Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports

Structuring Guide: Module 1 Leadership

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Introduction to Document

The *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Structuring Guide* has been created to assist schools in creating the structures necessary to begin the implementation of a Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). This document serves as a workbook for either schools working with Recognized MTSS Facilitators (a current list can be found at www.kansasmtss.org) or as a do-it-yourself guide for schools taking on the challenge themselves. This document provides an explanation of why each component is important as well as suggests steps that have helped other schools successfully complete the tasks and decision making necessary for creating structures that support a sustainable system. Content area specific documents for reading, mathematics, and behavior are companion documents to this one, providing information specific to each content area. All Kansas MTSS documents are aligned with the *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM)*, which describes the critical components of a MTSS and what each looks like when fully implemented, and the *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Research Base*, which provides a basic overview of the research support for a MTSS.

Acknowledgements

A significant commitment of time and energy from numerous Kansas educators, their districts, organizations and partners made this document possible. Their efforts to learn and help others understand what it takes to make a MTSS a reality within schools is reflected in this document. This grassroots effort on the part of Kansas educators indicates a commitment to meeting the needs of every student and sharing wisdom from the field and the research. As the list of individuals and districts that have contributed to this effort over the past 8 years has become too long to detail, a collective expression of gratitude is offered here to everyone who has contributed to the concepts, ideas, and knowledge that are reflected in all Kansas MTSS documents.

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INTRODUCTION

In Kansas, every student should always be learning. More than that, every student should be challenged to achieve high standards both academically and behaviorally. The systemic framework for ensuring that all students in Kansas have this experience is referred to as the Multi-Tier System of Supports or MTSS. Simply put, MTSS is a set of evidence-based practices implemented across a system to meet the needs of all learners. Horner and colleagues (2005) stressed the importance of supporting children both academically and behaviorally in order to enable them to reach their full learning potential. MTSS builds a system of prevention, early intervention, and support to ensure all students are learning from the instruction. It establishes a system that intentionally focuses on leadership, professional development, and an empowering culture. MTSS incorporates a continuum of assessment, curriculum, and instruction. This systemic approach supports both struggling and advanced learners with the selection and implementation of increasingly intense evidence-based interventions in response to both academic and behavioral needs. The system establishes a Self-Correcting Feedback Loop that includes ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of instruction to ensure that each Kansas student achieves to high standards.

Across the nation, schools use a variety of curricula, interventions, and methods to monitor student learning, both academically and socially. Early Intervening Services (EIS), Response to Intervention (RtI), and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) are all similar practices. For almost two decades, Kansas has supported a problem-solving process of student improvement teams (SIT) to provide intervention as early as possible for academics and behavior. All of these processes are based on a body of research that documents that providing intervention as early as possible for both academic and behavioral problems will prevent more serious problems later.

Goals of MTSS

To provide an integrated systemic approach to meeting the needs of all students.

To become the guiding framework for school improvement activities to address the academic and behavioral achievement of all students.

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The goal of MTSS is to provide an integrated systemic approach to meeting the needs of all students. To achieve this, resources must be used in an effective and efficient way to enable every student to be successful. Most importantly, MTSS does not necessarily require additional resources or adding on to existing practices. Instead, it involves evaluating current practices to identify those that yield evidence of effectiveness, addressing areas that are missing, and replacing ineffective or

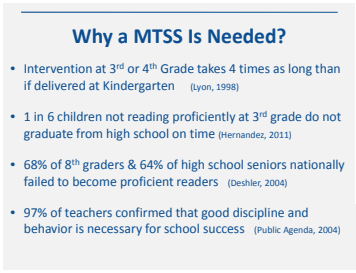
inefficient approaches with those that are supported by research. MTSS is the guiding framework for school improvement activities to address the academic and behavioral achievement of all students. Classroom teachers frequently request assistance with behavior and classroom management. When teachers are struggling with behavioral issues, valuable opportunities for learning in other areas are being lost.

According to research conducted by Public Agenda (2004), teachers are frustrated by behavioral issues that detract from classroom instructional time. Of the 725 middle and high school teachers surveyed, 97% confirmed that good discipline and behavior are necessary for a school to flourish. Further, 77% of teachers felt that their teaching would be better if disruptive behaviors did not require so much of their time. While more than half of those surveyed indicated that armed police officers are on school grounds, most indicated that they felt that their schools were doing a good job of handling issues like drugs and guns, but that issues such as minor rule violations, disrespect, disruptive behaviors, and the like needed to be handled better. This concern is warranted, as research suggests that there is an increased probability of academic problems when a student displays early problem behaviors, and vice versa. Further, the older students get, the higher the stakes, as both academic and behavioral variables contribute to high school dropout rates (McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008).

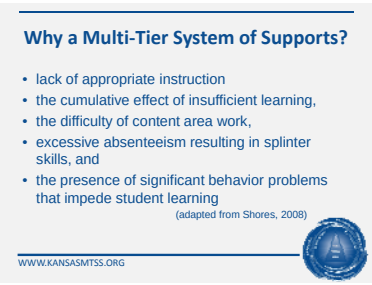
McIntosh and colleagues (2008) obtained interesting results when they looked at the transition from middle school to high school. Data indicated that Grade 8 behavioral data (i.e., office discipline referrals) were strongly predictive of Grade 9 academic performance (i.e., GPA, state assessments), while Grade 9 behavior was predictable given Grade 8 academic performance. Perhaps even more interesting, the prevalence data showed that the percentage of students with academic challenges alone (18%) was nearly quadruple the percentage of students with behavioral challenges without academic challenges (5%), while students with both behavioral and academic challenges comprised a relatively large group (12%). These data suggest that students with behavioral challenges are more likely to also grapple with academic challenges. They go on to assert:

> There is a common public perception that middle and high school students do not need to be taught how to behave according to teacher expectations, but these results provide evidence that student problem behavior directly predicts academic achievement. If teachers are

expected to provide successful academic instruction, it may be necessary to provide behavior instruction to lay the groundwork for effective teaching to take place without distraction (p. 252).

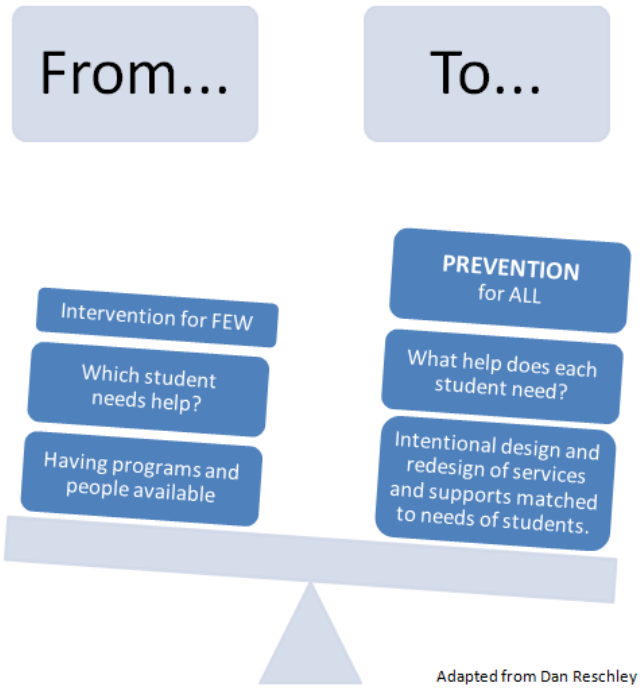


Thus, the school improvement plan and results-based staff development plan should include a focus on the underlying concepts of the principles and practices of MTSS. The MTSS framework seeks to be prevention-oriented and resolve the disconnected nature of the supports within schools. MTSS does not necessarily require additional resources or adding on to existing practices; instead, it requires the evaluation of current practices to identify those that yield evidence of effectiveness. MTSS also addresses areas that are missing and replaces ineffective or inefficient approaches with those that are supported by research and address areas of need.



Why a Multi-Tier System of Supports Is Needed

Even with the best of intentions, educational systems are not always as cohesive as desired. In many instances, educators and parents have been frustrated with the process to access support for students who are advanced learners as well as those who are struggling. A significant aspect of changing to a multi-tier system involves a shift in thinking about how a system responds to student needs. The table below highlights how thinking shifts from matching students to programs to becoming focused on understanding student needs and designing services and supports to meet those needs.



MTSS is designed as a framework based on prevention, early intervention, and support for all students. It is not tied to a specific content or curriculum. While MTSS does not stipulate the curriculum, programs, instructional practices, or assessments used within a system, those chosen by schools must be supported by the highest quality of research available.

Definition of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports

MTSS is a coherent continuum of evidence-based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs. Frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision making empowers each Kansas student to achieve high standards.

Focus of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports

The focus of MTSS is to achieve system level change across the classroom, school, district, and state.

Core Beliefs of the Multi-Tier System of Supports Stakeholders

- Every child learns and achieves to high standards.
- Learning includes academic and social competencies.
- Every member of the learning community continues to grow, learn, and reflect.
- Every leader at all levels is responsible for every child.
- Change is intentional, coherent, and dynamic.

The Core Beliefs are achieved by making a commitment that:

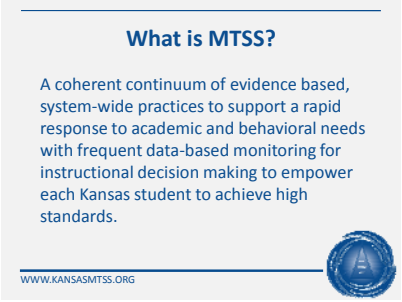
- Every child will be provided a rigorous and research-based curriculum.
- Every child will be provided effective and relentless teaching.
- Interventions will be provided at the earliest identification of need.
- Policy will be based on evidence-based practice.
- Every educator will continuously gain knowledge and develop expertise to build capacity and sustain effective practice.
- Resources will be intentionally designed and redesigned to match student needs.
- Every leader will be responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based practices.
- Academic and behavioral data will be used to inform instructional decisions.
- Educators, families, and community members will be part of the fundamental practice of effective problem solving and instructional decision making.
- An empowering culture will be enhanced and developed to create a collective responsibility for student success.

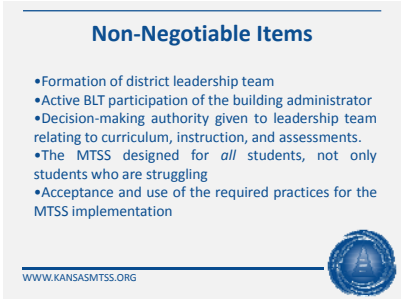
These beliefs were created by a stakeholder group comprised of early implementers and the list was adopted by KSDE. Buildings and districts develop and adopt their own belief statements as they move toward a multi-tier system.

Non-Negotiable Items of the Multi-Tier System of Supports

The creation of a sustainable MTSS requires significant leadership and an intense focus on alignment of all resources and practices. To achieve this, schools must agree to the following non-negotiable conditions:

- There must be a district leadership team if the MTSS effort is district driven.



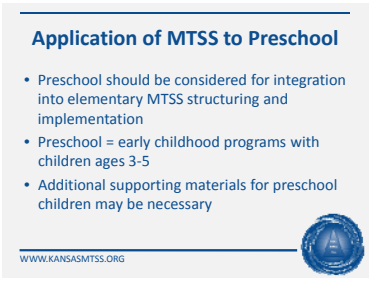


- Active participation of the building administrator on the building leadership team is necessary to provide leadership, support, and authority to the team.
- Membership of the leadership team includes individuals with decision-making authority over curriculum, instruction, and assessments. This enables teams to have discussions and take action as opposed to having to require external approval of their work to move forward.
- The MTSS needs to be designed to support the learning of *all* students, not only students who are struggling to learn.
- The acceptance and use of the required practices for the MTSS implementation of the content area chosen must be embraced by all school staff.

Creating a Multi-Tier System of Supports

The process of creating an MTSS is neither a quick fix nor the adoption of new rhetoric. It is a thoughtful and intentional redesign of educational practices and supports provided by general education and entitlement programs, such as Title I and special education, to ensure that the individual needs of all students are being met in the most effective and efficient way possible. The design and implementation of MTSS is a multi-year process. The *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Structuring Guide* supports schools in the creation of an MTSS. Additional guides are available to support efforts as the system moves into implementation and refinement. Creating the structures necessary and implementing an integrated and sustainable multi-tier system is a process that is likely to take two to five years, depending on current practices and structures within a building.

Application of MTSS to Preschool Programs



Preschool programs utilize a prevention model, as does the Kansas MTSS framework, and therefore, should be considered for integration into elementary MTSS structuring and implementation activities. The general practices and procedures provided in the Kansas MTSS materials can and should be applied by leadership teams when integrating preschool into the MTSS. For appropriate integration to occur, it is important for leadership teams to carefully consider the similarities and differences between programming for very young children and formal schooling. There will be times when the application of an MTSS to a very young population may be slightly different than what is created for school-aged children.

Additional consideration must be given to program variables within early childhood programs. Since early childhood programs are not mandated, many have been designed to serve

targeted populations that are considered at risk. This results in variables that impact the appropriateness of instruction and intervention within classrooms such as a having age-grouped classrooms (3, 4, and 5 year old classrooms) vs. multi-age classrooms in addition to having a predominantly at-risk population.

When reading the *Kansas MTSS Structuring Guide* and other materials, the leadership team must be aware that terms such as grade level or student are not generally used to describe preschool classrooms. However, those terms are predominantly used in the MTSS guidance documents. The necessity to change all sentences to be descriptive of both preschool and K-12 appears unwarranted as long as leadership teams understand the importance of understanding the basic concepts and underlying principles included in the materials. Therefore, when reading general MTSS documents, leadership teams must remember to properly interpret and adjust accordingly to ensure that practices are put into place that are developmentally age-appropriate.

For the purposes of the guides the term preschool will be used to describe early childhood programs serving young children between the ages of 3 through 5 years of age. There will be times when the information provided in the guides is not extensive or specific enough to adequately address specific preschool content or structuring activities. Leadership teams will occasionally need to access supporting materials located in the appendix of each guide or on the Kansas MTSS website.

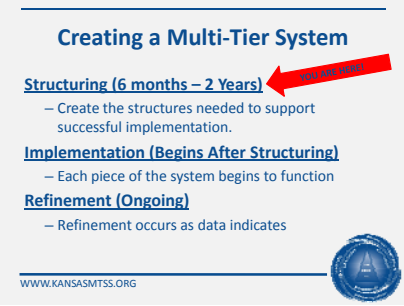
Stages of Implementation

The implementation of an MTSS requires the identification and action of using a set of practices. Winter & Szulanski describe the implementation as a transfer of knowledge process as opposed to an event that creates a set of routines in a manner that occurs continuously (as cited in Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). This process of identification, transfer, and continued use typically takes 2 to 4 years and is not linear. The system will continually cycle back through stages as staff, students, and the community change. Fixsen et. al. (2005) identify the stages of implementation as:

1) Exploration and Adoption: consideration of the need for change, for potential interventions that may be effective, and for making the decision to proceed.
2) Program Installation: identifying the specific practices to be used and allocating resoures necessary to use these practices as designed.
3) Initial Implementation: the first and sometimes awkward

use of the practices by trained staff.

