



Quick Guide for Multi-Tiered System of Supports: The Building Level



Purpose of this Quick Guide

The purpose of this Quick Guide is to provide an overview of Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) considerations at the building level. The intended use is for leaders to build a common understanding of MTSS that will lead to the thoughtful implementation of MTSS in the building. The audience for this MTSS Quick Guide includes principals, assistant principals, school improvement team members, teachers, counselors, interventionists, instructional coaches, content specialists, school psychologists, behavior specialists, school social workers, behavior coaches, PBIS team members, and building level stakeholders.

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OVERVIEW

➔ *What is a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)?*

MTSS refers to a framework for support at all levels of instruction that is systemically in place to help all students succeed. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) defines Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to meet the achievement and behavioral health needs of ALL learners.

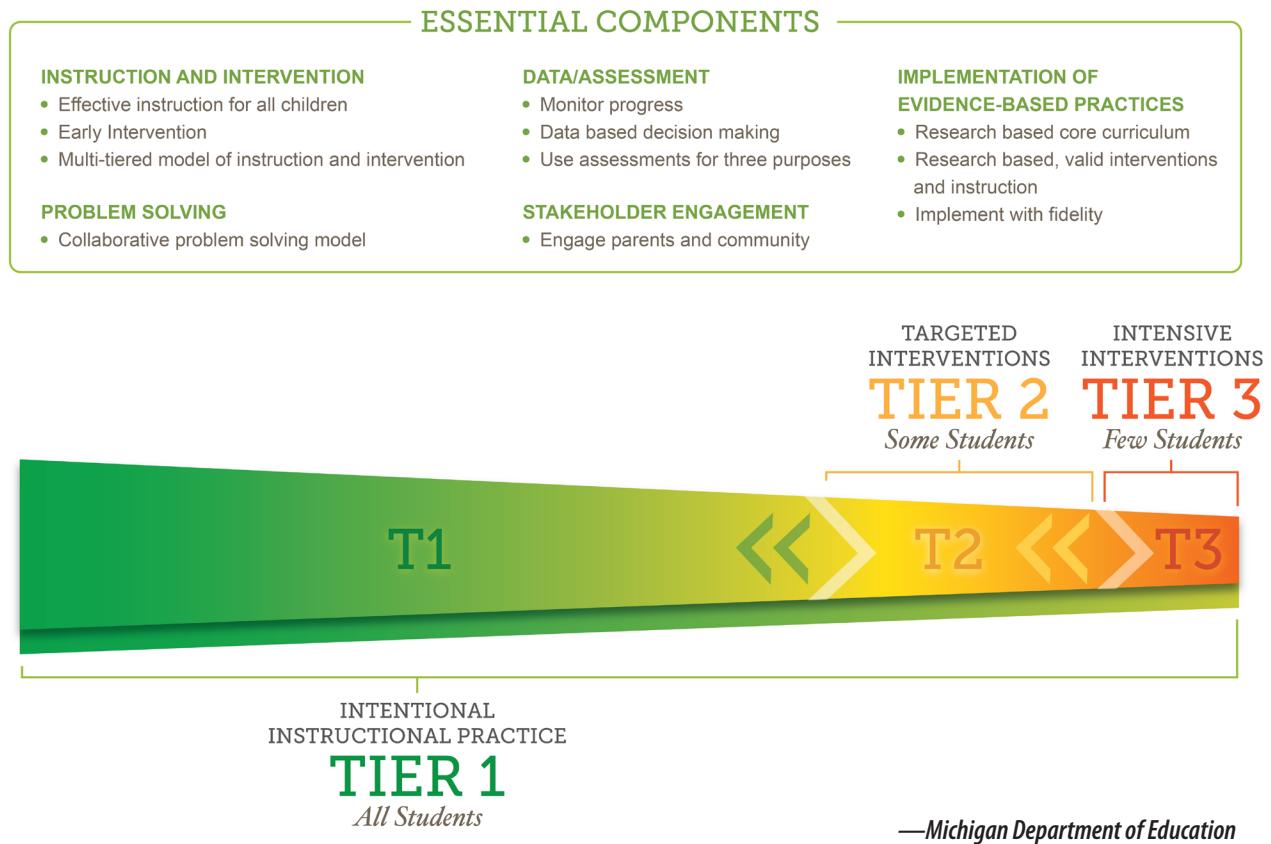
The Essential Components of MTSS together design a system of support for all learners. The components are briefly summarized:

Essential Components of MTSS	
Implementation Fidelity	The implementation of evidence based practices that include research-based core instruction, research-based, valid instruction/intervention and fidelity to the research models.
Problem Solving	A problem solving model that emphasizes collaboration of teachers and instructional support specialists who work together to plan for the academic, behavioral and social needs of students.
Data Systems	Data and assessment systems that are used for the purposes of universal screening, diagnostic study, and progress monitoring. Instructional/intervention planning decisions are based on data.
Instruction/ Intervention	Quality instruction for all students is foundational to effectual MTSS. Included in the model of quality instruction is early intervention with multi-tiered delivery of instruction/ intervention. Instruction/intervention are driven by the needs of students.



MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

MEETING THE ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS



The essential components of MTSS are represented in this graphic designed by the Michigan Department of Education. It is critical to note that intentional instructional practices are evident for all students. Core instruction does not discontinue with the provision of targeted or intensive interventions. Core instruction continues and students receive the explicit interventions they require to be successful learners.

