

## **Lawrence County Schools**

### **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**

Last Updated: June 5, 2024

Approved: June 10, 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**

The Lawrence County School System (LCSS) utilizes Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA), a foundational skill curriculum grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. CKLA uses foundational skills as the primary form of instruction and has a designated block of time (60 minutes skills instruction daily) for foundational skills instruction in Grades K-2. Skills are taught in a systematic, comprehensive, sounds-first approach and build over time. Activities included phonemic awareness, phonics practice, and fluency practice in addition to comprehension and vocabulary work. Teachers explicitly teach a sound, students practice the sound aloud, teachers model writing the sound, students refer to their individual code chart on which they write the sound, and then students apply the skill in independent practice within small groups or individually. The explicit skills instruction is accompanied by 100% decodable readers.

LCSS's improvements for next year include continuing the focus of 60 minutes designated time for foundational skills instruction daily for all students in Grades K-2 and incorporating coaching cycles to support foundational skills similar to knowledge coaching cycles as we strive to fully implement CKLA with integrity and fidelity. LCSS will also further develop this plan to include a more comprehensive PreK-2 ELA implementation plan with ongoing, spiraled literacy professional learning for teachers and leaders in both knowledge-building and foundational skills.

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

The Lawrence County School System (LCSS) utilizes Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA), a foundational skill curriculum grounded in reading science and aligned to Tennessee ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. LCSS has an integrated literacy block for Grades 3-5. During the integrated CKLA block that meets an evidence-based approach to applying foundational skills within daily lessons, we strive to provide our students a minimum of 90 minutes of Tier I ELA instruction. Although the daily schedule may vary from day to day, all daily instruction includes components for knowledge-building (to build and improve the ability to comprehend complex text and apply that knowledge as they listen, read,

write, think, and speak) for about 60 minutes per day and foundational skill instruction that includes fluency, grammar, morphology, spelling, and writing for a minimum of 30 minutes per day.

The foundational skills instruction is embedded in all aspects of Tier I instruction to develop students' holistic literacy approach to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension coherently as recommended by research. CKLA engages students in work around fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills not taught in isolation but embedded to ensure continuity, cohesion, and connection within the lessons. CLKA also provides teachers with sidebar supports, as well as fluency and decoding and encoding remediation guides to assist students who struggle with foundation skills or need additional help.

LCSS's improvements for next year include continuing the focus of 90 minutes as a minimum of Tier I ELA instruction daily for all students in Grades 3-5 as we strive to fully implement CKLA with integrity and fidelity. With departmentalized structures in the upper grades, protecting 90 minutes in the master schedule for ELA instruction becomes difficult. LCSS will also further develop this plan to include a more comprehensive ELA implementation plan with ongoing, spiraled literacy professional learning for teachers and leaders in both knowledge-building and foundational skills.

### **Additional Supports**

The Lawrence County School System (LCSS) district office will diligently work to serve and support schools and subgroups targeted. To provide successful support, collaboration between the LCSS district office, South Central core office, and the school administrative team will be needed. The blending of general-purpose and federal funds from the district level will be used to provide evidence-based strategies throughout the school year.

The district has provided HQIM curricula in ELA that will assist in making sure that the instruction is aligned to state standards and meets the standards' rigor. The impact of the instruction will be measured through a variety of assessment measures, including the common formative Mastery View Predictive Assessments, TNReady practice assessments, and classroom formative and summative assessments. The COACH model of observation, along with TDOE/NIET learning walks, will identify areas of strength and weakness for school(s) and district trends.

LCSS will continue to provide a variety of training and resources. The district recognizes that for students to successfully master standards, social and emotional needs must be met first. Therefore, training to address the climate and individual students' mental health is in place.

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

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (K-5)

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

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (K-5)

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

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) K-5

## **Intervention Structure and Supports**

In the fall, the students in the Lawrence County School System (LCSS) are given a universal screener to determine which students have a significant reading deficiency or are “at-risk.” LCSS RTI Coordinators, grade-level teachers, and principals review universal screener data to determine which students score between the 0-40th percentile. The team also reviews other student data to help determine student need. Those students showing need are classified as needing Tier II or Tier III instruction. Students classified as Tier II or Tier III take a diagnostic assessment to determine specific deficits to best assign students to a small group with an intervention to help narrow skill gaps. Students receive daily, small-group intervention for at least 30-45 minutes depending on the Tier level in the area of greatest deficit.

