

## **Dyer County Schools**

### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 27, 2021**

**Updated: June 3, 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**

Our district utilizes a foundational skills curriculum that is aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards and has been created to reflect the science of reading. The HMH Into Reading curriculum is a literacy program which includes a large portion (55-65 minutes) of the daily instruction focused on foundational skills for grades k-2. This block of ELA instruction includes explicit teaching through focused mini-lessons with phonological awareness (approx. 10 minutes), Alphabet Knowledge (approx. 10 minutes), Phonics practice (approx. 15 minutes), and word study (approx. 15 minutes) in addition to comprehension and fluency practice. The lessons with HMH Into Reading, provide a direct plan for teaching speech sounds, distinct from the letters that represent them; attention is called to sound and word pronunciation with emphasis on blending and separating sounds in spoken words. Teachers provide an explicit and systematic instruction of phoneme-grapheme (sound-symbol) correspondences, sound/spelling connection and blending/decoding practice. Alphabet knowledge instruction includes multi-sensory instruction methods of letter card manipulation and modeling blending sounds with finger-movement. During the word study section of the foundational literacy block the students practice building, manipulating, and sorting words to transfer skill knowledge. Comprehension and fluency is an additional 25-35 minutes of daily instruction and practice. This block of time helps to reinforce phonics skills through read alouds and short reads, as well as provide time to focus on the comprehension standards.

For example, in the third nine weeks, Kindergarten students will learn to blend spoken phonemes to form one-syllable words. They will also be able to isolate and pronounce the medial vowel sound in a one-syllable word. Students will have the opportunity to practice these skills while reading decodable texts.

In the second nine weeks, second grade students will learn the oa, ow, and oe vowel team spellings for the long o sound. They will also blend and decode regularly spelled one-syllable words with long patterns o, o\_e, oa, ow, and oe. They will also use knowledge of syllable patterns to decode longer words.

In addition to the 55-65 minutes of whole group foundational skills instruction, students receive a focused differentiated small group instruction. Our district uses Literacy Footprints Guided Reading (Pioneer Valley Books), for small group instruction, which has a strong base of developmentally

appropriate foundational skills. Students learn to apply foundational skills to decode and make meaning of increasingly challenging text. Within the small group setting students develop and use a network of complex strategies and behaviors needed to become successful lifelong learners.

One improvement for next year is to implement collaborative vertical-planning. Vertical planning structures will enhance access to curricular rigor for all students, connecting learning expectations horizontally within and across content areas and contexts, as a means to develop accurate frameworks of knowledge.

Another improvement is the continued time for collaborative planning for teachers to develop and refine opportunities for their students to practice writing skills.

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

Our district utilizes a literacy curriculum for grades three (3) through five (5) that is aligned to the Tennessee ELA standards and has been created to reflect the science of reading. Students receive 90 minutes of direct ELA instruction on a daily basis. During this block of time, students are engaged in whole group instruction, small group instruction, and independent work study.

Our third through fifth grade students spend 30-45 minutes daily working with foundational skills within whole group instruction, and a minimum of 20 minutes daily during small group instruction. We are currently using a state approved curriculum, Guide Books by Learnzillion. The Guide Book curriculum provides students with daily opportunities to build and apply knowledge through reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking. This curriculum engages students with authentic texts that allow them to cohesively work on fluency, vocabulary, writing, and comprehension. Our daily foundational skills instruction focuses on grammar, morphology, spelling, writing and fluency. In grades 3-5 we focus on a daily warm-up before we move into our daily ELA instruction. In grades 3-5 our warm up focuses on Greek and Latin roots, affixes, prefixes, suffixes, spelling patterns, syllabication, and letter sounds. These standards based warm-ups will be connected to the core curriculum. The warm-ups provide an opportunity to collect formative data to give teachers guidance on which standards we need to focus on in both whole and small group instruction. In addition to whole group instruction, students receive a focused differentiated small group instruction. Our district uses Literacy Footprints Guided Reading (Pioneer Valley Books), for small group instruction, which has progressive steps within the comprehension focus. Students learn to internalize a variety of strategic actions that help them work with words, read with phrasing and expression, and retell text. Foundational and comprehensive strategies are used to help students bridge the gap between fluent guided reading lessons to their independent assessments.

For example, our third grade students just finished a unit about Treasure Island. The unit started with an overview of the end task and then had students activate prior knowledge with treasure. The daily routine often begins with a review and a discussion. In an example lesson, the lesson begins with a class discussion about similes and why authors use them. Partners discuss what similes are and why authors use them. Next the lesson moves to working with words. The teacher works with students to analyze a quote from the text Treasure Island. Together they identify the simile and discuss what the simile reveals about the character. Students are then given another quote from the text to analyze to find the simile and identify its meaning. A think-pair-share activity is used to

engage students in a discussion about how authors use figurative language and what they reveal. After practicing with a partner, students express their understanding by writing similes to describe a character after the teacher models an example of a strong and weak response. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded throughout the curriculum.