➔ **What are the critical elements of the MTSS?**

- Effective, actively involved, and resolute leadership that frequently provides visible connections between a MTSS framework with district and school mission statements and organizational improvement efforts
- Alignment of policies and procedures across classroom, grade, building, district, and state levels
- Ongoing efficient facilitation and accurate use of a problem-solving process to support planning, implementing, and evaluating effectiveness of services



- Strong, positive, and ongoing collaborative partnerships with all stakeholders who provide education services or who otherwise would benefit from increases in student outcomes
- Comprehensive, efficient, and user-friendly data-systems for supporting decision-making at all levels from the individual student level up to the aggregate district level
- Sufficient availability of coaching supports to assist school team and staff problem-solving efforts
- Ongoing data-driven professional development activities that align to core student goals and staff needs
- Communicating outcomes with stakeholders and celebrating success frequently

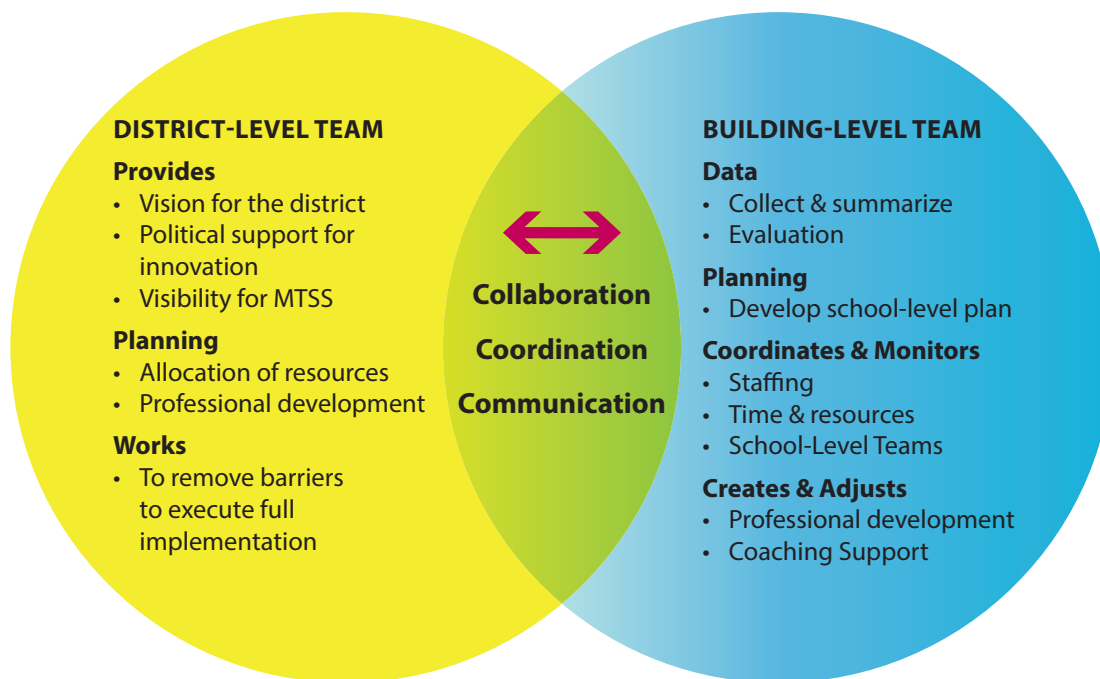
—From Florida MTSS Implementation

➔ **How does the building leverage support from the district for MTSS?**

Ongoing collaboration, coordination, and communication between the building leadership and district leadership are critical to assuring that the system of multi-tiered supports are implemented with fidelity. The building and district have a shared responsibility to uphold the district vision, support innovation, communicate to the school community, allocate resources, and to execute the district plan.

At the building level, the leadership must be responsive to school needs while moving forward to ensure that student needs are met, staff are trained and supported to be effective, and the identified components of MTSS are in effect.

DISTRICT-BUILDING PARTNERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE MTSS



➔ *What are the tiers of instruction/intervention in the MTSS framework?*

MTSS is characterized by a continuum of integrated academic and behavioral supports reflecting the need for students to have fluid access to instruction and supports of varying intensity.

TIER 1

Tier 1 refers to the Core Universal Instruction and Supports.

These are the core academic and behavior instruction with supports designed and differentiated for all students in all settings. Approximately 80 percent of students in Tier 1 are typically expected to meet learning targets.

Tier 1 instruction is the key component of the MTSS framework. It is the core program in which all students receive high quality evidenced-based instruction. Generally, academic and behavior instruction and supports are designed and differentiated for all students. Tier 1 instruction incorporates the core academic curriculum that is aligned with state standards. The intent of the core program is the delivery of a high-quality instruction to all students with the expectation of meeting grade-level standards and preparedness for the future.

TIER 2

Tier 2 refers to Targeted Supplemental Interventions and Supports.

These are more focused, targeted instruction/intervention and supplemental supports in addition to and aligned with the core academic and behavior curriculum and instruction. Approximately 10–15 percent of students typically need targeted supplemental interventions and supports while continuing to be instructed in the core program.

Tier 2 consists of the academic and behavioral instruction/intervention that are provided to students who show a need for help in addition to the instruction/intervention they receive at Tier 1. Tier 2 instruction/intervention is designed to meet the needs of students who are at some risk for academic failure but who are still above levels considered to indicate a high risk for failure. The needs of these students are identified through the assessment process, and instructional programs are delivered through smaller groups and are administered with a focus on meeting the specific needs of the students.

