

**Davidson County**

**Metro Nashville Public Schools**

**Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

**Approved: June 1, 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**

Since July 2020, our district has used the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement in grades K-2 to teach print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, word composition/spelling, fluency, and sentence composition. The TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement follows evidence-based reading research and was carefully crafted in order to build a solid foundation for 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. The Sounds First component of the TNFSCS is used to support students' phonological awareness across the continuum of difficulty. The Sounds First component is aligned to research that concludes students need additional work in advanced phonemic awareness which includes deleting and substituting phonemes. Research shows that students who can engage in advanced phonemic awareness activities fluently are more likely to become proficient readers. In grades K-5, we use the Wit & Wisdom knowledge-building curriculum to develop students' language comprehension and vocabulary. The Deep Dive components of Wit & Wisdom will be used to explicitly teach fluency, sentence composition and vocabulary acquisition. During the integrated ELA block, teachers will use the Deep Dive components of Wit & Wisdom to deliver evidence-based instruction including fluency and vocabulary instruction. In Wit & Wisdom Deep Dive vocabulary lessons, teachers explicitly teach students the vocabulary needed to access complex texts. Students use their growing knowledge of words to engage in group discussion and writing activities. Foundational skills is the primary focus of this curriculum. We have designated a block of time (45-minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. This instructional time includes Sounds-First activities that build phonological awareness, explicit phonics instruction with aligned practice using decodable texts and fluency practice. During that instruction, teachers explicitly teach a sound, the students practice the sound, the teacher models writing the sound and the students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, then students apply the skill in independent practice (small group and individual). Next year, we plan to improve support to teachers and students by increasing the amount of time devoted to K-2 foundational skills instruction from 30 minutes to 45 minutes (see Appendix A & B). We also plan to strengthen teacher

preparation with the Curriculum Supplement by providing educators with unit-level and lesson-level planning protocols.

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

Our district uses Lexia Core 5 and the Deep Dive components of the Wit & Wisdom curriculum to teach foundational skills instruction to students in grades 3-5. Lexia Core 5 will be used to explicitly and systematically teach 3rd – 5th grade students’ phonics and word recognition, word composition, and fluency. The Deep Dive components of Wit & Wisdom will be used to explicitly teach fluency, sentence composition and vocabulary acquisition.

Our district has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 grounded in current reading research and aligned to the TN ELA Standards. Wit & Wisdom was selected from those approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block, teachers will use the Deep Dive components of Wit & Wisdom to deliver evidence-based instruction including fluency instruction and practice, grammar, mechanics and morphology. 15 minutes of 90-minute ELA block (minimum) in grades 3-5 are devoted to Deep Dive lessons (See Appendix A & B).

Our adopted curriculum does not teach fluency, vocabulary and comprehension skills in isolation, but they are embedded within the lesson to ensure students are able to transfer the skills into increasingly more complex texts. Lexia Core 5 Lessons will be used to provide additional instruction in phonics and word recognition, word composition, and fluency. The 15-minute lessons explicitly and systematically teach the ELA standards, offering frequent opportunities for student practice, corrective feedback and re-teaching.

For example, our fourth-grade students will begin the year engaging in a Wit & Wisdom unit about a Great Heart. The curriculum will activate their prior knowledge about what it means figuratively to have a great heart as well as how the heart works to keep our bodies healthy. Throughout the module of study, students independently read, participate in daily read alouds or paired readings of on-grade level, complex text. In this module, students will learn the significance of the word chamber, discover it has multiple meanings and consider how understanding this vocabulary word improves comprehension of the module content. Throughout the module, students will unpack the essential vocabulary, respond to text-specific questions with peers and write in response to questions supporting their answers with evidence from the text. In Wit & Wisdom Deep Dive vocabulary lessons, teachers explicitly teach students the vocabulary needed to access complex texts. Students use their word knowledge as they engage in group discussion and writing activities. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of the 90-105 minute literacy block.

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

Approved waiver for other materials

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

Great Minds - 3-5 Wit and Wisdom

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

FAST (Formative Assessment System for Teachers) In compliance with the RTI2 screening requirements outlined in Tennessee's RTI2 framework manual, MNPS utilizes a multi-step universal screening process that "uses multiple sources of data to identify individual student strengths and areas of need" (p. 19), to identify those who may need additional support and/or other types of instruction" (p. 19), and "to make important determinations about dyslexia-specific accommodations and interventions" (p.19). Step One in our process for literacy is universal K-6 administration of the nationally-normed, curriculum-based measures included in the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) platform to measure academic skills in the areas of basic reading, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Step One of our process also includes the use of the standardized administration and scoring procedures for Written Expression (WE) CBM beginning in winter of first grade to measure academic skills in the area of written expression. In Step Two, school data teams analyze the results of the skills-based universal screener (FAST) compared to other district and classroom assessments to validate/confirm/challenge screening results and identify students "at risk." For Step Three, students identified as "at risk" are administered survey level and/or diagnostic assessments to further determine specific needs to inform intervention instruction. Specific Step Three assessments utilized in MNPS may include (but are not limited to): Lexia Core 5 Auto Placement, S.P.I.R.E. Placement, Test of Silent Contextual Reading, Fluency (TOSCRF---2), Test of Written Spelling 4th Edition (TWS---4), and additional FAST screening measures (survey-level). For K-1, MNPS utilizes the Early Reading measures that make up the full composite as normed by FAST and follows the recommended screening schedule as attached. These measures provide initial screening in the areas of phonological awareness (onset sounds); phonemic awareness (word segmenting); alphabet knowledge (letter names, letter sounds, nonsense words); sound/symbol recognition (letter sounds, nonsense words); and decoding skills (nonsense words, sentence reading, CBMreading). Because these Early Reading measures are all fluency measures, many of the measures listed above, along with many of the Early Math measures, provide some opportunity for initial screening for Rapid naming as defined in the Dyslexia Resource Guide: ability to connect visual and verbal information by giving the appropriate names to common objects, colors, letters, and digits (quickly naming what is seen). Rapid naming requires the retrieval of phonological information related to phonemes (letter/letter combination sounds), segments of words, and words from long-term memory in an efficient manner. This is important when decoding words, encoding words, and reading sight words. However, for students who are identified as at-risk in this area, school psychologists also have available more traditional measures for RAN (Rapid Automatic Naming), such as the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP). Screening for encoding skills is addressed through the use of WE-CBM, scored for Correct Writing Sequences. This scoring method incorporates spelling, grammar, punctuation, and meaning. To supplement our FAST subtests, our district will consider opting into using the state RAN screener after it has been released.

