

## **Loudon County Schools**

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

First Approved: May 11, 2021

Approved: May 3, 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**

Loudon County K - 2nd grade teachers use the Amplify CKLA Skills Strand for our foundational skills curriculum, which is the primary form of instruction. CKLA is a comprehensive program that includes knowledge-building and foundational skills materials used in our K - 2nd-grade classrooms throughout the district. It is aligned with the TN state standards. The CKLA skills strand uses a sounds-first, evidenced-based method grounded in reading science and aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards (approved materials by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission).

This curriculum uses the CKLA foundational skills as the primary form of instruction. Elementary schools throughout the district have a designated 45-60-minute block of time for foundational skills instruction in grades K - 2. The foundational literacy instructional block is devoted to providing and implementing activities that build print concepts, phonemic and phonological awareness, phonics (decoding, encoding, and word recognition), fluency skills, comprehension, and vocabulary. The program features evidence-based practices that include explicit and systematic skills instruction and practice. The CKLA skills program provides a systematic phonics approach (instruction is oriented from sound to letter), including repeated oral practice and reading to improve fluency. Intensive practice with decodable text is provided to build reliability and automaticity in reading. This focused instruction will help students develop the reading skills required to meet Tennessee's academic standards.

### **Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5**

Loudon County's 3rd-5th-grade teachers have a 90-minute integrated literacy block grounded in the science of reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. The 90-minute instructional block includes 30 minutes of foundational skills instruction that is isolated and/or embedded into daily lessons. Our district-adopted Guidebook curriculum materials (approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission) provide explicit support to engage students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and build students' capacity to read, think, talk, and write about complex text. The Guidebooks curriculum provides resources and guidance for foundational literacy instruction that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons. Foundational reading and language standards are addressed within the context of the text-based lessons, which is consistent with research that readers in the intermediate

grades benefit from a more contextualized approach to teaching foundational skills (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2003; Bloodgood & Pacifici, 2004).

Our students receive a total of 90 minutes of ELA instruction daily. Daily instruction includes components for knowledge-building (to build and improve the ability to comprehend complex texts and apply that knowledge as they listen, read, write, think, and speak) and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing that is embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection.

Third-grade teachers use the additional support and structure offered through CKLA Writing Studio and skills strand to provide additional explicit instruction focused on spelling (including syllabication), morphology, and grammar. Fourth and fifth-grade teachers provide foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing embedded in daily lessons.

### **Additional Supports**

To help support and strengthen teacher practices and student achievement, the district hired three academic coaches during the 2023-2024 school year. Differentiated levels of support were needed at each school, so the coaches were assigned to two schools each. The district literacy coach oversaw and supported the school literacy coaches since this was their first year in the position. The district also provided coaching support for the district and school-level coaches through an independent contract with TNTP. The goal was to help them learn and then apply their learning of strong coaching practices while supporting teachers in classrooms. Changes were made in school administration at two schools and a change in the assistant principal in another school. With the changes, we are seeing improvement. One of our district-wide focuses this past year was on 5<sup>th</sup> grade ELA. Several teachers are no longer with the district, and several moved to different grade levels. The district-level literacy coach and school-based literacy coaches focused on supporting teacher practices and curriculum implementation with fidelity in 5th grade this past year. Additionally, specific training for units of reading was provided district wide. Literacy walk-throughs were conducted throughout the year, being intentional in the purpose of classroom visits at grade levels while also honing in on teacher needs. This practice will continue during the 2024-2025 school year.

