

## **Shelby County Schools**

### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: May 25, 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**

Shelby County Schools (SCS) utilizes McGraw-Hill Wonders curriculum for grades K-2 Foundational Skills instruction. Wonders is a comprehensive, researched-based English Language Arts (ELA) program that aligns to TN Academic Reading Foundational Literacy Standards.

While Wonders incorporates key components of literacy that promote speaking and listening development, explicit phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency, vocabulary acquisition, grammar, and writing tasks in addition to text comprehension, foundational skills instruction is demonstrated as the primary form of instruction. The SCS ELA instructional frameworks for grades K-2 allocate a 120-minute comprehensive literacy block that provides explicit, systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Additionally, the curriculum embeds foundational skills in the vocabulary and comprehension lessons throughout the ELA block during whole group instruction, small group instruction, and literacy workstations.

Wonders utilizes evidence-based methods to teach foundational skills in grades K-2. Through the gradual release of responsibility, teachers engage students in explicit, direct whole group instruction, and they provide students with guided and collaborative practice with phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Teachers lead small groups of students in differentiated skills-focused lessons to meet their varied literacy needs. Literacy workstations are implemented to ensure students have multiple, varied opportunities to practice and apply foundational literacy skills and strategies collaboratively and independently.

For example, during whole group instruction teachers utilize toolkit resources such as word building cards to support students' development of sound awareness and letter sound correspondence. Teachers explicitly model and guide students in letter/sound practice with blending and segmenting CVC words. Students practice identifying, reading, and writing CVC words in and out of context. During small group instruction, teachers work with flexible groups of students to address specific foundational literacy skill deficits, while the remaining students complete workstation task cards that are leveled to ensure appropriate practice and student success.

Our improvements for next year are tailored to providing K-2 teachers with support that enables students to develop reading skills to meet the rigorous demands of Tennessee's academic

standards. Our district will employ an additional 500 Specialized Education Assistants (SEAs) to provide instructional support to students in K-2 classrooms. SEAs will assist teachers with the daily implementation of learning goals and objectives by working with students to reinforce skills and concepts to advance students' literacy performance within and outside of the 120-minute comprehensive literacy block. Specific guidance and articulation of expectations will be communicated during a weeklong Summer Learning Intensive (SLI). The SLI will provide SEAs with the foundational literacy content and pedagogical knowledge required to appropriately support K-2 students' development of the early literacy skills needed to read proficiently by third grade. Teachers and SEAs will receive monthly, job embedded professional development to build intense knowledge in Phonological Awareness, Phonics/Word Recognition, and Fluency to ensure the needs of all students are met. This includes designated time for educators to work collaboratively and safely to plan for effective foundational literacy skills instruction.

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

Shelby County Schools (SCS) utilizes McGraw-Hill Wonders curriculum for grades 3-5 Foundational Skills instruction. Wonders is a comprehensive, researched-based English Language Arts (ELA) program that aligns to TN Academic Reading Foundational Literacy Standards.

While Wonders incorporates key components of literacy that include morphology, grammar, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, and writing in addition to text comprehension, foundational skills instruction is demonstrated as the primary form of instruction. The SCS ELA instructional framework for grades 3-5 allocates a 90-minute comprehensive literacy block that provides explicit, systematic instruction in morphology, grammar, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, and writing in addition to text comprehension. Additionally, the curriculum embeds foundational skills in the vocabulary and comprehension lessons throughout the ELA block.

Wonders utilizes evidence-based methods to teach foundational skills in grades 3-5. Through the gradual release of responsibility, teachers engage students in explicit, direct whole group instruction to support students' fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teachers lead small groups of students in differentiated lessons to meet their varied literacy needs. Literacy workstations are implemented to ensure students have multiple, varied opportunities to practice and apply foundational literacy skills and strategies collaboratively and independently.

Embedded vocabulary is provided alongside explicit instruction to maximize word acquisition and understanding. Teachers utilize an instructional toolkit of vocabulary strategies that students employ to tackle unfamiliar words. For example, teachers utilize the vocabulary visual cards to engage students in the Define/Example/Ask routine (cooperate- to work together to get something done/I cooperate with my sister to clean our room/How do you and your family cooperate to get jobs done?). Teachers intentionally employ the gradual release of responsibility (GRR) model to ensure students receive explicit and direct whole group instruction, teacher-led small group instruction, and opportunities to become independent and critical thinkers and learners as they engage in collaborative discussions and quality literacy workstations.

Our improvements for next year are tailored to supporting teachers through on-going, job embedded professional development in advanced phonics, morphology, fluency, vocabulary, and

comprehension to ensure that daily, meaningful instructional decisions are provided to best meet the needs of students. This includes designated time (professional learning communities, CANVAS on-line modules, and professional development sessions) for educators to work collaboratively and safely to plan for effective foundational skills instruction dedicated to developing students' holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as required by TN Academic Foundational Literacy Standards and research.