TIER 3

Tier 3 refers to the Intensive Individualized Interventions and Supports.

More focused, targeted instruction/intervention and supplemental support in addition to and aligned with the core academic and behavior curriculum and instruction are provided to students with greatest need for personalized attention. Tier 3 also provides an opportunity to conduct more diagnostic study of the student's needs to plan for more comprehensive programming and intervention. A small percentage of students, in the range of 1–5 percent, would need the intensive individualized interventions and supports of Tier 3.

Tier 3 refers to the academic and behavioral instruction/interventions that are provided to students who show a need for intensive and individualized help that is provided in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 3 instruction/intervention consists of students who are considered to be at high risk for failure and, if not responsive, are considered to be candidates for identification as having special education needs. It is also viewed as a tier that includes students who are not identified as being in need of special education but whose needs are at the intensive level. The groups of students at Tier 3 are of much smaller sizes than Tier 2 with some models including one-to-one instruction.

➔ What are the basic components of the problem-solving process?



It is a collaborative model for decision-making. The problem-solving process begins by defining the problem and directly measuring the skill or behavior. The meeting participants engage in problem analysis that will validate the problem and identify variables that contribute to the problem. The meeting participants then develop and implement a plan that is progress monitored to determine if the plan is effective. Lastly, they evaluate the plan to determine if it was successful. The process is integral to all levels of problem-solving when forming, implementing, and revising decisions at the building level, classroom level, and student level. The graphic at the left represents this problem-solving process.

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
<p>What's the problem?</p> <p>Define the problem or goal by determining the difference between what is expected and what is occurring. Ask, "What specifically do we want students to know and be able to do when compared to what they do know and are able to do?" When engaged in problem solving at the individual student level, the team should strive for accuracy by asking, "What exactly is the problem?"</p>	<p>Why is it occurring?</p> <p>Analyze the problem using data to determine why the issue is occurring. Generate hypotheses (reasons why students are not meeting performance goals) founded in evidence-based content area knowledge, alterable variables, and instructionally relevant domains. Gather assessment data to determine valid/non-valid hypotheses. Link validated hypotheses to instruction/intervention so that hypotheses will lead to evidence-based instructional decisions. Ask, "Why is/are the desired goal(s) not occurring? What are the barriers to the student(s) doing and knowing what is expected?" Design or select instruction to directly address those barriers.</p>	<p>What are we going to do about it?</p> <p>Develop and implement a plan driven by the results of the team's problem analysis by establishing a performance goal for the group of students or the individual student and developing an intervention plan to achieve the goal. Then, delineate how the student's or group of students' progress will be monitored and implementation integrity will be supported. Ask, "What are we going to do?"</p>	<p>Is it working?</p> <p>Measure response to instruction/interventions by using data gathered from progress monitoring at agreed upon intervals to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention plan based on the student's or group of students' response to the intervention. Progress-monitoring data should directly reflect the targeted learning. Ask, "Is it working? If not, how will the instruction/intervention plan be adjusted to better support the student's or group of students' progress?" Team discussion centers on how to maintain or better enable learning for the student(s).</p>

—From Florida MTSS Problem-Solving Process <http://www.florida-rti.org/floridaMTSS/psp.htm>



➔ **What are the roles and responsibilities of the school principal and staff?**

	Principal/Building Leader	Staff
TIER 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a school-wide commitment to instruction/intervention designed to meet the needs of ALL students <input type="checkbox"/> Assure the building has a plan for core academic and behavior program <input type="checkbox"/> Develop building-level procedures for school-wide activities <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule for school-wide meetings and activities, e.g., SIP, PBIS, Universal Screening/Benchmark assessments, Data review, Grade Level/Content Teacher Teams, Problem-Solving Intervention Team meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Provide support and training for staff on core instructional and behavioral strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and train coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Support teachers to organize flexible student groupings and to deliver differentiated instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Provide materials, technology and resources <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with district central office on MTSS and core program <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with the community on learning and behavioral expectations of the school <input type="checkbox"/> Identify building leadership team and work with them to coordinate activities <input type="checkbox"/> Oversee and assure time for scheduled activities and meetings to occur <input type="checkbox"/> Review school-wide data on a regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Document observations and evidence of student learning, behavior, and social/emotional needs <input type="checkbox"/> Administer district and school assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Review Universal Screening data to identify student learning needs <input type="checkbox"/> Implement the core instructional plan <input type="checkbox"/> Utilize research, evidenced-based instructional practices <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in and apply professional development strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Provide differentiated instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboratively develop flexible groupings of students for targeted instructional delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Provide appropriate academic and behavioral supports <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain communication with parents on student progress <input type="checkbox"/> Build relationships with colleagues, students, and parents



