

## **Metro Nashville Public Schools - Davidson County**

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: January 2024

Approved: May 9, 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**

Since July 2020, our district has used the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement in grades K-2 to teach print concepts, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and word recognition, word composition/spelling, fluency, and sentence composition. The TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement follows evidence-based reading research and was carefully crafted in order to build a solid foundation for early literacy. It is aligned to TN ELA standards. This supplement uses a systematic and explicit approach to instruction so that all students can gain the foundational skills necessary to become proficient readers. The Sounds First component of the TNFSCS is used to support students' phonological awareness across the continuum of difficulty. The Sounds First component is aligned to research that concludes students need additional work in advanced phonemic awareness which includes deleting and substituting phonemes. Research shows that students who can engage in advanced phonemic awareness activities fluently are more likely to become proficient readers. In grades K-5, we use the Wit & Wisdom knowledge-building curriculum to develop students' language comprehension and vocabulary. The Deep Dive components of Wit & Wisdom will be used to explicitly teach fluency, sentence composition and vocabulary acquisition. During the integrated ELA block, teachers will use the Deep Dive components of Wit & Wisdom to deliver evidence-based instruction including fluency and vocabulary instruction. In Wit & Wisdom Deep Dive vocabulary lessons, teachers explicitly teach students the vocabulary needed to access complex texts. Students use their growing knowledge of words to engage in group discussion and writing activities.

Foundational skills instruction is the primary focus of this curriculum. We have designated a block of time (45-minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. This instructional time includes Sounds-First activities that build phonological awareness, explicit phonics instruction with aligned practice using decodable texts and fluency practice. During that instruction, teachers explicitly teach a sound, the students practice the sound, the teacher models writing the sound and

the students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, then students apply the skill in independent practice (small group and individual).

In 2022, we increased the amount of time devoted to K-2 foundational skills instruction from 30 minutes to 45 minutes. We also supported teacher preparation with the Curriculum Supplement by providing educators with unit-level and lesson-level planning protocols.

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

In grades K-5, we use the Wit & Wisdom knowledge-building curriculum to develop students' language comprehension and vocabulary. This curriculum is aligned to TN ELA standards. The Deep Dive components of Wit & Wisdom will be used to explicitly teach fluency, sentence composition, morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition. During the integrated ELA block, teachers will use the Deep Dive components of Wit & Wisdom to deliver evidence-based instruction including fluency and vocabulary instruction. In Wit & Wisdom Deep Dive vocabulary lessons, teachers explicitly teach students the vocabulary needed to access complex texts. Students use their growing knowledge of words to engage in group discussion and writing activities. The Deep Dive lesson component typically constitutes 15 - 20 minutes of the literacy block.

To address the TN ELA Foundational Skills standards, we use the Wit & Wisdom curriculum for Grades 3-5, supplemented with portions of the open-source grades 3-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts Foundational Skills Curriculum. The open-source CKLA foundational skills lessons constitute 15 minutes of instruction in addition to the Wit & Wisdom Deep Dive lessons. The Deep Dive and CKLA foundational skills lessons combine to total 30 minutes of foundational skills instruction for students in grades 3-5.

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

Approved waiver for other materials—Great Minds Wit & Wisdom

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

Great Minds Wit & Wisdom

### **Supplemental Instructional Materials**

We use the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement to provide K-2 students with foundational skills instruction.

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

We use the Fastbridge Suite of assessments as our universal reading screener for students in grades K-5. We also administer the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) to students in third grade for the Spring Benchmark.

## **Supplemental Screeners**

In compliance with the RTI2 screening requirements outlined in Tennessee's RTI2 framework manual, MNPS utilizes a multi-step universal screening process.

Step One in our process for literacy is universal K-6 administration of the nationally normed, curriculum-based measures included in the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) platform to measure academic skills in the areas of basic reading, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Step One of our processes also includes the use of the standardized administration and scoring procedures for Written Expression (WE) CBM beginning in winter of first grade to measure academic skills in the area of written expression.

In Step Two, school data teams analyze the results of the skills-based universal screener (FAST) compared to other district and classroom assessments to validate/confirm/challenge screening results and identify students "at risk."

