

Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Fidelity of Implementation Rubric (Updated March 2021)

Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a framework that integrates data and instruction within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and support students' social, emotional, and behavior needs from a strengths-based perspective. (Center on MTSS, 2020, www.MTSS4success.org)

Overview

The MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric is for use by individuals and teams responsible for supporting local implementation of MTSS. It can support local educators and teams in the following:

- self-evaluating and monitoring fidelity of local MTSS implementation,
- developing and monitoring MTSS implementation action plans,
- planning and prioritizing MTSS professional learning, and
- guiding continuous improvement efforts.

The rubric aligns with the essential components and supporting infrastructure shown through over a decade of research, national policy, and local implementation to support successful implementation of MTSS. Although the research on tiered system of supports began several decades ago, the development of this implementation rubric began under the National Center on Response to Intervention, a 2007 – 2012 U. S. Department of Education funded center hosted at the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

The rubric is accompanied by an optional worksheet that teams can use to engage in thoughtful discussion and review documentation of implementation to accurately rate and identify strengths and limitations of current implementation. Please note

that teams may use the rubric to assess a single domain within the system (i.e., literacy, math) or assess the overall comprehensiveness of the current system. In addition, teams may choose to focus on a specific grade span (e.g., elementary, secondary), grade level, or the whole school. It is recommended that the scope of the review be documented on the rubric cover page.

Tips for Use

Versions of the MTSS Fidelity Implementation Rubric have been used by local educators since 2010. Lessons learned during this time suggest the following approach can assist teams in completing the activity effectively and efficiently.

Step 1: Convene a representative team that includes individuals responsible for implementing MTSS (e.g., interventionists, general and special education teachers, and support staff) and have authority for resource allocation and program decision making (e.g., principals, curriculum directors, program directors).

Step 2: Participate in professional learning on MTSS and its essential components.

Step 3: Have team members **rate each of the component's criteria individually** and be prepared to share with the team. This can be done prior to convening or during a facilitated activity with the team.

Step 4: After sharing individual ratings with the team, **engage in consensus building** to create a team rating for each item.

- Averaging individual scores is not recommended, especially if there are outliers.
- To facilitate a more efficient and effective process, focus consensus building efforts on those items in which the team's individual ratings are more than two numbers apart (i.e., one member rates an item a 1 while another rates it a 3).
- Provide evidence for any ratings of a 4 or 5.
- Although the rubric provides descriptions for ratings 1, 3, and 5, consider ratings of 2 and 4 when the team believes their implementation falls between two of the described implementation levels.

Step 5: Summarize the findings and prioritize areas of concern and future focus.

It is important to remember that the rubric was designed to provide local educators an opportunity to engage in self-reflection, identify strengths and limitations of current implementation, and engage in continuous improvement around MTSS implementation.

Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Fidelity of Implementation

Rubric: Cover Page

School Name:	
District:	
Date:	
Grades Levels/Spans Evaluated (e.g., K-3, middle school):	
Focus of MTSS Framework (e.g., social, emotional, academic, behavioral):	
Participating Team Members and Role:	

Section 1: MTSS Universal Screening Fidelity Rubric

Screening. Uses a systematic process that includes valid data for identifying students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes, including academic, behavioral, social, emotional, school completion, and college and career readiness outcomes.

Indicator	1	3	5
Screening Tools	Insufficient evidence that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, and predictions of risk status are accurate.	Evidence indicates that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, predictions of risk status are accurate, but staff is unable to articulate the supporting evidence.	Evidence indicates that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, and predictions of risk status are accurate, and staff is able to articulate the supporting evidence.
Universal Screening	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).	All of the following conditions are met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).
Data Points to Verify Risk	Screening data are not used or are used alone to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.	Screening data are used in concert with at least one other data source (e.g., classroom performance, curriculum-based assessment, performance on state assessments, diagnostic assessment data, short-term progress monitoring) to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.	Screening data are used in concert with at least two other data sources (e.g., classroom performance, performance on state assessments, diagnostic assessment data, short-term progress monitoring) to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.

Section 2: MTSS Progress Monitoring Fidelity Rubric

Progress Monitoring. *Uses ongoing and frequent collection of formal data to assess students' performance, to quantify a student's rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction or intervention, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention using valid and reliable measures. Measures are appropriate for the student's grade and/or skill level.*

Indicator	1	3	5
Progress-Monitoring Tools	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet no more than one of the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available.	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet two or three of the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available.	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet all of the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available and staff is able to articulate the supporting evidence.
Progress-Monitoring Process	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).