	Principal/Building Leader	Staff
TIER 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop procedures for Tier 2 with the building leadership team and input from staff <input type="checkbox"/> Identify a menu of Tier 2 interventions that will be trained and supported <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and train a coach to support teachers and the delivery of interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the roles and staff who will lead Tier 2 problem-solving intervention teams <input type="checkbox"/> Assure strategies, tools, training, and data collection methods for progress monitoring <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and install a method of record keeping of students identified for Tier 2 interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule and provide supports for time to be honored for problem-solving intervention meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Support staff in the management and delivery of Tier 2 interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Know the students who are identified for Tier 2 interventions and the instructional/management concerns of staff in meeting their needs <input type="checkbox"/> Review data to monitor efficacy of interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Adhere to building procedures for Tier 2 processes <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in Tier 2 problem-solving meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Document observations and evidence of student learning, behavior, and social/emotional needs <input type="checkbox"/> Establish goals or learning objectives for the intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Provide small group intervention during scheduled intervention periods <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboratively develop flexible groupings of students for targeted instructional delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Administer and record progress monitoring data <input type="checkbox"/> Review progress monitoring data at regular intervals to revise interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Track fidelity of intervention delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Seek and utilize coaching supports <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain communication with parents on student progress and learning needs
TIER 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Define building procedures for Tier 3 interventions and instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and support staff who will provide for and support Tier 3 interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for and honor time for Tier 3 problem-solving meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Provide coaching support to staff <input type="checkbox"/> Assure progress monitoring tools, instructional resources, technology, and supports are available to deliver Tier 3 interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Know the students identified for Tier 3 interventions and the presenting concerns of staff who are working with them <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor the efficacy and fidelity of intervention delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Assure communication with parents regarding student progress, the interventions used and the parent option to request a special education evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in Tier 3 problem solving meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Establish learning objectives for the intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Implement Tier 3 instruction/intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Review progress monitoring data at regular intervals to revise interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Track fidelity of intervention delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Seek and utilize coaching supports <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain communication with parents on student progress <input type="checkbox"/> Complete district/school special education referral process (when necessary)



➔ **How will the building organize school improvement and intervention teams to be coordinated?**

Experience has demonstrated that in order to increase achievement, successful systems plan their improvement efforts collaboratively. Developing one common plan for improvement streamlines the school and district's efforts and resources and maximizes improvement for all learners. The Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process serves as a comprehensive process to organize the work through data analysis, goal setting, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating. By strategically embedding an MTSS framework into the district and school improvement plan, a school system sets itself up for continuity and alignment in the implementation of a research-based system of MTSS. When working together, the Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process and the MTSS framework enhance and strengthen each other for the benefit of all learners (http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753_65803-322534--,00.html).

➔ **What are the timeline considerations for planning MTSS meetings and activities?**

The coordination of time, staff, resources and objectives is critical for an efficient and effective implementation of MTSS in your building. The building leadership team plays an important role in establishing a calendar for the school year that organizes time for School Improvement activities, collaborative grade level and/or content meetings, universal screening data review meetings, regular intervention meetings, and PBIS activities. General guidelines for scheduling of activities follow:

- School-wide School Improvement Meetings: Quarterly
- Universal Screening Data Review Meetings: Three times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring)
- School-wide PBIS Meetings: Three times a year
- Grade level/content collaborative teacher meetings: Monthly
- Building Leadership Team Coordination Meetings: Quarterly
- Intervention Planning Meetings: 4 - 6 Weeks

➔ **Does the building leadership team utilize data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and their impact on student outcomes?**

It is essential that the building leadership team utilizes data, pulling from the data sources of the building's balanced assessment system to conduct regularly scheduled reviews of MTSS effectiveness and impact. It is also a good idea to plan for annual re-visiting of the expectations for the components of MTSS in formal meeting structures that encourage teacher collaboration. For example, the leadership team would review outcomes on an annual basis. The effectiveness of the interventions should be monitored at regularly scheduled intervals, such as quarterly data reviews.

An example of an agenda for the leadership to evaluate effectiveness of interventions and outcomes is provided follows:



Building Leadership Intervention Effectiveness Meeting Agenda

Meeting Dates: Fall _____ Winter _____ Spring _____ End of Year _____

Recommended Participants: Principal, SIP Representatives, Grade/Content Teachers, Coaches, Intervention Team Members

- *What are the building identified annual goals for achievement and behavior?*
- *Evaluate the progress of the building in meeting annual goals by collecting evidence from intervention data, staff feedback, and benchmark data sources.*

Evidence and Topics of Discussion Include:

- Identify the building-wide interventions for each tier
- How many students are identified for Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 with this specific intervention?
- How many weeks are students in the intervention before a change in placement occurs?
- Were staff able to use the intervention? On a regularly scheduled basis?
- Were resources or materials available?
- Did staff have the time to do the intervention and documentation?
- Which staff received coaching support and how are we monitoring effectiveness?
- Did the intervention team apply decision rules in a consistent manner?
- Did interventions align to core instructional methods and content?



TIER 1

UNIVERSAL SCREENING AND CORE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION FOR ALL STUDENTS

→ *How will the building leadership team support and ensure high quality differentiated instruction at the building level?*

The building leadership team is shaped by the shared vision and beliefs grounded in a commitment that all students will learn the skills that they need to be successful. The building leadership team includes the building administrator, school improvement team, grade level and content teacher leaders, and the specialists who support the school that may include coaches, instructional specialists, interventionists, school psychologists, counselors, or school social workers. The building leadership team sets common academic and behavioral goals for the school that are clearly communicated to the staff and school community.

