

## **White County Schools**

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: August 17, 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**

The master schedule of all Kindergarten through Second Grade classrooms in White County provides for 120 minutes (about 2 hours) of ELA instruction that is aligned to Tennessee ELA standards and is approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During these 120 minutes (about 2 hours), foundational skills instruction (45 minutes) is the primary form of instruction and includes standard aligned instruction and student practice in fluency, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, writing, and speaking/listening opportunities. Group time also allows teachers to individually assess students' understanding of the sound they are learning and provides practice in pronouncing the sound correctly and writing the sound.

White County uses the Benchmark Advance curriculum. This curriculum provides opportunities for students to: work with and read text that builds content knowledge, reflect on diversity within culture, and build successful transfer of foundational skills. The Benchmark curriculum texts engage students in a balance of informational and literary texts. In addition, these texts follow a vertical progression of knowledge building strands that directly align with the Tennessee social studies and science standards. This curriculum provides on-going formative and summative assessment data that support teachers in efficient planning for responsive teaching.

This year of implementation has provided teachers and administrators opportunities to explore the curriculum. Overall, our teachers find the curriculum effective in supporting literacy development. Through a collaboration with teachers, our goals include a closer focus on the following: 1) closer monitoring and use of student data to drive instruction, feedback, and remediation, 2) to provide a culture of instruction that encourages growth mindset that fosters productive struggle, 3) set expectations that allow students to continually grow toward increased rigor. We also know that lesson planning/preparation is the key to good instruction.

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

The master schedule of all Third through Fifth Grade classrooms in White County provides for 90 minutes of ELA instruction with 30 minutes of foundational skills instruction embedded. During these 90 minutes, teachers use this evidence-based curriculum to provide Tennessee standard

aligned instruction to develop reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, morphology, fluency, and vocabulary deep dives with explicit supports for fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Wit and Wisdom uses a books, not Basals, knowledge building approach, and vocabulary, spelling, writing, language skills that are integrated and not isolated. The texts are wide-ranging and varied, including a careful balance of literary, informational, and fine-art texts.

White County uses the Wit and Wisdom curriculum. This curriculum provides opportunities for students to read authentic, complex text while building fluency, writing, speaking, and listening, and using vocabulary as they gain content knowledge. The Wit and Wisdom curriculum texts engage students in a balance of informational and literary texts. This curriculum provides an assessment piece that monitors student comprehension and progress on targeted reading and vocabulary standards. The end of module task is designed to demonstrate through writing, student understanding of the focus standards.

This year of implementation has provided teachers and administrators opportunities to explore the curriculum. Through a collaboration with teachers, our goals include a closer focus on the following: 1) closer monitoring and use of student data to drive instruction, feedback, and remediation, 2) to provide a culture of instruction that encourages growth mindset that fosters productive struggle, 3) set expectations that allow students to continually grow toward increased rigor. As we move forward, our hope is that teachers become stronger in the implementation of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in an integrated way, with every strand of the standards woven throughout each module. This integrated approach enables students to be more successful as they activate and build on their developing background and vocabulary knowledge of the module topic while learning skills in other areas.

### **Additional Supports**

We plan to focus on building our teachers' instructional capacity as we will use our coaches to write individual learning plans for teachers who are not getting achievement and growth. The coaches will focus on ensuring the classroom teachers meet the standard's rigor and student work. Coaches will model lessons and lesson prep with the teachers each week to provide any needed support. Our district is also focusing on Tennessee standards aligned to student work during individual grade level meetings by using the TDOE unit and lesson preparation tools.

Our students in the different subgroups are going to be focusing on using HQIM to continue to focus on grade level standards. We hope to use the passages from the different grades to help them focus on deficits in skills. In these subgroups our goal is not to let students get further behind each year. We will use our Benchmark data and their personal learning paths to help them improve in Reading.

White County looks at the following to help our students with growth and achievement.

- Look at data from the universal screener and progress monitoring to identify subgroups that are not experiencing expected growth or achievement in grades K-3
- Develop individualized support plans such as IEPs and ILPDs for each group based on data analysis.