LCSS has research-based options for reading intervention support available to students who are “at risk” and/or who have been identified with a significant reading deficiency. Amplify’s CKLA ELA curriculum contains an assessment and remediation guide in which teachers can find activities that directly address skill gaps. They can tailor this to the needs of their RTI group of students. If that intervention is not proving to be effective, more comprehensive, strategic interventions (such as 95% group & SPIRE) become an option. Data teams meet every 4 ½ weeks and review progress monitoring data to determine if a change in the intervention or the person providing the intervention is warranted. The data team also looks at other variables (attendance, engagement) as part of the decision-making process before a change is made to the programming or provider.

LCSS students receive explicit instruction in their area of deficit in small groups using research-based materials and strategies. These students are also screened using additional survey level assessments to determine if they have characteristics of dyslexia. Students who do demonstrate those characteristics receive intensive intervention as outlined in the Say Dyslexia Law using programs meeting the law’s requirements. LCSS uses a research-based supplemental program as one intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Our district notifies families of students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia and indicate a significant reading deficiency and the intervention being utilized to accelerate learning for the student. Possible intervention programs used are Barton, 95% Group, or SPIRE curriculums to support those students, as they are based on the Orton-Gillingham approach of systematic, explicit, sequential, phonics-based instruction and are considered a strong support for students. Every effort is made to provide coherent instruction with the Tier I curriculum.

Intervention takes place daily during a grade-level time in the master schedule designated for RTI. When students are in RTI groups, they work on activities and assignments to accelerate learning in Tier I. For example, students needing acceleration in vocabulary and comprehension may read a new text and answer scaffolded questions, all related to the knowledge-building unit they are studying in Tier I instruction. Students needing fluency support may receive intervention using a previously mentioned program and/or Achieve3000. Every effort is made to provide a coherent intervention with the Tier I curriculum.

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

LCSS notifies parents in Grades K-5 if their child(ren) 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. 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(s) will receive and the amount of time each day the student(s) 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 promotion pathway to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

LCSS explains how students are assessed and what a “significant reading deficiency” means. Parents are subsequently notified of their child’s progress, or lack of progress, after the 4 ½ week data team meetings. In the parent notifications/communication, data teams note any changes being made if the child is not showing sufficient progress as evidenced by progress monitoring and universal screening data as well as 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-3 three times annually and are shared in Grades 4 and 5 annually.

Parents of students exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia are given an overview of the “Say Dyslexia” law. Additionally, the CKLA ELA curriculum contains parent letters in the younger grades 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

## **Professional Development Plan**

LCSS will continue to utilize the free Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education to meet the requirements set forth in the Tennessee Literacy Success Act. LCSS’s plan for providing Professional Development (PD) for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

Summer Months: Any and all teachers in Grades Pre-K through five, as well as coaches, interventionist, RTI coordinators, special education teachers, and administrators working with students in this grade band, who have not already met the training requirements set forth in the Tennessee Literacy Success Act, will engage in Week 1 of the Early Literacy Training series, asynchronously. This training focuses on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. It includes phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. TDOE continues to ensure the materials and training support districts in foundational skills instruction. Teachers are required to demonstrate knowledge and competency to receive a certificate of completion at the end of the training. LCSS will encourage these educators to further their knowledge and understanding of foundational skills emphasizing practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

LCSS has two District Early Literacy Coaches who provide continuous support targeting Grades K-3 teachers. Each Coach has 4 schools they are assigned to and are completing 3-day cycles of support for all K-3 literacy teachers. Support provided includes facilitating collaborative Unit and Lesson Prep, modeling of instruction, student work analysis, data tracking and analysis, and individual instructional needs. LCSS also has one District Literacy Coach to support literacy teachers in the upper grades. This support has primarily focused on newly hired and newly assigned positions. LCSS currently has posted an additional Literacy Coach position to increase support to Grades 4-8 ELA teachers.

LCSS has 31 educators currently completing Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) professional learning Course I. The study is based in the science of reading and designed to teach the how, what, and why of literacy acquisition. It teaches the skills needed to master the foundational and fundamentals of reading and writing instruction. These 31 educators will be sharing with their fellow peers during school-based and district Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), in-service sessions, etc.

All LCSS K-5 ELA teachers are provided continuous support and professional development annually. Improving foundational skills literacy continues to be a district goal and focus for LCSS.