4) Full Implementation: the skillful use of all identified practices by all staff as designed.
5) Innovation: improvements to the design based on improved knowledge and skill based on evaluation data.
6) Sustainability: consistent and skillful use of and reinforcement for using all practices as part of the normal routine of the building by all staff.



Structuring

When a building makes the decision to create an MTSS, the structures necessary for implementation and sustainability of a multi-tier system are designed first. To design the structure, a needs assessment must be completed that includes an evaluation of the alignment of academic and behavioral expectations, current practices, research, and materials within the building. This is not a quick process in itself; to do it adequately will take time and effort on the part of both the leadership and staff. The process of ensuring that the structures are in place has taken buildings in Kansas anywhere from six months to two years, depending on current practices. The duration of aligning expectations and practices depends on the ability both to commit resources to evaluate practices and to provide the necessary professional development and ongoing support for the staff to change instructional practices. Although it is tempting to hurry through these tasks to move quickly to implementation, buildings have learned that it is worth the effort and time to reconfigure the structures necessary prior to implementation. Without solid structures, implementation will invariably be met by barriers that will require even more time to overcome and will challenge sustainability.

Implementation and Refinement

For effective implementation, building teams create structures to collect data. The structures support the use of data to guide instructional decisions and refine instruction. Once the structures are in place, implementation begins. All decisions made during structuring are coordinated to create an effective system. During implementation and refinement, the Self-Correcting Feedback Loop becomes evident as a building continually revisits each of the areas.

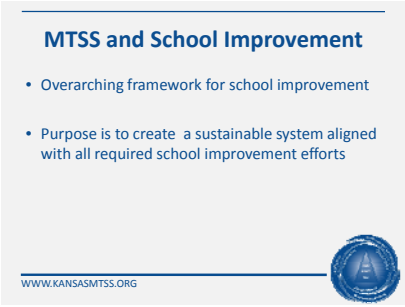
Successful implementation ensures that practices are being implemented as planned and that the decisions made are having a positive effect on student success. The goal of Kansas' framework is that each building will create a self-correcting MTSS. When a Self-Correcting Feedback Loop is functioning,

the building will have the infrastructure to support a dynamic system that can be refined and redesigned as necessary to match resources with the needs of students.

Creating an MTSS within a district and building should not be considered as a single event of implementing a program or intervention that is only provided to students (i.e., 'this student is receiving MTSS.'). The creation of an MTSS requires establishing procedures for how the system operates and responds systematically to student needs. An MTSS provides a framework for how the school responds when students need additional support. When this system (set of procedures) is functioning effectively, a Self-Correcting Feedback Loop (discussed in detail later) is established, which creates a process of instruction that includes an ongoing needs assessment at all levels (district, building, grade, classroom, individual student). This ongoing needs assessment process is driven by the comprehensive assessment system and a problem-solving process.

School Improvement within the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports Model

MTSS is not an initiative that schools choose instead of or as an alternative to Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA), North Central Accreditation (NCA) or any accreditation or improvement plan required by KSDE. MTSS is an overarching framework that guides schools through a process of needs assessment and decision making that assists in not only selecting effective practices but also in creating a sustainable aligned system. Schools use an MTSS as the framework for the school improvement process to address the academic and behavioral achievement of all students.



Most school accreditation and improvement models have specific requirements with built-in timelines for planning, developing, and conducting needs assessments as part of the process. As an overarching framework, an MTSS does not have specifics for timelines or needs assessment but allows schools to establish an MTSS according to the requirements of accreditation and school improvement. The MTSS materials and the process for structuring and implementing it require an ongoing needs assessment process to address both the factors that influence educational practices as well as the results being achieved.

Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) and Response-to-Intervention (RtI)

It is not uncommon to hear the terms RtI and Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) used interchangeably. However, in many instances the meaning applied to RtI does not align with the principles and practices of an MTSS. The principles and practices of an MTSS are based upon what research has shown to be effective in creating successful and sustainable system changes as well as what is necessary in providing the most effective instruction to all students. The MTSS framework is designed to address the academic and behavioral needs of every student, regardless of whether the students are struggling or have advanced learning needs.

The meaning and practices referred to as RtI range from a narrow view point such as the identification of students with specific learning disabilities under IDEA (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Kavale, Kauffman, Bachmeier, & LeFever, Summer 2008), to a broad view point as an educational change paradigm (Sansosti & Noltemeyer, Annual 2008; Shores & Chester, 2009). Since not all models labeled RtI have the same purpose or practices, Kansas has intentionally chosen to call this model the Multi-Tier System of Supports.

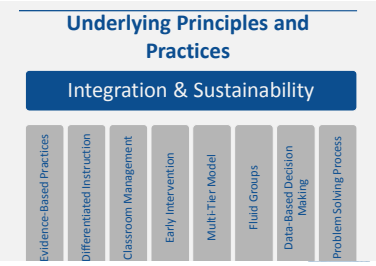
The focus of most RtI models is on instruction and intervention, and the model is typically represented as a triangle. Through years of experience Kansas educators came to the conclusion that focusing on the triangle alone is insufficient when truly realigning resources to support all students. To effectively support instruction and intervention within classrooms, both students and staff need aligned support including evidence-based curricula and instructional practices and a comprehensive assessment system. For these to be used effectively and systematically throughout a building or district and for the Self-Correcting Feedback Loop to function effectively, Leadership, Professional Development and an Empowering Culture must be included.

To ensure effective and efficient response by the system, the MTSS uses a hybrid model that includes standard protocol interventions and problem solving (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2006). In the MTSS hybrid model, standard protocol interventions are pre-identified interventions that allow for immediate response when a student's instructional needs are matched to those interventions. In addition to the protocol interventions, the system must also include problem-solving to adjust

interventions when protocol interventions are not matched to student need or if adequate progress is not being achieved.

Underlying Principles and Practices of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports

The MTSS is built upon strong educational practices that should be at the center of all instruction. These basic educational practices include using **evidence-based** (the highest level of research available in the content area) **curriculum and practices** in such a way as to provide **differentiated learning experiences** that challenge all students. In addition to these basic practices, teachers must be effective in the delivery of instruction in order for students to attain high achievement.



It is important not to overlook the significance of **classroom management** when planning to provide students with a tiered support system. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) found that, out of 228 possible variables, classroom management has the greatest impact on student achievement. Marzano and colleagues (2005) defined effective classroom management as the artful joining of the following teacher actions: (1) establishing and implementing rules and procedures, (2) establishing and implementing appropriate consequences, (3) maintaining effective teacher and student relationships, and (4) maintaining a "healthy emotional objectivity regarding management issues" (p. 92). Marzano's (2003) review of research concludes that educators addressing all four areas are more effective classroom managers, and that their management increases the likelihood of student achievement.

Once these basic instructional practices are in place, the additional principles and practices that are specific to multi-tier models are addressed. One practice is **intervening early**. The rationale for early intervention is twofold: (1) intervening early in the student's schooling prevents failure, and (2) intervening at the earliest indication of need at every grade level makes the best use of time and continual learning. Another practice is the use of a **multi-tier model**. Although the literature may show many configurations of a multi-tier model, the underlying concept is the same. The different levels/tiers within the triangle do not represent programs or staff, but describe the level of instructional support students receive. Allocation of staff responsible for providing the various levels of instruction is based upon local resources and the model of supports selected.

It is important to expect and plan for the varying levels of support based on student needs. It is further recognized that

despite delivering the most effective educational practices possible in each and every classroom, there will be some students for whom that is not sufficient. Therefore, it is imperative to establish additional supports that will target individual needs. It is much less important to debate how many tiers are needed than it is to understand that the system must be designed to match instruction to the needs of each student. Within and across the multiple tiers, there is an expectation that **instructional groups are fluid**. That is, students may access the instruction and curriculum most closely matched to their individual needs whenever warranted.

Data-based decision making and the use of a problem-solving process are inherent within a well-functioning MTSS. Consistent with the message that Kansas has been promoting for many years, buildings and districts are encouraged to utilize a problem-solving approach as they use data to guide decision making when creating, implementing, and refining an MTSS. It is through the use of data-based decision making that a Self-Correcting Feedback Loop, discussed in more detail later in this section, can be achieved. In a Self-Correcting Feedback Loop, data is used to guide initial efforts in the design of the system to determine whether the system is achieving the desired results and to guide refinement of the system until the desired results are achieved. Lastly, an MTSS framework must have **integration & sustainability**, so that all aspects of the system are integrated to support and sustain student learning.

The Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports Framework

The MTSS Framework

The triangle at the center of the MTSS graphic represents the multi-tier framework commonly seen in RtI models. Surrounding the triangle are Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, which interact to directly influence the system's ability to meet each student's needs.

The three arcs around the outside of the circle highlight the concepts of Leadership, Professional Development, and an Empowering Culture. These concepts must be constantly cultivated to ensure that all the work that takes place within the system is supported and that the system is sustainable. Viewing the MTSS graphic from the center out makes it clear that a system is necessary to support the business of educating students.

All (Core) forms the base of the triangle and represents what is often referred to as the core, or Tier 1. This level of the system is the foundation for the educational experience for all students, and includes curriculum, instruction, and assessment. At the core level, practices are evidence-based and

are designed so that a maximum number of students will be successful, thereby minimizing the need for additional intervention. However, even in a well-functioning MTSS with a strong core, there will be students who need additional (supplemental or intensive) support in order to continually learn and achieve to high expectations.

Some (Supplemental) is the center portion of the triangle, representing the supplemental level of support provided to some students. This is often referred to as Tier 2. The use of a process to make data-based decisions regarding grouping and instruction of students is essential at this level. Data-based decision making may be conducted in various configurations of collaborative teams: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), grade level teams, departmental teams, student improvement teams, etc. The goal remains constant: to analyze student data obtained through universal screening and diagnostic assessments and to make informed, intentional decisions that match interventions to student needs.

Interventions in Tier 2 target specific learning needs of students based on assessment data. Instruction in supplemental groups is more explicit and intense. The group size is smaller, typically three to five students. Interventions are research-based. Supplemental levels can focus on advanced learning as well as remediation. These interventions are *in addition to* the core provided to all students. It is through regularly scheduled times that the collaborative team reviews the progress of students receiving supplemental supports to determine if any instructional adjustments are required. With a strong core and effective supplemental supports, the needs of most students will be met. However, a well-functioning MTSS should also contain more individualized, customized, and intensive supports for those few students who have more significant needs.

Few (Intensive) is the level at the top of the triangle and represents the most intensive and customized intervention available within a school. A strong core and effective supplemental support help ensure that the numbers of

students being served at this level remain small enough to sufficiently provide intensive support. Again, collaborative teams use data to determine student needs. The intensive support provided at this level is even more explicit and systematic than at the previous tier. This is created through even smaller groups, as guided by research, potentially resulting in increased instructional time, different curricular materials, and/or instructional practices. Intensive services may necessitate an individual plan of student support.

The components of curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be designed, utilized, and implemented within the context of multiple tiers for instruction to be effective.

Curriculum: The curricular materials that are used at all the levels must be evidence-based and align with Kansas state standards. When determining curricular materials to support student behavior, considerations may include character education outcomes and school-wide behavior expectations. The issue of which curriculum/curricula to use is not as important as ensuring that all the essential components of the content area are addressed, appropriate staff training is available, and the curriculum can and will be executed with fidelity.

Instruction: Schools that understand instructional design will be able to plan explicit, systematic, scaffolded instruction in a purposeful manner. These practices are evidence-based, reflected in all teaching, and implemented with confidence and fidelity to positively impact student learning.

Assessments in a multi-tier system are used for a variety of purposes. Therefore, it is essential that a comprehensive and aligned assessment system be in place to facilitate necessary instructional decisions for academics and behavior. A comprehensive assessment system includes valid and reliable assessments for the purposes of (1) universal screening, (2) diagnostic/functional behavioral assessment, (3) progress monitoring, and (4) outcomes in each area being addressed.

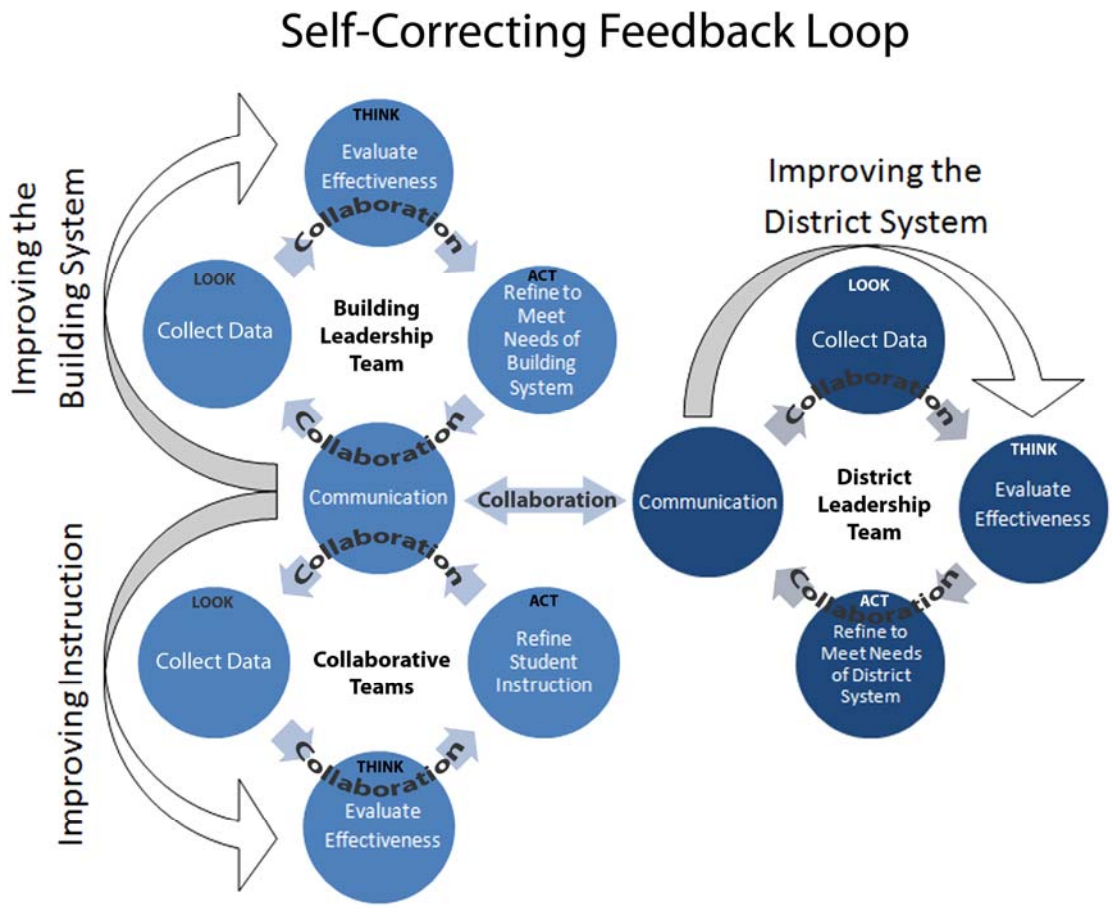
Leadership is an essential component to creating sustainable change within the system. Leadership is of particular importance in structuring and implementing an MTSS. When moving to a multi-tier system, there are formal structures of leadership that are necessary to ensure consistent communication and support to all stakeholders including staff. The initial work of the leadership team will be to create these leadership structures.