Section 3: MTSS Data-Decision Making Fidelity Rubric

Data-Based Decision Making. Occurs at all levels of MTSS implementation, from individual students to the district level. Teams use screening and progress monitoring data to make decisions about instruction, movement within the multi-level prevention system, intensification of instruction and supports, and identification of students with disabilities (in accordance with state law).

Indicator	1	3	5
Decision-Making Process	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/intervention levels meets no more than one of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/intervention levels meets two of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/intervention levels meets all of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).
Data System	A data system is in place, but only meets two or fewer of the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.	A data system is in place that meets three of the following four conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.	A data system is in place that meets all of the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.

Indicator	1	3	5
Responsiveness to Secondary and Intensive Levels of Intervention	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions about responsiveness to intervention are based on reliable and valid progress-monitoring data that reflect slope of improvement or progress toward the attainment of a goal at the end of the intervention; and (2) these decision-making criteria are implemented accurately.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions about responsiveness to intervention are based on reliable and valid progress-monitoring data that reflect slope of improvement or progress toward the attainment of a goal at the end of the intervention; and (2) these decision-making criteria are implemented accurately.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) decisions about responsiveness to the intervention are based on reliable and valid progress-monitoring data that reflect slope of improvement or progress toward the attainment of a goal at the end of the intervention; and (2) these decision-making criteria are implemented accurately.

Section 4: MTSS Multi-level Prevention System Fidelity Rubric

Multilevel Instruction---The MTSS framework includes a school-wide, multilevel system of instruction and interventions for preventing school failure. It is commonly represented by a three-tiered triangle to represent Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3.

Tier 1: Core Programming for All Students

Tier 1 includes high-quality, schoolwide academic, social, emotional, and behavioral programming and supports designed to meet the needs of all students.

Indicator	1	3	5
Research-Based Curriculum Materials	Few core curriculum materials are research based for the target population of learners (including subgroups such as English learners and students with disabilities).	Some core curriculum materials are research based for the target population of learners (including subgroups such as English learners and students with disabilities).	All core curriculum materials are research based for the target population of learners (including subgroups such as English learners and students with disabilities).

Indicator	1	3	5
Articulation of Teaching and Learning (in and across grade levels)	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another; and (2) teaching and learning is well articulated within grade levels so that students have highly similar experiences, regardless of their assigned teacher.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another; and (2) teaching and learning are well articulated within grade levels so that students have highly similar experiences, regardless of their assigned teacher.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another; and (2) teaching and learning are well articulated within grade levels so that students have highly similar experiences, regardless of their assigned teacher.
Differentiated Instruction	Neither of the following condition is met: (1) staff can describe how most teachers in the school differentiate instruction for students on, below, or above grade level; and (2) staff can explain how most teachers in the school use student data to identify and address the needs of students.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) staff can describe how most teachers in the school differentiate instruction for students on, below, or above grade level; and (2) staff can explain how most teachers in the school use student data to identify and address the needs of students.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) staff can describe how most teachers in the school differentiate instruction for students on, below, or above grade level; and (2) staff can explain how most teachers in the school use student data to identify and address the needs of students.
Standards-Based	The core curriculum is not aligned with the state standards or agreed upon standards.	The core curriculum is partially aligned with the state standards or other agreed upon standards.	The core curriculum is aligned with the state standards or other agreed upon standards
Exceeding Benchmark	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) the school provides enrichment opportunities for students exceeding benchmarks; and (2) teachers implement those opportunities consistently at all grade levels.	One of the following conditions is met: (1) the school provides enrichment opportunities for students exceeding benchmarks; and (2) teachers implement those opportunities consistently at all grade levels.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) the school provides enrichment opportunities for students exceeding benchmarks; and (2) teachers implement those opportunities consistently at all grade levels.

Tier 2: Supplemental Intervention

At Tier 2, schools provide small group, standardized academic interventions or targeted behavioral or mental health supports using validated intervention programs to support students identified as at-risk through screening.