Included among the functions of the building leadership team is the identification of the instructional strategies and supports for students that must be incorporated into the core instructional program to meet the needs of all learners. Using universal screening data and feedback loops among faculty, the leadership team may identify areas in which staff need professional development to improve their understanding and use of differentiation strategies. The leadership team may then plan for the training and on-going coaching support for teachers to practice and apply differentiated strategies in the classroom.

The building leadership team must also plan for the time and resources that teachers and students need to engage in differentiated teaching and learning practices. Schedules should be continually reviewed to plan for sufficient time for learning, for collaborative problem-solving teams to meet, for teachers to plan, and for students to receive the interventions as part of

the school day. For example, access to differentiated instruction may involve the acquisition of technology tools, leveled text, and tutorial supports.

Recognizing that there are limitations to the time, resources, skills and capacities of the building and staff when trying to meet the needs of a diverse student body, an additional role of the building leadership team is to identify a delimited resource bank or menu of strategies and interventions that will be trained and supported by the school. For example, a school may decide to build a specific leveled text library and train teachers on how to access and embed the leveled text in instruction. Another example may involve the training of teachers on formative assessment practices that research has shown supports the general education classroom teacher to raise the achievement of all learners. At the secondary level, when teachers learn to use common formats for homework, classroom organization of student materials, coordinated project timelines, and on-line resource banks, student performance is improved due to the clarity and consistency of expectations and study habits.

A commitment to data-based decision making is developed and modeled by the building level team. The building level team identifies the assessments that are linked to instruction that will be used at all Tiers of the MTSS framework. The building team serves an important function in planning for and supporting the administration of appropriate assessment, the collection of data, reporting and analysis of data, and the problem-solving process for the identification and development of differentiated instructional strategies.

The school community, including parents and the larger community are informed of the school's vision and plan for a tiered model of instruction/intervention. Parents receive information on how student learning is regularly assessed and are oriented to the learning expectations of the core instructional program. Parents are also informed of the system of supports and interventions that the school is using to reach all students. Included in the building leadership team



planning are the mechanisms for communicating student needs and progress to parents. Strategies for supporting student learning at home are also identified by the building team, with planning for parent training opportunities.

Listed below are guiding principles to the work of the building leadership team:

- A shared belief that all students learn and can achieve high standards as a result of effective teaching
- A shared commitment to the highest quality classroom instruction that is informed by research and supported by standards based curriculum
- A leadership team that is actively supported by administration with clear roles and responsibilities communicated to the school community
- The leadership team clearly supports the roles required within the MTSS framework by providing needed time, resources, and training
- The MTSS framework is identified in the School Improvement process and communicated to the staff and school community
- An ongoing professional learning plan is developed and implemented based on the staffs' needs assessment and student data
- The leadership team monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the MTSS model
- Targeted and differentiated instruction are provided at the earliest indication of student need
- Building wide instructional support includes behavioral and social emotional content
- Building wide assessments are directly linked to the skills taught
- Parents and community are informed and are involved in the implementation of MTSS



➔ *Is there a system of coaching supports to assure teacher effectiveness?*

Research has demonstrated that coaching supports and collaborative study teams are the most effective methods of professional staff development. The following chart demonstrates the efficacy of coaching as compared to other methods for training teachers:

Impact of Training			
Concepts of Training	Concept Understanding	Skill Attainment	Application
Presentation of Theory	85%	15%	5-10%
Modeling	85%	18%	5-10%
Practice and Feedback	85%	80%	10-15%
Coaching/Study Teams	90%	90%	80-90%

Source: *Student Achievement through Staff Development*, 2nd ed., by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers, White Plains, NY: Longman, Inc., 1995

Coaching interactions may take three purposes:

- ❶ **To Inform:** Provide guidance around instructional practices and problem-solve collaboratively
- ❷ **To Model:** Demonstrate strategies based on connections to student and teacher needs
- ❸ **To Reflect:** Improve instructional decision-making and increase reflection on practice

The collaborative coaching model is helpful to teachers when working to solve instructional problems by problem-solving together. The coach and teacher work together to identify areas for instructional focus and problem solving based on student data and reflect on professional practice.

For teachers to master the instructional and intervention practices, professional development should include opportunities to study and learn together as well as coaching support. A system of coaching support may include the following components:

- Clear identification of the practices, skills, and strategies identified by the building leadership team
- Training to staff on the practices, skills, strategies, and procedures
- Identified coaches who have a level of expertise with the practices, skills, strategies, and procedures
- Clear definition of the coach's role in supporting the classroom and MTSS process
- A method for teachers to seek coaching support
- A system or method to identify the needs of teachers, that may include review of student performance data
- Time for coaches to conference with teachers



➔ ***Are there processes in place to support collaborative problem-solving for differentiated instruction based on student need?***

The professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn. This simple shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning is reshaping how educators work together to develop instructional practice and improve outcomes for students. As the school moves forward, every professional in the building must engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that drive the work of those within a professional learning community:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

The professional learning community model serves as the best example of a collaborative problem-solving process for developing staff, supporting teachers to identify effective strategies, and raising student achievement. For the process to occur, it is critical that staff are trained. Designated meeting times must become part of the school schedule for the school year. Time in the meetings will need to be well utilized with clear norms, meeting agendas, action items, and monitoring of the implementation of the action items. Meeting agendas require teachers to review achievement and behavior data for each student. The richness is in the dialogue that occurs among professionals in developing understanding of the needs of students, identifying strategies, and sharing ideas on how to implement differentiated strategies.

