

Emerald Academy Charter Schools

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan

Approved: May 20, 2021

Edited: October 18, 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

At Emerald Academy we use two curriculums that teach foundational literacy skills. We have used a phonics-based program to teach phonics explicitly and will use Wonders in the upcoming school year to teach phonics in combination with other reading skills during ELA time. Letterland is supported by scientific research and uses characters and plots to teach phonics. Scholars in grades K-2 spend 45 minutes participating in foundational literacy skills instruction daily through these curriculums. During foundational literacy instruction scholars are introduced to all 44 sounds in the English language in addition to their spelling. These curricula also focus on decoding and word recognition in order to build student's reading fluency. Students develop phonemic awareness through the curriculum by learning letters and their corresponding sounds. Wonders is aligned to Tennessee State Standard and is supported by research. Lessons contain phonics, writing, spelling, fluency and phonemic awareness components and will be our primary form of instruction. Research that supports this program suggests that students are more likely to become better readers when they are engaged in phonics instruction through a program that explicitly teaches foundational skills but also does so in a relatable and engaging way. In all, students in K-2 receive a total of 110 minutes of ELA instruction and 45 minutes of foundational literacy instruction. This includes instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5

At Emerald Academy our ELA core curriculum in grades 3-5, Wit and Wisdom, engages students in foundational literacy skills through a researched based approach. The curriculum reinforces literacy skills through novel studies and application. Each lesson includes many parts that teach core foundational skills such as morphology, grammar, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Within each lesson scholars are introduced to these skills through a holistic approach. Lessons contain vocabulary deep dives, in which students engage in word meaning activities, in addition to a styles and conventions component, which aligns to foundational literacy standards. The curriculum also integrates writing and speaking skills daily. Students are often asked to write in response journals in addition to learning how to develop strong paragraphs and multiple paragraph essays. By 4th grade scholars are expected to write 4-5 paragraph essays. Students also engage in socratic seminars in which they have rich text dependent discussions. Wit and Wisdom also requires students to build their reading fluency by having multiple reads of a text. Typically students will spend at least two

weeks on one novel. Students are able to build their fluency and comprehension by having multiple attempts at each novel. Students are then able to apply their knowledge and understanding to more complex skills, such as analyzing a character's actions and words to determine motive.

In all, students in grades 3-5 spend 90 minutes daily on ELA instruction. 30 of these minutes are dedicated to writing and vocabulary, while the remaining 60 reinforces reading skills in a holistic style. While Wit and Wisdom is aligned to common core standards, we provide teachers with an alignment guide for the curriculum that correlates to the TN State Standards.

Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2

McGraw Hill – K-5 Wonders

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 RTI² and Say Dyslexia requirements.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Suite

Intervention Structure and Supports

Scholars at Emerald complete the NWEA MAP assessment in reading and math as our universal screener. We use these benchmarks to identify scholars through the RTI process. Scholars at Emerald that perform above the 25% only receive Tier 1 instruction. Scholars at Emerald that fall between the 25%-11% in reading are placed into Tier 2 intervention. Tier 2 instruction takes place during GRIT time, in which the entire school, regardless of Tier, participates in. Because we have an extended school day, Tier 2 instruction is 45 minutes. Teachers use a researched based program to instruct students, iReady. The iReady curriculum supports scholars in foundational skills, such as vocabulary, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Scholars that perform at the 10%-1% are enrolled in Tier 3 intervention. Tier 3 students in grades K-4 use Reading Mastery, Spire, and Sound Sensible for curriculum depending on student's deficits. Scholars in grades 5-8 use Language Live for reading instruction. Scholars spend 45 minutes in Tier 3 intervention daily. In grades K-4, 30 minutes is spent with the intervention teacher while the remaining 15 minutes is spent on a computer based approved program. Scholars in grade 5 spend 45 minutes with a licensed teacher for Tier 3 intervention. Once a month the RTI team (school administrators, general education teachers, and Intervention teachers) meet to discuss the progress of students in intervention. Decisions are made on whether students need a change in intervention or to continue with their intervention plan. These decisions are made based off their progress monitoring in Aimswebplus (Tier 3) or Iready (Tier 2). Scholars are progress monitored each week if they are in Tier 3, and bi-weekly if they are in Tier 2. Scholars who are not making progress are moved to a more intense Tier intervention, their curriculum is changed, a change of instructor, and or any other change, such as location, group, etc. If scholars continue to show little to no progress, an evaluation for Special Education Services is requested.

Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports

Parents of students at Emerald who are "at risk" are notified of tier enrollment after the first universal screener. Teachers also analyze student performance and families whose student(s) that exhibit characteristics of dyslexia are notified by letter. In addition, the letter expresses the importance of being a proficient reader by 3rd grade. The letter communication also identifies the specific skill deficits in either ela or math. After students are placed in a tier program, scholars then take a diagnostic assessment in either Iready or aimswebplus. This provides the interventionist with detailed information on skill deficits to guide instruction during intervention. Intervention teachers also give a weekly (Tier 3) or bi-weekly (Tier 2) progress monitoring assessment that guides their instruction as well. Intervention teachers have access to several curriculums that they can use to teach to individual skill deficits. Each curriculum contains placement tests which tell the intervention teacher exactly how to proceed with instruction. Data teams come together once per month to analyze student progress provided by progress monitoring data as well as teacher input. Following these meetings, teachers send home a progress monitoring notification as well as student data, to families. In the letter to families, the intervention teacher will write an explanation in regards to the decision made at monthly RTI meetings. For example, if a student needs to increase intervention from Tier 2 to Tier 3 based on data, the intervention teacher will communicate to the family what the target scores are and current levels of the student. At Emerald we have parent nights at least once a month in which we share academic strategies and resources for families to implement at home with their scholars. Families are given online resources that they can use at the school's cost to reiterate reading skills at home. As a part of our family and school commitment, parents must sign a contract that states the importance of reading requirements nightly by students. This is an expectation at Emerald in which students receive a letter grade for. In addition to monthly meetings, parents are required to attend parent teacher conferences 3 times a year. At these conferences teachers share skill strengths and deficits, in addition to sharing ways in which families can support their scholars at home. Lastly each report card teachers are required to indicate one piece of actionable feedback in reading for families. This is so families can better support their scholars at home on their skill deficits. Our universal screener is done 3 times each school year and new RTI enrollment is decided after each screening. New families are informed of RTI enrollment in the same manner as indicated above.

Professional Development Plan

Teachers at our school go through a 3 week professional development summer program. Teachers in grades K-2 receive training on the implementation of LetterLand each summer and how to teach foundational skills. This summer teachers will receive professional development that focuses on foundational skills through an online self paced module. This training will include lessons that teach phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency and vocabulary. All 3-5 teachers will also receive training on how to use Wit and Wisdom in the classroom with an explicit focus on foundational literacy skills, including writing and vocabulary. Teachers complete a deep dive of all standards, including foundational literacy standards, to understand what mastery looks like and how to best plan and teach them. Intervention teachers also attend curriculum training on the programs they will be using, such as Reading Mastery, iReady, and Spire. Intervention teachers in grade 5, attend Language Live training as well. Teachers are also trained on how to deliver rigorous

instruction during GRIT time (Tier 2 and enrichment) by learning how to use iReady to identify skill gaps. Recently we have implemented a tool, MAP Skills that gauges reading fluency by having scholars read into a microphone. Teachers learn how to analyze this data as well in order to plan and teach fluency related skills. Teachers will demonstrate competency of trainings by planning and using skills learned, in our Summer School program with scholars on campus. We plan to participate in Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series in Summer 2021 for all teachers in K-5.