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2**

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5**

Imagine Learning Guidebooks (formerly LearnZillion)

### **Supplemental Instructional Materials**

To support students with possible foundational skills misconceptions and/or skills gaps in daily instruction, the district has supplemented our adopted approved curriculum for ELA instruction with resources from Heggerty. This supplement allows teachers to focus more intensely on phonological and advanced phonemic awareness skills crucial for success through second grade. The

supplemental foundational skills resources align with TN state standards and fully address phonological and phonemic awareness. This resource will provide all students, especially our English Language Learners and students struggling with phonological and phonemic awareness additional practice to strengthen their foundational literacy skills. Beginning in the fall of 2023, third through fifth-grade teachers will be able to begin using Amplify Writing Studio. This program will allow students to use rich content knowledge to strengthen their writing abilities and further their approach to writing and reading as interconnected tasks.

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

Loudon County Schools will use Aimsweb Plus as our universal screener for students in grades K-5. Aimsweb Plus complies with the dyslexia screening requirements established in §49-1-229 and with the universal screening requirements established in Tennessee's RTI framework manual. Loudon County provides three screening assessments using Aimsweb Plus annually in the fall, winter, and spring.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

Students are given the Aimsweb universal screener three times yearly to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency (scoring below the 15th percentile) or are considered "at risk" (scoring between the 16th and 40th percentile). RTI2 data team members meet to review and analyze several forms of data, including but not limited to universal screener data and progress monitoring, to assist teachers in planning and implementing appropriate instruction and evidence-based interventions for all students. Members of the school RTI2 data meeting include classroom teachers, RTI2 interventionists, and school administrators and may include, as needed, a school psychologist, guidance counselor, special education teacher, and ELL teacher. The RTI2 team will review Aimsweb Plus data and other available data (such as attendance, TNReady/TCAP scores, classroom grades, and ACCESS scores) to help provide a picture of student academic skill needs. The RTI2 data team meets approximately every month (no less than quarterly) to discuss student benefits from participating in Tier II or Tier III instruction. Data teams will use progress monitoring to inform decisions about the duration of interventions, research-based materials, and intensity changes when a student is not showing progress.

Once students are classified as needing support in Tier II or Tier III, they will be given a diagnostic assessment such as but not limited to Dibels (K - 6th grade), PASS - Phonological Awareness Skills Screener, and PWRS - Phonics and Word Reading Survey (7th - 12th grade) to help drill-down to determine specific skill deficits and then outline an intervention plan to narrow skill gaps.

Interventions are evidence-based and differentiated to address specific skill gaps and support teachers in preparing lessons and activities that directly address skill gaps. Progress monitoring (weekly or every other week) will be used to monitor progress in closing specific gaps. Parents of Tier 11/111 students will receive progress reports showing student progress in conjunction with Tier I progress report dates and at the end of each universal reading screener administration window. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 30 minutes for Tier II and 40 -45 minutes for Tier III per day during a dedicated, protected time for RTI2 intervention.

School intervention schedules are aligned with expectations outlined in the RTI2 manual.

The schedule below is aligned with the expectations outlined in the TDOE RTI2 manual.

The district uses research-based and evidence-based programs, practices, and strategies to support reading intervention. It is available to our students who are "at-risk" and identified with a significant reading deficiency. Research-based options include but are not limited to (Amplify MClass, CKLA Assessment and Remediation Guide, Amplify Skills Foundations, Heggerty, Sounds Sensible, SPIRE, and Rewards). Interventions are evidence-based and differentiated based on Tier II and III, addressing specific skill gaps. Progress monitoring of specific skill gaps for students is completed every one to two weeks. Data teams use progress monitoring data to inform decisions about duration, materials, and intensity changes when a student is not showing progress. Data teams meet approximately every month (no less than quarterly) to discuss student progress and determine if modifications need to be made toward interventions. The data team continues to look at additional variables such as attendance, TNReady/TCAP scores, classroom grades, ACCESS scores, progress monitoring, and Dibels scores (for K - 6th) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to intervention programming or services.