➔ ***Is sufficient time provided for staff to meet in collaborative problem-solving teams?***

Timelines for the collaborative problem-solving meetings need to align with points in the school year in which universal screening and benchmark data collections occur. Minimally, the staff would need to meet in grade level and/or content teams in the fall, winter, and spring to identify student needs and check on the progress with school-wide goals.

For the development of staff and effective uses of differentiated instruction using this model, teachers would need to have a minimum of one to two hours to meet on a monthly basis.

➔ ***Does the personnel evaluation process provide feedback for continuous improvement and individual development ensuring that staff is able to provide effective instruction for ALL students?***

Research based educator evaluation tools have been identified by the Michigan Department of Education. Within each of these frameworks, there are indicators that examine teacher practice with uses of data, standards aligned instruction, delivery of core instruction, classroom behavior management, and differentiation of instruction to meet student needs. Additionally, state legislation has required a review of student growth data as having a significant placement in the educator evaluation process. With this focus on research based educator evaluation and student growth data, there is now evidence for teachers and school administrators to use to identify goals for teacher development. The most important aspect to the educator evaluation method is the opportunity for teachers to have targeted development of skills that will support them to effectively instruct all students.



TIER 2

TARGETED SUPPLEMENTAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS

** Tier 2 supports are in addition to and a continuation of Tier 1*

→ **Are various types of data informing decisions around students' academic and behavioral intervention planning?**

Assessments at Tier 2 are likely to be varied for different student needs. The frequency of assessments can be as limited as once a month or as frequent as once a week depending on the needs of the small group of students and the assessment parameters. Typically, progress monitoring occurs on a bi-weekly basis. Assessments of behavior at Tier 2 may occur each period or each day. Just as with Tier 1, assessments at Tier 2 should be able to answer specific questions such as (but not limited to):

- Which students require supplemental instruction or practice based on an analysis of their current needs in relation to Tier 1 standards of performance?
- How should students receiving supplemental instruction be grouped together for small-group instruction (e.g., based on skill/content/subject area of need)?
- Which students will be provided with a standard protocol approach to address common and recurring concerns for which there are ample evidence-based options for intervention/instruction?
- Which students will need modified interventions or more in-depth problem solving in order to ensure an appropriate match between the instruction/service supports and the students' needs?
- Which students are demonstrating a positive response to the supplemental instruction/intervention being provided to them? Which are demonstrating moderate to poor responses to instruction/intervention (remember to check fidelity first for those not progressing)?
- Are the majority of students within a given supplemental instructional group demonstrating a positive response to the instruction (i.e., is Tier 2 effective)?
- What modifications are needed to increase positive student responses to instruction/intervention at Tier 2?
- Which students may need more intensive services? And, which students may be ready to either address other areas of need or transition back to receiving Tier 1 instruction only?
- Are students who are demonstrating progress at Tier 2 based on progress monitoring data also demonstrating progress on their Tier 1 assessments? If not, why not?

—Adapted from Florida's MTSS Implementation



➔ **Is there a system in place to progress monitor student outcomes?**

A system for progress monitoring would include the following components:

- Identification of the progress monitoring tool or strategy
- Training of staff on the administration, scoring, collection, and interpretation of the progress monitoring data
- A method for teachers to collect progress monitoring data, preferably in a data management system
- A method of generating summary reports
- Time to review progress monitoring data in problem-solving team meetings
- Opportunities for teachers to collect other data sources, such as observational data, to support documentation of student progress

Ongoing progress monitoring is a key element of an effective MTSS process. Progress monitoring data are typically collected on a bi-weekly basis. Research has established that a problem-solving team would require 5 - 7 data points to make a decision as to the effectiveness of the intervention. When students are not making progress, the problem-solving process creates the opportunity to explore the factors that might explain the lack of response to the intervention.

- What are the barriers to the student's learning?
- What instructional supports can be provided to break down those barriers?
- What additional information does the team need to understand the student's struggles?

See the RTI Action Network for more information.

➔ **Are student outcome data advising decisions about the effectiveness of the MTSS process?**

Program evaluation is a critical component to making schools stronger and improving outcomes for students. The MTSS process is grounded in the systematic use of data to identify students at risk and to monitor the effectiveness of interventions. The building leadership team should conduct an annual review of the building data to monitor the effectiveness of the MTSS interventions. The results of specific intervention programs or plans should be considered from the perspective of outcomes to students but also review evidence of the fidelity with which the MTSS process was implemented. A school-wide survey of staff should occur on an annual basis to identify concerns that staff may have with the MTSS process. Considerations for the program review are listed:

- How many students are identified at risk for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in the fall, winter and spring?
- How many students' response to intervention led to completion of Tier 2 or Tier 3 goals?
- Did the school make progress in meeting school-wide goals?
- What are the key interventions for Tier 2 students?
- Were interventions implemented with fidelity? Did the interventions occur as planned? Were intervention protocols adhered to?
- Were intervention plans for Tier 3 students implemented with fidelity? Did the interventions occur as planned? Were intervention protocols adhered to?
- What concerns or needs have been expressed by staff?