Professional Development is another essential component of MTSS. Effective professional development supporting MTSS practices require a carefully designed and executed plan. Professional development must be designed so that all staff receive initial training and implementation support. A comprehensive professional development plan also includes processes and procedures to monitor fidelity and to provide ongoing support to individual staff.

An Empowering Culture can prove to be one of the most challenging components to create, but it is key to creating a system that is sustainable. In an empowering culture, staff, students, families, and stakeholders become actively involved in the process of school improvement. The leadership team not only provides skills and opportunities but also encourages and facilitates active involvement of others in decision making.

A Self-Correcting Feedback Loop

The defining element of an effective MTSS is a Self-Correcting Feedback Loop. A Self-Correcting Feedback Loop is achieved through the use of a problem-solving process that continually collects data, analyzes results, and makes adjustments aimed



at positively influencing student learning and achievement. While the term 'self-correcting' suggests something that happens automatically, the reality is that there is nothing automatic about it. The forces behind the Self-Correcting Feedback Loop are teams working in concert toward a common vision. In order to ensure that all parts of the feedback loop are functioning, teams must utilize bi-directional communication in a clear, consistent fashion.

The cycle of **Improving Instruction** in the graphic represents the work of collaborative teams comprised of teachers and support staff who are in charge of analyzing data (screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring) at the grade, classroom, small group, and individual student levels. The collaborative teams use data to group students, identify the instructional focus of the groups, ascertain the materials to be used for core, supplemental and intensive instruction, and evaluate the effectiveness of the supports being provided. Collaborative teams have the ultimate responsibility of informing the building leadership team of how the system is operating on the front lines. Members of the collaborative teams are "in the trenches," so to speak, providing insight regarding potential system issues. Information is proactively communicated to the building leadership team for a timely, effective response.

The cycle of **Improving the Building System** in the graphic represents the work of the building leadership team made up of members of collaborative teams representing all grade levels as well as other appropriate staff members. The building leadership team, led by the building principal, is responsible for making all the pieces of the system function effectively and ensuring that student learning is monitored and evaluated. To accomplish this, the building leadership team analyzes input from the collaborative teams in addition to building-level student data. The leadership team determines whether adequate progress is being made toward building goals. They evaluate the effectiveness of components of the system to determine if adjustments are needed. When adjustments are required, the team determines what actions will be taken to refine the system. When results are not consistent with the goals, the building leadership team determines what course of action is needed to improve the system. The building leadership team, with the principal making final decisions, has the ultimate responsibility of ensuring the system is intentionally redesigned so that each student is learning.

The graphic illustrates the intersection of the two cycles occurring at different levels for different purposes, each communicating with the other. It is at the intersection of the

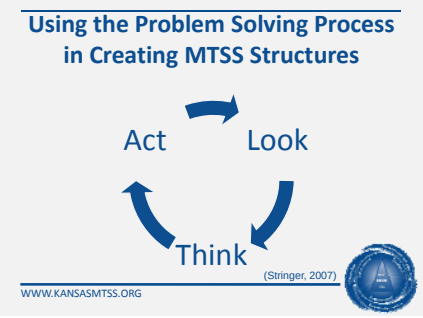
two circles that anticipated actions are communicated to the collaborative teams. In addition to the crucial communication between the collaborative teams and the building leadership team, communication with the district leadership team must occur. This is a reciprocal communication, as the building leadership team seeks to share information about successes as well as any need for support from the district. The district, in turn, shares district decisions that the building leadership team needs to know so that it can determine impact to an MTSS.

The district leadership team is made up of members representing schools in the district as well as district leaders. The cycle of **Improving the District System** in the graphic represents the work of the district leadership team. It is the responsibility of this leadership team to ensure that the district system has all the pieces functioning effectively to support the growth of the MTSS in each building.

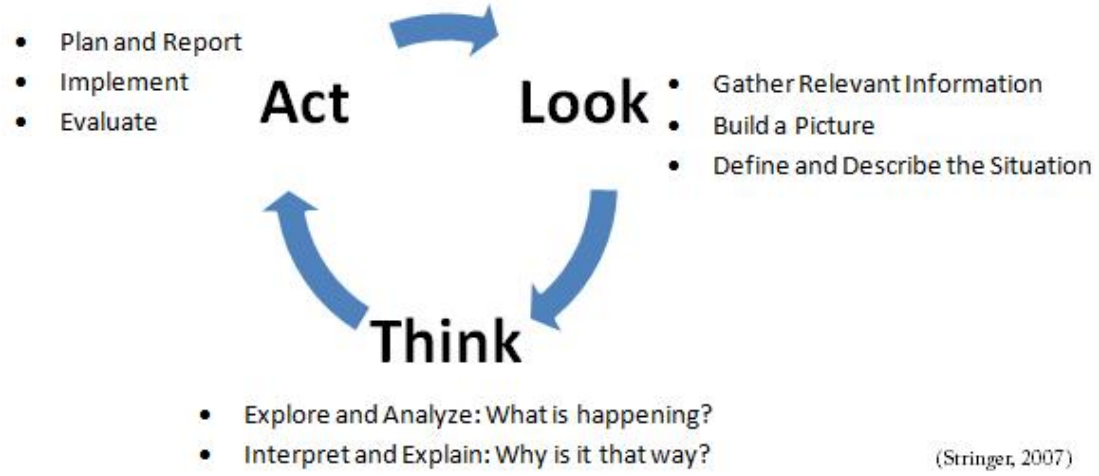
To accomplish this, the district leadership team analyzes district and building level input and data to evaluate the effectiveness of district supports. Through this analysis, district leadership teams determine if adjustments in district supports are needed, and communicate what actions or resources will be provided to building leadership teams.

Using the Problem-Solving Process in Creating MTSS Structures

As described in the introduction, an effective MTSS is one that is self-correcting and is based on a problem-solving process. As a leadership team makes decisions during structuring, a problem-solving process should be used. Problem-solving is a process to follow whether the team is determining if a change is necessary or is addressing a specific problem to solve. Through the problem-solving process the leadership team collects appropriate information, analyzes it, plans for implementation, and acts. If the building already uses a formal problem-solving process, it can be used for the MTSS. However, if one is not currently used, a simple problem solving process like the Look-Think-Act routine (Stringer, 2007) can be used. During each step of the routine the team observes, reflects, and then takes action.



The three steps in the Look-Think-Act routine involve:



With new data, team action circles back to the initial stage of Look as the process continues. When all teams follow this routine, it creates a Self-Correcting Feedback Loop. All work of the leadership team is driven by the problem-solving process. Even a method as simple as Look–Think–Act is effective. In fact, the Look-Think-Act problem-solving process was repeated several times while establishing the leadership team. The first group that came together performed the initial action. This group looked at the decisions to be made and the students and adults who were affected. From here, the group thought about representation of the original team, ensuring that all stakeholders had a voice. The team then scrutinized temperaments of the members. The group potentially took the action of adjusting membership of the leadership team to assimilate a variety of personalities. The Look-Think-Act process is simple, and it makes change efficient, effective, and sustainable. The problem-solving process continues throughout the MTSS structuring and implementation.

Purpose and Use of the Kansas MTSS: Structuring Guide

The purpose of an MTSS is to ensure healthy behavioral development and academic success of all students by expanding awareness of, access to, and use of a multi-tier system of supports for all students. The intent of MTSS Structuring is to provide an integrated systemic approach for buildings to evaluate current practices, identify current levels of effectiveness, address systemic/programmatic deficits, and replace or delete ineffective and inefficient practices. The *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Structuring Guide* is designed to assist buildings in creating the infrastructure needed for implementing a multi-tier system. The content of

the MTSS documents is validated by research and supported by Kansas educators who have shared their learning, experiences, and recommendations**.** The MTSS Structuring process systematically guides buildings in conducting a comprehensive needs assessment of the policies and practices in place and targeting areas of need. The needs assessment and planning process are critical. All staff must have adequate support to provide instruction matched with student needs, monitor student progress, and make refinements to ensure student success.

The content of this guide is divided into sections to enable teams to address key components systematically. The *Structuring Guide* is designed to guide teams through the most critical decisions about how the structure will be created in each building. In addition to this document, there are multiple content-specific structuring guide supplements that provide additional in-depth content area information to aid teams in making decisions. While this guide is approached systematically, section by section, experience verifies that the decisions might not be completed in the order presented. This guide is meant for use as a workbook. Teams revisit each section several times as tasks are accomplished. It is essential that leadership decisions (i.e., leadership team, norms, vision, and core beliefs) be made prior to moving on, as these decisions lay the foundation for further work.

Support for Schools during Structuring and Implementation

The Kansas State Department of Education, through IDEA Part B funds, supports the development of resources designed to assist districts and buildings through structuring and implementation of the MTSS. These materials are written with a focus on creating a system that is based on research from systems change, effective schools, and specific content areas (e.g., reading, mathematics, and behavior). The MTSS materials continue to be refined and additional tools developed to support buildings and districts. The most current materials are available on the Kansas MTSS website ***www.kansasmtss.org.***

The foundational documents, *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM)* and the *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Research Base* describe the framework and introduce the research behind the principles and practices included in the framework.

Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM)
The ICM describes the principles and practices within the MTSS framework and provides the big picture of an MTSS. It includes examples and non-examples of implementation of the essential components in schools.

Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Research Base
The Research Base provides some of the primary research that supports the principles and practices included in the ICM. This document is not a comprehensive bibliography but provides the starting point for the research.

Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Structuring Guide
The Structuring Guide serves as a workbook to assist buildings through the decisions necessary to create the infrastructure to support an MTSS.

Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Structuring Content Supplements
The Structuring Content Supplements provide content-area (reading, mathematics, and behavior) specific information to assist teams in completing the work described in the Structuring Guide.

Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Implementation Guides
The Implementation Guides assist building leadership teams through the use of data for improving the system and guide collaborative teams through data analysis for designing instructional groups, monitoring progress, and making instructional adjustments.

Kansas MTSS: Information Briefs
On the resource page of the Kansas MTSS website is a growing collection of information briefs. These are short documents that address specific issues related to MTSS.

Recognized MTSS Facilitators
Recognized facilitators receive training specific to an MTSS and have the responsibility to support buildings through structuring and implementation. Recognized MTSS Facilitators are located throughout the state (a list can be found at www.kansasmtss.org under training). Schools assisted by a Recognized MTSS Facilitator will be asked for information and documentation of progress as the MTSS is developed and implemented. Knowing what decisions have been made by the leadership team and which ones are pending assists in providing additional support specific to the team's needs.

A Family Guide to Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)
Provided by the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center - www.kpirc.org

This booklet reviews the basic components of any MTSS process and includes questions parents might want to ask their child's educators to learn more about the MTSS process. It includes suggestions of how families can get involved in the process and what to do or where to go with questions or concerns. http://www.kpirc.org/uploads/MTSSKS1.pdf

A Family Guide to Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS)
Provided by the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center - www.kpirc.org

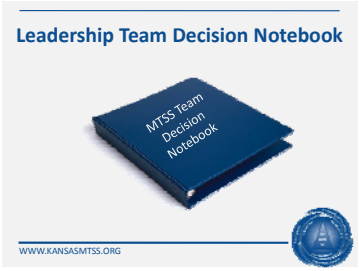
This booklet is designed to help families understand their important role in Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports. It includes suggestions of how families can get involved in the process and what to do or where to go with questions or concerns.
http://www.kpirc.org/uploads.PBS1.pdf

Family Engagement: A Critical Component to Building an Empowering Culture in the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)
Provided by the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center - www.kpirc.org

This booklet is designed to help schools understand the important role that family engagement plays in developing an empowering culture within an MTSS. This resource provides an explanation of the connection as well as possible strategies for buildings to use.
http://www.kpirc.org/uploads/MTSS_Handout_6.pdf

MTSS Helping Your Child Grow, Learn and Succeed
Provided by the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center - www.kpirc.org

This booklet is designed to help families understand how schools use an MTSS framework to support students in learning to read, the terminology of reading that is used in the schools, and how they can support their child as he or she learns to read. http://www.kpirc.org/uploads/MTSS_lit.pdf



Documenting the System

The creation of the MTSS, as with any system change effort, presents both exciting opportunities and challenges. Documenting decisions as they are made helps teams remain

focused on next steps. Documenting the process of change not only provides clear and consistent information about the efforts and the system, but also articulates the procedures for the system.

Indicates need to document decision in the MTSS Decision Notebook

The *MTSS Decision Notebook* or similar book should be used to keep track of decisions made by the leadership team. The *MTSS Decision Notebook* contains forms and tools aligned with the *Kansas MTSS: Structuring Guide* to assist in documenting the procedures for the building's MTSS. Throughout the *Kansas MTSS: Structuring Guide* will be space labeled TEAM DISCUSSION that provide prompts for team discussion as well as space for individual team members to write notes about the discussion. Another element found throughout the *Kansas MTSS: Structuring Guide* is a graphic like the one to the side which indicates that documentation of a decision in the *MTSS Decision Notebook* should be done at the conclusion of the discussion when a decision is reached.

The tools in the *MTSS Decision Notebook* are to assist teams with documentation. It is acceptable to use a different documentation format if the building already has a process in place to document the decisions being made or if the building needs to document the same decision for other purposes such as the Title I Schoolwide Plan. Many of the issues the team considers during structuring overlap with school improvement and the local results-based staff development plan. Schools are encouraged to integrate the MTSS effort rather than to duplicate work or create new and separate plans. If existing documents or plans are used, they should be included in the team's decision notebook to keep track of progress.

In addition to tools to document specific decisions, the *MTSS Decision Notebook* also contains two generic forms that some teams have found useful. One is an Action Plan that provides a place for teams to plan and monitor action that needs to be taken. Additional copies can be made as necessary. The second is a Stop-Doing List. There are many good practices happening within buildings; however, some may not align with the current effort or could be a distraction from what staff are being asked to do now. Making and monitoring a list of policies and practices that should stop occurring can help alleviate some of the anxiety and implementation fatigue that occurs when staff are asked to add things but not remove anything.