- Implement early intervention programs designed to support struggling students in grades K-3.
- These programs include additional tutoring, small group instruction, targeted literacy, or numeracy interventions.
- Progress monitoring to track the interventions.

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

Benchmark Advance

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

Great Minds Wit and Wisdom

### **Supplemental Instructional Materials**

We use the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement (TNFSCS) along with our Benchmark Curriculum to strengthen our work.

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

iReady Suite will be used as our universal screener three times a year for our students in K-5. We will also use Aimsweb for 3rd grade students for the spring benchmark.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

The intervention program closely follows the RTI2 framework as outlined in the manual. Students take the universal screener three times a year. (Fall, Winter, and Spring) Students who score below the 25%ile are discussed at data teams that are held every 4 ½ weeks. Students are placed in Tier II if below the 25%ile or Tier III if below the 10%ile and if the data team determines the placement is appropriate based on classroom observation and performance. Students who scored between 25% - 40%ile are discussed and placed in small groups as "bubble kids" who are served by either the classroom teacher or interventionist depending upon the number of Tier II and Tier III students.

Tier II and Tier III students receive skill-based intervention using evidence-based intervention programs. "Bubble students" may receive instruction using skill-based intervention programs or standards-based intervention depending on the student's needs. Tier II and III students are progress monitored every other week using easyCBM. Intervention takes place during a grade-level time in the master schedule just for RTI. Interventionists work with small groups of students to remediate skill deficits identified by the screener and progress monitoring. All interventions address specific skill gaps while we progress monitor these gaps.

At data teams, students already being served in Tier II and III are discussed in terms of progress. Data-based decisions are then made to return the student to Tier I, continue same intervention, change interventions, change tiers, or refer for additional testing.

The district follows a master schedule for all elementary schools (K-5). The schedule allows a 45-minute intervention period for all grades. Most schools provide additional support for kindergarten and/or first grade each morning.

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

After students complete the universal screening (3 times each school year), students' scores are communicated to parents in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. Our district notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child has scored below the 25th percentile which indicates that the student is "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency. These notification letters include the student's skill deficit areas, what intervention the student will receive, the amount of time each day the student will receive services, and a reminder about the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade and the pathway to 4th grade.

Additionally, dyslexia letters are sent home once a year after interventionists and school psychologists review universal screening data to identify students whose scores indicate a potential reading disability. Students who meet the criteria for the minimum matrix provided by the state for having characteristics of dyslexia receive an opportunity to be served with an ILP-D if parents agree.

After each data team meeting (every 4 ½ weeks), parents are notified of tiered students' progress through reports that include their child's progress or lack of progress. In these parent notifications, data team recommendations for changes in intervention indicated by progress monitoring are listed as well as free and accessible activities that parents can do to support their child in the area of deficit.

Additionally, the ELA curriculum contains parent letters in the younger grades that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the upcoming week that will inform and equip parents in supporting their child's reading growth. These communications help families better understand how to support their child through questions about their text and through an awareness of what foundational skills their child is learning. Interventionists also lead multiple parent involvement activities throughout the year that support literacy. These activities include free materials for parents to work with or engage students at home.

### **Professional Development Plan**

White County teachers have had multiple opportunities for professional development to enhance foundational skills instruction.

- Over the past year, all of our White County teachers have been engaged in explicit training using the High-Quality ELA Materials. This model provided effective literacy instruction that focused on building strong foundational skills.
- The district uses two reading coaches to continue supporting teachers in implementing these research-based practices. These coaches routinely visit, monitor and provide feedback to all ELA teachers to ensure demonstration of their knowledge and competency in teaching foundational skills.

- During the months of May - June, K-5 new teachers will be engaged in Early Reading Training provided by the Tennessee Department of Education, as current K-5 teachers have completed this training.
- Grade level meetings are planned for May-July 2024 that focus on our areas of improvement in building strong foundational skills and knowledge of appropriate comprehension strategies.