MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

Mobilization Guide
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INTRODUCTION

A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) is a system designed to provide equitable access to education and meet the needs of all students by ensuring that schools optimize data-driven decision making, progress monitoring, and evidence-based supports and strategies with increasing intensity to sustain student growth.

MTSS is not just about tiered interventions, but rather how all the systems in a school or district fit together to ensure a high quality education for all students.

Building a multi-tiered system of support in your district is a big undertaking, but a worthy cause. In order to be successful, it is critical that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of what MTSS is and, most importantly, how to use evidence-based practices to remove the barriers that prevent all students from learning at high levels.

If that all sounds like a lot, you may be wondering where to begin. This guide is here to help.

Throughout this document, we will introduce you to resources that will assist you and your district or school with understanding the most current research on MTSS and how to get started building a system that will address the needs of all students.

Get started with the MTSS Readiness Flowchart on the next page.
MTSS READINESS FLOWCHART
FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Start

Get mobilized! Start by testing your knowledge. Take an online diagnostic to assess your current understanding of MTSS. page 6

Read the Massachusetts MTSS Blueprint to build on your current knowledge of MTSS. page 7

The MTSS visual provides a reminder of the different touch points we should keep top of mind when planning. Explore and unpack the visual. page 8

Once you have a good understanding of MTSS, it is time to start defining your leadership team for implementation. page 9

Your leadership team can further build understanding and help spread the word of MTSS throughout your education community using the video facilitation guide. pages 10 - 17

Complete the MTSS Self-Assessment. page 18

Access additional resources to support your planning and implementation efforts with the MTSS Clearinghouse. page 19

FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
MTSS DIAGNOSTIC

Assess your current knowledge of MTSS by taking this diagnostic assessment.

Access the assessment here

MTSS DIAGNOSTIC

Directions

A diagnostic assessment is a form of pre-assessment that allows educators to determine learners’ knowledge, and skills prior to instruction. This diagnostic assessment is intended to be used to determine current understanding of the research and theory behind the design and delivery of effective multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).

Use this tool during leadership team meetings, faculty meetings, or during professional development sessions as a pre-assessment to determine prior knowledge about MTSS. Given anonymously, this can help teaching and learning teams embrace variability and can increase motivation to explore the MTSS Blueprint and corresponding tools to learn more about how to best meet the needs of all students.

Pre-Assessment Questions

1. Based on the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), choose the best definition of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).
   a. a systematic approach that addresses conditions for creating successful and sustainable system change while supporting staff through competency drivers
   b. a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students’ needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making
   c. a framework that schools use to provide targeted support to struggling students, supporting academic growth and achievement, but it also behavior and social emotional needs
   d. an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to meet the achievement and behavioral needs of all learners

2. There are six key tenets of the MTSS framework. Which of the following is NOT one of the six key tenets.
   a. All students are capable of grade-level learning with adequate support
   b. MTSS is rooted in proactivity and prevention
   c. Every educator should reinforce reading comprehension skills across the content area in Tier I
   d. Decisions and procedures are driven by school and student data
MTSS BLUEPRINT

The MTSS Blueprint defines each of the components for a robust Multi-tiered System of Support.

The Blueprint can be accessed here.
THE VISUAL

Multi-Tiered System of Support

To read a document unpacking the MTSS visual, [click here](#).
DEFINING THE TEAM

Read guidance and tips on creating your implementation team for MTSS.

The team member guidance document can be accessed here.
# MTSS VIDEO FACILITATION GUIDE

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**MODULE 1**

**INTRODUCTION TO MTSS VISUAL**

This module introduces the new Massachusetts MTSS visual and helps to answer the question: WHAT is the MTSS Blueprint and WHAT does MTSS look like in MA?

**Tools**

- [Unpacking the MTSS Visual](#)

**Discussion Questions**

Choose one or more of the following questions and discuss, tweet, or write a reflection.

- Why does MTSS need to support teachers as well as students?
- How can the MTSS visual help you when designing educational experiences?
- How can we ensure that a high-quality Tier 1 foundation is accessible for all students, regardless of variability?

**Resources**

- View this [one page fact sheet](#) from Understood.org on what MTSS is and is not.
- [Read the MA State ESSA Plan](#)
- Read about [5 Myths and Truths about the MTSS Framework and Young Children with Disabilities](#)
- Explore the Every Student Succeeds Act: Summary of Key Provisions. Pg. 6 specifically focuses on all references to multi-tiered systems of support
MODULE 2

INTRODUCTION TO IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

This module unpacks the outside drivers around the model and why it’s important for leadership to elevate and celebrate teachers through robust professional development, coaching and a focus on universally designed, inclusive practice as well as the development of integrated and sustainable district strategies to ensure a tiered continuum of evidence based practices. This module answers the question, WHAT is implementation science and why will it help to improve the outcomes of all students.