Beginning Rationale for the Implementation of the MTSS

The choice to move toward the implementation of MTSS is up to the leadership and staff within the school. There must be strong support and a commitment for completing the work

necessary to create a sustainable system. It is important to understand and to be able to communicate to others why it is important to spend the time and energy toward this effort. With the basic information that has been covered so far, leadership teams can begin describing why it might be important to engage in this work and what is hoped to be achieved.

TEAM DISCUSSION

What are the current situations that lead to these materials and/or the participation in the MTSS Structuring workshop?

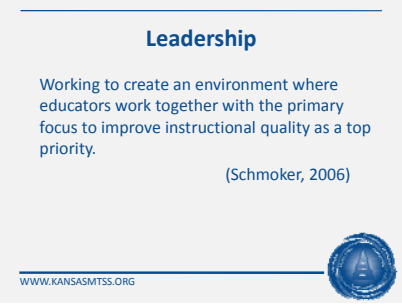
Describe the current situation that you believe the MTSS will improve.

What relevant data and analysis led to the determination that the situation needs to be improved and to build an MTSS?

There are a variety of reasons why current practices and behaviors exist within schools and organizations. With any effort that may result in a change in practice come a set of advantages and disadvantages. Being able to describe what they are helps schools come to an understanding as to whether it is worth the time and effort to change the practices that currently exist. Use the table below to guide the discussion and to record the advantages and disadvantages of both holding on to and letting go of current practices.

	Holding On	Letting Go	TEAM DISCUSSION
Advantages			
Disadvantages			

Establishing the Leadership Team



The success of any school-wide student support model relies not only on a team-based approach but also on the buy-in, support, and implementation by all stakeholders (Sadler, 2000; Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000). For these reasons, it is imperative to create a building leadership team that embraces all stakeholders. When leadership is discussed within the MTSS, it is not limited to those with formal leadership or administrative titles. Leadership within the MTSS also includes informal leaders who have influence within the system.

Leadership throughout the system is essential in the process of creating an MTSS. Schools improve when leaders work cooperatively with fellow educators to create an environment that gives priority to improving instructional quality (Schmoker, 2006). Structuring for and implementing an MTSS is best accomplished by a careful consideration of the building culture and requires developing and navigating a course for improvement in light of present and past practices and events. The formal leaders must take an active role in supporting the change. This means the formal leadership and stakeholders fully participate in problem solving and decision making, a complex process that will not happen without clear concise planning.

Kansas MTSS: Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM)

As discussed earlier, the *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Innovation Configuration Matrix* (*ICM*) provides a big picture of all practices that make up an MTSS in full implementation. All of the Kansas MTSS documents are organized in a way to help teams make the decisions and create the structures that will allow for full and sustained implementation of the MTSS. A copy of the *ICM* is included in these materials to provide the vision for the work the team is beginning. The notation on the left column indicates the specific line item within the *ICM* and can be cross-referenced to the complete document and to the *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Research Base*.

Leadership Team Norms

The leadership team will have discussions in which members will have a variety of opinions and beliefs. For that reason many find it helpful to agree on how the team will work together and interact with one another. Writing norms will

help the group have open and honest discussions that enables everyone on the team to participate and be heard as an active team member. Norms that support a safe and empowering environment will improve trust and encourage team members to question and objectively state opinions without fear of retribution within the leadership team.

During norming, the leadership team focuses on ways to plan for productive communication and problem solving. Norming is a candid and meaningful way to ensure that each team member agrees to be a genuine part of the team. Team members agree to let go of old unproductive patterns, unfinished business, unresolved resentment, and any self□focused need to control the decisions or outcomes of the group.

To help a team through the process of developing norms, team members individually write responses to the questions below and then discuss them as a team. Together the team identifies the key norms most conducive to team effectiveness.

TEAM DISCUSSION

How can meetings:

- enable all participants to have honest discussions?
- ensure that everyone on the team participates?
- ensure that everyone is heard?
- enable participants to openly address their individual issues?
- ensure that everyone agrees to let go of personal agendas for the benefit of the leadership team's immediate agenda and vision?
- begin and end on time?
- meet on a consistent basis?
- ensure confidentiality?
- not be viewed as 'secret' by staff who are not part of the team?

On the Leadership Team tool in the Decision Notebook, document the team norms that have been agreed to in the section entitled Leadership Team Norms. It is important to keep the norms in front of the leadership team so that team

members are constantly reminded of and become comfortable enforcing the norms when necessary. Well devised team norms assist the leadership team in consistently conducting productive meetings with action plans.

Decision Making Method

The process of making decisions allows stakeholders to work together to develop mutually acceptable solutions. There is no right or wrong way to make a decision; the important thing is that the process is transparent and builds common understanding and agreement. Ideally, the solution reached will meet the relevant interests of all stakeholders. While all individual issues may not be resolved, agreement is reached when all agree to support the final proposal.

As a group, the leadership team needs to have a clear understanding and be able to explain to others how decisions are made by the group. This means clarifying what agreement means to the group and adopting the operating procedures for determining agreement. Unanimity is not realistic. Teams will not be in 100% agreement all of the time. Therefore, the group needs to determine at what point agreement has been reached and it is acceptable to move forward. Unless this is clearly defined, individuals may perceive final decisions as incomplete or "holdout," believing their interests will be better served by resisting the proposed agreement.

It is time well spent early in the process to determine when agreement has been achieved, the procedure for agreement, and the course of action if agreement cannot be achieved on any topic. If individuals are not in agreement, exclusion from the final solution may occur. The team has a duty to make every effort to meet the interests of the holdouts. (This is to the team's advantage as well as the individual's. Holdouts may become *spoilers* – people who try to "spoil" or block implementation of any agreement that is reached.) The table below is adapted from the work of Robbins and Finley (2000) and identifies seven methods of making decisions.

Decision Making Models	
1. Consensus	Consensus is reached when all team members get a chance to voice their opinions and all agree and support the outcome. If any team member disagrees, then the discussions continue until all can agree and support the outcome. If using this method, the team should identify how it will be determined that consensus has been achieved using approaches such as fist to five or thumbs up, thumbs down or thumbs sideways.
2. Majority Rule	This method is democracy in action; the team votes and the majority wins. Some groups use a modified majority rule model where a minimum threshold of agreement must be met (e.g., 80%) before it is considered a majority that demonstrates agreement.
3. Minority Rule	This method is used when a subgroup investigates information and makes recommendations to the entire group. When using this method, it is important to determine how final decisions about recommendations from subgroups will be made. This approach may be used as a way to bring information to the entire Leadership Team.
4. Averaging	This is the ultimate method of compromise. Team members discuss, haggle, and negotiate an intentional middle position.
5. Expert	Either an expert on the team or an external one brought in for a specific decision provides a recommendation for the team to follow.
6. Authority Rule without Discussion	This method typically leaves no room for discussion. The predetermined decision maker hands down the decisions to be followed by the team. If using this method, it is important to identify who has the authority for all decisions within each area (e.g., assessment, curriculum, etc.).
7. Authority Rule with Discussion	This is also called Participative Decision Making. Using this method, those in the decision-making role make their authority clear to all and then all team members engage in a lively discussion on the issues. Everyone's opinion counts. When the discussion starts to repeat with no new insight being offered, the discussion comes to an end. The decision maker makes the decision and informs everyone of the outcome and explains how their input affected the decision. If using this method, it is important to identify who has the authority for all decisions or within each area (e.g., assessment, curriculum, etc.).

Many teams determine that a variety of methods are necessary to function effectively, depending on the circumstances. This approach to decision making works well as long as it is clear (1) when each method will be used, and (2) who has the authority to make a final decision in the event of an "authority rule" model.

TEAM DISCUSSION	Decision Making Model	Used by the leadership team when…
	1. Consensus	
	2. Majority Rule	
	3. Minority Rule	
	4. Averaging	
	5. Expert	
	6. Authority Rule without Discussion	
	7. Authority Rule with Discussion	

When all team members have made notes here, document the final decision in the Decision Notebook. The decision-making method selected by the leadership team should be used from this point forward in making all decisions about an MTSS.

Team Temperament

As the leadership team is formed it is important to note the temperament of the people on the team. Member temperament impacts how the team works together, communicates, and collaborates. Leadership teams have found it beneficial to do activities that identify member temperament, such as 'Thinkers/Shakers/Doers/Feelers.' Teams often find that initial leadership teams are largely comprised of shakers and doers, those who have vision and want to get things moving. However, it is important to include all types of temperaments on the leadership team to provide a wider range of insight and a variety of strengths.

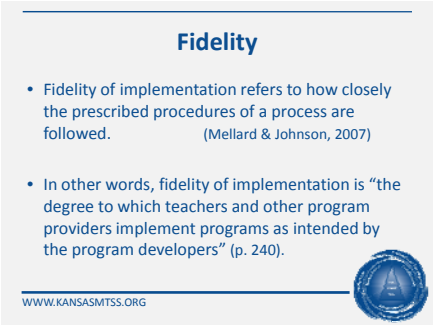
After completing the temperament activity, list individuals on the table below to help the team reflect on the strengths and needs of the team as a whole.

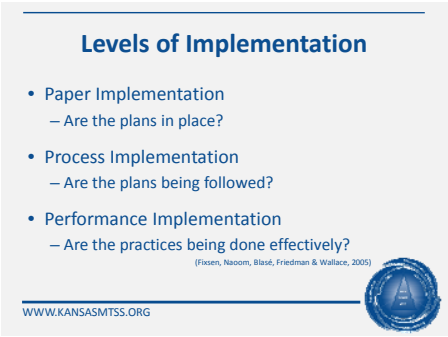
Responsibilities of the Leadership Team

The building leadership team organizes and oversees the decision making that occurs during the structuring process and ensures the Self-Correcting Feedback Loop is functioning as intended within the building during implementation. The leadership team has responsibility for making decisions specific to:

- Articulating the rationale for implementation and bringing staff to consensus around implementation.
- Establishing bi-directional communication among stakeholders about the MTSS effort.
- Fostering a culture that allows staff to be actively involved.
- Guaranteeing alignment and implementation of guidance provided by the district.
- Guaranteeing alignment of building policies and practices with expectations
- Allocating and/or reallocating resources including staff, time, materials, and funding.
- Selecting and training for core, supplemental, and intensive curricula.
- Selecting and training for universal screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments.
- Selecting and training for instructional practices and strategies.
- Establishing and ensuring a schedule that supports the system including instructional time for students and collaboration time for staff.
- Ensuring that all aspects of the MTSS are implemented with fidelity and are operating efficiently and effectively.

If the district has an MTSS leadership team, some of the decisions related to the selection of assessments, curricula, and instruction may have already been made. Therefore the building leadership team needs to work with the district leadership team to plan for communication and collaboration. If the effort is building-based and no district leadership team exists, the building leadership team makes all decisions ensuring that the decisions align with the policies and procedures of the district. The only way to ensure alignment is through communication with district level staff. This communication occurs by including district staff in discussions or by reviewing clearly written documentation from the district if available. Regular communication between the building and district will allow the Self-Correcting Feedback Loop to function effectively.





Supporting Fidelity and Sustainability

The concept of implementation fidelity refers to how closely the procedures of a process are followed (Mellard & Johnson, 2008). One of the most critical roles of the leadership team is to ensure that all procedures and practices within the system are being followed. As a building works through structuring and into implementation**,** the level at which fidelity is monitored and how it is monitored shifts.

Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, and Wallace (2005) discuss three levels of implementation that must be worked through to achieve effective implementation; paper, process, and performance. Fidelity is monitored throughout each level of implementation. The first level and the leadership team's focus during structuring is **paper implementation.** Fidelity at this level focuses primarily on policies, procedures, and structures (including plans) established to support an effective and sustainable system. The second level is **process implementation**. During process implementation, fidelity ensures actions are being performed as planned. The third level of fidelity is **performance implementation**. It focuses on ensuring that all practices (e.g., curricula, instructional strategies, and assessments) are taught or used as intended and that the directions provided by the publisher are followed with a positive effect on outcomes.

The building leadership team ensures implementation fidelity of the MTSS system when they:

- Definitively describe operations, techniques, and components.
- Clearly define responsibilities of specific persons (coaches, teachers, and administration).
- Create a data system for measuring operations, techniques, and components of MTSS.
- Create a system for feedback and decision making.
- Create accountability measures for noncompliance.
- Link interventions to improved outcomes.

(Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006)

During structuring the leadership team completes paper implementation. This is achieved by making decisions and developing policies, practices, and structures to support the full implementation of the MTSS process within the building. The Monitoring Fidelity of Paper Implementation tool provides the guide map for the leadership team, and progress reviews are completed at each team meeting to ensure fidelity to the MTSS process.

The most critical role of the leadership team is supporting fidelity and sustainability of the MTSS that is being designed. Supporting fidelity is the first step to creating a sustainable system. The leadership team supports fidelity by ensuring that all staff members are receiving information and professional development in a timely manner so that everyone within the building can be successful in doing what is being planned during the structuring process. When the leadership team is unwavering in their commitment to support staff to have the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively do what is being asked of them and to create an environment that supports these practices, the MTSS becomes institutionalized and sustainable beyond the efforts of any single person or small group.

Throughout the structuring guide, the leadership team will have to plan for providing professional development. High quality professional development is essential to increasing educators' knowledge of academic and behavioral content, enhancing teaching skills, and changing what educators believe about student learning and achievement.

In order to lead a sustainable change, professional development must be planned from the onset of any new initiative. Supporting professional development around the MTSS practices requires a carefully designed and executed plan. Sustainability goes beyond the concept of whether something lasts and addresses how initiatives can be implemented without compromising the environment or others now or in the future (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000). Sustainable initiatives plan professional development to support all educators. This is imperative for the ultimate buy-in and success of the change.

It is the leadership team's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources (time, budgetary allocation, administrative follow-up, and emotional support) are apportioned to professional development. Many times buildings collaborate with the district on professional development to be able to provide training in a more cost-effective way. Buildings in which the MTSS has been successful used the results-based staff development plan to drive all of the MTSS-related professional development. It can be difficult for individual buildings to manage separate funding sources without district support. District staff in collaboration with building leaders coordinate funding streams (Title, Special Education, and ESOL) so that focused professional development opportunities are equitably available to all staff.

Kansas Learning First Alliance developed *Tools for Quality Practice: A Resource Guide for Professional Learning* (Kansas Learning First Alliance, 2005). This document provides leadership teams a tool to plan professional development that is meaningful and effective. The section titled Professional Development provides examples of school-focused, quality professional development. The guide includes questions aligned to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) standards that aid in the development of a professional development plan.

Providing Communication

A communication plan does not have to be a large formal plan. It only needs to be as large and formal as is necessary for the leadership team to ensure that communication occurs as planned by the leadership team. The purpose of planning communication is part of managing the change process. This provides a method to ensure the building leadership team is providing a consistent message, giving the necessary information to the appropriate groups, and helping them understand why the change and timeline is necessary, as well as what it means to them.

