

Maryville City Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 18, 2021

Updated: July 28, 2021

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

Maryville City Schools' Literacy Teachers have a long-standing commitment and evidence of success for Balanced Literacy and the Pillars of Reading – Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension. Our student achievement and growth data has consistently placed our students in the top of the state for all students as well as for particular subgroups.

In grades K-2, Literacy Instruction comprises between 2.5 – 3 hours per day. These primary teachers devote this time to the Foundational Standards and Skills, inclusive of print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, word and sentence compositions, and fluency. In addition, by using the Tennessee Literacy Standards, they cover all other literacy standards, including language, comprehension, speaking, listening, and writing composition. Teaching teams unpack all grade level standards for rigor and relevancy, being selective to choose materials and resources that ensure mastery of skills and concepts.

We believe all standards should be explicitly taught with high quality direct instruction, small group instruction focused on voluminous reading, rich writing programing, and meaningful independent practice.

The following evidence-based methods are used:

- Acquisition of language-related skills through games, nursery rhymes, and rhythmic activities to grow a child's ability to hear and manipulate sounds
- Development of language, vocabulary, and comprehension skills through read-aloud, shared reading, and independent reading
- Direct, explicit phonics instruction - full immersion into alphabet and the sound/letter relationships to unlock the code of reading
- Daily practice with writing composition
- Small Group Instruction – guided reading, reteaching, literacy circles, skills.
- Monitoring of independent reading – asking the right questions, checks for understanding

- Whole Group Instruction – direct, overall standards instruction
- Devotion to time in text, voluminous reading, and rich, engaging text

A significant goal for teachers is to know their readers, so they can best meet the needs of each child. Student achievement and growth data drives literacy instruction. Multi-metrics are used to identify the child's areas of strength and areas to strengthen. Through guided reading, direct instruction, shared reading, read-aloud, writing, small groups, writing, and independent reading, classroom teachers provide a balanced approach to supportive instruction and productive struggle. Teachers want children to fall in love with books and become lifelong readers. By staying current in best practice and professional development and accessing high quality materials and resources, teachers seek to move a child through the progression in the mastery of standards and acquisition of rich and engaging text. Individual student progress is closely monitored by classroom teachers and regularly and routinely communicated with parents.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Maryville City Schools' Literacy Teachers have a long-standing commitment and evidence of success for Balanced Literacy and the Pillars of Reading – Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension. Our student achievement and growth data has consistently placed our students in the top of the state for all students as well as for particular subgroups.

In grades 3 - 5, Literacy Instruction comprises between 1.5 – 2.5 hours per day, depending on the grade level. Third grade teachers are assigned to elementary buildings in self-contained classrooms, spending approximately 2 hours per day in literacy instruction, including reading fluency, morphology, grammar, language, spelling, and comprehension. Fourth and fifth grade teachers are assigned to intermediate schools and provide departmentalized literacy instruction for a range of 1.5 - 2 hours each day. In addition, all teachers have a commitment to infuse literacy into their classes, especially in Social Studies where writing is an integrated skill.

The Tennessee Literacy Standards are used as the core framework. Teachers unpack these standards for rigor and relevancy, being selective to choose materials and resources that ensure mastery of skills and concepts. Teachers explicitly teach these standards through high quality direct instruction, small and large group instruction focused on voluminous reading, rich writing experiences, and meaningful independent practice. The Foundational Literacy Standards are taught both in isolation and embedded in the other literacy standards, practices, and processes. In grades 3, 4 and 5, the Foundational Skills focus on the following:

- Application of grade level phonics and word analysis skills when decoding words and in connected text. (syllables, roots, suffixes, prefixes).
- Knowledge and application of grade level phonics and word analysis when encoding words and producing writing compositions.
- Ability to read grade level text with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- Ability to apply the appropriate rate, pace, and expression to the reading process.

- Utilization of techniques to unlock meaning - content clues, self-correction, reread as necessary.
- Application of accurate language conventions.
- Ability to unlock meaning of unknown words – context clues, affixes, reference materials, figurative language, academic and grade level vocabulary and language.