Loudon County RTI2 Tier II and Tier III students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based material and strategies. The district follows the "Say Dyslexia" law that requires screening in the following areas: phonological and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding skills, encoding skills, and rapid naming skills. The district uses AimsWeb Plus as the universal screener to meet this standard through their Test of Early Literacy and Reading domains. In addition, the district has access to the Shaywitz Dyslexia Screening tool, which is included in the TN Universal Reading Screener through AimsWeb Plus. The Shaywitz Dyslexia Tool is an optional rating scale used for targeted screening when a student's universal screening data indicates "at risk" for characteristics of dyslexia. Students who demonstrate having characteristics of dyslexia receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law. Evidence-based programs, practices, and strategies designed to support students displaying characteristics of dyslexia are used to provide systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia through parent letters or phone calls.

### **Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports**

Our district notifies parents of kindergarten - 5th-grade students after each benchmark assessment administration window if their child has a significant reading deficiency (students scoring below the 15th percentile) or is "at risk" for a significant reading deficiency (students scoring between the 16th and 40th percentile) based on the universal reading screener results (three times each school year). A Student Snapshot Report will be generated via AimswebPlus after each universal screening benchmark (fall, winter, and spring) and sent home to parents whose child receives a composite score below the 40th percentile and is "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency. Student scores are communicated in parent friendly language that clearly explains student skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. The report also emphasizes the importance of reading proficiently by the end of 3rd-grade and 4thgrade promotion pathways information. Reading intervention activities and resources for home are also provided. Parent conferences are held each nine-week grading period for all students. Parents can access TDOE's Guide for Parent-Teacher Conferences and Engaging with Your Child's School from teachers and the district website to support them in becoming active partners in their child's education. At the beginning of each year,

information is shared with 3rd - 5th-grade parents on accessing the Parent Portal to review personalized student TCAP information.

Throughout the year, opportunities (tutoring, tiered intervention, and summer learning camp) will be communicated to parents (via parent conferences, phone calls, letters, and the district website) to help support kindergarten through 5th-grade students. Student tutoring opportunities will be discussed and advertised at the beginning and throughout the school year for students who have been previously retained and students showing deficits. Parent conferences will be held each nine-week grading period, allowing parents to partner with their child's teacher and support their child's educational needs. During parent conferences, time will be given to inform or remind parents of tutoring opportunities, no-cost reading programs and activities (for example, Ready4K, summer free reading books, decodable readers, curriculum parent support material), and the need for possible attendance at our Summer Learning Camps.

For students recommended to receive instructional support in Tier II or Tier III, parents are notified by parent conference or letter when a student enters or exits Tier II or Tier III intervention. Parents are invited to attend parent conferences to discuss academic skill concerns, benchmark assessment data, the RTI2 program and how it is used to address skill gaps during intervention, and curriculum materials that will be used to address the skills gaps. Parents will also receive a document titled Understanding Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2) as a resource.

Parents of Tier II or Tier III students are subsequently notified via progress report of any changes being made to student progress as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data, as well as recommended activities to support students in the area of deficit(s). Progress report communication will occur in conjunction with Tier I progress reporting dates (i.e., progress reports and report cards) and indicate student progress toward the goal.

### **Professional Development Plan**

PreK - 5th-grade teachers and administrators were required to complete Week 1 of the online self-paced Reading 360 Early Reading Modules developed by the Tennessee Department of Education during the 1st and 2nd years of the state roll-out. This is deep training for teachers in grades K - 5 on foundational skills instruction grounded in a phonics-based approach. New K - 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and administrators to the district are required to complete the online self-paced modules before the end of May of the school year they were hired if they haven't already completed the modules. This training focuses on foundational reading development and instruction grounded in a phonics-based approach (phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary). Principals will keep an updated log of teacher completion. Teachers are required to demonstrate knowledge and competency of 80% or higher to receive a certificate.

During the summer (June - July), Pre-K - 5th-grade teachers are given training locations and dates to complete Week 2 of the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Week 2 training applies the theoretical knowledge gained in the online modules to foundational skills curriculum and instruction.