### **Intervention Structure and Supports**

To ensure that interventions are delivered in addition to Tier I (core) instruction and as aligned with expectations outlined in the RTI manual, MNPS schools implement Personalized Learning Time (PLT), a daily, 45-minute (minimum) grade-wide or school-wide block of time during which students receive

supplemental support based on need. During this time, students may participate in skills-based Tier II, III, or Special Education Interventions; standards-based reinforcement/remediation; English Language Support; or enrichment. The PLT block helps to ensure that this supplemental support is in addition to Tier I and allows for strategic grouping across classrooms to target student needs. The evidence-based literacy interventions included on the MNPS list of approved interventions (including those purchased for district-wide use) were vetted through an extensive RFP review process to identify and recommend evidence-based academic intervention products to address specific skill gaps in the areas of basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and written expression. Products were screened and evaluated by teams of district- and school-based teachers and coaches using specific criteria in the categories of research support, systematic & explicit instruction by skill area, tier/intensity level, and product design/teacher usability, and dyslexia-specific (if applicable). The dyslexia-specific criteria included those outlined in the TN Dyslexia Resource Guide. Progress in interventions is monitored through the use of FAST CBMs as well as program-specific and other instructional assessment data. Progress monitoring measures are aligned to the skill area(s) in which interventions are being provided. School-level MTSS data teams meet every five weeks and utilize data-based decision-making to ensure that individual students are making adequate progress through interventions. These teams review progress monitoring data to inform decisions about duration, material, and intensity changes when a student is not showing progress.

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

Through monthly (MTSS School Leadership Teams) and five-week (MTSS School Data Teams) meetings, educators collaborate regularly to review student data from multiple sources and make instructional decisions based on that data. At least three times per year this team reviews the data from Universal Screening. When a student has been identified for a tier II or tier III intervention in literacy, math, or SEL/behavior, the team sends the MNPS Intervention Placement Letter to caregivers. This occurs at least three times per year for grades K-6. With the Intervention Placement Letter, parents are informed of student performance on the universal screening measures as well as the specific skill area of need (basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, written expression), related skill gaps, level of intensity, and planned intervention to meet the identified need. Parents are informed that interventions are specific to individual student need based on skill gaps, are in addition to core instruction, and take place in small group settings with a qualified instructor. Once a student begins receiving intervention, the Intervention Progress Letter is sent every five weeks, detailing the student's progress and the data-based decision about next steps for the intervention for that student (e.g., discontinue the additional intervention, continue the current intervention, modify the current intervention, implement a different intervention, invitation for a parent meeting). We have also created a Tier 1 Literacy parent letter that is coupled with a description of the importance of being able to read by the end of 3rd grade (See Appendix). In Tier 1, classroom teachers and school educators can use the attached TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement Parent Letters to inform families and caregivers of the foundational skills content students are learning in class. The parent letters also provide families with specific, no-cost activities they can do with their children to support learning. There are full 1–2-page letters that can be sent to parents at the beginning of a unit of instruction. Abbreviated letters are available for every week of instruction (see Appendix).

## **Professional Development Plan**

During the summer of 2021, K-5 educators in our district will have the option to participate in the free Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Over 500 MNPS K-5 educators have registered for the Early Literacy Training. 400 of the educators will participate in both weeks of training: the asynchronous modules and the in-person week two training. Roughly 25% of our teachers will participate in the Early Literacy Training during the summer of 2021. About 31% of our K-5 teachers will take the week 1 content during the spring and summer of 2021. The Reading 360 Early Literacy Training provides educators with critical content knowledge about phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and vocabulary. The professional learning was developed by TNTP, experienced training providers with a proven track record of supporting districts with foundational skills. The training requires teachers to demonstrate their knowledge and competency with the content through an assessment taken at the end of the asynchronous module. The Reading 360 Early Literacy Training is free of MSV and cueing strategies. All MNPS K-5 educators that did not take the Early Literacy Week 1 training during the spring and summer of 2021 will be required to complete the Modules using a blended learning approach. During the Fall and Spring of 2021-2022, MNPS K-5 educators will engage in the first half of the asynchronous modules, then take a professional development day to participate in in-person learning about the Module content. During in-person learning, educators will discuss their asynchronous pre-work, engage in discussions about the module content and discuss applications to the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement, Lexia Core 5 and Wit & Wisdom. After engaging in the last half of the asynchronous modules, teachers would use a professional development day to engage in in-person learning about the Module content with their peers. At the end of the course, teachers would take the Module assessment which will require them to demonstrate mastery of the module content. Educators who did not take the Early Literacy Training during the Spring and Summer of 2021 or the Fall and Spring of 2021-2022, would be required to take the training during the Summer of 2022. Educators that are new to MNPS would also be required to take the training within the first year of employment. The fall/spring and summer trainings would use a blended model to deliver the Early Literacy Training content to MNPS educators until everyone receives the training. (See Appendix)