

## **Rocketship Public Schools**

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: September 19, 2023

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**

Students in K-2 spend 140 minutes in literacy instruction. In these grade levels, foundational skills instruction is the primary form of instruction, and our district uses a foundational skills curriculum (Amplify CKLA) grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. During this instructional block, 60 minutes is dedicated to foundational skills that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary work.

During the 60 minutes Skills block, students will learn the 150 spellings for the 44 sounds of English in an intentionally sequenced progression from Kindergarten through Grade 2. The foundational skills curriculum introduces an average of 5-10 sound-spelling relationships within each unit of study; each unit lasts approximately 2-3 weeks. The curriculum provides daily lessons in phonics. The lesson formats vary, but in every lesson, there is practice in the basic sound-spelling relationship(s) of focus, which includes a fairly intensive set of activities to further practice these relationships (e.g. approximately 15 minutes daily of writing, spelling and word-level reading and word sorting, using sound-spellings that were just taught).

Then, each day, children are given the chance for extended practice through independent and/or small group reading or writing activities. These opportunities for extended practice reflect naturalistic activities where children are building other skills, such as grammatical skills related to sentence activities, genre writing, or reading and reading comprehension. For example, children may be responding to questions from texts, using words in sentence-level work, or applying their knowledge of sound-spelling correspondences with the plan, draft and edit processes of various writing genres that they are taught.

In K-2, students also read chapter books that are 100% decodable because they correspond to the unit of phonetic instruction (Amplify CKLA) in which they are placed.

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

We have a literacy block for our upper grade students grounded in both Literacy and Social Studies. Our curriculum materials are aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Students receive a total of 140

minutes of ELA instruction, in which foundational skills are integrated within daily lessons for at least 30 minutes.

This block includes components for knowledge-building, which includes the skills needed to make meaning of complex texts, as well as apply that knowledge through discourse and written expression. To achieve this, students spend 180 minutes engaging in instruction for reading and writing, and language instruction.

Our 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, so that students have opportunities to practice skills in the context of content instruction. Additionally, students analyze texts at the word, sentence, paragraph, and passage level and different levels of questioning are used to establish deep meaning of the text. During the Thematic Unit and Close Reading instructional blocks, students build strong habits and skills to analyze the main idea of any text they encounter. Students also engage in rigorous and relevant discourse in order to deepen their understanding of what they are reading.

Students begin by briefly activating prior knowledge and connecting the topic of the read aloud to the broader context of the unit. Teachers use comprehensible input and questioning to help students access and process the texts. After the daily read aloud of a complex text, the students may summarize the content (through partner discussions and class discourse) and unpack the most essential vocabulary and ideas. Teachers engage students in a mini lesson focused on transferrable comprehension skills that support the meaning making process.

Conversely, during the writing block student's work on a sustained writing project aligned to the same genre and have the opportunity to apply their knowledge of the content. Students also integrate knowledge from the language block, which emphasizes word study, vocabulary development, and grammar. In doing so students more clearly express their ideas and understanding of content instruction. This example demonstrates how foundational skills instruction is embedded and integrated into all aspects of this 180-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 Core Knowledge Language Arts

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

Rocketship Education curriculum—approved waiver

Each Rocketship school implements the charter approved Rocketship Education academic model and curriculum. The same materials are used at each school and consist of a combination of instructional resources, including components of Amplify CKLA, Expeditionary Learning, iReady, and Wilson Foundations.

## **Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5**

DIBELS mCLASS, 8th Edition K-5

DIBELS is compliant with the dyslexia screening requirements established in § 49-1-229 and Tennessee's RTI framework manual. DIBELS will also be administered to all students in at least three assessment windows yearly.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

Reading intervention is available for all Rocketship students deemed "at risk" for or identified as having a significant reading deficiency. After each universal screening window, multiple student data sources are analyzed and reading intervention schedules are created. Students participating in Tier II interventions receive additional 30 minutes of instruction daily and Tier III receives 45 minutes. These students are also progress monitored on a consistent basis to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. The progress monitoring data is then reviewed by the data team (approximately every four weeks), and any students that are not making sufficient progress have their intervention plan updated. Updated intervention plans may result in a movement to Tier III and/or include a combination of increased duration or frequency of intervention time as well as a potential use of an additional curricular resources.

General education reading teachers receive weekly, individualized coaching to build teacher skills regarding differentiation in order to ensure that Tier I instruction is accessible to any students receiving tiered supports. Academic Intervention leads facilitate the data meetings, provide reading interventionist coaching, lead weekly school leadership team instructional walkthroughs, and conduct bi-weekly consultation meetings with our Manager of Psychological Services. As noted in other portions of this plan, families of students placed in reading intervention are informed of their student's placement and progress and receive resources to support learning at home.

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

Rocketship Public Schools notifies parents in grades K-5 if their child is "at-risk" for or has a significant reading deficiency (as evidenced by students scoring in the 0-40th percentile) on the DIBELS 8 assessment, within one week of the schools' completion of fall universal screening. Students' scores are communicated in parent-friendly language that provides a clear explanation of student skill gaps and the depth and extent of student needs. The parents are told what intervention their student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive services. This is coupled with a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade and information on the pathways to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. We also share recommended activities (that do not require purchased resources) that will support students in the area of deficit (activities are not tailored by child but tailored by skill deficit generally). These communications go out to parents with students in grades K-5 three times annually.

In addition, parents are subsequently notified of their child's progress, or lack of progress, after data team meetings every four weeks throughout the school year. In the parent notifications, data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Professional development sessions for K-2 teachers, will focus on developing content knowledge of phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Teachers will then apply their growing content knowledge, by demonstrating and practicing different components of a foundational skills lesson.

Professional development will begin in the summer, three weeks prior to the first day of school. As universal screener and progress monitoring data is collected, teachers will engage in data analysis and instructional planning cycles. Teachers in our district will engage approximately 86 hours (10.5 business days or 2 weeks) in professional development that is designed and facilitated by Rocketship Tennessee's regional team with support from the national program team.

In addition, all teachers in grades K-5 will complete Week 1 of the Reading 360 Early Literacy Series.