➔ **Has the building developed a plan for identified Tier 2 instruction/ interventions aligned to the core program?**

Many schools lack clear planning for Tier 2 instruction/interventions. In the absence of specification of the Tier 2 methods, the staff do not know what to do to provide consistent and quality instruction/intervention to students. First, it is important to acknowledge that teachers and schools do not have the capacity to develop personalized problem solving plans for every student who is identified in need of intervention. Simply asking teachers to “do more” of the same is not Tier 2 instruction/intervention. Similarly, installing a purchased program in isolation of connections to the Tier 1 instruction creates a problem of skill development in isolation that may not transfer to the learning in the core program. This may cause confusion for students. A simple method of planning for Tier 2 instruction/intervention is to develop a matrix or listing of the identified interventions that specifies what is going to occur at Tier 2, aligning to the content and methods of the core program.

➔ **Steps to Take to Develop Building Instruction/Intervention Plan**

Date Completed	Plan Components
	Identify core standards
	Identify universal screener and decision rules for Tiers
	Identify methods, resources, strategies for Tier 1
	Identify skills and concepts for Tier 2 instruction/intervention
	Identify those methods, resources, strategies to be used to address the identified skills and concepts
	Identify methods for progress monitoring
	Define decision rules for student groupings
	Identify methods, resources, strategies, programs to be used to address the identified skills, concepts and learners
	Summarize intervention plan for training and implementation

The plan for Tier 2 does not have to be complex but can be a simple summary. Schools in Wayne County using PBIS are familiar with the benefits to clearly defining the Tier 2 methods for instruction/intervention. It is common for schools to identify what they will use for Tier 2, and to train and support staff with how to do this work. *See the Wayne RESA School-Wide PBIS Tier 2 Plan (McEvoy).*



TIER 3

INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS AND ADDED SUPPORTS

** Tier 3 intensive supports are in addition to and a continuation of Tier 1 instruction*

→ **Are the interventions designed to meet the unique needs of the students?**

The third tier of the MTSS is designed to support students identified through screening, previous intervention attempts, and/or other data sources as highly at risk. Often these students are functioning academically at or below the 10-15th percentile and behaviorally have demonstrated significant self-control issues. The students at Tier 3 are general education students who require personalized supports and interventions. Students at this level of intervention often need more diagnostic study to identify additional factors that may be contributing to their struggles. Using the problem-solving process, interventions are designed and/or selected, goals are established, and a plan is developed for the student. The students should receive explicit evidence-based instruction focusing on targeted skills within a supported learning environment.

When developing an intervention for a student and/or students, the planning is directly linked to the problem solving that occurred in the last two phases of the problem-solving process. This planning should be directly linked to the data that were collected when identifying and analyzing the problem.

The problem-solving team should follow specific criteria for choosing appropriate interventions. The intervention should include the following components:

- Be evidence-based
- Delivered with integrity and fidelity
- Allow for intensified instruction
- Implemented for a sufficient time
- Evaluated frequently
- Integrated across the tiers

When planning for intervention, it is important to consider the “What” and “How”. What is being taught and adjusted? The “How” is the intervention being taught and adjusted? The “What” and “How” are flexible and should be adjusted according to how the students are responding to the instruction/intervention. The “What” refers to the content of the intervention focuses on the goal for improvement. The “How” refers to how the intervention is being taught, including the frequency, duration, and group size. These factors play a significant role in the success or failure of instruction/intervention. As student learning needs become more severe, these factors may become more intensified. For example, the frequency of the intervention may occur five times a week instead of three times.

→ **Are the interventions aligned with Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction and content?**

Typically, Tier 3 intervention provides “more” of the instruction that was provided in Tier 2: **more time, more often, more explicit to the student, with more personalized one-on-one support**. The student has the opportunity for direct instruction on skills and strategies that will be foundational to improved success with the core program. When there is a shift or divergence in the strategies utilized, that would be in response to diagnostic or new information about the student needs that require a different approach than previously attempted. As a problem-solving process, it is imperative that teams are adaptable to student needs.

→ **Does progress monitoring occur more frequently in Tier 3 than during Tier 2?**

Tier 3 is characterized by interventions that occur with more frequency, duration, individualization, and focus. Progress monitoring at Tier 3 should occur more often. Recommendation is for progress monitoring to occur with weekly brief probes that are aligned to the instruction provided to the student. The interventionist would use the data to identify skill progress but to also focus learning trials and instruction.



➔ ***Does the staff have the time and knowledge to analyze, plan and monitor data based on student outcomes?***

The school infrastructure will need to provide the time for staff to meet to review data, analyze, plan and monitor the effectiveness of the Tier 3 interventions. Given the intensity of the interventions and frequency of the progress monitoring data, the teams would optimally meet on a bi-monthly basis to consider the effectiveness of the plan and to make revisions.

Staff training should provide teachers with the understanding of the timelines, data and nature of the interventions to establish learning objectives for students in core instruction and to plan for opportunities to apply the skills in the classroom. Coordinated planning supports the teacher to reach the student.



RESOURCES ON MTSS

General

- **Kansas Multi-Tiered System of Supports:** http://www.kansasmtss.org/resources_ks_docs.html

This site provides a wealth of guidance and resources on MTSS.

- **National Center on Response to Intervention:** <http://www.RTI4Success.org>

This site has a variety of resources including information about universal screeners, progress monitoring, interventions, papers and presentations on Rtl topics, and a discussion forum.

- **Understood.org:** <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/rti>

This site includes basic resources on Rtl (information about the three tiers, what Rtl should and should not include, and questions to ask your school about Rtl). It also has a “Parenting Coach” that gives parents practical ideas for social, emotional, and behavioral challenges based on the child’s issue and grade level.