While planning communication, close attention needs to be given to bi-directional communication. One-way communication may get the message out, but it does not allow for easy feedback. Reciprocal communication is critical if the leadership team is to achieve buy-in and support from all impacted by the MTSS effort.

In planning communication, consider how far the district and/or building have progressed in structuring and implementation, what information is being discussed, what decisions are being made, and who is going to be affected by the decisions. The table below provides some ideas for the type of information to provide to stakeholders throughout the structuring and implementation process.

Progress into MTSS	Communication Topics to Consider:
Early and Mid Structuring (Exploration and Early Installation)	Rationale for adopting MTSS Description of current state/situation to be affected Description of the desired state/situation to be achieved Create sense of urgency for change Method & frequency the group will receive information How decisions are made How staff will be supported Timeline of activities/change How each group can have input
Mid and Late Structuring (Installation)	Core Beliefs Vision Commitments/Non-negotiable items that guide decisions Timeline for activities/change Decisions that have been made Decisions yet to be made How each group can have input
Implementation (Initial Implementation, Full Implementation, and Refinement)	What is being done Timeline for activities Expectations of staff What the data shows How staff can get more support Impact on student success Refinements to the system

(Biech, 2007; Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005)

In addition to looking at what information should be shared, it is also important to look at who would want to know. The communication plan should address all groups that have a vested interest in either the students or staff within the building and provide information specific to the interest of each group. The communication plan is a living document that will be reviewed and updated continuously by the leadership team. In identifying groups and creating the plan, include all groups on the list and then indicate when communication with each of them should begin so the information is not lost.

TEAM DISCUSSION

Potential Groups: *Board of Education, Principals, Community, General Education Staff, Families - ESOL/SPED/Title Staff District Office/Leadership Team - Students - Building Leadership Teams - Others*

Potential Group	What They Need/Want	When do they need to know?

While format and detail of the communication plan can vary, there are several items the leadership team must scrutinize to help ensure the plan is carried out effectively.

- Who needs information? Who is the audience being targeted?
- What information do they need? What specific information needs to be shared?
- When will communication occur? Is it a one-time event that will occur on a specific date or is it a regular item that will occur weekly, monthly, etc.?
- Who will provide the information? Who will be responsible for delivering the message?
- How will the communication be provided? What format will be used (verbal message, PowerPoint, newsletter, email, website, printed handouts, group activities, etc.)?
- What feedback/input will be requested? What information is needed from the group? What were the reactions, questions, and comments from the group?
- When will feedback/input be shared with the leadership team? Will the feedback be immediately forwarded to individuals on the team, or will the input be presented at a leadership team meeting? How will the process ensure feedback is shared in a timely manner?
- How will the feedback/input be used? If feedback and input is requested, it is important to use the information and be able to explain to the stakeholders how the information is used.

After the communication plan is in place, it must be visible in both form and action. It is imperative to keep the communication plan visible and to keep communication a focus of the leadership team's work. One way to do that is to begin and end each leadership team meeting by reviewing the communication plan. At the beginning of the meeting, communications that occurred and the feedback received are reviewed. At the end of the meeting, decisions and progress made during the meeting are summarized and the feedback and current progress to refine the message are reviewed. This practice ensures consistent communication between the leadership team and stakeholders.

Consideration of Policies and Practices

As decisions are made throughout structuring, the leadership team needs to consider specific policies or practices that may help, hinder, or need to be acknowledged due to their impact

upon the decision or the implementation of the decision. For the purpose of structuring, consider **policies** as written rules or guidelines that must be followed. These guidelines can come from any level: federal government, state government, district office, building principal or other source. It is important to identify where the policy originated and why, because this will allow for better alignment of policy and practices within the district and building. **Practices** are the actions that come about due to policies or tradition. Practices might be initiated because of the adoption of a new curriculum or because of staff attendance at a workshop. It is important to identify the practices that are being used in the building, even if only by a small number of staff, because some current practices may be in opposition to new practices the leadership team is trying to implement, and this conflict can contribute to staff overload.

For example, consider a policy that requires special education staff to attend a separate in-service training from that provided to the general education staff within the building. This policy was created to ensure that special education staff remain up-to-date on all special education compliance issues. The impact of this type of policy is that special education staff do not receive the same professional development on the new learning strategy that is being implemented building wide.

One example of a practice is the use of a specific office discipline referral form. The form may have been developed for specific state reporting requirements with an additional optional section at the bottom to provide the administration more information. The required section is completed but the optional section of the form is never completed. The impact of this is that the leadership team will not have all the information needed regarding office discipline referrals.

TEAM DISCUSSION

Are there any policies that would impact the communication plan?

- Is there someone specific that any information to the board or community must go through? Is there a policy about the frequency or type of information that can be shared, or who attends staff meetings?

Are there common practices that impact how to ensure the best communication?

- For example, are newsletters/emails actually read in a timely fashion?

What policies or practices specific to communication may need an action plan or need to be included on a stop-doing list?

Communication Plan: The Decision Notebook provides a basic format to begin planning for the communication that must occur. At this time, it is important to focus on the Exploration and Early Structuring stage. Basic information is provided to all and a common understanding and buy-in is established.

Stop-Doing List and Action Plans: If there were any items that should stop occurring within the building or are beyond the basics of the communication plan that require action planning, take time now to update the Stop-Doing List and to create any necessary action plan.

Time Commitment of Leadership Teams

The time commitment to structure and implement an MTSS cannot be overlooked. Administrators should be well aware of the time involved for building leadership teams and staff to collaborate and engage in necessary professional development. During the structuring process, leadership teams working with a Recognized MTSS Facilitator will complete Module 1 (MTSS framework and establishing leadership team), Module 2 (assessment, curriculum, and instruction specific to content area), and Module 3 (empowering culture and family engagement). In addition to working with the Facilitator, it is imperative for leadership teams to schedule additional work time in the school to complete tasks and make decisions. Progress through the modules is dependent on outside conversations and task completion in preparation for the next training date with the facilitator. On average, a building leadership team should plan for a minimum of five days with the Recognized MTSS Facilitator.

If a District Leadership Team has completed the MTSS Structuring including making district-wide decisions about assessments and curriculum, the time necessary for the Building Leadership Team to complete the three modules of Structuring may be reduced.

Leadership Team Membership

Instructional leadership is essential in the process of creating a multi-tier system. Marzano, et al. (2005) suggest that an effective school leader is one with a broad array of complex skills. They acknowledge that to find a person who has the capacity to master all those skills is next to impossible. The solution is to have a strong leadership team comprised of committed individuals who work together to create "a purposeful community of learning." When identifying leadership team members, administrators need to keep in mind roles and responsibilities in order to include members with

Leadership Team Membership

Considerations when identifying membership:

- Primary responsibilities of the leadership team
- Role of the leadership team
- Groups/people affected by the changes
- Staff that will be effected by the changes
- Authority to make decisions
- Ability to allocate resources including time

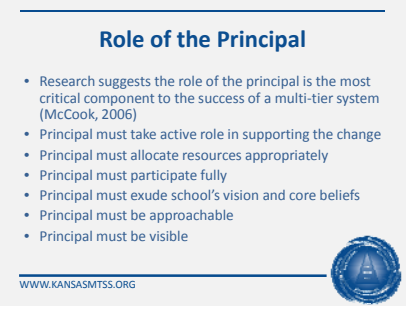
appropriate representation, voice, expertise, and decision-making authority.

The leadership team needs to be large enough to meet responsibilities while remaining small enough to operate efficiently. The goal is to align all state, federal, and local programs/resources appropriately and effectively into a single system with multiple ways of supporting each student. The team needs to include administrators (including representation from state and federal programs), grade level/content area teachers, guidance counselors, parents, students (in a secondary school), and community members as appropriate. If the building is concurrently structuring MTSS and Schoolwide Title I, team membership must address all requirements of Title I Schoolwide Planning.

If early childhood is to be included in the MTSS effort it is important to include early childhood staff as well. With the understanding that early childhood programs may be administered collaborative with the school and sometimes outside of the school administrative structure, it is important to invite those with decision making authority into the leadership team. In situations where they are hesitant to join the effort give extra attention to communicating and provide an open invitation to participate at any time in the future.

There is no requirement to create a new team to address an MTSS. Alignment of resources is at the heart of an MTSS, so the creation of another team is not always the most effective or efficient. The use of an existing group can avoid duplication of effort and capitalize on collective experience and expertise.

Research suggests that the role of the principal is the most critical component to the success of a multi-tier system (McCook, 2006). The principal must take an active role in supporting the change not only in actions but also with the allocation of resources and full participation on the building leadership team. The building administrator also ensures that the building leadership team builds and supports the school's culture. The principal must take the lead role and participate in all aspects of the process if success for all students is to be achieved (McCook, 2006).



The building leadership does not complete its work in isolation from stakeholders. The entire leadership team must have a foundational understanding of all issues being addressed. However, members of the leadership team may create workgroups outside of the leadership team. Workgroups not only assist in the completion of tasks but also provide

information and recommendations. Considering the amount of effort required to design a system, multiple workgroups can be beneficial to all staff, especially if the building is working on multiple academic areas and/or behavior. Multiple workgroups avert team member burnout (Shores & Chester, 2009). When multiple workgroups are used, communication is critical to ensure that the leadership team and all its workgroups are aware of progress and decisions being made.

The efficacy of the building leadership team is reflected in the development of the system. It is the responsibility of the leadership team to facilitate decision making regarding curriculum, instruction, assessments, and professional development. When identifying the leadership team, the roles and responsibilities, appropriate representation, voice, expertise, and decision-making authority need to be considered. Leadership team membership should represent all stakeholders, intentionally incorporating collective strengths, weaknesses, and temperaments of individuals. Use the questions on the following page to help determine appropriate representation on the building leadership team.

TEAM DISCUSSION

Effective Leadership Team Membership

1. Is the building administrator an active member of the team?
2. Who has authority to make decisions about the **curricula** used in the building?
3. Who has authority to make decisions about the **assessments** used in the building?
4. Who has authority to make decisions about use of staff?
5. Who do people look to for ideas and support?
6. Who is effective at communicating with the school board, school staff, and the community?
7. Who works well in supporting, mentoring, and helping others learn?

continued on next page...

8. Who has strong knowledge of the content area(s) that will be addressed?

9. Who is the voice of each grade/content area?

10. Who has strong knowledge of assessment?

11. Who knows what is happening in the building and has a good feel for the staff?

12. Who can make sense of data?

13. Who are the Thinkers?

14. Who are the Doers?

15. Who are the Shakers?

16. Who are the Feelers?

17. Who is the voice of families?

18. Who is the voice of state and federal programs?

19. Who is the voice of culturally and linguistically diverse students?

20. Who is the voice of students, particularly at the secondary level?

21. Are there required team members tied to specific programs (e.g., Integrated Improvement Plan or School-Wide Plan)? If so, who should be included?

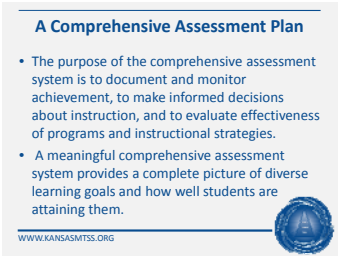
22. Who is the voice of the special education staff?

23. Who are others that are often left out of discussions?

TEAM DISCUSSION

Document the leadership team membership and the skill set each member brings to the team on the Leadership Team form in the Decision Notebook. If the building has an improvement plan for KSDE that requires a leadership team, that form can be used to document the team.

Assessment



Creating the comprehensive assessment system is one of the major structuring tasks that must be completed by the leadership team. In addition to the creation of the assessment system, the structures for data-based decision making must be established at all levels: building, grade, class, small group, and individual student. The comprehensive assessment system gathers the data to be used for that data-based decision making. The quality of the decision-making process relies on the accuracy and usefulness of the data collected. For this reason it is critical that the data collected be trustworthy, i.e., reliable and valid. It is also important that the system obtains the right types of data for analysis, i.e., data that addresses the questions being asked and decisions that need to be made.

In general there are two broad types of assessment, summative and formative. "Summative assessments are administered after instruction and measure students against a defined set of grade-level content standards." (Kansas State Department of Education, 2011, p. 126). "Formative assessments are designed to aid learning by providing explicit feedback related to student performance and are used to make immediate instructional decisions on behalf of individuals or groups of students. Formative assessments include universal screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tests." (Kansas State Department of Education, 2011, pp. 126-127).

Comprehensive Assessment Plan

When developing a comprehensive assessment system, it is important to begin by taking stock of the school's current behavioral data and currently used assessment instruments for academics and behavior. It is important to review and evaluate each assessment currently being used or being considered for future use with regard to reliability, validity, and a clear understanding of the purpose for which the assessment was intended and validated. Just because an assessment has been published does not mean that the instrument has adequate technical validity.

The table on the next page summarizes the types of assessments that comprise a comprehensive assessment plan, and the characteristics and uses of each:

Types of Assessments that Comprise a Comprehensive Assessment Plan

Broad Type of Assessment	Specific Type of Assessments	Characteristics	Uses
Summative Assessments "They are designed to evaluate student performance after instruction has been completed..." (Kansas State Department of Education, 2011, p. 126)	**Outcome Assessments:**	For academics outcomes assessments are administered after instruction and measure students against a defined set of grade-level content standards.	They are administered one time per year and are designed to evaluate student performance after instruction has been completed and are useful in determining the overall effectiveness of a given program.
	Interim Assessments:	For academics interim assessments are administered throughout the year after sections of instruction and measure students against a defined set of grade-level content standards.	They are administered three to four times per year and are designed to predict student performance on outcome assessments.
Formative Assessment: "Formative Assessments are designed to aid learning by providing explicit feedback related to student performance and are used to make immediate instructional decisions on behalf of individuals and small groups." (Kansas State Department of Education, 2011, pp. 126-127)	**Universal Screening**:	At grades PK-8 universal screening assessments for reading and math are curriculum-based measures that provide both accuracy and fluency data of critical skills. At grades 9-12 universal screening for academics is a multi-step process that first involves group or computer assessment followed by a curriculum-based measure. For behavior universal screening consists of office discipline referral (ODR) data that includes behavior, student, location, time, and who made referral for externalizing behaviors and a formal screening measure for internalizing and externalizing behavior.	For academics universal screening assessments are administered 2-3 times per year depending on grade level. For behavior, universal screening consisting of office discipline referrals (ODRs)/behavior incident reports (BIR) is collected continuously throughout the year and the formal screening measure is conducted 3 times a year. Universal screening is designed to identify students who may be in need of additional support.
	Progress Monitoring of Core Instruction:	For academics these are assessments that progress monitor core instruction and are tied to content area curriculum standards and instruction. For behavior, office discipline referral (ODR) data are used to progress monitor core instruction at the building level. Data on problem behaviors, location, time of day, # of ODRs per day/month are used to assess the effect of the core instruction and target instruction as needed based on those data.	This is used to help teachers know whether students have learned the concepts and skills taught so that instruction can be adjusted to re-teach concepts or to provide additional practice on skills not yet mastered.
	Progress Monitoring of Intervention:	For academics these are assessments that progress monitor intervention instruction. They are curriculum-based measures aligned to the universal screening assessment that can show small increments of change in accuracy and fluency of the skills targeted by intervention. For behavior these are assessments that progress monitor intervention effects for individual students. Student ODR data along with individual student monitoring data (e.g., point/goal sheets) are used to determine the extent to which targeted behaviors improve as a result of intervention.	These are used to ensure effectiveness of intervention and to inform instructional decisions.