The following evidence-based methods are used

- Development of language, vocabulary, and comprehension skills through active reading
- Direct, explicit, grade level appropriate foundational skills instruction paired with embedded instruction through the other five pillars.
- Whole Group Instruction – direct, overall standards instruction
- Small Group Instruction –literature circles, reteaching, skills.
- Daily practice in writing composition
- Monitoring of independent reading – asking the right questions, checks for understanding
- Development of vocabulary through explicit and applied strategies within authentic text

Student performance achievement and growth data drives literacy instruction. Multi-metrics are used to identify the child’s areas of strength and areas to strengthen. Teachers invest in knowing their readers and providing them the tools to engage in text and develop the love of reading as they move students from the continuum of learning to read to reading to learn. A strong balance and abundance of fiction and non-fiction text is provided to develop fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension. The progression in the mastery of standards is monitored by classroom teacher and regularly and routinely communicated with parents.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Approved waiver for other materials

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Approved waiver for other materials

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

i-Ready Suite

Intervention Structure and Supports

Maryville works diligently to follow the guidance outlined in Tennessee's RTI framework manual to identify students with reading delays and provide interventions to remedy weaknesses so all students can be successful readers. High-quality Tier I instruction is critical to the foundation of the district’s RTI² model in coordination with a problem-solving approach to meet individual student

needs. Universal screening measures are employed regularly to all students in K-8. Those students identified as “at-risk” or as having a significant reading deficiency who have failed to make sufficient progress with Tier I classroom interventions are referred to Tier II interventions following a multi-metric review of data including universal screening measures. Collaborative RTI2 data review support teams collect and analyze data and recommend Tier I, II, and III interventions specific to meeting students’ individual needs.

Tier II supports are typically provided with a pull-out, direct intervention model and are consistently provided in addition to Tier I supports. Interventions are research-based and specifically address a student’s area of deficit. Examples of Tier II intervention programs include, but are not limited to, Funemics, Systematic Phonics, Wilson:Foundations, RISE, Journeys, Sidewalks, and Marie Carbo. Intervention is provided in a small-group setting with trained personnel for at least 30 minutes daily. Interventions are implemented with fidelity and selected programs/instruction are adjusted to support student progress.

Tier III supports are the most intensive of the RTI2 interventions and occur in addition to Tier I supports. Referral to Tier III is based on regular analysis of progress monitoring data indicating a student is failing to make adequate progress based on Tier II supports. Tier III intervention is more rigorous in nature with programs such as Stepping Stones, PALS, Signs for Sounds, Systematic Phonics, Marie Carbo, and iSpire. Explicit daily instruction for Tier III is provided by trained personnel in smaller, more intensive groups. Students who fail to adequately respond to Tier III instruction may be referred for a special education evaluation. Tier III intervention for grades K-8 has a duration of approximately 45 minutes daily. Interventions are implemented with fidelity and selected programs/instruction are adjusted to support student progress.

The intervention framework is built on providing increasing intensity of support based on student progress. RTI services are in addition to grade level instruction and do not replace strong Tier 1 differentiated instruction provided in the general education classroom. Tier 2 and Tier 3 services occur in addition to grade level content instruction through evidence-based instruction. RTI2 intervention is a protected and scheduled time at each school. Students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 academic services are monitored weekly with progress monitoring assessments in academic areas of weakness. School-based support teams review student progress for Tiers 2 and 3 every 4.5 weeks as well. The purpose of these reviews is to identify students who are making satisfactory progress and the intervention provided needs to be continued, failing to make satisfactory progress and a new intervention strategy/tool needs to be changed, and/or needing to have a change in tiered support.

