

Sweetwater City Schools
Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 30, 2021

Updated: June 27, 2022

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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

Students in Kindergarten through second grade spend 45 minutes in foundational skills instruction daily. The uploaded model of the master schedule indicated an increased foundational literacy time from the previous master schedule in previous years. Sweetwater City School district uses Wit and Wisdom from Great Minds as the primary Core Knowledge component and supplement the phonics portion with Reading Horizons in grades K-2. Wit and Wisdom was adopted as part of a waiver process, but meets the stringent academic standards set forth by the Tennessee Department of Education.

The Wit and Wisdom curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (75 minutes) for instruction and is denoted on the master schedule as Core Knowledge. The foundational skills taught within this curriculum include but are not limited to: phonological awareness such as rhyming words, blend and segment compound words, blend, segment, and count syllables, blend and segment onset-rime, blend, segment, and count phonemes, and segment compound words. The phonics or sounds-first portion of the academic instruction is labeled as Foundational Literacy in the master schedule and is taught using Reading Horizons curriculum. Reading Horizons focuses on identifying individual letter sounds, decoding words with common rime families, identifying sounds for letter combinations, decoding one-syllable words with specific letter combinations, identifying common spellings for long and short vowel sounds, knowing and applying final-e conventions, reading words with r-controlled vowels, reading words with prefixes and suffixes, reading two-syllable words with various syllable types, reading multi-syllable words and applying grade-level phonics and words analysis in text.

In addition to the high quality instructional materials teachers will also use the following scope and sequence for instruction: teach pre-skills before the new skill or strategy is presented, introduce high-utility skills and easier before seldom used skills or more difficult skills are taught. Additionally, new information is introduced at a controlled and realistic pace, as well as, teachers will provide adequate practice and review to ensure that all students can and will be successful. This strategy for instruction and curriculum content aligns with the Tennessee State Standards of instruction for students in grades K-2. It includes each of the concentrated standards that includes specific

instructional techniques for print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, word composition, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and sentence composition. Time for student practice of the state standards is built-in to the master schedule and is labeled as small group instruction. This time will be in addition to time spent in both Foundational Literacy and CORE Knowledge.

The district is thrilled to announce a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education to be included in the K-2 Implementation Network. Sweetwater City Schools believes this additional support will ensure our teachers and students have an effective and efficient means of success with the new curriculum and necessary mind-shifts required to make the transition to the high quality instructional materials.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Sweetwater City Schools has an integrated literacy block for grades three through five grounded in the science of reading and aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards. As a district, the teachers and LEA voted to adopt Expeditionary Learning with Open Up Resources as the publisher for grades three through five. The curriculum materials were selected from options proposed by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block of time, students are engaged with literacy for whole group module Lesson for 90 minutes and then have an additional 45 minutes for All Block Instruction in grades 3 and 4. In grade 5 students have whole group lesson for 75 minutes and All Block instruction for an additional 30 minutes with foundational literacy skills embedded throughout. The knowledge building component of instruction includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling and writing.

The Expeditionary Learning curriculum also includes instruction around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension that is taught inclusively within the realms of the curriculum. As the skills are embedded students are encouraged to make connections between skills and have more support with the continuity of the learning. For example, our fifth grade students begin the year with module one which explores Stories of Human Rights and begins with the anchor text Esperanza Rising. They begin by briefly activating prior knowledge and read independently and/or aloud. After the daily reading or independent reading in on-grade level, complex text, the students may summarize the content, unpack the most essential vocabulary, 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. For example, in vocabulary lessons teachers provide explicit support for vocabulary needed to access the complex text. Students use their word knowledge as they engage in group discussion and writing activities. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of the literacy block and is dedicated to developing students' holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as recommended by research.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Approved waiver for other materials

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

K-5 Expeditionary Learning

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

While we are using Expeditionary Learning, we are using Open Up Resources and not LearnZillion as our platform.

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

Sweetwater City Schools uses iReady as our universal reading screener tool in grades K-5 in the fall, winter, and spring. In addition, our K-3 students are given aimswebPlus three times each year. These screeners comply with RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements.

Intervention Structure and Supports

All interventions and supports align with the expectations set forth in the RTI² Manual. The interventions are evidence-based and differentiated by Tier, addressing specific skill gaps.

Sweetwater City Schools utilizes Reading Horizons in grades K-2, and a combination of TN Foundational Skills and SPIRE curriculum in grades 3-5 for students who display a reading deficiency (Tier II intervention or identified significant reading deficiency -Tier III intervention). Universal screening data as well as more specific AIMSweb data along with teacher observation data, prior intervention data and when applicable TCAP data is used along with an appropriate flow chart to determine students needs and therefore best placement and schedule for intervention supports. This program insures all students are experiencing intervention supports that specifically address their specific skill gaps. The students are progress monitored on a set schedule as directed by the district to ensure uniformity of data and instruction throughout the district. The schedule also ensures that all students are progress monitored on their specific skill gaps. The information collected during the progress monitoring along with teacher observation data, prior intervention data collected throughout the year or prior year and when applicable TCAP data is also used to make decisions regarding the duration of intervention support within the academic day, the materials used to support student intervention, and the intensity of the intervention support should a student show a lack of progress as a result of the progress monitoring.

See the attached schedules for screenings and progress monitoring.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Sweetwater City Schools has three letters of communication with parents of students who indicate they are "at-risk" during the Universal Screening process. The first letter is titled "Universal Screener Parent Letter" and outlines the purpose of the screener and the tool used to conduct the screening in caregiver friendly language. The letter also states a clear explanation of skills gaps and the depth and extent of student need as well as how instruction will be provided to offer additional support if needed. The district attaches the specific colored chart showing performance and narrative information about individual student domains and overall scale score. The letter also contains multiple suggestions of no-cost activities for families to support learning at home and a statement regarding the importance of 3rd grade reading proficiency. This letter is sent home to inform all parents following all Universal Screening assessments three times each school year.



Professional Development Plan

Sweetwater City Schools is thrilled to announce their participation in the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education for teachers in grades K-5. Additionally, the district will be partnering with the Tennessee Department of Education in the Early Literacy Network for grades K-2. The district will also be a member of the HQIM Literacy Implementation Network for grades 3-5. This support will ensure that our teachers and leaders have additional training, actionable feedback, and a consistent plan of implementation. This training will be specific to early literacy and the implementation of the adopted high quality instructional materials.