- **Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide:** <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorousetid/index.html>

This site links to publications that provide educational practitioners with user-friendly tools to distinguish practices supported by rigorous evidence from those that are not.

- **Response to Intervention Blueprints: School Level:** <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/SCHOOL.pdf>

This pdf document is one of three documents that provides concrete guidance and a framework around which the implementation of Rtl can be built. This particular document is meant for use at the school level.

- **Response to Intervention Blueprints: District Level:** <http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/DISTRICT.pdf>

This pdf document is one of three documents that provides concrete guidance and a framework around which the implementation of Rtl can be built. This particular document is meant for use at the district level.

- **A Cultural, Linguistic, and Ecological Framework for Response to Intervention with English Language Learners:** http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Framework_for_RTI.pdf

This pdf document discusses the benefits of the Rtl process for ELLs.

- **Rtl Quick Reference Guide National Center on Student Progress Monitoring:**
<http://www.studentprogress.org/chart/chart.asp>

This site includes a chart detailing the results of the review of progress monitoring tools for General Outcome Measures (GOMs) and Mastery Measures (MMs), as well as supplemental resources on Rtl.



Interventions

- **Best Evidence Encyclopedia (BEE):** <http://www.bestevidence.org/>

This site includes detailed program overviews and reviews, broken down into categories: Mathematics programs, Reading programs, Science programs, Comprehensive School Reform programs, and Early Childhood programs. In each program category, there are program ratings; you can find top-rated programs for school or district use—these have strong or moderate evidence of effectiveness—as well as limited evidence programs and other programs.

- **What Works Clearinghouse:** <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

This site publishes reviews on the research of different programs, products, practices, and policies in education and tries to answer the question “What works in education?” based on high-quality research. The goal of the site is to provide educators with the information they need to make evidence-based decisions.

- **Intervention Central:** <http://www.interventioncentral.org>

This site includes ideas for both academic and behavioral interventions, as well as information on curriculum-based measures and a Behavioral Intervention Planner.

Early Childhood

- **Early Childhood Frameworks for Response to Intervention in RtI: Description and Implications:**

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/RTI%20in%20Early%20Childhood.pdf>

This PDF document defines the frameworks for RtI in Early Childhood Education and was made to promote a broad understanding and discussion of the topic.

- **Roadmap to Pre-K RtI:** http://www.florida-rti.org/Resources/_docs/roadmaptoprekrti.pdf

This pdf document details the implementation of RtI in pre-k classrooms in order to prevent early delays from becoming language, literacy, and academic learning difficulties.

Literacy

- **Literacy Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR):** <http://www.fcrr.org/>

The FCRR site explores all aspects of reading research – basic research into literacy-related skills for typically developing readers and those who struggle, studies of effective prevention and intervention, and psychometric work on formative assessment.

- **RtI Quick Reference Guide FCRR Interventions for Struggling Readers:**

<http://www.fcrr.org/interventions/index.shtml>

This site details progress monitoring to improve reading instruction and interventions for struggling readers.

- **FCRR Selecting Research-Based Reading Programs:** <http://www.fcrr.org/science/pdf/kosanovich/CSPD.pdf>

This site is intended to assist educators in choosing reading and professional development programs. The resources can be used at the school and district level.



- **Early Literacy Resources:** <http://www.free-reading.net>

This site contains activities and intervention materials for the following early literacy skills, including: print concepts, phonological awareness, letter sounds, sounding out, word recognition, etc. The site is primarily useful for Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions.

- **Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices [Grades 4–12]:**

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=8>

This site links to a pdf document that presents strategies for classroom teachers and specialists to use in increasing the reading ability of adolescent students.

Mathematics

- **Assisting Students Struggling in Mathematics: Response to Intervention (RtI) for Elementary and Middle Schools:** <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/2>

The Institute for Educational Sciences (IES) guide to Response to Intervention for K-8 Mathematics provides eight research-based practices that are shown to improve student learning of mathematics.

- **MTSS in Mathematics-RESA webpage:** <http://www.resa.net/curriculum/curriculum/math/mtss-mathematics/>

The Wayne RESA MTSS in Mathematics webpage is meant to gather a number of resources (e.g. links to screeners, trajectories, and research guidelines) in a systematic way in order to support the implementation of MTSS in Mathematics.

Behavior

- **Behavior Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) National Technical Assistance Center:**

<http://www.pbis.org/>

This site is meant to define, develop, implement, and evaluate PBIS frameworks and emphasizes the impact of implementing PBIS on social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities.

- **PBIS Videos:** <http://www.pbis.org/media/videos>

This page contains several videos that are useful for staff introduction and training on PBIS.

- **Functional Behavior Assessment:** <http://cecp.air.org/fba/>

This site has resources needed to understand functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and behavioral intervention plans (BIP), as well as their impact on addressing students' problem behaviors.

- **Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary Classroom:**

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/behavior_pg_092308.pdf

This site links to a pdf guide that is designed for elementary school educators and school- and district-level administrators. It offers prevention, implementation, and school-wide strategies that can be used to reduce problem behaviors.

- **Rethinking Discipline:** <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>

This site promotes practices to reduce removals from school and alternatives that promote relationship and positive school climate.



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DeAnn Mack	Director, Clinical Services	Detroit Public School Community District
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