

**Memphis School of Excellence Elementary &
Memphis School of Excellence Elementary Cordova**

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 25, 2021

Updated: January 30, 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

K-2 students spend 135 minutes in an ELA block; 90 minutes is devoted to literacy instruction including reading, writing, and standard-skills. 45 minutes is devoted to foundational skills instruction. Our schools use curriculum that is aligned to the Tennessee state standards and approved by the state; teachers use both the Benchmark Advance curriculum materials and the Tennessee Foundational Skills curriculum to provide students with instruction and practice in five areas: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

For example, on day one in the first unit of 2nd grade, students will practice identifying words with short vowels, blends, and consonant digraphs and blending and spelling words with short vowels (including consonant blends, digraphs, trigraphs). Students have the opportunity to hear a teacher model and then practice the words and sounds both orally and in writing. There are opportunities for whole class and small group instruction within the curriculum. Later in the block, students have the opportunity to listen to fluent text, practice their own fluency, review key vocabulary, and build comprehension.

Our improvements for next year include additional training for our teachers in foundational skills best practices. We will also support our teachers in better scheduling their literacy block to ensure that all necessary components are included.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Our schools take an integrated literacy block approach for students in grades 3-5. Our third grade students continue using the Benchmark Advance curriculum while our grades 4-5 students work from the Expeditionary Learning curriculum. Both curricula align to the Tennessee standards and are approved by the state. Our 3-5 students spend 90 minutes each day in their ELA class, engaging in different activities with 30 minutes of this time being dedicated to embedded foundational literacy skills instruction. Daily instruction includes opportunities for students to build knowledge and engage with complex texts while also providing all students with opportunities to practice fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing. The instructional materials support students in developing their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

For example, one third grade module focuses on students reflecting on the lessons we can learn from literary classics. The first lesson in the module begins with students going over the objectives, using vocabulary strategies to determine the meaning of key words within the objectives (illustrations, contributes, and recounts). Students then participate in an activity about inference that includes opportunities for them to interact with their peers in a think-triad-share, write, and discuss. Students then engage in a complex, grade-level text focusing on key details, making inferences through a variety of methods (think-pair-share, whole class discussion, written answers), and answering scaffolded questions. Students end the lesson by reflecting on their own understanding of the text. Foundational skills are embedded throughout the lessons with opportunities for students to practice their fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing as they participate in the lesson activities and work to make meaning from the text.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Benchmark Advance

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Benchmark Advance (3)

Open Up -Expeditionary Learning (4-5)

Additional Information about Instructional Materials

Our schools have adopted approved ELA curriculum for instruction; however, we supplement the curriculum with other materials. We use the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement to further address foundational skills in daily instruction. This supplement allows us to focus more deeply on the phonological awareness and advanced phonemic awareness skills in grades K-2.

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

K-5--NWEA MAP (primary) with additional easyCBM benchmarking

We also administer the TN URS (aimswebPlus) to our 3rd grade students for the spring benchmark.

Intervention Structure and Supports

Three times a year (fall, winter, spring), all students take a universal screener (NWEA MAP) to determine which students have a significant reading gap and are at risk. Our campus admins, instructional coaches, teachers, and RTI interventionists review data to determine which students score below the 25th percentile. Those students are then benchmarked using easyCBM to determine their instructional level and skill gaps. Using that data, students are placed into RTI and receive Tier II or Tier III supports depending on their placement. Students receive daily, research-based small group intervention for 45 minutes per day in their area of greatest deficit. Our ELA curriculum contains RTI plans and supports; teachers also supplement with a variety of computer-based resources including MobyMax. Students are progress monitored on a weekly basis.

Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level intervention period. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that support their skill deficit. For example, students who need instruction in comprehension may read a new text and answer scaffolded questions.

Our data teams meet every 4 weeks to review data and determine if the student's intervention plan needs to change or if they need to change instructional levels or skills based on their progress monitoring data. The data team also considers attendance and behavior when making decisions.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Our schools notify parents in grades K-5 if their child is "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-25th percentile) immediately after the schools complete the fall universal screening. Students' scores are communicated in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. The parents are told what intervention their student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive services. Parents are updated of their child's progress, or lack of progress, after the monthly data team meetings. In the parent notifications/communication, the data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data as well as recommended free home activities that will support students in the area of deficit. These communications go out to K-3 parents after every universal screener (3x a year) and every data team meeting. 4-5 parents receive communications after the first universal screener and every data team meeting.

Professional Development Plan

Teachers in our network participated in the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education.

Our plan for providing PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

- All teachers of students in grades kindergarten through five engaged in Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series, asynchronously. This training focused on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach.
- Our lead teachers attended in-person training offered as Week 2. Shelby County offered each of our schools two seats in this in-person training; we sent two strong lead teachers from each campus to receive this professional development. This week emphasized practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Teachers who received training shared the information with other teachers at each campus during our July in-service.
- We plan to include all other K-5 teachers as well as interventionists, SPED/ESL teachers, and instructional coaches during the summers of 2022 and 2023. If the district offers us more seats for course 2, we have a list of teachers who are interested in filling those spots.