

Murfreesboro City Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Update: May 3, 2024

Approved: May 5, 2025

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

MCS district uses a researched based curriculum, grounded in the science of reading for grades K-2nd. The foundation skills curriculum is used district wide for K-2 classrooms and has a daily, one-hour block for foundational skills instruction. The Expeditionary Learning (EL) Curriculum is aligned to TN ELA standards and is on the state approved list from the Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission and is the primary form of instruction.

MCS foundational skills block has explicit instruction and student practice which includes on grade level targeted activities/practice for phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension instruction and the use of decodable text to support application of skills and comprehension, for both whole group and differentiated small groups. Phonics practice is also supported with Age of Learning, (My Reading Academy) which is grounded in the science of reading, with instructional videos, games and rich digital texts to support fluency and reading skills. *Master schedules for K-2 ELA is one hour/60 minutes daily for knowledge/vocabulary building and one hour/60 minutes daily for foundational skills (whole group/small group).

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

MCS District has an integrated literacy block for grades 3rd – 5th grades and uses a researched based curriculum, grounded in the science of reading with an evidence-based approach to teach foundational skills. The Expeditionary Learning (EL) Curriculum is aligned to Tennessee ELA standards and is on the state approved list from the Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission.

MCS 3rd – 5th grade ELA block includes instruction and practice, which includes on grade level targeted practice for morphology, spelling, writing, grammar, and fluency. Foundational skills are also explicitly addressed with the use of EL Unlock Phonics, a structured phonics curriculum, developed by EL Education and offered through Kiddom. It focuses on building foundational reading skills, particularly word recognition, through interactive digital learning and virtual coaching. A minimum of 90 minutes (embedded within the knowledge building content and the ALL Block/small group instruction) addressing foundation skills instruction. Teachers were provided with the EL ALL BLOCK small group curriculum, which addresses grammar usage and mechanics (spelling), writing,

word study (advanced phonics/fluency), vocabulary (morphology) fluency, and comprehension. For example, our fourth-grade students are now beginning the domain on The Nineteenth Amendment. They begin by briefly activating prior knowledge and read independently and/or aloud. After the daily read aloud or independent reading with on-grade level, complex text, the students summarize the content using a talk structure, complete “word work”, respond to a series of questions, and write a response to a question that requires students to pull evidence from the text to support their answer. An additional example of the EL Curriculum is vocabulary lessons where teachers provide explicit support for vocabulary needed to access complex text. In one lesson, the students study the affix ‘tion’ to support word meaning and comprehension of the text. Students use their word knowledge as they engage in group discussion and writing practice.

Foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of their 90-minute block and is dedicated to developing students’ holistic literacy approach to phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Grades 3-5 have a minimum of 30 minutes of foundational skills instruction embedded within the EL curriculum along with additional practice with EL Unlock Phonics. *There are currently no plans to change or supplement the EL 3rd – 5th grade curriculum although there will continue to be additional year-long professional developments which support teacher clarity and implementation of the curriculum with integrity.

Additional Supports

MCS provides additional supports to specific student groups which include: monthly professional development targeting subgroups for Tier 1 teachers, supporting PLCs which target ways to address specific subgroups in Tier 1 classroom addressing specific scaffolds and extensions to support Tier 1 content, learning walks using specific, targeted indicators that address all subgroups (Core Action 2 and Core Action 3), and bi-weekly instructional coach professional developments to support specific schools and subgroups within each school. During PLCs, district staff work with PLCs (modeling for instructional coaches), ways to navigate and use embedded curriculum scaffolds to support access for all students. During learning walks, district staff target subgroups during debriefs to support next steps. Students in the ESL classroom receive additional instruction and support to address foundational skills, embedded within their language acquisition lessons.

A district level team of district leaders, TDOE leaders, school level leaders, instructional coaches and teachers have created an Access for All lesson preparation protocol to support school level instructional leaders and teachers as they prepare for lessons and plan for access for all subgroups within the EL lessons and practice opportunities.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Open Up OUR Expeditionary Learning

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Open Up OUR Expeditionary Learning

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

MCS uses the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener, aimswebPlus, as our primary universal screener and progress-monitoring tool for K-6 reading, which meets the criteria for the dyslexia screening requirements. All students, K-6 are administered the aimsweb assessment three times per year.

Additional Screener Information

All K-2 students will also take Age of Learning (My Reading Academy) placement assessment at the beginning of the year to assess on-grade level standards. All 3rd-6th grade students will take SchoolNet benchmark three times per year to assess on-grade level standards.

Intervention Structure and Supports

In the fall, K-6 students are given a universal screener (aimswebPlus) to determine which students have significant reading areas of need or are “at-risk” in reading proficiency. Stakeholders then have data team meetings (interventionists, grade-level teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, school psychologists) who analyze the universal screener data to determine which students’ ‘flag’ on the universal screener along with any additional stakeholder student concerns. Data team members then analyze and discuss other sources of data (historical data, classroom performance, grades, attendance) when determining which students demonstrate areas of need.