For Step Three, students identified as "at risk" are administered survey level and/or diagnostic assessments to further determine specific needs to inform intervention instruction. Specific Step Three assessments utilized in MNPS may include (but are not limited to): Lexia Core 5 Auto Placement, S.P.I.R.E. Placement, Test of Silent Contextual Reading, Fluency (TOSCRF---2), Test of Written Spelling 4th Edition (TWS---4), and additional FAST screening measures (survey-level).

## **Intervention Structure and Supports**

To ensure that interventions are delivered in addition to Tier I (core) instruction and as aligned with expectations outlined in the RTI manual, MNPS schools implement Personalized Learning Time (PLT), a daily, 45-minute (minimum) grade-wide or school-wide block of time during which K-5 students receive supplemental support based on need. During this time, students may participate in skills-based Tier II, III, or Special Education Interventions; standards-based reinforcement/remediation; English Language Support; or enrichment. The PLT block helps to ensure that this supplemental support is in addition to Tier I and allows for strategic grouping across classrooms to target student needs.

The evidence-based literacy interventions included on the MNPS list of approved interventions (including those purchased for district-wide use) were vetted through an extensive RFP review process to identify and recommend evidence-based academic intervention products to address specific skill gaps in the areas of basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and written expression.

Products were screened and evaluated by teams of district- and school-based teachers and coaches using specific criteria in the categories of research support, systematic & explicit instruction by skill area, tier/intensity level, and product design/teacher usability, and dyslexia-specific (if applicable). The dyslexia-specific criteria included those outlined in the TN Dyslexia Resource Guide.

Progress in interventions is monitored through the use of FAST CBMs as well as program-specific and other instructional assessment data. Progress monitoring measures are aligned to the skill area(s) in which interventions are being provided.

School-level MTSS data teams meet every five weeks and utilize data-based decision-making to ensure that individual students are making adequate progress through interventions. These teams review progress monitoring data to inform decisions about duration, material, and intensity changes when a student is not showing progress.

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

Through monthly (MTSS School Leadership Teams) and five-week (MTSS School Data Teams) meetings, educators collaborate regularly to review student data from multiple sources and make instructional decisions based on that data. When a student has been identified for a tier II or tier III intervention in literacy, math, or SEL/behavior, the team sends the MNPS Intervention Placement Letter to caregivers.

The FastBridge Family Report for Reading is sent home with all students in Grades K-5 following each of the 3 MTSS Academic/Dyslexia Screening windows (fall, winter, spring). Each report is accompanied by the Home Literacy Letter which includes a clear explanation of a student's skill gaps, the depth of student need, and how the gaps will be addressed during intervention. Information on the importance of reading proficiently by third grade is shared along with information regarding the pathway to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Virtual information sessions are held to inform parents about the Third Grade Retention Law and the options available to students and families. Family letters are sent home to notify parents of their child's predicted proficiency level. The information FAQ is attached in the Appendix.

Classroom teachers and school educators may also use the attached Parent Letters to inform families and caregivers of the foundational skills content students are learning in class. The parent letters also provide families with clear, family friendly language ideas for no-cost activities they can do with their children to support learning. There are full 1–2-page letters that can be sent to parents at the beginning of a unit of instruction. Abbreviated letters are available for every week of instruction.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Beginning in the summer of 2021, K-5 educators in our district were required to participate in the free Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education.

The Reading 360 Early Literacy Training Course 1 provides educators with critical content knowledge about phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. The professional learning was developed by TNTP, experienced training providers with a proven track record of supporting districts with foundational skills. The training requires teachers to demonstrate their knowledge and competency with the content through an assessment taken at the end of the asynchronous module. The Reading 360 Early Literacy Training is free of MSV and cueing strategies.

Through the Fall and Spring of each school year, MNPS K-5 educators will complete the Early Literacy Course 1 asynchronous modules and email their certificates to the MNPS Elementary Literacy Team.



At the end of the Course, teachers complete the Module assessment which requires them to demonstrate mastery of the module content.

Educators who completed Course 1 are encouraged to participate in the free, in-person, five-day TDOE Early Reading Course II Training. Educators new to MNPS are also required to take the Early Literacy Training Course 1 within the first year of employment.