

Cocke County Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: March 21, 2024

Approved: June 14, 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

Our district uses a foundational skills curriculum grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (60 minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. Our Academic Coaches and teachers have developed guides for each unit that highlights standards/skills that are new in blue and spiraled standards/skills in black. These are included as an appendix to our pacing guides. Teachers will use these to ensure that all Tennessee State Standards have been taught during the school year. We will also incorporate specific strategies to develop proficient student writers using the SRSD method. Each school is committed to foundational skills instruction and to knowledge building. Important elements in the CKLA foundational skills lessons include decoding and encoding, explicit teaching of letter-sound correspondences, a systematic approach to phonics, focus on phonemes, staircase of complexities, and deliberate consistent practice. We will also be using the state training on foundational skills and Heggerty Phonics in supplement to our CKLA. CKLA includes foundational skill instruction that has a designated block of time. Sixty minutes of daily foundational skills instruction is required in K-2 classrooms. The CKLA Skills Strand provides comprehensive instruction in foundational reading skills, such as phonological awareness, phonics, and word recognition and language skills, including conventions of English, spelling, and grammar. In addition, lessons include fluency practice, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing instruction. During instruction, teachers explicitly teach a sound, the students practice the sound aloud, and the teacher models writing the sound. Then the students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, and students apply the skill in independent practice. We plan to continue to improve in our implementation of CKLA for next school year. Common PLCs for teachers in grades K-2 will allow time for teachers to collaborate and complete unit and lesson prep. These will be held after school through zoom.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Our schedules for grades 3-5 are designed to deliver comprehensive instruction in reading, grammar, morphology, fluency, and writing, incorporating 30 minutes dedicated to foundational literacy skills. Within our district, we utilize the CKLA curriculum for grades three through five. This curriculum is meticulously aligned with Tennessee State Standards and fulfills all requirements for foundational skills. The CKLA program selected meets the criteria set forth by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Our integrated ELA block employs an evidence-based approach, seamlessly integrating foundational skills into daily lessons. Students receive 30 minutes of embedded foundational skills instruction each day, directly aligned with Tennessee State standards, covering morphology, grammar, spelling, writing, and fluency. This approach ensures that foundational literacy skills are taught holistically, fostering connections, continuity, and cohesion within the curriculum. Specific supports for fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension are thoughtfully included to enhance learning outcomes. For instance, fifth-grade students will commence their exploration of Chemical Matter within the curriculum. They will initiate this segment by reviewing prior knowledge and engaging in both independent and group reading activities. Following the daily read-aloud session or independent reading of appropriately challenging texts, students will summarize content using a think-pair-share model. They will also delve into essential vocabulary through focused "word work," respond to scaffolded questions, and craft a written response to inferential queries that necessitate citing textual evidence. Vocabulary lessons are designed to provide explicit support for mastering the terminology essential for comprehending complex texts. Throughout collaborative discussions and writing exercises, students will apply their knowledge of words, fostering skills in group dynamics and written expression. The instructional framework integrates foundational skills across the ninety-minute block, nurturing a comprehensive approach to literacy encompassing grammar, spelling, writing, fluency, and comprehension, all grounded in current educational research.

Additional Supports

In Cocke County, addressing the needs of subgroups underperforming in English Language Arts (ELA) is a top priority. We have implemented a multifaceted approach to support these students, ensuring they receive targeted interventions and resources tailored to their specific needs. Firstly, we have adopted a differentiated instruction model that allows teachers to tailor their teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities within each subgroup. This includes using the Intervention Toolkit that accompanies our adopted curriculum, CKLA. This, in addition to tutoring, Tier II, Tier II, and Special Education services, approach ensures that every student receives instruction that is both challenging and supportive. Additionally, we have invested in professional development opportunities for our educators focused on culturally responsive teaching practices. By understanding and respecting the cultural backgrounds and experiences of our students, teachers are better equipped to engage them effectively in ELA instruction. Our main focus historically has been on the impact of poverty and academic achievement. Furthermore, we have established intervention programs that provide additional support to students who are struggling in ELA. These programs include small group tutoring, extended learning opportunities, and access to technology-based learning platforms that supplement classroom instruction. Collaboration with families and communities is also a key component of our strategy. We actively involve parents and guardians in

their child's education through regular communication, family literacy nights, and resources that empower them to support learning at home. Lastly, we continuously monitor student progress through data-driven assessments and evaluations. This allows us to identify trends and areas needing improvement promptly, enabling us to adjust our strategies and interventions accordingly. By implementing these initiatives comprehensively and collaboratively, we are committed to ensuring that every student, especially those in subgroups underperforming in ELA, has the opportunity to achieve academic success and thrive in our district.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Supplemental material is used during tutoring, or intervention services. Our reading intervention supports are research-based and include strategic programs such as Heggerty Phonics, S.P.I.R.E, Wilson Reading, and the CKLA Reading Intervention Toolkit, all of which are tailored to meet the needs of RTI² students. Quarterly data team meetings ensure interventions are effective, with adjustments made as needed to the intervention, provider, or duration, considering factors like participation and attendance.