Once students are identified as having a reading area of need, survey level diagnostic assessments (aimsweb) are administered. Teams then use the data to determine intervention placement (Tier 2/Tier 3), instructional scaffolds needed, and Tier 1 differentiation, access based on student need. If a student indicates areas of need at the word level and meets the criteria for characteristics of dyslexia, the student is then placed in a dyslexia specific intervention, targeting his/her foundational skill area of need. Students receive daily intervention instruction for 45 minutes in the area of greatest need. We have research-based options for reading intervention support available to our students who are “at-risk” and/or who are identified with a significant reading deficit.

The EL curriculum contains an assessment and remediation guide in which teachers can find instruction/practices that directly address skill gaps for Tier 1 reteach/remediation. Teachers can tailor this to the needs of their intervention group of students. If the intervention does not indicate effectiveness over time via the use of progress monitoring data, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as UFLI) may be an option. Students are progress monitored bi-weekly, using aimswebPlus. Data teams meet every 4.5--6 weeks to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is needed based on student response to the intervention provided—via use of progress monitoring data and/or teacher concerns. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, historical data, etc.) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the instruction/program or provider.

Students receive explicit instruction in their area of need, in small groups, using research-based materials and strategies. MCS has systematic procedures at all levels of assessment, instruction, and intervention to meet the needs of students with characteristics of dyslexia. School based data teams utilize multiple sources of data to determine if a student requires a dyslexia-specific intervention based on his/her reading profile.

Tier 1: All K-6 students are provided with a skills-based assessment three times per year (aimswebPlus) for reading, to identify students who may struggle in the area of foundational skills and comprehension (basic skills needed for a particular grade level). All K-6 students are provided with a standards-based assessment, to determine Tier 1 strengths and needs. K-2 standards-based assessment/placement will be Age of Learning (My Reading Academy) and 3-6 standards-based benchmark assessment will be SchoolNet. Students who need on-grade level foundational skills support receive targeted foundation skills instruction using EL Curriculum, Age of Learning or Unlock Phonics.

Tier 2: Students who flag on the universal screener and historically struggle in Tier 1, along with other sources of data, are discussed and considered for Tier 2 interventions. Some of the reading interventions for Tier 2 reading include: TNFSCS Phonological Awareness Manuals (in combination with other intervention programs), Tools4Reading, Florida Center for Reading Research, and Age of Learning (adaptable) and Unlock Phonics.

Tier 3: Students who flag on the universal screener and historically struggle in Tier 1 and/or Tier 2, along with other sources of data, are discussed and considered for Tier 3 interventions. A change in intervention is discussed if the student does not demonstrate progress, via the use of progress monitoring data, teacher anecdotal notes and data team decision making. The reading interventions for Tier 3 reading are: TNFSCS Phonological Awareness Manuals (in combination with other intervention programs), ReadingDoneRight (PA), 95Percent, 95Percent multi-syllable routines or UFLI, all targeted to students' specific area of need.

All interventions listed are systematic, explicit, and researched based. The interventions are cumulative in nature, ensuring students are fluent and automatic with a skill prior to moving to the next level. All interventions listed have multisensory component, are explicit and systematic which supports students with characteristics of dyslexia.

BOOST is the name for our district's targeted intervention one-hour block of time. Students receive targeted instruction based on his/her area of need and level of instruction needed. Each school in the district schedules 60 minutes each day to address students' needs. Some students may receive on grade level Tier 1 reteach while another student may receive Tier 3 targeted, explicit instruction in his/her area of need. Provided are a few schedules with BOOST time embedded within the schedule.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

MCS notifies parents in grades K-6 if their child has a significant reading gap (as evidenced by students scoring below the 15th percentile) or is at-risk of a significant reading deficit (as evidenced by students scoring between the 16th-40th percentile) immediately after the completion of each universal screener benchmark (fall, winter, spring). 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. An explanation of the intervention the student will receive and the amount of time each day the student will receive services based on his/her intervention services (tier) are included. This is coupled with a description of the importance of being able to read proficiently by the end of

third grade. Parents also receive information explaining the fourth-grade promotion pathway for students in third grade, which entails an achievement level of 'approaching' or 'below' on the ELA portion of the most recent TCAP assessment.

The district explains how students are assessed and what a "significant reading deficit" means. Parents are subsequently notified of their child's progress, or lack of progress, every 4 ½ week period with a letter and a progress monitoring graph. In the parent notification, data teams note any changes made, if the child is not showing sufficient progress, as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data. Parents are also provided recommended 'at home' practice/activities, that do not require purchased resources and will support students in the area of need. These communications go out to all K-3 parents three times per year, following each universal screener benchmark. Communications go out to all 4th-6th grade parents after each fall universal screener benchmark and to all 4th-6th grade intervention students after each universal screener benchmark.