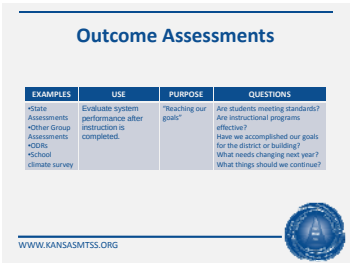
Types of Assessments that Comprise a Comprehensive Assessment Plan *continued*

Broad Type of Assessment	Specific Type of Assessments	Characteristics	Uses
Formative Assessment: *continued*	**Diagnostic Assessments:**	For academics diagnostic assessment refers to formal diagnostic assessments using standardized tests that assess skills in depth for the essential reading and math components.	They are administered when additional information is needed to allow teachers to determine the student's instructional focus.
	Diagnostic Process:	For academics the diagnostic processes involves the use of informal surveys and tests to probe a student's knowledge and skills in depth for the essential reading and math components. For behavior the diagnostic process involves conducting a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) in order to customize interventions that focus on the function (e.g., attention, escape) of student behavior	They are used when additional information is needed to allow teachers to determine the student's instructional focus. With behavior, the diagnostic process is used to determine the function of behavior so that individualized, function-based interventions may be designed to meet the students needs.

For each assessment selected, reliability and validity of the measure could be obtained by a variety of methods such as: review of the technical manual that details the way in which reliability and validity were established, expert recommendation (e.g. Center on Instruction, National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, National Center on Response to Intervention, Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts, Florida Center for Reading Research, Oregon Reading First, etc.), or establishing reliability and validity through statistical analysis of local data. Establishing technical adequacy of all measures contained in the comprehensive assessment system assures confidence in the data collected.

Summative Assessment

Outcome Assessments



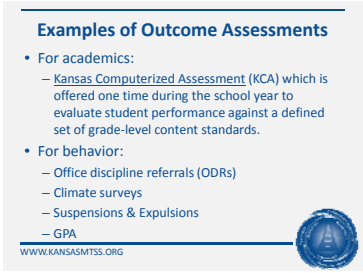
It is critical that teams understand that tests are designed and built for specific purposes. Outcome tests reflect the end result of curriculum design, program implementation, and individual teachers' efforts over the course of an entire school year. Schools can and should know how many students are likely to meet state standards far in advance of the spring date on which the high stakes tests are given (Moats, 2005).

Outcome assessments help evaluate student performance after instruction is completed. As with all other assessments, outcome assessments must have technical validity. Outcome assessments answer the questions:

1. Are students meeting standards?
2. Are instructional programs effective?

3. Have we accomplished our goals for a student, a class, or a district?
4. What needs changing next year?
5. What things should we continue?

All districts in Kansas must use the Kansas Computerized Assessment (KCA) as one type of outcome assessment for academics. However, there are also other outcomes assessments used by districts and buildings (for example, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED), or Stanford Achievement Tests). In order to use the results of any other outcome assessment as a means to improve instruction, it is useful to determine the alignment of the outcome assessment with the Kansas curricular standards. Assessments such as the Kansas Computerized Assessment are designed as summative assessments and should not be used for purposes inconsistent with their design.

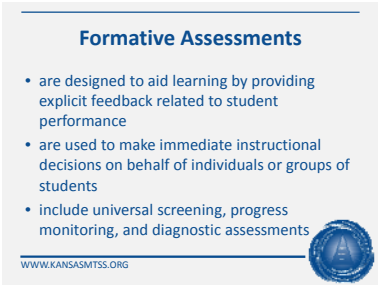


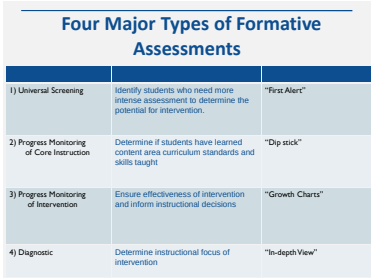
Within the MTSS behavior framework, several types of data are used as outcomes measures. Office discipline referrals are most frequently used, often in combination with school climate surveys, student GPAs, and data on suspensions and expulsions. Improvement in these measures is used to assess the effectiveness of the system in meeting students' social and behavioral needs.

Formative Assessment

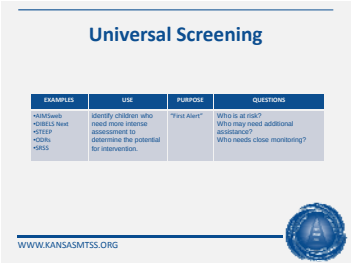
Universal Screening Assessment for Academics

There is much research to support the use of universal screening (Fuchs & Deshler, 2007; Jenkins, Hudson, & Johnson, 2007). Typically, all students are screened in one or more academic areas. The most common universal screening assessment used in the area of academics is curriculum-based measurement (Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt, 2007). Curriculum based measures provide both accuracy and fluency data, both of which are predictive of later academic success. In order to have the data needed for implementation, the universal screener must collect both accuracy and fluency information. Accuracy distinguishes students according to the percentage of correct responses on tasks and can reveal individual differences in knowledge. Fluency distinguishes students by number of correct responses per minute and can reveal individual differences both in knowledge and speed of processing.

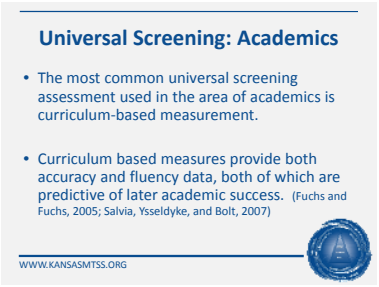




Screening assessments such as curriculum based measurements (e.g., AIMSweb, DIBELS Next, STEEP) are designed to identify at-risk students efficiently and effectively before they fail or before they establish a pattern of failure. Such measures should be used to intervene and help the at-risk students achieve at grade level. Grade level in the academic screening process is a minimal proficiency target that predicts a passing score on the high stakes outcome test. A screening test can indicate how likely it is that a student will be at

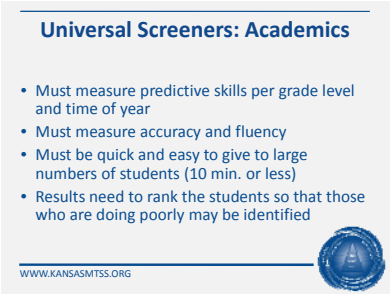


grade level at the end of each year. Early identification of students at risk is possible because the scores on curriculum based measures are good predictors of performance on high-stakes, summative tests. Curriculum based measurements enable teachers to intervene with students at risk for failure before they take end-of-year assessments (Moats, 2005). When selecting universal screening measures for preschool, it is important to understand the difference between universal screening assessments and developmental screening tools that are used frequently with preschool children. For more information on this topic please refer to the Preschool Screening Document located in the appendix.

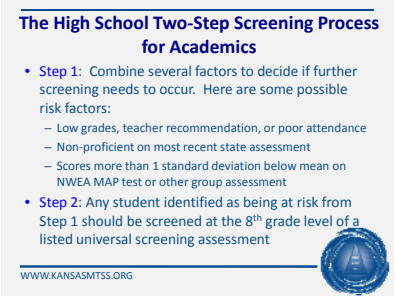


Selecting a Universal Screening Assessment for Academics

Choosing a universal screening instrument is the first step in developing a comprehensive assessment system. Universal screening is conducted with all students and serves multiple purposes. First, the information is used to determine which students are performing at adequate levels and which students need instructional interventions. Second, universal screening is repeated during the year to identify which students continue to achieve expected rates of improvement and which students are not keeping pace and may need additional support. Finally, universal screening provides information for making decisions about the effectiveness of instruction at the system, grade, classroom, small group, and individual student levels. To accomplish this, the universal screening assessment must be administered to all students three times per year; therefore, it must have the capacity for repeated administration.



The MTSS framework requires that universal screening assessments be predictive of future proficiency within a content area. This means that for grades Pre-K-8 the universal screening assessment needs to measure early critical skills.



For grades 9-12 the MTSS Framework uses a two-step process for screening students in reading or in math:

Step 1: Group tests and at-risk factors to decide if further screening needs to occur.

Step 2: Any student identified as at-risk from Step 1 is screened using the 8th grade level universal screening assessment.

The tables on the following pages provide information regarding the predictive skills that selected universal screening tools must assess and the specific measures used to assess those skills at each grade level.

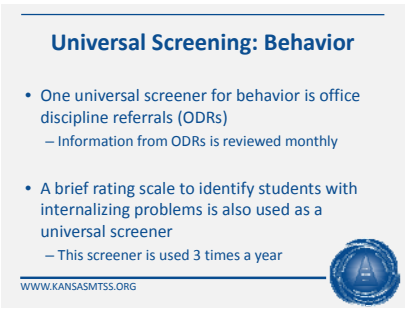
Universal Screening Measures for Reading

Grade Level	Measure	Skills Assessed
Infant to Toddler	Under Development	
Pre-K	Rapid Picture Naming Rapid Naming of Numbers	Memory Oral Language
	Rhyming Alliteration	Phonological Awareness
	Letter Naming	Alphabetic Knowledge
K	Letter Naming Fluency	Letter name identification and ability to rapidly retrieve abstract information
	Letter Sound Fluency First Sound Fluency	Letter Sounds
	Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	Phonemic Awareness
1	Letter Naming Fluency	Letter name identification and ability to rapidly retrieve abstract information
	Letter Sound Fluency First Sound Fluency	Letter Sounds
	Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	Phonemic Awareness
	Nonsense Word Fluency	Proficiency and automaticity with basic phonic rules
	Grade Level Oral Reading Fluency R-CBM	Reading connected text accurately and fluently
2-3	Grade Level Oral Reading Fluency R-CBM	Reading connected text accurately and fluently
4-6	Grade Level Oral Reading Fluency R-CBM	Reading connected text accurately and fluently
	Mazes	Basic comprehension
7-8	Mazes	Basic comprehension
9-12	Group Reading Comprehension Assessment	Reading Comprehension

(adapted from Hosp, Hosp, & Howell, 2006; Morsy, Kieffer, & Snow, 2009)

Universal Screening Measures for Mathematics

Grade Level	Measure	Skills Assessed
Pre-K	Number Naming Quantity Comparison	Ability to name the numerals in random sequence Ability to identify which of two sets of circles is larger
K	Quantity Discrimination	Ability to identify which of two numbers is larger
	Missing Number	Ability to name the number missing from a sequence of three numbers
1	Quantity Discrimination	Ability to identify which of two numbers is larger
	Missing Number	Ability to name the number missing from a sequence of three numbers
	Computation	Proficiency and automaticity with basic computation skills
2-8	Computation	Proficiency and automaticity with basic computation skills
	Concepts/Application	Math concepts, problem-solving, and vocabulary
9-12	Group Assessment At-Risk Factors Curriculum Based Measure	



Universal Screening for Behavior

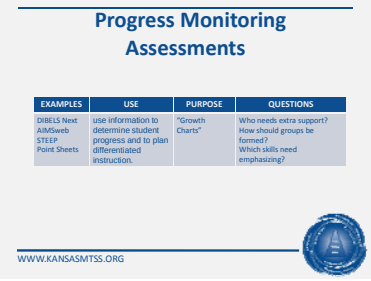
Universal screening for behavior is conducted with all students and serves multiple purposes. The universal screening assessments for behavior for all grade levels will include both (1) office discipline referrals (ODRs) and (2) a brief screener that is a rating scale designed for screening purposes. It is important that every student in the building be rated on the screener, in order to identify students with internalizing problems and to identify at-risk students before they reach the level of an office discipline referral. The universal screener/rating scale will be administered three times per year. Data collection for ODRs is an on-going process but will need to be reviewed by the leadership team at least monthly. The universal screening assessments for behavior are first utilized to assess and make improvements in the behavioral system at the level of core (Tier 1). Once the data indicate that a well-functioning core is in place, then the screening data will be used to identify students for interventions (Tiers 2 and 3).

Universal Screening Measures for Behavior

Grade Level	Measure	Skills Assessed
PK-12	Office Discipline Referrals (ODR)	Externalizing Behaviors
	Behavior Incident Reports (BIR)	Externalizing Behaviors
	Screening Rating Scale	Externalizing and Internalizing Behaviors

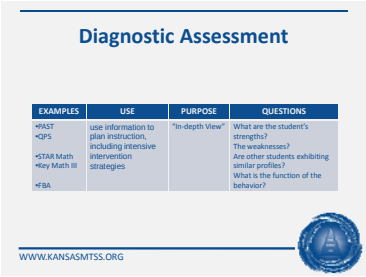
Progress Monitoring Assessment

Progress monitoring is conducted on a frequent basis with students receiving intervention to evaluate their learning progress and the effectiveness of the intervention being provided. The progress monitoring assessment for reading and math should be the same as the assessment selected for universal screening. Curriculum based measures are based on strong research demonstrating their effectiveness as progress monitoring assessments in the areas of reading and math (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2002; Stecker & Fuchs, 2000). When addressing behavior, both point sheets and office discipline referrals are typically used for progress monitoring.



Diagnostic Assessment

Within the MTSS framework two types of diagnostic assessments are conducted: the diagnostic process and formal diagnostic assessment.

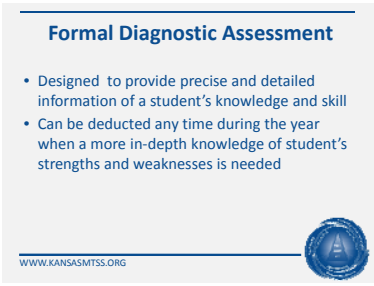


Diagnostic Process

For academics, the diagnostic process is the use of brief criterion-referenced assessment and error analysis to obtain more detailed information about specific student deficits for the purpose of planning instructional intervention. For behavior, the diagnostic process uses a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) which determines the function of a student's behavior so that a targeted intervention plan can be developed.

Formal Diagnostic Assessment

Formal diagnostic assessments are the second type of diagnostic assessment. While traditional academic diagnostic assessments are typically associated with students who have learning difficulties, this type of assessment is also appropriate for use with advanced learners to plan instruction. Diagnostic assessments are designed to provide more precise and detailed information about a student's knowledge and skill. The purpose of a diagnostic assessment is to give very specific information about a student's skills, and it should focus on sampling a student's knowledge in ways that are instructionally relevant. Formal diagnostic assessment of behavior is accomplished through the use of behavioral rating scales.



