

Arlington Community Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

First Approved: May 13, 2021

Approved: May 2, 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

Our district uses a foundational skills curriculum grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (45-60 minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. During this block of time, activities include explicit instruction and student practice in phonemic awareness, phonics/spelling (decoding/encoding), reading decodable texts, and fluency. An additional block of time (60 minutes daily) is spent focused on building student knowledge, comprehension, and vocabulary through a variety of listening, reading, and writing activities, which include high quality and rich read alouds and shared reading of both literary and informational texts. During this time students have additional opportunity to apply their decoding/encoding skills. Differentiated instruction to address individual student needs is provided during small group instruction.

In K-2, the evidence-based, foundational skills instruction engages students in building alphabet knowledge (K), phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics skills, and fluency to develop a strong foundation for reading and writing. Daily lessons are explicit and systematic and follow the following sequence:

- Develop Phonemic Awareness – Focus on blending and segmenting orally; connect to phonics activity to focus students on the target sound.
- Connect Sound-Spelling – Review previously learned sounds and explicitly model/teach the targeted spelling(s) that represents the sound.
- Decode Words: Provide explicit instruction and practice sounding out words with the target sound-spelling.
- Work with Words: Build independence by building, spelling, and writing words with target sound-spelling, including words that have not been taught explicitly; provide spiral review of previously taught sounds/spellings.
- Read Decodable Text: Provide opportunities for students to practice reading decodable text with the target sound-spelling.

Over the past two years, we have been more intentional in incorporating daily dictation of phonetic words and sentences that provide practice and formative assessment of targeted/review phonics

sounds and spellings. We have a guide for each grade level that provides daily encoding activities aligned to our scope and sequence. We have also created K-2 instructional presentation slides for every lesson. These slides include all of the lesson components mentioned above. Students have continuous, extensive practice reading and writing words and word parts and applying phonetic skills.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Our district has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 grounded in science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. During the literacy block, students receive at least 75 minutes of ELA instruction each day, including an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons. The schedule may not be the same every day, however, daily instruction includes at least 45 minutes of instructional activities, which focus on language and knowledge building of topics and genres through collaborative discussion, topic word study, building knowledge maps, and actively viewing and responding through listening, reading, thinking, speaking, and writing activities. An additional 30 minutes are spent on foundational skills instruction that includes morphology, fluency, spelling, and grammar. Our grades 3-5 curriculum supports students in building a strong foundation for literacy as they engage in activities that develop and practice reading, comprehension, vocabulary, writing, decoding, spelling, and fluency skills.

Explicit, evidence-based instructional routines for fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are embedded in lessons to target the acquisition of key skills and to build structure and continuity between lessons. When a topic is introduced, activities engage students in accessing prior knowledge and building background and vocabulary for content-area and social emotional topics. Vocabulary lessons include explicit instruction in critical vocabulary (high utility academic and content vocabulary) and generative vocabulary (learn new words based on morphological and/or semantic relationships). Students build vocabulary networks based on critical and generative vocabulary and use newly acquired words in their speaking and writing. Shared reading lessons provide comprehension and strategy instruction with application to student texts. Scaffolded questions and prompts give students opportunities to develop and strengthen close reading skills. Engage and respond activities provide guided, partner, and independent opportunities to respond to the texts in a variety of ways and to cite text evidence in their spoken and written responses. Explicit decoding/spelling (encoding) lessons build on the instruction in earlier grades and help students facilitate with structural analysis in order to read fluently and understand longer words. This foundational knowledge is reinforced and applied in daily speaking and writing activities.

Additional Supports

Our district is committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment where every student can thrive. Recognizing the diverse needs of our student body, we are dedicated to providing tailored support for subgroups with specific learning needs. Through personalized assistance, targeted resources, and ongoing collaboration with educators and families, we will ensure that each student receives the necessary tools and interventions to reach their full academic potential. During our Fall Inservice, our K-5 teachers will participate in a training on "Letting Data Lead", which will focus on using data to intentionally and effectively plan for interventions and extensions to support student growth including those of noted subgroups. During PLCs, there will be an ongoing focus on this

intentional use of data, discussion of best practices, and development of action plans to support students' learning needs. We will continue to carefully monitor student progress and adjust instruction/intervention accordingly. We will also remain vigilantly focused on continuing to grow our highest group of learners and provide them with the enrichment/extensions they need so their growth does not become stagnant.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading, Tennessee

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

McGraw Hill Wonders (Grade 3)

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading, Tennessee (Grades 4 and 5)

Supplemental Instructional Materials/Additional Information about Instructional Materials

Our district has adopted state approved curriculum materials for ELA instruction. Our adoptions include HMH Into Reading for grades K-2 and 4-5 and McGraw Hill Wonders for grade 3. The district also has chosen to supplement in additional ways. Our district uses ELA standards- aligned Heggerty Phonemic Awareness and Letterland multi-sensory stories/strategies and blending/segmenting activities to provide additional support for K-2 foundational skills Tier 1 instruction and Tier 2 intervention. These resources help us to provide an even deeper focus of phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics skills and include a significant amount of spiraling back and review of previously learned concepts in order to assist in solidifying foundational skills taught throughout the year and across grade levels.