The district also follows the guidelines set in T.C.A. S49-1-229 to inform parents if their child meets the criteria for characteristics of dyslexia. The universal screener is administered which assesses letter knowledge, RAN, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and encoding. If a student's data indicates his/her universal screener composite score falls below 25% AND 50% his/her subtests fall below the 25%, AND other sources of data indicate (historical data, classroom performance, attendance, grades) an area of need, the data team then determines the student has characteristics of dyslexia. *There may be instances when the universal screener data does not reflect the student's typical performance, and a case-by-case decision will be made by the school data team.

Once a determination is made, the school data team will: Notify the student's parent(s) in writing and/or via phone call. The district will provide the student's parent(s) or legal guardian with information and additional TDOE dyslexia specific resource materials to support understanding of characteristics of dyslexia. The materials will detail for parents the appropriate tiered dyslexia-specific interventions the child will receive. Progress monitoring reports indicating the student's response to intervention services are provided every 4.5 weeks. The school/district leadership team and/or an ESL liaison have a plan in place when there is difficulty reaching parents.

In addition, MCS provides monthly Parent University sessions (in person and online) which supports parents with helping their child with foundational skills, language acquisition skills, comprehension skills, TCAP information and writing supports. The parent sessions detail the importance of supporting their child at home with practical ideas and activities with an emphasis on early literacy foundational skills, language acquisition, decoding and encoding skills. Free resources to use at home are provided at many of the parent university sessions.

Professional Development Plan

Current MCS teachers have completed the Early Reading Training series developed by the TDOE. Our district plan for providing PD for all K-6 teachers is as follows:

May/June 2025 Teachers in grades K-2 will receive training for the EL Skills Block edition. Teachers will be trained how to navigate new EL Skills Block teacher guides and resources, the scope and sequence of the materials and all additional resources. The training will target the following

foundational skills: phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

July 2025 – A cohort of teachers in grades K through 6th, will engage in a weeklong Summer Literacy Institute training with a ‘deep dive’ into the EL curriculum--knowledge building component of the EL Curriculum. Teachers will be trained on the ALL-Block curriculum which emphasizes grammar, morphology, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension skills.

July 2024—A summer Coaches’ Institute will support coaches with the EL Curriculum, as well as how to analyze school level, grade level and classroom level data. The training will focus on coaching cycles and cycles of improvement to support teachers within their building for the 2025-26 school year.

July 2025-A New Teacher Orientation session will target new teachers to the profession and to the district. There will be an overview of the EL Curriculum both for Skills Block, Knowledge and ALL Block lessons. Teachers will learn how to assess students using the foundation skills curriculum assessments to determine small groups targeting students’ areas of need. Teachers will walk through a lesson internalization for both Skills Block and Knowledge building lessons.

July/August 2025 Teachers in grades K-6 will receive a two-day professional development, which offers multiple reading sessions. The sessions address phonological awareness, phonics, morphology, spelling, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension with the focus on the implementation of the EL Curriculum. The sessions will be offered by Central Office personnel and instructional coaches within the district.

July/August 2025 (specific dates TBD) K-6 grade teachers (with fewer than 3 years of experience) will receive EL Curriculum targeted training addressing foundation skills lessons as well as knowledge building lessons. Lesson internalization, lesson coherence and teacher clarity of the EL curriculum will be the focus of the training.

Fall/Winter 2025 (specific dates TBD)

All new Pre-K--5th grade teachers will take the Early Reading Training series (asynchronously) (week 1) offered by the TDOE on Best for ALL/TeachALL site. Teachers will take each module to learn how to internalize HQIM and foundational skills lessons. At the end of the course, teachers will demonstrate knowledge of foundational skills and competency when instructing students.

Fall/Winter 2025 Book Studies-Teach Like a Champion and Field Guide; Reading Reconsidered, Know Better, Do Better: Foundational Skills; Know Better, Do Better: Comprehension

Fall/Winter 2025—16-week Teaching Challenge PD sessions

School Based Inservice Days 2025-26 EL Curriculum Module Unpacking—targeting prepare to teach cycles of improvement

2025-26 Monthly Literacy Network Meetings

Each grade level (K-6) across the district, will meet monthly to discuss EL Curriculum implementation trends, spotlights and needs. The meetings target foundation skills curriculum needs/concerns/trends as well as the knowledge building curriculum needs/concerns/trends.

Teachers from each school meet monthly to further internalize lessons, lesson components, analyze student work and determine best practices to support student success.

In addition, MCS will continue to provide many professional developments offered throughout the school year (2025-2026) to deepen teacher understanding and efficacy of foundational skills and knowledge building practices, using the EL Curriculum as the training focus. Teachers will indicate an understanding and internalization of lessons, with the use of the IPG during learning walks.