Using the Assessment Data to Drive Instruction

The assessments in a comprehensive assessment system, including Curriculum Based Measurements (e.g., AIMSweb), are linked to a decision making model and provide a method of accurate and early identification of a student's need for support.

Assessment Decision Making Steps	Assessment Decisions/Questions	Assessment Data
1. Identify Need	Are there students who may need support? How many? Which students?	Screening data
2. Validate Need	Are we confident that the identified students need support?	Diagnostic data and additional information as needed
3. Plan and Implement	What level of support for which students? How to group students? What goals, specific skills, curriculum/program instructional strategies?	Screening and diagnostic information as needed
4. Evaluate and Modify Support	Is the support effective for individual students?	Progress Monitoring data
5. Evaluate Outcomes	As a school/district: How effective is our core (Tier 1) support? How effective is our supplemental (Tier 2) support? How effective is our intensive intervention (Tier 3) support?	Screening Data Outcomes Assessment

(Adapted from Dynamic Measurement Group)

Summary of Assessments

The table on the next page provides a list of assessments used in the Kansas MTSS framework for each type of assessment for literacy, mathematics, and behavior.

Potential Assessments for Comprehensive Assessment System

Type of Assessments	Content Area	Grade	Name of Assessment
Outcome:	Reading		Kansas Computerized Assessment (KCA) District Assessment Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) Stanford Achievement Tests
	Math		Kansas Computerized Assessment (KCA) District Assessment Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) Stanford Achievement Tests
	Behavior	PK-12	Office Discipline Referral (ODR) Behavior Incident Report (BIR) School Climate Surveys *May be used in combination with:* Student GPA Suspension and Expulsion Data Detention data Attendance data
Universal Screening	Reading	PK	IGDI Get it Got it Go
		PK-6	DIBELS/DIBELS Next
		PK-8	AIMSweb
		9-12: is a multi-step process	Step 1: NWEA/MAP Step 2: Mazes
	Math	PK	STEEP
		PK 3-4	Preschool Numeracy Indicators EARLI
		K-1	Early Numeracy Indicators
		K-8	AIMSweb
		2-8	STEEP
		9-12: is a multi-step process	Step 1: Group assessment and at-risk indicators (math grades, attendance, low scores on group test)
			Step 2: Use 8th grade CBM probe from AIMSweb or STEEP
	Behavior	PK-12	Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) Behavior Incident Report (BIR) Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS) Behavioral Emotional Screening System (BESS) Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Continued on next page

Potential Assessments for Comprehensive Assessment System *continued*

Type of Assessments	Content Area	Grade	Name of Assessment
Progress Monitoring of Core Instruction:	Reading		Kansas Interim Assessment Common Formative Assessments NWEA/MAP
	Math		Kansas Interim Assessment Common Formative Assessments NWEA/MAP
	Behavior		Office Discipline Referral (ODR)
Progress Monitoring of Intervention:	Reading	PK-6 PK-8	DIBELS/DIBELS Next AIMSweb
	Math	PK-6 PK-8	AIMSweb STEEP
	Behavior	PK-12	Point Sheets Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) Behavior Incident Report (BIR)
Diagnostic Assessments:	Reading		CTOPP DRA2 GORT IV
	Math		Key Math STAR Math
	Behavior		See Diagnostic Process below
Diagnostic Process:	Reading		Phonological Screening Assessment Test (PAST) Quick Phonics Screener (QPS)
	Math		Error Analysis Use of universal screener at lower levels
	Behavior		Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

Note: No single assessment provides all necessary data within a comprehensive assessment system.

In consideration of a comprehensive assessment system, the leadership team should discuss and consider issues of policy and practice within the building that could potentially impact the selection and use of assessments. The following questions help start the discussion around the comprehensive assessment system.

TEAM DISCUSSION

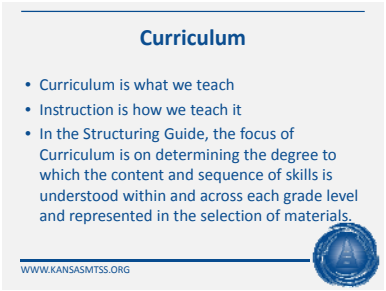
Are there any policies (rules/guidelines) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what assessments are used?

What are the practices (routines/traditions) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what assessments are used?

Knowing that a comprehensive assessment plan will be developed later; did anything come up that the team needs to create an action plan for at this time?

Are there any practices that might belong on the Stop-Doing List?

Curriculum



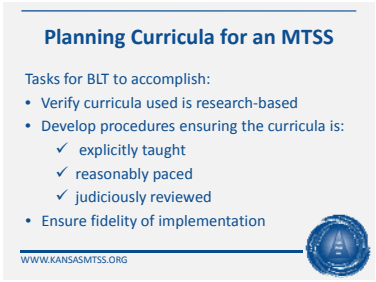
Both curriculum and instructional practices are used to support students in achieving outcomes. It is important to distinguish between curriculum and instruction. The curriculum is what it taught; instruction is how it is taught. With the understanding these two components are united in practice, structuring for the MTSS addresses each separately. This facilitates critical discussions around the selection of curriculum and instructional practices that will be used in the system. Classroom instruction works coherently with the content of student materials (texts, activities, homework, manipulatives, etc.) to reinforce the acquisition of specific skills. This sets up a constant interaction between the curricular materials that will be used to teach important concepts, strategies, and skills and the instructional practices used to deliver them.

The term curriculum refers to the content and skills that are represented in the Kansas Curricular Standards. For the purpose of this guide, the focus for curriculum is on determining the degree to which the content and sequence of skills is understood within and across each grade level and/or within each content area and represented in the selection of curricular materials.

A school system must strive to have strong, evidence-based curricula that cover all content areas being taught, meeting all district and state mandates. A core curriculum represents essential learning for all students to meet standards at each grade level. They are the skills, concepts, and ideas that provide the foundation on which subsequent learning may be built. Supplemental curricula should allow for targeting essential components according to individual student needs.

In planning for curricula in a multi-tier system, there are several tasks that will need to be addressed including:

- Verifying the research base, including addressing all essential components of the content area.
- Developing an order in which the content and skills will be explicitly and systematically taught, judiciously reviewed, and appropriately paced throughout the school year.
- Developing a method to ensure fidelity of implementation.



Teachers must guarantee a viable curriculum by making sure all content area teacher guides are research-based, clearly organized, and meet the needs of the locally written grade level or course curriculum guides. Additionally, the student texts should be chosen for readability and provide sufficient practice to master the instructional strategies covered in each of the lessons being taught (Foorman, 2007).

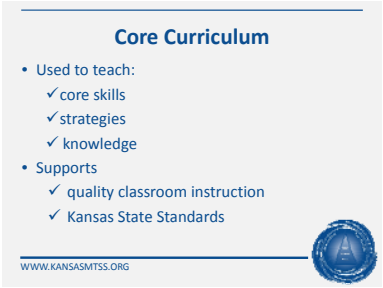
While selecting and designing curricula to be used within the MTSS, buildings should also ensure that curriculum does not become tied to

particular programs, funding sources, positions, or individual staff. For example, materials purchased for and used by reading specialists should be available to all students.

During structuring, leadership teams will identify the current curriculum and how it may be used to support core, supplemental, and intensive instruction. During content-specific sections, the emphasis will be on determining whether or not the curriculum contains the essential components of each content area. Teams will then consider how the current curriculum does or does not support all areas along the continuum of skills for reading and mathematics so that instruction may become more skill focused as students access supplemental and intensive instruction.

Core Curriculum

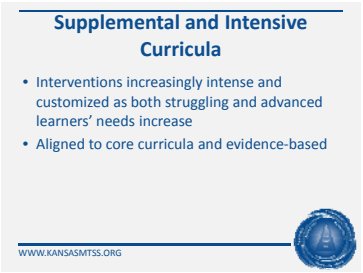
At all levels, the staff need to consider what core skills and knowledge will be required of all students and what core curriculum materials will be used to provide that instruction. For the purposes of this guide, core curriculum is defined this way: Regardless of whether the core skills and knowledge are taught through a comprehensive core curriculum such as what is typically seen at the elementary level or through content area classes as students transition to the secondary level, the purpose is still the same – each school must establish and provide curriculum materials that will be used to teach core skills, strategies, and knowledge.



Materials that comprise the core curriculum must support good quality classroom instruction to ensure that all students meet or exceed state and local standards, benchmarks, and indicators in all areas. In order to evaluate the materials, staff should examine materials that are currently in use and consider their alignment with state standards, look at the evidence regarding their effectiveness, and determine if there is a need to strengthen the core curriculum.

Curricula for Supplemental and Intensive Instruction

Supplemental instruction and intensive instruction are designed to meet the needs of students by providing additional interventions that are aligned with the core. For advanced learners, intervention may be support for enrichment or extension of skills already learned through instruction in the core curriculum. For struggling learners, instruction will focus on targeted interventions that match learners' needs. In the MTSS, interventions should become increasingly intense and customized as learners' needs increase.



Supplemental curriculum materials must provide targeted instruction. Intensive curriculum materials are often different from those used for supplemental because students are typically missing many skills or concepts, and these students require a more

comprehensive intervention. From this foundation, the problem-solving aspect of the MTSS hybrid model is used to further intensify and customize supports for students, especially at the intensive level.

Curricula materials used to support supplemental and intensive interventions around all essential skills will be identified during structuring. Just as the core curriculum was reviewed and evaluated, it is imperative to review current supplemental and intensive materials to determine what will work best to meet the needs of students. Curricula for supplemental and intensive instruction must be aligned to the core curricula and must be evidence-based.

TEAM DISCUSSION

Are there any policies (rules/guidelines) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what curriculum is used for core instruction?

What are the practices (routines/traditions) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what core curriculum is used?

Are there any policies (rules/guidelines) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what curricula are used for intervention?

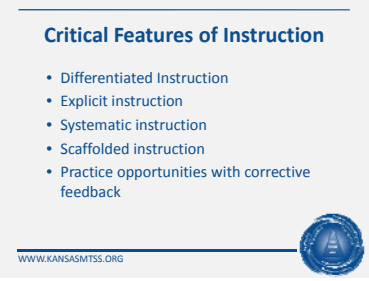
What are the practices (routines/traditions) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what curricula are used for intervention?

Knowing that selection of curricula will be completed later, did anything come up that would benefit from creating an action plan for the team?

Are there any practices that might belong on the Stop-Doing List?

Instruction

Ideally, in a well functioning MTSS, the core curriculum and instruction will meet the needs of most of a school's learners. In working toward this goal, the core is strengthened by the use of evidence-based instructional practices and by differentiated instruction. Differentiating instruction is an important component to meet the needs of all students in the core content curriculum in all content areas. This is one of the conceptual differences between the core instruction represented in the MTSS and what may have been occurring in previous systems. In the MTSS, intervention to support students begins in the core. For the purposes of this guide, differentiated instruction is defined as a way of teaching in which teachers modify curriculum, teaching methods, resources, learning activities, and student products to address the needs of individual students and/or small groups of students in order to maximize the learning opportunities for each student in the classroom (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000).

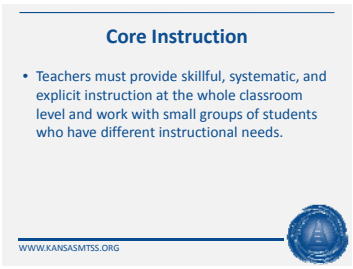


As the leadership team considers the instructional practices used in the core, the team must also develop a plan to ensure these practices are used in the delivery of the core curriculum. The critical steps of the plan include:

- Selecting evidence-based practices to be used by all staff.
- Implementing these practices (making sure everyone knows when, where, and how).
- Conducting walk-throughs.
- Identifying any professional development needs based on the walk-throughs and staff feedback.

Critical features of well-designed instructional programs include such things as:

- Differentiated instruction.
- Explicit instruction.
- Systematic instruction.
- Scaffolded instruction.
- Ample practice opportunities with corrective feedback.



Core Instruction

Many students are able to acquire the necessary skills with high quality core instruction given by the teacher, while other students require more explicit and systematic instruction. Teachers must provide skillful, systematic, and explicit core instruction (whole classroom level) and work with small groups of students who have different instructional needs. Students with diverse needs are best supported when instruction is at the right level and is focused on areas of most critical need. Core classroom instruction must be effective and differentiated by classroom teachers. Initially focusing on

hiring intervention specialists can overwhelm school resources because too many students will not make the yearly progress that is expected. Thus, it is important that:

- teachers provide explicit, well organized, and engaging whole-group instruction;
- small-group instruction be appropriately differentiated based on student need; and
- other students be involved in independent learning activities that are appropriate and engaging while the teacher is teaching a small group of students (Torgesen, Houston, Rissman, & Kosanovich, 2007).

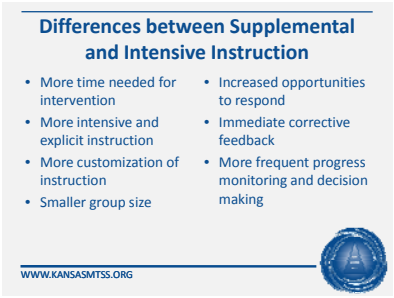
Supplemental and Intensive Instruction

Supplemental and intensive instruction is designed to meet the needs of students by providing additional interventions. For advanced learners, intervention is instructional support for enrichment or extensions of skills already learned through instruction in the core. Struggling students receive supplemental or intensive instruction when data indicate the student is not on track in a particular area. The intervention that each student receives is based on specific, individual needs.

Supplemental interventions are targeted to individual student needs based on data. This translates into the determination of specific instructional strategies/skills. The differences between intensive and supplemental instruction typically are:

- More time needed for intervention.
- More intensive and explicit instruction.
- More customization of instruction.
- Smaller group size.
- Increased opportunities to respond.
- Immediate corrective feedback.
- More frequent progress monitoring and decision making.

Supplemental instruction is delivered through small group instruction, where group size depends on the age level of the student and the materials being used. Intensive instruction is provided through either small group or individualized instruction, but groups have an even smaller teacher-student ratio than supplemental instruction. Student progress is monitored frequently using curriculum-based measurement to determine if the instruction is meeting their needs or if the intervention needs to be adjusted. Student progress is monitored more frequently in intensive instruction than in supplemental instruction.



Supplemental and intensive supports may be delivered by a variety of qualified staff members (e.g. classroom teacher, a specialized teacher, or another interventionist who has been trained for specific

interventions). This decision is made by the building team and is well defined before the process begins.

TEAM DISCUSSION

Are there any policies (rules/guidelines) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what instructional strategies are used?

What are the practices (routines/traditions) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what instructional strategies are used?