Additional supports provided by the school district include regular training for RTI, regular education teachers and special education staff on reading intervention instruction, especially related to dyslexia, research-based reading methodology, and differentiation strategies. Schools offer additional before and after school tutoring supports with an emphasis on reading.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Maryville City Schools follows the processes and procedures in the Response to Intervention (RTI2) Model regarding universal screening, provision of RTI Tiered Support, progress monitoring, and

parent communication. Beginning in elementary school, children participate in universal screening three times per year (fall, winter, spring) and upon transferring to MCS for the first time. For reading, Star Reading Assessment is administered in grades K-5. Within the general classroom structures, or Tier 1, students are provided layers of support and services through high quality materials and resources, differentiated instruction, and teaching assistant support in every elementary classroom. Families receive the universal screening data reports after each administration as well as reviewing and discussing these reports during open houses, family meetings, and parent conferences. Any identified concerns in Tier 1 instruction is conveyed through work and assessment samples. Recommendations are made, support plans are built, and structures are added in hopes to close gaps and remedy delays.

While the universal screener is critical to referral to RTI, Maryville City Schools utilizes a multi-metric approach to identifying students with significant reading deficiencies and potential reading disabilities. Students typically falling below the 25th percentile on the universal screener in reading will be considered for RTI services and will receive additional benchmarking and progress monitoring assessments with FastBridge assessments (oral reading fluency and reading comprehension) and/or AIMSweb Plus (written expression) and/or additional dyslexia screeners. Based on a multi-metric review of data on and teacher input, school level student impact/data review teams may refer students performing below the 25th percentile in reading for the RTI Program. Families are provided the student performance and growth assessment data along with a notice for the recommendation to the RTI program. Parents receive reports of achievement and growth/regression at least every four weeks during the school year. As students may travel up the RTI tiers, consistent communication is provided to define the tiers and the level of service associated with each one. These communication packages include suggested intervention activities as well as the interventions being provided by the school.

As the district is making plans to implement Reading 360 expectations with our current RTI service model, we are hopeful the TN Universal Reading Screener that fulfills the RTI expectations along with the dyslexia screener expectations will be a valuable resource for consideration and implementation. If this tool does not meet our expectations for rigor or if we feel we have a better tool that fulfills the expectations and obligations of the TDOE, then the district will submit a waiver. We have piloted iReady Reading to provide a comparison against the current STAR Reading and TE21 Reading Assessment in an effort to be pro-active in our search for an alternate tool.

We will be revising our Grades K-3 RTI letters of notification to fulfill the TDOE requirements by using the provided cut scores with the provided assessment tool or the approved cut scores of the approved waived tool.

Our new communication will include the following:

- Information about the importance of learning to read by 3rd grade
- Reading intervention activities for at-home use
- Information about the specific reading intervention and supports the school provides, including RTI2 framework manual

- Home Literacy Reports must be provided to families after each of the three benchmark assessments

We will continue to use our Grades 4-5 RTI Letters of Notification and add the provision of an annual Home Literacy Report.

Professional Development Plan

Maryville City Schools K-5 educators have been provided the TN Literacy Bill, Public Chapter No. 3, a district summary of the legislation, and a summary of the professional development expectations aligned with the expectation for completion of at least one professional development course on foundational literacy skills as approved by the TDOE by August 2021 with a stipulation for license renewal.

In the past five years as our district has prioritized K-5 literacy, our teachers have been trained extensively in high quality foundational literacy instruction through Benchmark Phonics, Wiley Blevins Phonics Training, Wilson Phonics, Beverly Tyner Foundational Reading, and Scholastic Literacy. The district created support tools, complete with Read to Be Ready Resources and our own created materials and resources. These resources include a MCS Literacy Framework, and a OneNote Notebook tools with strategies, lesson plans, and supports for all five pillars of reading as well as all represented components in a balanced literacy model – large group direct instruction, small group support options, read aloud, shared reading, independent reading, and meaningful practice.

To comply with the TN Literacy Bill, the district is hosting a TDOE Foundational Skills Professional Development for Week 1 and Week 2 components. We expect all our K-3 teachers to complete the online digital components of Week 1 by the end of the 2021-22 school year. We have reached the maximum capacity of 50 educators for the optional Week 2 training. We expect all our 4-5 grade teachers to complete the online digital components of Week 2 by the end of the 2022-2023 school year.