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) K-5

Supplemental Screeners

Some of our schools also use STAR Early Literacy, STAR Reading, and the CKLA diagnostic assessment that accompanies the curriculum as additional measures of reading ability.

Intervention Structure and Supports

All intervention supports, schedules, and structures in Cocke County are aligned with the guidelines outlined in the RTI² Manual. Our interventions are grounded in evidence-based practices, differentiated by tier to address specific skill gaps. Progress monitoring data guides our data teams in making informed decisions regarding the duration, materials, and intensity of interventions when students show insufficient progress. Starting in August, students will undergo a universal screener to identify those with significant reading deficiencies and who are at risk. RTI² data teams, consisting of school leaders, classroom teachers, and principals, will analyze universal screener results to identify students scoring between the 0-40th percentile. These students will be reviewed during data team meetings where both quantitative and qualitative data will be assessed. Based on this review, decisions will be made regarding placement into tutoring, Tier II, or Tier III instruction. A survey-level or diagnostic assessment will further pinpoint specific learning needs, leading to placement in small-group interventions focused on their greatest deficits. AIMSwebPlus serves as the Universal

Screener for all students in grades K-5. Our reading intervention supports are research-based and include strategic programs such as Heggerty Phonics, S.P.I.R.E, Wilson Reading, and the CKLA Reading Intervention Toolkit, all of which are tailored to meet the needs of RTI² students. Quarterly data team meetings ensure interventions are effective, with adjustments made as needed to the intervention, provider, or duration, considering factors like participation and attendance. Students identified with characteristics of dyslexia through screening criteria receive appropriate interventions, with families notified promptly of their child's intervention plan. These interventions are systematic, explicit, and phonics-based to support student progress.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

After a school-based team has reviewed multiple sources of data in the screening process and identified skill deficits in need of intervention, parents shall receive notification of the student's performance and need for intervention. The notification should include specific areas of deficits

Step One

- Screen all students using a skills-based screener.
- If a standards-based assessment is used to screen all students instead of a skills-based universal screener, a skills-based screener is necessary to identify a more specific skill area(s).

Step Two

- Consider additional sources of information to identify "at-risk" students.

Step Three

- Conduct survey-level diagnostic assessments to inform intervention needs associated with the characteristics of dyslexia. For example, if a student demonstrates weaknesses in phonological awareness inconsistent with developmental expectations and requires interventions, the parent notification should identify the area of weakness targeted in the intervention (i.e., phonological awareness) and the intensity level of the intervention (e.g., Tier II, 30 minutes per day in a small group setting in addition to core instruction). Ongoing communication, at least every 4.5 weeks, should inform the parent(s) of the student's progress in skill development through tiered interventions, any changes in the intervention and any additional concerns identified. Additionally, students who are at risk in K-5 are sent a home literacy report after the administration of each benchmark.

Our district maintains a Parent Notification Plan and issues Home Literacy Reports to keep parents informed. Following completion of the fall universal screener, parents of K-5 students are promptly notified if their child is identified as at-risk for significant reading deficiencies. These notifications clearly communicate student skill gaps and detail the specific intervention and daily support their child will receive. Parents also receive information on the critical importance of reading proficiency by third grade and information on the pathway to 4th grade. We also share no-cost family activities to support student literacy. These literacy updates are sent home at least three times annually to K-5 families.

Additionally, parents receive updates on their child's progress, including any changes to interventions based on progress monitoring and universal screening data, following each quarterly data meeting. Recommendations for supporting students in deficit areas are also shared with parents.

The CKLA curriculum includes parent letters in early grades that outline foundational skills and upcoming domain content. These letters help families understand how to support their child through text-based questioning and awareness of classroom learning objectives. Each school has sets of decodable texts and other books that can be sent home for additional practice between student and parent. We have also partnered with Save the Children to build an ABC Bus (Arts, Books, and Creativity). This bus will travel around the district both during the school year and summer to offer opportunities to families to interact with their child and state standards.

Professional Development Plan

Cocke County will continue to support the development of foundational literacy professional development through the summer and by partnering with the CORE Office. We will be hosting ten zoom sessions for teachers in K-2 to complete unit and lesson prep in both foundational skills and core knowledge. We are also a part of the Early Literacy Network and the Implementation Network, which will focus on providing professional development in foundational literacy skills instruction (ELN) and refinement with high quality instructional materials (LIN) in grades 3-8.

Ongoing professional development topics will be introduced in the summer and will continue as the focus topic throughout the school year. Topics include:

- Best Practice for small group, chaining, and decodables for K-2 teachers.
- Intellectual Prep & Lesson Rehearsal and Student Work Analysis for 3-5 teachers.
- SRSD Writing method for new teachers and anyone who wants a refresher.
- Walkthroughs with the CORE Office that focus on foundational skills and includes teacher feedback according to the IPG tool.
- Any teacher in K-5 who has not previously completed the early reading online training at TeachAll Learning Platform or on the previous platform as week 1 training will be encouraged to complete this training.