Indicator	1	3	5
Evidence-Based Intervention	Tier 2 interventions are not evidence based in content areas and grade levels where they are available.	Some Tier 2 interventions are evidence based in content areas and grade levels where they are available.	All Tier 2 interventions are evidence based in content areas and grade levels where they are available.
Complements Core Instruction	Tier 2 interventions are poorly aligned with core instruction and incorporate different topics that do not directly support core program learning objectives at Tier 1.	Tier 2 interventions incorporate foundational skills, but only occasionally align with the learning objectives of core curriculum and instruction at Tier 1.	Tier 2 interventions are well aligned with core instruction and incorporate foundational skills that support the learning objectives of core curriculum and instruction at Tier 1.
Instructional Characteristics	None or only one of the following conditions is met: (1) interventions are standardized; (2) Tier 2 interventions are led by staff trained in the intervention according to developer requirements; and (3) group size and dosage are optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) interventions are standardized; (2) Tier 2 interventions are led by staff trained in the intervention according to developer requirements; and (3) group size and dosage are optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	All three of the following conditions are met: (1) interventions are standardized; (2) Tier 2 interventions are led by staff trained in the intervention according to developer requirements; and (3) group size and dosage are optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.
Addition to Tier 1 Core Programming	Tier 2 interventions replace Tier 1 core programming and instruction.	Tier 2 interventions sometimes supplement Tier 1 and sometimes replace Tier 1 core programming and instruction.	Tier 2 interventions supplement Tier 1 core programming and instruction.

Tier 3: Intensive Intervention

Tier 3 includes intensive intervention for students not responding to Tier 2 through instruction and supports that are intensified and individualized based on student need. For more information on intensive intervention.

Indicator	1	3	5
Data-Based Interventions Adapted Based on Student Need	Intensive interventions are not more intensive (e.g., no increase in duration or frequency, change in interventionist, change in group size, or change in intervention) than Tier 2 interventions.	Intensive interventions are more intensive than Tier 2 interventions but are based only on preset methods to increase intensity (e.g., sole reliance on increased duration or frequency, change in interventionist, decreased group size, or change in intervention program).	Intensive interventions are more intensive than Tier 2 interventions and are adapted to address individual student needs in a number of ways (e.g., increased duration or frequency, change in interventionist, decreased group size, change in instructional delivery, and change in type of intervention) through an iterative manner based on student data.
Instructional Characteristics	None of the following conditions is met: (1) the intervention is individualized; (2) intensive interventions are led by well-trained staff experienced in individualizing instruction based on student data; and (3) the group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	Only one or two of the following conditions is met: (1) the intervention is individualized; (2) intensive interventions are led by well-trained staff experienced in individualizing instruction based on student data; and (3) the group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) the intervention is individualized; (2) intensive interventions are led by well-trained staff experienced in individualizing instruction based on student data; and (3) the group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.
Relationship to Tier 1 Core Programming	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both core instruction and intensive intervention are made on a case-by-case basis, according to student need; and (2) intensive interventions address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both core instruction and intensive intervention are made on a case-by-case basis, according to student need; and (2) intensive interventions address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both core instruction and intensive intervention are made on a case-by-case basis, according to student need; and (2) intensive interventions address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.

Section 5: MTSS School Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms

School Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms - Includes the knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize all components of MTSS in a unified system to meet the established goals. Most schools have these or components of these mechanisms, so it is important to assess the extent to which they are being used to support MTSS implementation. Schools with effective MTSS implementation also have a robust system for collecting and analyzing data to measure fidelity and effectiveness of the MTSS model and its individual components. The support infrastructures and mechanism have been found to be essential for scaling and sustaining MTSS implementation.

Indicator	1	3	5
Prevention Focus	Staff generally perceive MTSS as a program that solely supports the prereferral process for special education.	Some staff understand that MTSS is a framework to prevent all students, including students with disabilities, from experiencing poor learning outcomes.	All staff understand that MTSS is a framework to prevent all students, including students with disabilities, from experiencing poor learning outcomes.
Leadership Personnel	Decisions and actions by school and district leaders undermine the effectiveness of the essential components of the MTSS framework at the school.	Decisions and actions by school and district leaders are inconsistent and only somewhat supportive of the essential components of the MTSS framework at the school; support for MTSS implementation is not very evident.	Decisions and actions by school and district leaders proactively support the essential components of the MTSS framework at the school and help make the framework more effective; support for MTSS implementation is a high priority.
School-Based Professional Development	The school has no well-defined, school-based professional development mechanism to support continuous improvement of instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions and supports.	Some forms of school-based professional development are available, but most are not consistent or job embedded to ensure continuous improvement in instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions and supports.	School-based professional development is institutionalized and structured so that all teachers continuously examine, reflect upon, and improve instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions and supports.

