

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Fidelity of Implementation Rubric (Version 3)

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a proactive and preventative framework that integrates data and instruction to maximize student achievement and support students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs from a strengths-based perspective.

Overview

The *MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric*, referred to as the Rubric, is for use by individuals and teams responsible for supporting 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 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 Rubric began under the National Center on Response to Intervention, which was 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 (e.g., 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 Rubric have been used by local educators since 2010. Lessons learned during this time suggest that 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 who have authority for resource allocation and program decision making (e.g., principals, curriculum directors, program directors).

Step 2: Have team members **rate each of the indicators in the Rubric individually** and be prepared to share with the team. Team members can rate the indicators prior to convening or during a facilitated activity with the team.

Step 3: After sharing individual ratings with the team, **engage in consensus building** to create a team rating for each indicator.

- Averaging individual scores is not recommended, especially if there are outliers. Instead, engage in a discussion and come to an agreement on the rating for each indicator.
- If a consensus can't be reached quickly, move on to the next indicator and come back later.
- To facilitate a more efficient 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 as a 1 whereas another member rates it as a 3).
- Provide or discuss evidence for any ratings of 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 4: 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., whole system, social, emotional, academic, behavioral):	
Participating Team Members and Role:	

Section 1: Screening

Screening is a systematic process for identifying students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes, including academic, social, emotional, behavioral, school completion, and college and career readiness outcomes. The screening process depends on access and use of data connected to reliable and valid indicators of the desired outcome within the selected grade levels.

Indicator	1	3	5
Screening Tools	<p>Screening tools meet none or only one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) brief, (2) reliable and valid, (3) accurately identify student risk status (<i>classification accuracy</i>), and (4) aligned to valued outcomes. <p>Staff are unable articulate the benefits and limitations of the tools.</p>	<p>Screening tools meet two or three of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) brief, (2) reliable and valid, (3) accurately identify student risk status (<i>classification accuracy</i>), and (4) aligned to valued outcomes. <p>Some staff can articulate the benefits and limitations of the tools.</p>	<p>Screening tools meet all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) brief, (2) reliable and valid, (3) accurately identify student risk status (<i>classification accuracy</i>), and (4) aligned to valued outcomes. <p>Staff can articulate the benefits and limitations of the tools.</p>
Universal Screening	<p>None or only one of the following conditions is met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) screening is conducted for all students, (2) screening occurs more than once per year, (3) the process limits disruptions to learning or instruction, or (4) procedures are in place to ensure consistent and accurate administration. 	<p>Two or three of the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) screening is conducted for all students, (2) screening occurs more than once per year, (3) the process limits disruptions to learning or instruction, or (4) procedures are in place to ensure consistent and accurate administration. 	<p>All of the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) screening is conducted for all students, (2) screening occurs more than once per year, (3) the process limits disruptions to learning or instruction, or (4) procedures are in place to ensure consistent and accurate administration.
Risk Verification	<p>Screening data are not used or are used alone to verify decisions about risk status.</p>	<p>Screening data are used with only one other appropriate data source to verify decisions about risk status.</p>	<p>Screening data are used with at least two other appropriate data sources to verify decisions about risk status.</p>

Section 2: Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is the ongoing, frequent collection and use of formal data (that was gathered with reliable and valid measures) to (1) assess students’ performance, (2) quantify a student’s rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction or intervention, and (3) evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention. Educators use measures that are appropriate for the student’s grade and/or skill level.

Indicator	1	3	5
Progress Monitoring Tools	<p>Progress monitoring tools meet two or fewer of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) brief, (2) reliable and valid, (3) sensitive to growth, (4) allow for repeated measurement, and (5) has typical growth rates and end-of-year benchmarks. <p>Staff are unable to articulate the benefits and limitations of the tools.</p>	<p>Progress monitoring tools meet three of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) brief, (2) reliable and valid, (3) sensitive to growth, (4) allow for repeated measurement, and (5) has typical growth rates and end-of-year benchmarks. <p>Some staff can articulate the benefits and limitations of the tools.</p>	<p>Progress monitoring tools meet all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) brief, (2) reliable and valid, (3) sensitive to growth, (4) allow for repeated measurement, and (5) has typical growth rates and end-of-year benchmarks. <p>Staff can articulate the benefits and limitations of the tools.</p>
Progress Monitoring Process	<p>None or only one of the following conditions is met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) progress monitoring occurs at least biweekly for students receiving Tier 2, (2) progress monitoring occurs at least weekly for students receiving Tier 3, and (3) procedures are in place to ensure consistent and accurate administration. 	<p>Two of the following conditions is met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) progress monitoring occurs at least biweekly for students receiving Tier 2, (2) progress monitoring occurs at least weekly for students receiving Tier 3, and (3) procedures are in place to ensure consistent and accurate administration. 	<p>All of the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) progress monitoring occurs at least biweekly for students receiving Tier 2, (2) progress monitoring occurs at least weekly for students receiving Tier 3, and (3) procedures are in place to ensure consistent and accurate administration.