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

McGraw Hill - K-5 Wonders

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

McGraw Hill - K-5 Wonders

### **Additional Information about Instructional Materials**

1. Selected instructional materials are on approved state adoption list
  - Shelby County Schools has adopted McGraw Hill Wonders for Grades K – 5 foundational skills instructional materials. McGraw Hill Wonders is a state-approved instructional curriculum on the 2019 ELA Adoption list.
2. Instructional materials include complete alignment to the TN foundational skills standards
  - McGraw Hill Wonders Grades K -5 provides instructional materials aligned to the TN foundational skills standards. The materials include a variety of high-quality texts and tasks that support students' development of literacy skills. The materials are organized to build knowledge of topics and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate integrated skills. The materials support students' literacy development with foundational skills.
3. If district chooses supplemental foundational skills resources, supplemental resources are aligned to TN state standards and fully address phonological awareness and phonemic awareness
  - Shelby County Schools avails the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement as a supplemental foundational skills resource. The Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum is aligned to the TN state standards and fully addresses phonological awareness and phonemic awareness. This supplement is evidenced-based research and was carefully crafted by the Tennessee Department of Education to build a solid foundation for Pre-K through grade two, early literacy. This supplement uses a systematic and explicit approach to instruction so that all students can gain the foundational skills necessary to become proficient readers. Also, the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement is an open-source resource that is free and available to anyone. Tennessee's curriculum supplement was developed for all teachers, parents, higher education agencies, and others to help support students' foundational literacy skills acquisition.

### **Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements.**

Illuminate FastBridge (IFB) serves as the universal screener, benchmarking (3 times per year), and progress monitoring tool. K-1 students scoring below the 25th percentile on earlyReading and 2-12

students scoring below the 10th percentile range within the CBMReading passage reading fluency assessment receive follow-up foundational skills-based assessments. The following IFB assessments are utilized to address the dyslexia specific criteria: Onset Sounds, Letter Sounds, Word Segmenting, Nonsense Words, and Sight Words. In addition to those available through IFB, Rapid Automatized Naming and the Phonics and Word Reading Survey are also administered to adequately address all seven areas to be screened for characteristics of dyslexia. The seven areas within characteristics of dyslexia are addressed as students progress through the solution. i-Ready's Foundational Skills instruction, from Phonological Awareness to Phonics are highly structured and based on a set of rules for students to be able to recognize sounds and letters and applying word-level meaning through spelling and reading. Students work individually through multi-sensory lessons using a device, and teachers are able to access small group materials which includes the dyslexia specific strategies and techniques.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

The Curriculum Associates i-Ready intervention platform and Ready teacher toolbox are utilized to provide academic interventions (Tier II, Tier III, and At-Risk) for students in grades K-8. The i-Ready tool provides individualized learning paths for students and skills-based small group resources for teachers, targeting the following ELA domains: Phonological Awareness, High-Frequency Words, Phonics, Vocabulary, and Comprehension (Literature & Informational Text). The following i-Ready components also assist in addressing components of a dyslexia specific intervention:

- **Multisensory:** i-Ready Instruction for reading engages students' auditory, visual, and tactile senses in many lessons. Audio support is available in all content. Audio and visual feedback reinforces correct responses and redirects students on any misunderstandings. Lessons incorporate visual cues—including color changes, bounce, and highlighting text—to help students connect letters, word parts, and patterns to the corresponding sounds in words. Visual presentations within lessons include graphic organizers and pictures for reinforcing instruction, along with accompanying audio support. Students typically see visual support as well as hear supporting audio at the same time.
- **Explicit:** The highly scaffolded lessons in i-Ready Instruction follow a consistent instructional strategy that begins with explicit instruction. During explicit instruction, students work through a tutorial that explains the topic or skill and calls upon students to access prior knowledge and models the skill in engaging real-world scenarios. Teachers can access small group materials to support explicit instruction during face-face small group time, via the Tools for Instruction and Ready Teacher Toolbox.
- **Aligned to Deficit:** The i-Ready experience begins with the in-depth Diagnostic assessment that identifies student's overall performance level in reading, by domain and subskill level. This ensures that online lessons in i-Ready Instruction, teacher-led instructional activities from the included Tools for Instruction lesson plans or the optional Ready Teacher Toolbox, and any existing instructional materials are targeted to students' specific skill deficits and instructional levels.
- **Language Based:** The online lessons in i-Ready employ syntactic cues, lexical strategies, and graphophonic cues in language-based instruction. i-Ready vocabulary lessons and vocabulary Tools

for Instruction lesson plans include many opportunities for students to develop and use different cueing systems to make sense of what they are reading. Practice includes decoding, encoding, and spelling patterns. Every lesson ends with an engaging text, where students are challenged to use what they learned to decode and make meaning, to deepen their understanding of what they are reading.