**May:**

- Intellectual preparation practice for literacy coaches. Using assigned lessons in the curriculum to complete an intellectual preparation session. This training will help the literacy coaches apply and better understand what a strong intellectual prep should look like and help classroom teachers strengthen their intellectual prep practice. Intellectual prep sessions will be recorded to provide a resource for review and follow-up support. TNTP will be the vendor helping to support this training.

**July:**

- Curriculum orientation training for beginning teachers, teachers switching grade levels, or new teachers to the district using the material for the first time by school-level coaches.
- New unit training for 5th Guidebooks.
- Training on implementing Writing Studio into reading blocks.
- Intellectual preparation practice for school administrators. Using assigned lessons in the curriculum to complete an intellectual preparation session. This training will help the literacy coaches apply and better understand what a strong intellectual prep should look like and help classroom teachers strengthen their intellectual prep practice. TNTP will be the vendor helping to support this training.

**August:**

- Individual follow-up curriculum support for the teachers who attended the July curriculum orientation training by the school-level coaches.
- August through May of each year. District and school-level literacy coaches will host PLCs and provide professional development based on grade level, school, teacher, and curriculum needs. They will attend data team meetings and use information gained at these meetings to support student needs and teacher practices based on the data. Literacy coaches will also complete coaching cycles throughout the year.

**September:**

- Walk-throughs at three of the six elementary schools with feedback: Focus on strengthening Core Action 2 and 3 on the IPG. The purpose of instructional walk-throughs is to support lesson preparation, reflect on instructional practices, develop professional learning on standards-aligned practices, and provide feedback on classroom practices. A consultant from TNTP will support learning walks, debriefs, and feedback.

**October:**

- Walk-throughs at three of the six elementary schools with feedback strengthening Core Action 2 and 3 on the IPG. The purpose of instructional walk-throughs is to support lesson preparation, reflect on instructional practices, develop professional learning on standards-aligned practices, and provide feedback on classroom practices. A consultant from TNTP will support learning walks, debriefs, and feedback.

**November:**

- Elementary school district conference. Some, but not all topics will include Tier I Intervention, Boost Reading, MClass Intervention, Intellectual Pre, Using TCAP data to support lesson implementation with curriculum, Embedded versus isolated grammar and spelling within writing, and student work analysis. District and school-level coaches, teacher leaders, aspiring administrators, curriculum team members, and classroom teachers will serve as presenters. The session topics will be selected by district leadership based on the district vision and district and school-level needs. A call for presenters will be sent to district and school-level coaches, teacher leaders, aspiring administrators, curriculum team members,

and classroom teachers. Presentations will be reviewed to ensure the session aligns with the district vision, curriculum, and standards.

**January:**

- Analysis of district universal screener data and common assessments. Administrators, teachers, and literacy coaches will review district, school, and classroom data to determine deficit trends and identify support needed to strengthen student achievement and teacher practices. District and school-level coaches and administrators will facilitate the meetings.

**February:**

- Walk-throughs at three of the six elementary schools with feedback: Focus on strengthening Core Action 2 and 3 on the IPG. The purpose of instructional walk-throughs is to support lesson preparation, reflect on instructional practices, develop professional learning on standards-aligned practices, and provide feedback on classroom practices. Compare feedback from the September/October walk-throughs to determine growth in core practices. A consultant from TNTP will support learning walks, debriefs, and feedback.

**March:**

- Walk-throughs at three of the six elementary schools with feedback: Focus on strengthening Core Action 2 and 3 on the IPG. The purpose of instructional walk-throughs is to support lesson preparation, reflect on instructional practices, develop professional learning on standards-aligned practices, and provide feedback on classroom practices. Compare feedback from the September/October walk-throughs to determine growth in core practices. A consultant from TNTP will support learning walks, debriefs, and feedback.

**April - May:** Continued coaching support with the following:

- Intellectual Prep
- Student Work Analysis
- Data to Improve Teacher Practices and Student Work Needs