Section 3: Data-Based Decision Making

Data-based decision making is the use of screening, progress monitoring, and other forms of data to make decisions about instruction, movement within the multi-level prevention system, intensification of instruction and supports, allocation of resources, and identification of students with disabilities (in accordance with state law). Data-based decision making occurs at all levels of MTSS implementation, from individual students to the district level.

Indicator	1	3	5
Decision-Making Process	The process for making student and system-level decisions meets none or only one of the following conditions: (1) is data-driven, (2) involves appropriate personnel with relevant decision-making authority, (3) has guidelines for setting goals, and (4) has agreed-upon decision rules.	The process for making student and system-level decisions meets two or three of the following conditions: (1) is data-driven, (2) involves appropriate personnel with relevant decision-making authority, (3) has guidelines for setting goals, and (4) has agreed-upon decision rules.	The process for making student and system-level decisions meets all of the following conditions: (1) is data-driven, (2) involves appropriate personnel with relevant decision-making authority, (3) has guidelines for setting goals, and (4) has agreed-upon decision rules.
Data System	The data system used meets none or only one of the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data and instructional decisions, (2) data are entered in a timely manner, and (3) data can be represented visually or graphically.	The data system used meets two of the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data and instructional decisions, (2) data are entered in a timely manner, and (3) data can be represented visually or graphically.	The data system used meets all of the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data and instructional decisions, (2) data are entered in a timely manner, and (3) data can be represented visually or graphically.
Responsiveness to Tier 2 and Tier 3 Intervention	Few staff apply decision rules to progress monitoring data when examining responsiveness to instruction/intervention. There are no procedures in place to ensure consistent use of decision-making criteria.	Some staff apply decision rules to progress monitoring data when examining responsiveness to instruction/intervention. There are limited procedures in place to ensure consistent use of decision-making criteria.	All staff apply decision rules to progress monitoring data when examining responsiveness to instruction/intervention. Procedures are in place to ensure consistent use of decision-making criteria.

Section 4: Multi-Level Prevention System

The multi-level prevention system is the organization of supports for students that includes three tiers of increasing intensity for instruction and intervention.

Tier 1: Core Programming

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

Indicator	1	3	5
Articulation of Teaching and Learning	Teaching and learning objectives are not articulated from one grade to another or within grade levels.	Teaching and learning objectives are partially articulated from one grade to another and within grade levels.	Teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another and within grade levels.
Curriculum Materials	The core materials are <i>neither</i> evidence-based for the student population and subgroups <i>nor</i> aligned with state standards.	The core materials are <i>either</i> evidence-based for the student population and subgroups <i>or</i> aligned with state standards.	The materials are <i>both</i> evidence-based for the student population and subgroups <i>and</i> aligned with state standards.
Instructional Characteristics	Tier 1 instruction meets none or only one of the following: (1) delivered using agreed-upon evidence-based instructional practices, (2) led by staff trained in curriculum materials, (3) includes adequate time to teach the content and provide sufficient opportunity for students to respond, practice, and receive feedback, and (4) has procedures in place to ensure consistent use.	Tier 1 instruction meets two or three of the following: (1) delivered using agreed-upon evidence-based instructional practices, (2) led by staff trained in curriculum materials, (3) includes adequate time to teach the content and provide sufficient opportunity for students to respond, practice, and receive feedback, and (4) has procedures in place to ensure consistent use.	Tier 1 instruction meets all of the following: (1) delivered using agreed-upon evidence-instructional practices, (2) led by staff trained in curriculum materials, (3) includes adequate time to teach the content and provide sufficient opportunity for students to respond, practice, and receive feedback, and (4) has procedures in place to ensure consistent use.
Differentiated Instruction	Few staff use student data to design and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students on, below, and above grade level.	Some staff use student data to design and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students on, below, and above grade level.	All staff use student data to design and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students on, below, and above grade level.

Tier 2: Supplemental Intervention

Tier 2 is small group, standardized interventions that target academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs using validated programs for students identified as at-risk.

