

## **Putnam County Schools**

### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 28, 2021**

**Updated: June 30, 2023**

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 will spend 60 minutes each day engaged in direct systematic foundational skills instruction aligned to CKLA's research-driven scope and system of foundational skills. Each day, students engage in 3-4 "mini lessons" aligned to the systematic scope and sequence of foundational skills in order to allow them adequate time to both learn and practice new skills that ultimately result in fluent reading, comprehension, and writing skill. The CKLA scope and sequence includes direct instruction and aligned student practice in phonics, grammar, spelling, and writing. There are four guiding principles for the CKLA skills strand:

- **Explicit Phonics:** Explicit, systematic phonics instruction is a more effective way to teach decoding than "whole language" or whole word methods
- **Synthetic Phonics:** Synthetic phonics (or linguistic phonics), in which instruction is oriented from sound to letter, is an especially powerful way to teach phonics.
- **Repeated Oral Practice:** Repeated oral practice and oral reading are proven methods of improving fluency.
- **Intensive Practice:** Intensive practice with skills-aligned texts is essential in order to build reliability and automaticity in reading

Additionally, CKLA engages students in ongoing reading fluency and comprehension practice with decodable readers aligned to the skills students are learning to meaning from text and to produce the written word. These readers increase in length and complexity as students develop their reading and spelling skills. CKLA lessons included specific instruction and practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. During instruction, teachers follow the "I do, we do, you do" procedure to teach new sounds and skills, to model them and the student then practices the skill independently. Next year, we will spend time working and coaching teachers in prepping lessons and implementing the writing process within each lesson.

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

Our district has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 in the science of reading and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Our curriculum materials, Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA), are selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons, our students receive a total of 90 minutes of ELA instruction each day. Although the daily schedule is not the same each day, all 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) for about 60 minutes per day and foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing for at least 30 minutes per day. Our adopted curriculum also engages students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills are not taught in isolation, but are embedded within the lesson to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection.

A daily lesson sequence in grades 3-5 CKLA may include briefly activating prior knowledge and read independently and/or aloud in partners or whole group. After the daily read aloud (or independent reading in on-grade level, complex text), the students may summarize the content (through a think-pair-share model), unpack the most essential vocabulary (“word work”), respond to a series of scaffolded questions with both discussion and writing and write a response to an inferential question that requires students to use evidence from the text to support their answer. Students also receive vocabulary instruction where teachers provide explicit support for vocabulary needed to access the complex text. In some lessons, the students may study the root words to understand how they can use parts of words to determine meaning. Students use their word knowledge as they engage in group discussion and writing activities. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of this 90-minute block and is dedicated to developing students’ holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

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

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

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

Amplify - K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts

### **Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. These screeners comply with RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements.**

- The Putnam County School System utilizes DIBELS 8th Edition as it's Universal Screener for students in grades K-2.
- For 3rd grade students, we use the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, AimswebPlus.
- For students in grades 4-5, we use iReady as the Universal Screener.

## **Intervention Structure and Supports**

In the fall, students are given a universal screener to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are “at-risk”. Our grade-level teachers and principals review universal screener data to determine which students score between the 0-25th percentile. Those students demonstrating need are classified as in need of Tier II or Tier III instruction. Students classified as Tier II or Tier III are given a diagnostic assessment to determine specific deficits in order to best assign students to a small group with an intervention that will narrow skill gaps. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 45 minutes in their area of greatest deficit.

We have research-based options for reading intervention support available to our students who are “at-risk” and/or who have been identified with a significant reading deficiency. Our recently adopted ELA curriculum, CKLA, contains an assessment and remediation guide in which teachers can find activities that directly address targeted skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students. If that intervention is not proving to be effective, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as SPIRE) become an option. Data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, engagement) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or provider.

Our students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students are also screened using additional survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who do demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs that meet the law's requirements. Our district uses a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia. Families are notified that the SPIRE curriculum is used to support those students, as it is based on the Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and is considered a strong support for those students.

Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI. When students are in their RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments that make them stronger in that skill. For example, students who need instruction in comprehension may read a new text and answer scaffolded questions, all related to the knowledge-building unit they are studying in Tier I instruction. For students who need fluency support, they may receive intervention using the SPIRE program.

Additional Information about the CKLA Assessment & Remediation Guide:

The Assessment and Remediation Guide provides multiple additional resources for teachers to use as they support students on their path to mastery of grade-level foundational skills:

- **Sample Lessons:** Samples of lessons are provided, as well as lesson templates to guide the planning to build lessons that fit the specific needs of individual students or small groups.
- **Word/Chaining Lists:** The ARG includes words lists and chaining lists that teachers can plan into a lesson for students to use for practicing the mastery of the letter sound correspondences identified as weaknesses.
- **Activities for Reteaching:** The ARG includes activities to be used for reteaching. These activities are engaging and designed to be teacher-facilitated. Though there are worksheets for some activities to support structuring instruction, the focus is to provide students with ongoing support and feedback.
- **Games for Reinforcement:** The ARG includes games for reinforcement.

Additional Resources are provided.

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

Immediately following the fall K-5 benchmark assessments (Dibels in K-2 and NWEA MAP), families are notified if their child falls below the 25th% and are considered "at-risk". Families receive a letter that provides a clear explanation of their child's skill gaps and how the school plans to support the student to close those gaps. They will be given information about the specific intervention and the amount of time that will be spent each day using that intervention. They will also be given information about the importance of being a proficient reader by the end of 3rd grade. Parents are notified of their child's progress in intervention after each 4 1/2 week data team meeting. Students are progress monitored throughout intervention services to determine if skills gaps are being closed and adequate progress is being made. If not, a change in intervention may be necessary. Any changes made in programming and/or services are communicated to the parents as well as no cost activities they can do at home to support their child's progress. Communications go out to parents with students in grades K-3 three times annually and in grades 4/5 annually. Additionally, the CKLA curriculum contain Home Letters in K-2 that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domain topics for the coming week that inform parents about ways to support and enhance their child's learning experience. They are given questions to ask their child about the text they are listening to and reading and are given ways to support the foundational skills their child is learning that week. We have recently shared an opportunity for families to have an additional set of "at-home" decodables delivered to their homes through the state's free ordering website. This opportunity provides students with a way to practice skills at home with their parents.

### **Professional Development Plan**

In April of 2021, all K-2 classroom teachers, ESL teachers, interventionist and special education early grades teachers were given priority to register for Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series, asynchronously. This training will focus on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. Participating educators will earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 training in June. Our district registered for three cohort-based, in-person trainings offered as Week 2 of the Early Literacy Training series for all early grade teachers, ESL teachers, interventionist and special education teachers who completed Week 1 asynchronous

training and received a certificate of completion for the training. This training will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. In May, 2021, we opened up Week 1 asynchronous training to all grades 3-5 teachers. These teachers will only complete Week 1 asynchronous training. They will be required to submit a certificate of completion by demonstrating sufficient knowledge and competency based on an end of course assessment.

### **Additional Information about this Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

The district just identified six PCSS Literacy Lead Teachers, one per grade level, who will complete the Early Literacy Week 1 and 2 training this summer, and complete a year-long LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training to become certified in the methodology behind the science of reading. Under the supervision of the District Literacy Instructional Coaches and the Supervisor of Instruction for the District, they will lead literacy PLCs, model excellent instruction using the curriculum, lead in collaborative preparation to deliver instruction, and serve as a literacy advisory team in the district. Our goal is to build capacity in literacy leaders in the district and train a cohort to pull from to fill instructional coaching positions within the district and to lead their colleagues toward continuous improvement in literacy instruction in classrooms across Putnam County.