Are there any policies (rules/guidelines) that require, prevent, or otherwise influence how, when, and what curricula are used for intervention?

Knowing that selection of instructional strategies will be completed later; did anything come up that would benefit from creating an action plan for the team?

Are there any practices that might belong on the Stop-Doing List?

Determining Initial Focus and Developing Message

At this point the MTSS framework and specific considerations that need to be addressed have been covered. The determination of the initial content area (behavior, reading, or math) to be addressed is the next task of the leadership team. After the content area is selected, communication to stakeholders begins.

As described earlier in the assessment, curriculum, and instruction sections, each content area has specific practices that need to be included. The content-specific structuring guides lead teams through all of the considerations of creating a complete MTSS in a manner that is both effective and sustainable. While there is great flexibility within the MTSS framework for customizing the MTSS for each

district and building, there are specific practices that must be in place for any of the Kansas MTSS Implementation materials to be used. Reviewing these required practices prior to selecting a content area allows teams to make an informed decision about the commitment to the required practices.

Required Practices for Implementation of MTSS Addressing Reading

Assessment

- A Universal Screener that:
  - is used for screening all students 3 times a year,
  - is a curriculum-based measurement (CBM) that provides both accuracy and fluency data on the predictive skills at each grade level (e.g., DIBELS or AIMSweb) that is used with fidelity for grades K-8,
  - provides for a two-step universal screening process for grades 9-12. Step 1: grade level comprehension assessment (e.g. NWEA, GRADE, etc.) and Step 2: curriculum-based measurement maze passages and used with fidelity for grades 9-12, and
  - is integrated/aligned with a progress monitoring assessment.
- A progress monitoring assessment that:
  - is a curriculum-based measurement (CBM) that provides both accuracy and fluency data (e.g., DIBELS or AIMSweb) that is used with fidelity,
  - provides measures of same targeted skills as the universal screener to show the effectiveness of the intervention,
  - is able to show small increments of change, and
  - has multiple forms of the probes available (20-30 alternate forms per grade level).
- Diagnostic process and assessments that:
  - include a phonological awareness screener (i.e. Phonological Awareness Screening Test (PAST)) for the diagnostic process,,
  - include a phonics awareness screener (i.e. Quick Phonics Screener (QPS)) for the diagnostic process
  - enable analysis of student errors for the diagnostic process, and
  - include formal assessments that provide specific information about the student's skill or knowledge.

Instruction

- Collaborative teams that have protected time for data analysis and do instructional planning for students related to the MTSS
- Core Instruction (Tier 1) that:

    - is differentiated and delivered through evidence based instructional practices(i.e. explicit, systematic, scaffolded, with ample opportunities for practice),
    - consists of 90 minutes of uninterrupted core instruction addressing all 5 areas of Reading (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension) for grades K-3, and
    - consists of common comprehension strategies as part of core instruction for grades 4-12.
- Supplemental Intervention (Tier 2) that:
    - uses research-based protocol interventions,
    - provides 30 minutes of intervention in addition to core instruction,
    - is provided in small homogeneous groups,
    - provides Targeted Skill Based Instruction for grades K-3, and
    - provides Targeted Strategy Based Instruction for grades 4-12.
- Intensive Intervention (Tier 3) that:
    - uses research-based protocol interventions,
    - provides 60 minutes of intervention in addition to core instruction,
    - provides intensive, targeted and comprehensive skill based instruction, and
    - is provided in small homogeneous groups.

Required Practices for Implementation of MTSS Addressing Math

Assessment

- A Universal Screener that:
    - can be used for screening all students 3 times a year,
    - for grades K-8, is a curriculum-based measurement (CBM) that provides both accuracy and fluency data on the predictive skills at each grade level (e.g., AIMSweb or STEEP) that is used with fidelity, specifically:
        - early numeracy skills for kindergarten and first grade that include measures of magnitude comparison and strategic counting, and
        - math skills for grades 2 – 8 that are divided into computation and concepts/application (including problem-solving) strands, and
    - for grades 9-12, is a multi-step process that uses: (Step 1) data from group assessments in

and at-risk factors (low attendance, failure at earlier grades, specific math courses failed, etc.) to identify students who may be at risk and (Step 2) an eighth grade CBM given to students identified in step 1 to determine need for intervention.

- A progress monitoring assessment that:
  - is a curriculum-based measurement (CBM) that provides both accuracy and fluency data (e.g., AIMSweb or STEEP) that is integrated/aligned with the universal screening assessment and used with fidelity,
  - provides measures of same targeted skills as the universal screener to show the effectiveness of the intervention,
  - is able to show small increments of change, and
  - has multiple forms of the probes available (20-30 alternate forms per grade level).
- Diagnostic processes and assessments that:
  - enable analysis of student errors for the diagnostic process, and
  - include formal assessments that provide specific information about the student's skill or knowledge.

Instruction

- Collaborative teams have protected time for data analysis and instructional planning for students related to the MTSS.
- Core Instruction (Tier 1) that:
  - provides sufficient core instructional time, and
  - is differentiated and delivered through evidence based practices (i.e. explicit, systematic, scaffolded, with ample opportunities for practice, uses peer tutoring strategies).
- Supplemental Intervention (Tier 2) and Intensive Intervention (Tier 3) that:
  - uses evidence-based protocol interventions,
  - provides sufficient intervention in addition to core instruction,
  - is provided in small homogeneous groups,
  - uses a targeted skills model for intervention, and
  - groups students based on skill needs in
    - strategic counting and magnitude comparison for Kg-1st grade, and

- computation and concepts/application skills for 2nd grade and above.

Required Practices for Implementation of MTSS Addressing Behavior

Assessment

The basic assessment system that includes:

- clearly defined behaviors as major/minor offenses.
- a process for consistent collecting and reporting of behavioral offenses (Office Discipline Referral: ODR).
- a data system that has the capacity to disaggregate and produce graphic displays of ODR data for at least the following critical data components:
  - WHAT behavior?
  - WHICH students?
  - WHERE (location of incident)?
  - WHEN (time of day, day of week)?
  - WHO made the referral?
- the utilization of ODR data as the basis for determining both overall functioning of the system, and identifying individual students who may require support.

Curriculum

Core instruction (Tier 1) that includes:

- 3-5 positively stated building-wide expectations for student/adult behavior have been selected and agreed upon
- Rules/Guidelines further defining the building-wide expectations across settings have been written
- All individual classroom rules align and support the 3-5 building-wide behavior expectations
- A system for recognizing students who display the buildings' expectations
- Identified consequences for misbehavior

Instruction

- Common lesson plans based on the building-wide expectations
- Instruction is scheduled and delivered initially to students by building staff at an agreed upon time across the building.
- Instruction is scheduled for on-going, uniform review of lessons on a weekly basis throughout the school year

Selecting Content Area:

What content area will be addressed first?

If unsure, what additional information is needed to make the decision?

What will the deciding factor be?

TEAM DISCUSSION

As discussed earlier, one of the responsibilities of the leadership team is communication. The initial message is to help all staff understand why this effort is being undertaken and what the plan is. The questions below provide discussion points for the leadership team in developing the initial points of communication:

Developing the Message:

<u>The Rationale</u>

Why is the implementation of an MTSS being proposed?

What other factors are influencing the decision to implement an MTSS?

Who currently supports the implementation of an MTSS?

Who is leading the charge?

TEAM DISCUSSION

TEAM DISCUSSION

The Plan

When did (will) the efforts begin?

What will these efforts consist of?

When and how will staff begin receiving training and support?

How often and what methods will be used to keep everyone informed?

Document the initial communication that will be provided on the Communication Planning Tool in the Decision Notebook. The table below is an example of the information that is recorded on the plan. If the team currently has another method to plan and monitor communication, it may be used instead of this one.

When	To Whom	About What	How	Feedback
Staff Meeting	*All Staff*	*MTSS Overview & Desire to Move Forward*	*Presentation by building Principal*	
March Board Meeting	*Board Members*	*MTSS Overview & Desire to Move Forward*	*Presentation by principals with intro by Supt.*	

Frequency of Leadership Team Meetings

To ensure momentum is maintained and progress is made, the frequency of meetings needs to be determined and dates scheduled into calendars now. It might be helpful to revisit the Leadership Team Time Commitment section previously discussed in this guide. Even if working with a Recognized MTSS Facilitator, there is much work that must be completed by the leadership team between formal days.

In the Decision Notebook, on the bottom of the Leadership Team tool is a section titled Frequency of Leadership Team Meetings. In this section document the planned meeting schedule for the leadership team.

Stop-Doing List and Action Plans: If there were any items that should stop occurring within the building or are beyond the basics of the communication plan that require action planning, take time now to update the Stop-Doing List and to create any necessary action plan.

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Appendix

Structuring Literacy & Math for Preschool

	K-12	Preschool
Universal Screening Assessments / Progress Monitoring Tools	Readily available to the public Can be used to identify students at risk for later academic failure Can be used as a primary source of data for determining instructional focus and grouping for intervention Can be used for monitoring progress for students receiving supplemental or intensive intervention	Tools are in development- therefore few are available to the public Can be used to identify students whose skills appear lower than classroom peers Are not a primary source for determining instructional focus or for grouping, additional information will be required Can be used as a general progress monitoring tool for targeted skill acquisition within the core curriculum for targeted students
Decision Rules for Progress Monitoring	Leadership teams use predetermined rules to evaluate whether an intervention is working, if additional support is needed, or whether changes in instructional focus are needed	Available progress monitoring assessments do not provide definitive benchmarks, or cut from which predetermined decision rules can be easily made.
Intervention Structures Model of Instruction	Targeted skill instruction is provided during times devoted for supplemental or intensive intervention. This targeted instruction is provided <u>in addition</u> to core instruction.	Targeted skill instruction is provided within the core curriculum through differentiated small group activities and/or individualized learning opportunities. Targeted skill instruction is systematic, explicit, and implemented within a meaningful context for young children
Scheduling	Clear guidance is provided for core instruction in all content areas as well as for supplemental and intensive intervention	There is no guidance relating to scheduling for core instruction of specific content areas because, targeted skill instruction is embedded throughout the preschool day. .
Curriculum/Instruction Supplemental & Intensive	Targeted skill instruction is provided at tiers 2 and 3 of the MTSS. Leadership teams proactively select evidence-based curricula and instructional practices to be provided during the designated intervention times.	Targeted skill instruction is embedded within the core curriculum. Leadership teams may decide to supplement the general core preschool curriculum with a more explicit math/literacy curriculum.

Structuring Behavior for Preschool

	K-12	Preschool
Universal Screening Assessments / Progress Monitoring Tools Commercially Available/Formal Screening	Office Discipline Referral (ODR)- are based upon what the elementary or secondary school have been determined to be their major discipline offences that will always be referred to administration for action. Leadership teams may select tools that have been designed for elementary or secondary populations and do not include provisions for preschool.	Behavior Incidence Reports (BIR)- those predetermined behaviors that are considered major offenses however, are not referred to the administration for action, but rather for record keeping and school wide data review. If necessary leadership teams may need to select tools designed specifically for preschool.
Decision Rules for Universal Screening (rules for determining levels of support needed)	Leadership teams use the following guidance for making decisions: Students with 0-1 ODR as being successful with Tier 1 Supports Students with 2-5 ODRs may need Tier 2 supports Students with 6 or more probably need Tier 3 Supports	
Decision Rules for Progress Monitoring (rules to determine the effectiveness of interventions)	Leadership teams will review individual behavior charts or daily point sheets in addition to ongoing measures of ODRs, Suspensions, and other data already in use	TBA
Intervention Structures Model of Instruction		
Scheduling		
Curriculum/Instruction Supplemental & Intensive		

Research Base for Tiered Supports in Preschool

While the research base for applying a tiered model of instructional support is relatively new, it is believed to be a promising practice for the field of early childhood, and more specifically for preschool programs. To reduce the gap between research and practice in extending tiered approaches of support to early childhood, four large centers were funded by the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) to develop effective tiered intervention models for preschool settings. They include:

- Examining the Potential Efficacy of a Classroom Wide Model for Promoting Social Emotional Development and Addressing Challenging Behavior in Preschool Children With and Without Disabilities, Mary Louise Hemmeter, Principal Investigator, Vanderbilt University
- Building Social Competence for School Success through a Continuum of Positive Behavior Supports, Martha Snell, Principal Investigator, University of Virginia
- Center for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood (CRtIEC), Charles Greenwood and Judy Carta, Principal Investigators, University of Kansas
- Recognition and Response: An Early Intervening System for Young Children At-Risk for Learning Disabilities, Virginia Buysse, Principal Investigator
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These and other federally funded research projects are quickly adding to the evidence base regarding the identification and/or creation of assessment methods and tools for universal screening and progress monitoring, curricula that can be implemented with fidelity within all three tiers of instruction, and evidence based interventions that can be utilized for targeted supplemental and intensive instruction across early childhood educational settings. Initial work conducted by these and other researchers have focused primarily on supporting language/literacy development and positive behavior. Research in the application of tiered models to support the development of mathematical ability in young children is not as extensive, however also shows promise (VanDerHeyden et al, 2004).

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Creating Team Norms

Materials **Time**	Index cards, writing utensils, tape 30 minutes
LOOK	Look at how your current leadership team meetings are conducted.
THINK	Think about and discuss the following questions. Do your current leadership team meetings: 1. allow participants to have honest discussions? 2. ensure that everyone on the team participates? 3. ensure that everyone is heard? 4. enable participants to openly address their individual issues? 5. ensure that everyone agrees to let go of personal agendas for the benefit of the leadership team's immediate agenda and vision? 6. begin and end on time? 7. meet on a consistent basis? 8. ensure confidentiality? 9. ensure appropriate communication?
ACT	1. Give 5 index cards and like writing instruments to each member. 2. Ask each member to reflect and record behaviors they consider ideal behaviors for a group. Have them write one idea on each of the index cards. Give them 10 minutes. When doing this consider: **a. Time:** When do we meet? Will we set beginning and ending times? Will we start and end on time? **b. Listening:** How will we encourage listening? How will we discourage interrupting? **c. Confidentiality:** Will the meetings be open? Will what we say in the meeting be held in confidence? What can be said after the meeting? **d. Participation:** How will we encourage everyone's participation? Will we have an attendance policy? Is it allowable for anyone to not participate in the conversation? **e. Expectations:** What do we expect from members? Are there requirements for participation? 3. Shuffle all cards together. 4. Turn cards face up and read each card aloud. Allow time for the group members to discuss each idea. Tape each card to a display board so all group members can see it. As each card is read aloud, ask the group to consider if it is similar to any other idea that has been expressed. Similar cards should be grouped together. 5. When all cards have been sorted into groups, have the group write the norm suggested by the group of cards. Have one member record these new norms onto a large sheet of paper. 6. Review the proposed norms with the group. Determine whether the group can support the norms before the group adopts them.