Indicator	1	3	5
Evidence-Based Intervention	Tier 2 interventions meet none or only one of following conditions: (1) standardized, (2) matched to student needs, and (3) evidence-based for the target content areas, grade levels, and student population.	Tier 2 interventions meet two of following conditions: (1) standardized, (2) matched to student needs, and (3) evidence-based for the target content areas, grade levels, and student population.	Tier 2 interventions meet all of the following: (1) standardized, (2) matched to student needs, and (3) evidence-based for the target content areas, grade levels, and student population.
Complements Tier 1	Tier 2 interventions are poorly aligned with the foundational skills and learning objectives taught in Tier 1.	Tier 2 interventions incorporate foundational skills, but only occasionally align with the Tier 1 learning objectives.	Tier 2 interventions align with Tier 1 programming <i>and</i> incorporate foundational skills that support Tier 1 learning objectives.
Instructional Characteristics	Tier 2 interventions meet none or only one of the following conditions: (1) delivered using evidence-based instructional practices, (2) led by staff trained according to intervention requirements, (3) group size and dosage are optimal for the age and needs of students, and (4) implemented consistently.	Tier 2 interventions meet two or three of the following conditions: (1) delivered using evidence-based instructional practices, (2) led by staff trained according to intervention requirements, (3) group size and dosage are optimal for the age and needs of students, and (4) implemented consistently.	Tier 2 interventions meet all of the following conditions: (1) delivered using evidence-based instructional practices, (2) led by staff trained according to intervention requirements, (3) group size and dosage are optimal for the age and needs of students, and (4) implemented consistently.
Addition to Tier 1	Tier 2 interventions replace Tier 1.	Tier 2 interventions sometimes supplement Tier 1 and sometimes replace Tier 1.	Tier 2 interventions are always provided in addition to Tier 1.

Tier 3: Intensive Intervention

Tier 3 is intensive intervention that is intensified and individualized based on student need. It is provided to students not responding to Tier 2 interventions and who may have low achievement or ongoing, intensive needs.

Indicator	1	3	5
Intensified Interventions	Tier 3 interventions are <i>neither</i> individualized based on student data (<i>diagnostic data</i>) <i>nor</i> more intensive relative to Tier 2.	Tier 3 interventions are <i>either</i> individualized based on student data (<i>diagnostic data</i>), <i>or</i> more intensive relative to Tier 2.	Tier 3 interventions are <i>both</i> individualized based on student data (<i>diagnostic data</i>) <i>and</i> more intensive relative to Tier 2.
Instructional Characteristics	Tier 3 interventions meet none or only one of the following conditions: (1) delivered using evidence-based instructional practices, (2) provided by trained staff experienced in intensifying instruction based on student data, (3) the group size and dosage are optimal for the age and needs of students (e.g., <i>sufficient opportunity for students to respond, practice, and receive feedback on skills</i>), and (4) implemented consistently.	Tier 3 interventions meet two or three of the following conditions: (1) delivered using evidence-based instructional practices, (2) provided by trained staff experienced in intensifying instruction based on student data, (3) the group size and dosage are optimal for the age and needs of students (e.g., <i>sufficient opportunity for students to respond, practice, and receive feedback on skills</i>), and (4) implemented consistently.	Tier 3 interventions meet all of the following conditions: (1) delivered using evidence-based instructional practices, (2) provided by trained staff experienced in intensifying instruction based on student data, (3) the group size and dosage are optimal for the age and needs of students (e.g., <i>sufficient opportunity for students to respond, practice, and receive feedback on skills</i>), and (4) implemented consistently.
Relationship to Tier 1	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both Tier 1 and Tier 3 are made on a case-by-case basis, and (2) Tier 3 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 Tier 1 and Tier 3 are made on a case-by-case basis, and (2) Tier 3 interventions address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.	Both conditions are met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both Tier 1 and Tier 3 are made on a case-by-case basis, and (2) Tier 3 interventions address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.

Section 5: School Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms

School infrastructure and support mechanisms include the knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize and implement all components of MTSS in a unified system to meet the identified implementation and outcome goals.