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

Arlington Community Schools uses aimsweb+ as a universal screener and for progress monitoring for K-5. It is administered three times a year in the Fall, Winter, and Spring annually. This is a state approved screener that complies with RTI2 screening requirements outlined in the Tennessee RTI2 framework manual. Aimsweb+ also complies with the dyslexia screening requirements established in TCA 49-1-229.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Our intervention structures and supports are aligned to the Tennessee RTI2 Manual. Students are screened using the aimsweb+ universal screener, then student data is reviewed by the school RTI2 team to determine significant deficiencies and "at-risk" students. School RTI2 teams consist of administration and teachers from the school and grade levels, and the District RTI2 Coordinator. The School RTI2 team notifies parents prior to initiating interventions and also meet every 4.5-5 weeks to review each student's progress monitoring data to determine action plans. Students who score in the 0-25th percentile demonstrate a need for Tier II or Tier III instruction and are placed appropriately with the grade band interventionist (K-2, 3-5) to receive targeted support. Our intervention structures and supports are aligned to the Tennessee RTI2 Manual. Students are

screened using the aimsweb+ universal screener, then student data is reviewed by the school RTI2 team to determine significant deficiencies and “at-risk” students. School RTI2 teams consist of administration and teachers from the school and grade levels, and the District RTI2 Coordinator. The School RTI2 team notifies parents prior to initiating interventions and also meet every 4.5-5 weeks to review each student’s progress monitoring data to determine action plans. Students who score in the 0-25th percentile demonstrate a need for Tier II or Tier III instruction and are placed appropriately with the grade band interventionist (K-2, 3-5) to receive targeted support.

Students placed in Tier II and Tier III receive explicit intervention in deficit areas in a small group setting. Tier II and Tier III students are progress-monitored every other week to monitor student response to intervention. The district uses a blended model of research-based and evidence-based face-to-face strategies and computer-based intervention programs.

Students receive Tier II intervention using the Heggerty phonemic awareness and iReady programs. More comprehensive, strategic interventions for Tier III students are often employed, such as SPIRE for fluency support. SPIRE is used to develop reading success through intensive, structured, and escalating curriculum, which addresses phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding skills, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in a systematic plan. It is a language-based, multi-sensory, explicit, systematic, and cumulative intervention that addresses the specific skill deficit(s) identified through targeted assessments.

Vocabulary Through Morphemes is an intervention used primarily with Tier II that helps students analyze word structure and decoding of words. Students are exposed to multi-sensory, structured, systematic instruction through a language-based program.

Letterland offers both Tier I instruction and Tier II intervention supports that focuses on engaging and multi-sensory synthetic phonics methods that gets children reading and writing from an early age. Students are exposed to the 42 letter sounds in a multi-sensory, explicit, systematic, and cumulative approach to learning. It uses a hands-on strategy and follows a structured, sequential order for the mastery of skills related to blending and segmenting.

Elkonin boxes is a strategy used mainly with Tier III students, created to develop reading success by building phonological awareness skills by segmenting words into individual sounds, or phonemes. It helps students understand the alphabetic principle in decoding. It is language-based, multi-sensory, and an explicit intervention.

Interventionists have been trained in and use Orton-Gillingham strategies to assist “at-risk” Tier III students and those who have shown characteristics of dyslexia. Any student who demonstrates characteristics of dyslexia receives intensive intervention as per the Say Dyslexia Law to meet the law’s requirements. An Individual Learning Plan – Dyslexia (ILP-D) is created and implemented for each of these students. Notice is sent home to families of those students with information and resources to further support learning at home.

To further support and communicate the RTI2 process, ACS has also developed a manual and family brochure available to all stakeholders through the district website that includes RTI2 information and resources on dyslexia.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

ACS notifies parents of students in grades K-5 if their child has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring below the 15th percentile) or if the student is considered “at-risk” of a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring between the 16th and 40th percentile) beginning with the fall aimsweb+ universal screener.

Students are screened in the fall, winter, and spring using the aimsweb+ universal screener, then student data is reviewed by the school RTI2 team to determine significant deficiencies and “at-risk” students. The School RTI2 team notifies parents three times per year after the universal screener prior to initiating interventions using a home literacy report that consists of aimsweb graphs and family-friendly language that explains the student skills gaps and the intervention(s) to be received, dyslexia information and resources, no-cost reading activities to use at home, as well as a description of the importance of reading ability by the end of 3rd grade and information on 4th grade promotion pathways.

Parents are also notified after each regularly held RTI2 school team meeting to review each student’s progress monitoring data to determine action plans. These plans note any changes being made, as well as supports in the area of deficit. ACS provides additional support information to the classroom teachers of identified students to assist in providing age-appropriate interventions within the general education classroom. To further support and communicate the RTI2 process, ACS has also developed a manual and family brochure available to all stakeholders through the district website that includes RTI2 information and resources on dyslexia.

Classroom newsletters, family tip sheets, and school-wide family literacy nights are used to provide information on the importance of reading proficiency as well as engage and encourage family participation in their child’s educational journey.

Professional Development Plan

Over the past few years, our K-5 teachers have completed the TDOE’s Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training. This training focuses on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. The training covers print concepts, phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics & word recognition, developing skilled readers, and sounds-first instruction. The training also stresses the absence of cueing or MSV strategies within instruction. Teachers were required to demonstrate knowledge and competency for successful completion of the training.

In Summer 2022, the district hosted Week 2 of the TDOE’s Reading 360 Early Literacy Training, which included participation of K-5 teachers, interventionists, and SPED teachers. The district also hosted a training on the “Keys to Beginning Reading” presented by a Keys to Literacy trainer. This course focused on reading basics, oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency.

Over the past couple of years, we have continued to offer PD for our teachers on literacy topics such as the science of reading, writing, vocabulary, and understanding the needs of students with learning disabilities. In February 2023, all K-5 teachers participated in a training on dyslexia and structured literacy. There will be a follow up to that training this summer along with PD focused on



comprehension & vocabulary, intervention, writing strategies, literacy connections, and decoding/word reading skills. In the fall, we will be providing grades 3-5 teachers/assistants further training on working on phonics skills in the upper grades. All K-5 teachers will participate in a "Letting Data Lead" training focused on the intentional use of data and best practices to address student needs.