Indicator	1	3	5
Schedules	Schoolwide schedules are not aligned to support multiple levels of intervention and support based on student need; inadequate time is available for core programming, interventions, and teaming.	Schoolwide schedules are partially aligned to support multiple levels of intervention based on student need; some additional time is built in for core programming, interventions, and teaming.	Schoolwide schedules are aligned to support multiple levels of intervention based on student need; adequate additional time is built in for core programming, interventions, and teaming.
Resources	Resources (e.g., funds, programs, staffing) are not allocated to support MTSS implementation.	Resources (e.g., funds, programs, staffing) are partially allocated to support MTSS implementation.	Resources (e.g., funds, programs, staffing) are adequately allocated to support MTSS implementation.
Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness	One or none of the following conditions is met: Staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting culturally and linguistically relevant (1) instructional practices, (2) assessments, and (3) intervention programs.	Two of the following conditions are met: Staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting culturally and linguistically relevant (1) instructional practices, (2) assessments, and (3) intervention programs.	All three of the following conditions are met: Staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting culturally and linguistically relevant (1) instructional practices, (2) assessments, and (3) intervention programs.
Communications With and Involvement of Families	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) a description of the school's essential components of MTSS is shared with families; (2) a coherent mechanism is implemented for updating families on the progress of their child who is receiving Tier 2 or 3 interventions; (3) families are involved during decision making regarding the progress of students receiving Tier 3 intensive intervention.	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school's essential components of MTSS is shared with families; (2) a coherent mechanism is implemented for updating families on the progress of their child who is receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 intensive interventions; (3) families are involved during decision making regarding the progress of students receiving Tier 3 intensive intervention.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school's essential components of MTSS is shared with families; (2) a coherent mechanism is implemented for updating families on the progress of their child who is receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 intensive interventions; (3) families are involved during decision making regarding the progress of students receiving Tier 3 intensive intervention.

Indicator	1	3	5
Communication With and Involvement of All Staff	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of MTSS and data-based decision-making process is shared with staff; (2) a system is in place to keep staff informed; and (3) teacher teams collaborate frequently.	At least two of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of MTSS and data-based decision-making process is shared with staff; (2) a system is in place to keep staff informed; and (3) teacher teams collaborate frequently.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of MTSS and data-based decision-making process is shared with staff; (2) a system is in place to keep staff informed; and (3) teacher teams collaborate frequently.
MTSS Teams	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) the MTSS team is representative of all key stakeholders; (2) structures and clear processes are in place to guide decision making; and (3) time is set aside for the team to meet regularly.	At least two of the following conditions are met: (1) the MTSS team is representative of all key stakeholders; (2) structures and clear processes are in place to guide decision making; and (3) time is set aside for the team to meet regularly.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) the MTSS team is representative of all key stakeholders; (2) structures and clear processes are in place to guide decision making; and (3) time is set aside for the team to meet regularly.
Fidelity	None or only one of the following conditions is met: (1) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of MTSS and its essential components; (2) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of instruction and interventions, and (3) procedures are in place to monitor the processes of administering and analyzing assessments.	Two of the following conditions is met: (1) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of MTSS and its essential components; (2) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of instruction and interventions, and (3) procedures are in place to monitor the processes of administering and analyzing assessments.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of MTSS and its essential components; (2) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of instruction and interventions, and (3) procedures are in place to monitor the processes of administering and analyzing assessments.

Indicator	1	3	5
Evaluation	None of the following conditions are met: (1) an evaluation plan is in place to monitor short- and long-term goals; (2) student data are reviewed for all students and subgroups of students across the essential components to evaluate effectiveness of the MTSS framework (i.e., core curriculum is effective, interventions are effective, screening process is effective); and (3) implementation data (e.g., walk-throughs) are reviewed to monitor fidelity and efficiency across all components of the MTSS framework.	One or two of the following conditions is met: (1) an evaluation plan is in place to monitor short- and long-term goals; (2) student data are reviewed for all students and subgroups of students across the essential components to evaluate effectiveness of the MTSS framework (i.e., core curriculum is effective, interventions are effective, screening process is effective); and (3) implementation data (e.g., walk-throughs) are reviewed to monitor fidelity and efficiency across all components of the MTSS framework.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) an evaluation plan is in place to monitor short- and long-term goals; (2) student data are reviewed for all students and subgroups of students across the essential components to evaluate effectiveness of the MTSS framework (i.e., core curriculum is effective, interventions are effective, screening process is effective); and (3) implementation data (e.g., walk-throughs) are reviewed to monitor fidelity and efficiency across all components of the MTSS framework.

Center on **Multi-Tiered System of Supports** at the American Institutes for Research®
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