

Gestalt Community Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Last Updated: March 20, 2024

Approved: June 26, 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

Gestalt Community Schools uses the Core Knowledge Language Arts curriculum which emphasizes foundational skills grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. This curriculum uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (60 minutes daily) for foundational skills instruction in grades K-2. This instructional time includes activities that build phonological awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary work (“word work”). During that instruction, teachers explicitly teach a sound, the students practice the sound aloud (learning how to produce pure sound), the teacher models writing the sound, the students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, then students apply the skill in independent practice (small group or individual). For example, in the second nine weeks, students will know how to decode separated digraphs and vowel digraphs and students will be able to learn and use the most common spellings for each sound. Students can generalize these skills when using decodable texts aligned with the sounds taught in explicit instruction. Our improvements for next year are grounded in teacher development around phonics and phonemic awareness and their ability to teach foundational literacy skills to students with fidelity.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

Gestalt Community Schools has an integrated literacy block for grades 3-5 grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards. Our curriculum is Expeditionary Learning which is approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. During the integrated ELA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons, our students receive 90 minutes of ELA instruction meeting the required 30 minutes of foundational skills instruction. All core daily instruction includes components for knowledge-building (to build and improve the ability to comprehend complex texts and apply that knowledge as they listen, read, write, think, and speak) for 60 minutes per day. In addition, foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing will occur in the 30-

minute ELA block. Our adopted 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 to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection. For example, our fourth-grade students are now beginning the domain on The American Revolution. They begin by briefly activating prior knowledge and reading independently and/or aloud. After the daily read aloud (or independent reading in on-grade level, complex text), the students may summarize the content (through a think-pair-share model), unpack the most essential vocabulary (“word work”), respond to a series of scaffolded questions, and write a response to an inferential question that requires students to use evidence from the text to support their answer. For example, in vocabulary lessons teachers provide explicit support for vocabulary needed to access complex text. In one lesson, the students study the root “port” as in import, export, portable, etc. Students use their word knowledge as they engage in group discussion and writing activities. Therefore, foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of this 90-minute block and is dedicated to developing students’ holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research.

Additional Information

In order to support subgroup growth and development, all special populations staff will complete a two-year professional development program on the science of reading and supporting learners with foundational skills (LETRS). In addition, our network has hired a MLL Coordinator and Exceptional Scholar Coordinator in order to provide coaching, supporting, and monitoring of special population instruction in order to ensure subgroup growth. We have created data tracking systems to monitor subgroup (and all learners) growth throughout the course of the year and use this data to drive teacher coaching and scholar success plans.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (K-2)

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5

Imagine Learning EL Education (formerly LearnZillion Expeditionary Learning) 3-5

Supplemental Instructional Materials

We use additional instructional materials in grades 3-5 to supplement our foundational skills instruction. These materials are CKLA, RedThread Foundations, and Lavinia Insight Humanities. We also supplement with iReady intervention units and lessons.

Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5

i-Ready Suite K-5

We also administer the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) to students in third grade for the Spring Benchmark.

Supplemental Screener

We administer NWEA MAP as a screener and AIMSweb for further diagnostic screening.

Intervention Structure and Supports

GCS follows the State of TN RTI² Framework for correct implementation. Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are research-based and aligned to specific skill-deficit(s). Gestalt Community Schools uses iReady Suite as our research-based intervention. Tier 3 interventions will be more intensive than Tier 2 interventions. Gestalt's intervention structure consists of small group face-to-face intervention, where students receive multisensory, explicit instruction, aligned specifically to the student's skill deficit, which is language based and presented in a systematic and cumulative approach. Age-appropriate instruction is provided through direct-instruction and practice providing intervention remediation and enrichment opportunities. iReady supports building skills in comprehension of complex text and foundational skills. It provides reading opportunities for scholars to apply skills, thereby building success with texts at the just-right level they are ready to read. Complex on-level texts with developmentally appropriate themes are scaffolded to support the development of critical thinking. iReady also supports academic vocabulary development by providing in-context vocabulary support during reading. In order to establish baseline data, all scholars who will be using iReady Reading programs must take the diagnostic exams in iReady and will receive additional screening by AIMSweb. AIMSweb will be the progress monitoring tool used to measure effectiveness of the intervention. If scholars are not making adequate progress, the intervention may need to be changed. Scholars must have at least four consistent progress monitoring data points before a change is considered. Changes to a scholar's intervention can only be determined in a monthly data team meeting and should be updated in the scholar's RTI² plan. Possible changes include increasing frequency of intervention sessions, instructional level, skill deficit, changing computer-based interventions, changing intervention providers, and changing the time-of-day intervention is delivered.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Our network 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) immediately after the district's schools complete the fall universal screening through written communication. 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 ready by the end of 3rd grade and information on the pathways to 4th grade. We also provide no-cost activities for families to support learning at home. These letters are sent to families three times each year for K-3 students and annually for students in grades 4-5.

In addition to the written letter, we host Parent Data Meetings in early September and review all the data with parents in a face-to-face meeting. At this time, we answer any additional questions they have and provide ideas and strategies that they can do at home to reinforce scholar growth and

progress. Parents are subsequently notified of their child's progress, or lack of progress, after the 4 1/2-week data team meetings through our Progress Reports and Report Cards. There is a section for RTI progress where data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by progress monitoring data, as well as note if sufficient progress is being made and if interventions should continue or if the student qualifies to discontinue intervention supports. In follow-up Parent Data Meetings scheduled directly after these reports are issued, teachers go over scholar performance more in depth and develop additional action plans with families to support their scholar with success.

Additionally, the ELA curriculum contains parent letters in grades K-2 that outline the foundational skills and knowledge domains for the coming week that will inform and equip parents to work with the child. Families can better understand how to support their student(s) through questions about their texts and through an awareness of what foundational skills their child(ren) are learning. Teachers also put notes in their weekly newsletters to provide parents with information/questions they can ask their child about their learning that week.

Professional Development Plan

All K-5 Teachers and Leaders within Gestalt Community Schools have completed the Read360 Early Literacy training, both course 1 and course 2. Any new teachers to our district will also complete this training.

All K-5 Teachers will receive RedThread training from The Lavinia Group team members on an on-going weekly basis. Intellectual Preparation and Student Work Study Meetings for all literacy teachers' --The Lavinia Group and Gestalt Instructional Coaches will additionally support the development of teachers around the instructional components within the CKLA curriculum.

All literacy coaches within Gestalt Community Schools will co-facilitate these meetings with the Lavinia group and provide additional training and support, through classroom observation and feedback of the foundational skills block. Each grade-level and content area will have two meetings per week. Each meeting will be 45 minutes long and held virtually with all teachers.

In addition to the professional development with the Lavinia Group and the state, all K-2 teachers and leaders and K-5 special populations teachers will participate in a two-year professional development initiative with LETRS to deepen their understanding of the science of reading and how to deliver explicit and systematic instruction to all learners.