Sweetwater City Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Previous Update: June 7, 2024

Approved: August 27, 2026

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

Sweetwater City Schools employs Wit & Wisdom from Great Minds as the primary knowledge component and Reading Horizons as the primary phonics instruction resource for grades K-2. Wit & Wisdom, adopted through a waiver process, meets the rigorous academic standards set by the Tennessee Department of Education. This curriculum emphasizes knowledge building with topically aligned decodable readers and allocates 75 minutes for instruction.

The phonics instruction, called Foundational Literacy in the master schedule, is delivered using the Reading Horizons curriculum for at least 45 minutes daily. The curriculum is structured and sequential and follows a scope and sequence focusing on skills such as identifying individual letter sounds, decoding words with common rime families, recognizing letter combinations, and decoding one-syllable and multi-syllable words. It also covers spelling conventions for long and short vowel sounds, final-e rules, r-controlled vowels, prefixes, suffixes, and applying grade-level phonics in text. Additionally, the adopted research based, systematic phonics curriculum, Reading Horizons, has a sounds first, phonological awareness component and includes explicit instruction and student practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

In addition to the grade level, tier I instruction, small group time is denoted in the master schedule. This allows for targeted support and acceleration based on individual student progression along the literacy continuum.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Sweetwater City Schools has an integrated literacy block for grades 3rd – 5th that is based on the science of reading and aligned with Tennessee ELA standards. The district's teachers and LEA voted to adopt EL Education by Open Up Resources for these grades, choosing from materials recommended by the state's Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission.

During the integrated ELA block, students in grades 3 and 4 engage in a 90-minute whole group module lesson, followed by an additional 45 minutes for All Block Instruction which includes foundational skills instruction. In grade 5, students have a 75-minute whole group lesson with an

additional 30 minutes for All Block Instruction. The curriculum covers fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing, and includes instruction in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Additional Information

We have introduced high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), provided instructional practice guided feedback with instructional coaches, implemented intellectual preparation, and conducted professional development to support both students and teachers.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Great Minds Wit & Wisdom (Approved waiver)

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Open Up OUR Expeditionary Learning

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Reading Horizons grades K-2

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

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) grades K-2
iReady 3-5
We also administer aimswebPlus to our third graders for the spring benchmark.

Supplemental Screener:
iReady Suite for K-2

Intervention Structure and Supports
In the fall, students undergo a universal screening (Aimsweb/iReady) to identify those with reading deficiencies or who are “at risk.” Grade level teachers, principals, and the school’s data team review the results of these screeners alongside grades, formative and summative assessments, classroom performance, teacher observations, and other relevant information. Students identified as needing intervention support are given a survey level assessment to pinpoint specific deficits and are then assigned appropriate small group interventions. Students receiving Tier II instruction participate in a 30-minute small group intervention focused on their area of need and are progress monitored at least twice a month. Those in Tier III instruction receive a 45-minute small group intervention and are progress monitored weekly. Research-based reading intervention options are available for at-risk students and those identified with a reading deficiency.

The universal screener and benchmark assessments provide teachers with a detailed developmental analysis, guiding them with skill-specific activities to address gaps. Data teams evaluate progress monitoring data every 4.5 weeks to inform decisions about intervention duration, materials, and intensity if a student is not making progress.

Students receive systematic and explicit instruction in their area of deficit using research-based materials and strategies in small groups. They are also assessed for characteristics of dyslexia through additional survey level assessments and ongoing progress monitoring. Students exhibiting dyslexia characteristics receive intensive intervention compliant with the "Say Dyslexia Law," and families are notified of the prescribed intervention program.

The district uses the science of reading approach to support our students. Daily intervention takes place during a designated RTI time in the master schedule. In their RTI groups, students work systematically with research-based strategies and activities tailored to their skill deficits. Development including the word recognition and language comprehension strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope are evident.

All intervention schedules and supports are aligned with expectations outlined in the RTI^2 manual.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Sweetwater City Schools has established a comprehensive parent communication plan for all K-5 schools. This plan ensures timely, family-friendly communication that clearly explains each reading domain assessed, the student's skill progress over time, the depth and extent of current instructional needs, and next steps for skill practice through intervention. It also provides no-cost home activities for families. The notification emphasizes the importance of reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade and outlines 4th grade promotion pathways.

In addition to sending letters three times per year after each benchmark assessment, the school-based support team meets to review all student data and identify at-risk students. After reviewing multiple data sources and identifying skill deficits needing intervention, parents receive a notification detailing the student's performance, including specific areas of deficits and characteristics of dyslexia if applicable.

Once a student is identified, the notification indicates that the student will receive daily, skill-based group intervention using a research-based reading program that addresses basic reading skills (e.g., phonics, phoneme segmentation fluency, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness), reading fluency, and/or reading comprehension. For instance, if a student shows weaknesses in phonological awareness, the notification specifies this area of weakness and the intensity level of the intervention (e.g., TierII, an additional 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week, in a small group setting, in addition to core instruction).

Ongoing communication, at least every 4.5 weeks, keeps parents informed of their child's progress in skill development through tiered interventions, any changes in the intervention, and any additional concerns identified.

Professional Development Plan

Sweetwater City Schools teachers and administrators have completed the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training developed by the TN Department of Education. We are also offering week 2 of the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series to teachers and interventionists during June 2024.

Our instructional coaches plan weekly with teachers to ensure intellectual preparation supports student achievement across the grade level. Our instructional coaches and principals use The TN Foundational Literacy Instructional Practice Guide to facilitate learning walks and provide feedback to teachers on best practices for teaching reading. This data is used to create coaching cycles to best support teachers in delivery of high-quality reading instruction.

Throughout the year, our teachers and leaders participate in job embedded professional development to further support curriculum and instruction using high-quality instructional materials.