- **Systematic and Cumulative:** i-Ready Instruction is systematic, clear, and precise, with topics and skills that are carefully sequenced and broken down into small, essential components and taught individually. Upon completion of the Diagnostic assessment, i-Ready determines student performance level within each domain of reading and then automatically places students at the appropriate level within a logical sequence of lessons. These lessons are designed to help students master simple skills, before progressing to more complex skills, beginning at the student's functional level and then allowing the student to progress, one step at a time, to higher and more complex levels.

The lessons on the optional Ready Teacher Toolbox follow a consistent progression of skills and standards across all grade levels. The program automatically places the student at that appropriate level for online lessons in i-Ready and reports identify specific teacher-led lessons at the appropriate level in the optional Ready Teacher Toolbox.

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

Illuminate FastBridge (IFB) serves as the universal screener, benchmarking, and progress monitoring tool. K-1 students scoring below the 25th percentile on earlyReading and 2-12 students scoring below the 10th percentile range within the CBMReading passage reading fluency assessment receive follow-up foundational skills-based assessments. The following IFB assessments are utilized to address the dyslexia specific criteria: Onset Sounds, Letter Sounds, Word Segmenting, Nonsense Words, and Sight Words. In addition to those available through IFB, Rapid Automated Naming and the Phonics and Word Reading Survey are also administered to adequately address all seven areas to be screened for characteristics of dyslexia. Students performing in the aforementioned scoring ranges are referred to the RTI2 Data Team. The RTI2 Data Team reviews multiple sources of data to determine appropriateness of RTI2 skills-based interventions. Student intervention plans are subsequently developed and monitored in PCG EdPlan. Parent communication is generated in EdPlan and disseminated to parents regarding initial intervention placement and monthly student progress within intervention. Although SCS currently uses Illuminate FastBridge (IFB) as the universal screener, the district plans to utilize the TDOE's Universal Reading Screener when it becomes available. At that time, Illuminate FastBridge (IFB) will be used to progress monitor.

There is also a structure in place for notifying parents of their child's significant literacy deficiencies; however, SCS plans to make improvements to the existing parent communication. The revised home literacy reports for parents will more clearly articulate (1) the importance of being able to read by third grade, (2) student scores in parent-friendly language, (3) explanations of a student's specific skill gaps, (4) how the school will intervene and support students in their identified literacy skills deficits areas, and (5) no-cost activities for families to support learning at home. Parents of students in grades K-2 will receive a quarterly home literacy report which will communicate the aforementioned information, as well as their child's progress toward the Third Grade Commitment

Success Criteria established by SCS. The K-2 quarterly home literacy reports will include the results of each administration of the universal screener, quarterly report card grades, Lexile scores, and formative assessment scores. Parents of students in grades 3-5 will receive a home literacy report three times a year, following the administration of the universal screener at each benchmark (Fall, Winter, Spring). The 3-5 benchmark home literacy reports will include the results of each administration of the universal screener, report card grades, and formative assessment scores. Samples of the revised parent communication for grades K-2 and 3-5 are included in this plan.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Shelby County Schools offers K-5 teachers yearlong foundational skills professional development opportunities aligned to the Tennessee foundational literacy state standards. Utilizing a phonics-based approach, the modules engage teachers in deep foundational skills training. Each module offers activities, engagement strategies, and support for fragile learners. Modules are designed to support instruction in whole group, small group, and literacy workstations. They include phonological awareness, print concepts, phonics and word recognition, word composition, sentence composition, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Teachers are required to demonstrate knowledge and competency through pre-and post-module assessments, quick checks throughout presentations, and classroom observations. Modules are offered through the Canvas digital learning platform, Microsoft Teams, and in-person. Teachers have an opportunity to accumulate approximately 90 hours of foundational literacy professional development, which is the equivalent of 3 weeks. Additionally, there are 500 PreK-5 teachers registered for TDOE's Early Reading Training for Weeks 1 and 2 during Summer 2021.

The professional learning experiences will be provided by the SCS Early Literacy Department, which is composed of literacy professionals possessing extensive knowledge in foundational skills content, standards, instructional best practices, and practical classroom strategies. The department has a proven track record of designing and facilitating PD, as well as supporting K-2 teachers in foundational skills instruction. They have engaged in professional learning experiences with LETRS modules, Orton-Gillingham, Lucy Caulkins Reading & Writing Academy, SAP Foundational Skills Modules, and most recently, TDOE's Early Reading Training.

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

Additionally, there are 7 foundational skills modules specifically designed for Foundational Literacy Laureates, Professional Learning Community Coaches, Instructional Facilitators, Paraprofessionals, Assistant Principals, and Principals. We also provide resources and professional development to parents and community organizations. The goal is to equip every stakeholder with the foundational knowledge and skill set necessary to support early literacy learning in Shelby County.