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

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - K-2, 4-5 Into Reading, Tennessee

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

LearnZillion - 3-5 Guidebooks

### **Additional Information about Instructional Materials**

We have recently adopted two curriculums for our Kindergarten through fifth grade students. In grades K-2, we use Into Reading by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and in grades 3-5, we use Guidebooks by Learnzillion. The Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement will be utilized in grades K-2 to ensure our students are getting the foundational skills instruction they need, in addition to what our adopted curriculum offers. Kindergarten through second grade classrooms use sounds-first warm-ups in all of our schools, and we strongly believe this will help our students gain more phonological and phonemic awareness. We want to build this understanding not only with our students, but with their families as well. In order to achieve this goal, we send home corresponding activities, sight word lists, and decodable readers to provide students with additional opportunities to reinforce daily lessons outside of school. Helping them to grow as readers and writers.

### **Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements.**

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

At the beginning of each school year students are given either the Star Reading or Star Early Lit benchmark (universal screener) to determine which students have a reading deficiency or are “at risk” of falling behind. Those students demonstrating a need are classified as in need of Tier II or Tier III instruction. These students are then placed into either a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention group. Students who are placed into Tier 3 intervention groups have a PR of 0-25 and will receive a minimum of one hour daily intervention. After the benchmark is given, teachers, principals, instructional coaches, interventionists, and our elementary supervisor meet together to develop small groups and determine the appropriate intervention. Students are then given diagnostic assessments to help determine the best path to bridge the individual student’s gaps. The Pioneer Valley comprehension assessment and two word leveled assessment, along with the Next Step Guided Reading Assessment is used to determine students’ current reading level. These diagnostic assessments also help to determine specific focus areas for the groups (phonemic awareness, phonics, word study, fluency, comprehension strategies, etc.) Our district has implemented research-based intervention programs to support our Tier 2 and Tier 3 students, who have been

identified as having a substantial reading deficiency or are “at-risk” for developing reading deficiencies. The Pioneer Valley Books by Literacy Footprints is the program that is used for our Tier 2 intervention groups. This program is leveled to address students current reading level and is developed to focus on word study and foundational skills, as well as provide the opportunity for students to develop comprehension strategies to improve their reading. This program is easily tailored to meet the needs of the Tier 2 students. A more strategic intervention is used to address the needs of Tier 3 students. Such interventions include Sounds Sensible, SPIRE, Voyager, and RISE. For students that show a deficiency in letter sound relationships, Sounds Sensible is used. Sounds Sensible® provides hands-on instruction in the most reliable indicators of reading success: phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and understanding letter-sound relationships, as well as handwriting. The lessons follow a structured literacy approach, helping students quickly master 20 consonants and short a. For students in first and second grade who demonstrate a reading deficiency, S.P.I.R.E. is used. S.P.I.R.E. is a teacher-led 10-step lesson plan that methodically walks students through phonemic awareness and phonics, then spelling, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency — instilling and reinforcing every stage of reading development. Lessons include multisensory activities that meet different learning styles and engage all students, and provide continual practice and review to lock in permanent gains. The Voyager Program is used with students in grades second through fifth grade who have mastered their foundational skills but are struggling with comprehension. This program provides struggling readers with explicit instruction, corrective feedback, and more time on task to master critical reading skills. Data teams meet every 4 1/2 weeks to determine if a change in the intervention is needed or the person providing the intervention needs to be changed. The data teams also look at other variables such as attendance and engagement as part of the decision making process before an adjustment or change is made to the intervention program. If a child is not showing progress with the use of the intervention, a change is made to find an intervention that is best suited to address the deficit area. Intervention takes place daily and is part of the school wide master schedule. This time is protected and valued . When students are in RTI groups the work is centered on activities that are skill specific for their needs.

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

After the fall benchmark is given individual schools hold RTI meetings that include teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, principals, and our elementary supervisor. Once groups are determined parent contact is made through a letter explaining our intervention process and our goals for each individual student. The letter explains what learning deficits each student has and how the intervention will meet the student’s individual academic needs. The parents will be notified of the length of the daily intervention and strategies that can be used at home to help their child grow as a reader and learner. It will also emphasize the importance of being able to read by the end of their third grade year.

Progress reports are sent home each mid-nine week period, and the RTI team meets once per nine weeks to determine if a student is making adequate growth in their current intervention. We resend home a form letting them know whether or not their child is making progress, and any changes that will be made in the upcoming nine weeks. These reports will go out four times annually.

In addition to our RTI team's communication with families, classroom teachers also send out corresponding letters to families about what they see in the classroom and how they can help their child make progress at home.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Teachers within the Dyer County school district will participate this spring/summer in the free Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Our plan includes the following:

April 2021 - All teachers of grades Kindergarten through second grade will participate asynchronously in Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series. The online training will focus on a phonics-based approach to teaching foundational reading curriculum. Participating teachers will complete Week 1 certification prior to June in preparation for Week 2.

June 2021 - Our district has registered and is hosting the cohort-based, in person training of Week 2 Early Literacy Training series. All teachers in grades kindergarten through second grade will participate in the training. Those enrolled in the training will also include interventionist, special education teachers, elementary instructional coaches, and the ELA instructional coach. Week 2 training will focus on practical classroom application of research based instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Emphasising strategies that will allow our teachers to take this training and easily implement their learning within their individual classrooms.

We plan to include grades three through five during the summer of 2022.