Indicator	1	3	5
Buy-In	Staff generally perceive MTSS as a program that solely supports the prereferral process for special education. Leadership does not take proactive steps to build buy-in and understanding of MTSS.	Some staff understand that MTSS is a framework to support all students, including students with disabilities, and to prevent poor learning outcomes. Leadership takes limited steps to proactively build buy-in and understanding of MTSS.	All staff understand that MTSS is a framework to support all students, including students with disabilities, and to prevent poor learning outcomes. Leadership takes proactive steps to build buy-in and understanding of MTSS.
Leadership Personnel	Decisions and actions by school leaders do not actively support the essential components of MTSS. Support for MTSS implementation is limited.	Decisions and actions by school leaders are inconsistent and are only somewhat supportive of the essential components of MTSS. Support for MTSS implementation is inconsistent.	Decisions and actions by school leaders proactively support the essential components of MTSS 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 inconsistent or not 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 educators continuously examine, reflect upon, and improve instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions and supports.
Schedule	The schoolwide schedule provides inadequate time for assessment, Tier 1, Tiers 2 and 3, and teaming and decision making.	The schoolwide schedule partially provides adequate time for assessment, Tier 1, Tiers 2 and 3, and teaming and decision making.	The schoolwide schedule provides adequate time for assessment, Tier 1, Tiers 2 and 3, and teaming and decision making.
Resources	Resources (<i>e.g., funds, programs, staffing</i>) are not allocated to support MTSS implementation.	Resources (<i>e.g., funds, programs, staffing</i>) are partially allocated to support MTSS implementation.	Resources (<i>e.g., funds, programs, staffing</i>) are adequately allocated to support MTSS implementation.

Indicator	1	3	5
Cultural and Linguistic Relevance	Few staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting culturally and linguistically relevant instructional practices, assessments, and intervention programs.	Some staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting culturally and linguistically relevant instructional practices, assessments, and intervention programs.	All staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting culturally and linguistically relevant instructional practices, assessments, and intervention programs.
Family Engagement	The school has <i>neither</i> a description of the supports available for students and their families <i>nor</i> a coherent mechanism for communication with and involvement of families.	The school has <i>either</i> a description of the supports available for students and their families <i>or</i> a coherent mechanism for communication with and involvement of families.	The school has <i>both</i> a description of the supports available for students and their families <i>and</i> a coherent mechanism for communication with and involvement of families. There is evidence that families feel a sense of belonging.
Staff Communication and Collaboration	None or only one of the following conditions is met: (1) staff have a common language and data-based decision making processes, (2) a bidirectional communication system is in place, and (3) conditions are in place for teachers to collaborate frequently.	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) staff have a common language and data-based decision making processes, (2) a bidirectional communication system is in place, and (3) conditions are in place for teachers to collaborate frequently.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) staff have a common language and data-based decision making processes, (2) a bidirectional communication system is in place, and (3) conditions are in place for teachers to collaborate frequently.
Teaming Structures	The school has none or only one of the following conditions: (1) at least one team responsible for implementation of MTSS schoolwide, (2) at least one team responsible for decisions about students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions, (3) structures and processes are in place to guide team decision making, and (4) time is set aside for teams to meet regularly.	The school has two or three of the following conditions: (1) at least one team responsible for implementation of MTSS schoolwide, (2) at least one team responsible for decisions about students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions, (3) structures and processes are in place to guide team decision making, and (4) time is set aside for teams to meet regularly.	The school has all of the following: (1) at least one team responsible for implementation of MTSS schoolwide, (2) at least one team responsible for decisions about students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions, (3) structures and processes are in place to guide team decision making, and (4) time is set aside for teams to meet regularly.

Indicator	1	3	5
Evaluation of Fidelity	<p>Procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of none or only one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) implementation of MTSS and its essential components, (2) instruction and interventions, and (3) administering assessments, and (4) decision-making procedures. 	<p>Procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of two or three of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) implementation of MTSS and its essential components, (2) instruction and interventions, and (3) administering assessments, and (4) decision-making procedures. 	<p>Procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) implementation of MTSS and its essential components, (2) instruction and interventions, and (3) administering assessments, and (4) decision-making procedures. <p>Teams evaluate data on a regular basis.</p>
Evaluation of Outcomes	<p>Procedures are in place to monitor none or only one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) short- and long-term goals for MTSS, (2) impact of MTSS for all students and subgroups of students, and (3) the efficiency and effectiveness of MTSS implementation for continuous improvement. 	<p>Procedures are in place to monitor two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) short- and long-term goals for MTSS, (2) impact of MTSS for all students and subgroups of students, and (3) the efficiency and effectiveness of MTSS implementation for continuous improvement. 	<p>Procedures are in place to monitor all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) short- and long-term goals for MTSS, (2) impact of MTSS for all students and subgroups of students, and (3) the efficiency and effectiveness of MTSS implementation for continuous improvement. <p>Team(s) review data at least annually.</p>