive to adhere to the time structures for all subjects and tiers as delineated in the Tennessee RTI² Plan. Our master school schedules and teacher schedules reflect these times.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

After each screening period, Monroe County Schools strives to notify parents of skills deficiencies in both reading and math. These letters are written in parent-friendly language and resources are provided to equip parents to work with their children at home. There is a three-part process for notifying parents of their child’s reading strengths and weaknesses, each tier support that may be received, and any characteristics of dyslexia if identified. The first letters are sent to parents of all students in grades K-5 notifying them of their child’s performance on the screening assessments. This letter describes the assessments given at each grade level, their child’s score on each assessment, and how their child’s performance compares to the national norms. The letter further clarifies how the child’s performance correlates with grade level expectations. The importance of reading on grade level by the end of third grade is highlighted. Furthermore, the importance of a school and parent partnership, parent involvement, and reading practice at home in order to reach that goal are emphasized. No-cost strategies are provided to help parents support their child at home. Links to our district website which provides additional information and resources are also given.

The second set of correspondence is sent to parents of students who fall below the 25th percentile on screening assessments. This letter reviews the screening process and describes the RTI selection process. Parents are informed of their child’s tier placement in both reading in addition, math, and the intervention is explained. Links to the district RTI site are provided. On the district link, parents will find resources explaining RTI², resources describing both reading and math deficits, as well as reading and math resources to help parents work with their child at home.

Additionally, after students’ data has been analyzed by school RTI teams, the team will identify students who may need additional assessments to help identify those who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia as delineated in Tennessee’s Say Dyslexia Law and resource guide. Parents of students who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia based on our assessments will receive another letter outlining the many tiers of support their child receives, the rationale behind dyslexia screening, and information describing the dyslexia screening process. The characteristics that their child exhibits will be marked

and are explained in parent-friendly language. Links to resources describing each characteristic and strategies to address the deficiencies at home are also provided.

Professional Development Plan

PreK-5th grade classroom teachers, K-8 Special Education teachers, RTI teachers & coordinator, K-5 principals, K-5 assistant principals, district supervisors, and the district ELA Instructional Coach will be participating in the optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series offered this spring/summer 2021. The district will provide redelivery to the few teachers who could not attend this training, as well as continued supports through monthly PLC's, PD opportunities, learning walks, and coaching. We have also entered into a partnership with the East Core Office for the 2021-22 school year to obtain further guidance, support, and training surrounding our HQIM Implementation Plan and foundational skills.

Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

We have been using Wilson Foundations & Saxon Phonics to supplement foundational skills in grades k-2.