Tools
★ MTSS Self-Assessment

Discussion Questions
Choose one or more of the following questions and discuss, tweet, or write a reflection.
★ What are the goals of implementation science?
★ Identify challenges to increasing the use of evidence-based practices in your school or district.

Resources
★ Visit the National Implementation Research Network
★ Review the Implementation Science and Practice BRIEF in the Education Sector
MODULE 3

UNPACKING THE LEADERSHIP DRIVERS

This module introduces the research and rationale for a focus on shared responsibility & collaboration, research-based practice, resource allocation, and optimizing stakeholder engagement in MTSS work. This module makes connections between the leadership driver and the Ed Eval rubrics on leadership.

Tools

- Team Member Protocol
- MTSS Action Plan Review Tools
- MTSS Theory of Action Sample
- Review Protocol

Discussion Questions

Choose one or more of the following questions and discuss, tweet, or write a reflection.

- What are the differences between technical problems and adaptive challenges and how can they impact the development of a multi-tiered system of support?
- Think about the best leader you have ever worked with/alongside. How did they exemplify expertise in both technical problems and adaptive challenges? Share specific examples.

Resources

- Read this article or watch this video containing great self-assessment questions for leaders on leadership drivers
- Watch these Leadership Team (ILT) Modules
- Elementary Scheduling Guidance
- Secondary Scheduling Guidance
MODULE 4

UNPACKING THE COMPETENCY DRIVERS

This module explores a focus on high quality professional development through the MA DESE PD standards, the importance of feedback (Model Feedback surveys and connection to Ed Eval rubrics and what the expectations are for teachers), and a comprehensive coaching model.

Tools
- Professional Development Guidance
- UDL Interview Questions

Discussion Questions
Choose one or more of the following questions and discuss, tweet, or write a reflection.

- Consider the best PD you have ever attended. Discuss its impact using the 10 high quality PD standards and discuss how it built your competency as a result of the standards.
- Does your school or district provide high quality professional development using the high quality PD standards? If so, what specifically aligns and what do you need to work on? If not, what do you believe is the most important aspect to address first?
- Consider how your colleagues discuss the use of Educator Evaluation as a means to improve teacher competency. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your current model?

Resources
- View the Massachusetts Standards for High Quality Professional Development
- View this article by Marzano on the two purposes of educator evaluation
**MODULE 5**

**UNPACKING THE IMPLEMENTATION DRIVERS**

This module focuses on the importance of data-based decision making and standards-based instruction, making connections back to the overall design of the Blueprint as well as the connection to implementation science.

- the monitoring of implementation fidelity
- the use of robust data and assessment systems
- the use of standards-driven curriculum/instructional models

**Tools**

- Fidelity Measures Guidance
- Potential Root Causes

**Discussion Questions**

Choose one or more of the following questions and discuss, tweet, or write a reflection.

- Consider how often data-based decision making occurs in your school/district. What structures are in place to ask the following questions on an ongoing basis to inform instruction. What are the data telling us? What can we learn from the data? How can we change our practice in light of the data? What other data do we need to collect?

- What does it mean to be standards-based in practice?

**Resources**

- Read this chapter on the Importance of Data-Based Decision Making
- This article outlines A Brief History of the Role of Standards in Education Reform
MODULE 6

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING & EQUITABLE ACCESS

This module introduces the UDL framework, the UDL principles and the UDL guidelines and how they provide all students with equitable access and engagement. This video highlights that UDL is not just about academic instruction but also behavioral and social emotional support for all students.

Multi-Tiered System of Support

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
Is not Differentiated Instruction (DI)

Tools

- UDL Self-Assessment

Discussion Questions

Choose one or more of the following questions and discuss, tweet, or write a reflection.

- After viewing the video and the UDL Implementation Rubric or the UDL Progression Rubric, where are you in your UDL practice?
- How does implementation of Universal Design for Learning optimize equitable access for all students?

Resources

- Review the CAST UDL Guidelines
- Explore the UDL Implementation Rubric
- Self-assess your current teaching practices using the UDL Progression Rubric
Module 7

Tiers Are Not a Location

This module discusses the three tiers of a multi-tiered system and how they are not related to special education status. This video clarifies that special education students are first general education students and that all students deserve equal access to rigorous, grade-level, standards-based instruction. This module introduces the nature of flexibility in tiers and a focus on data-based decision making and the importance of UDL for all students in Tier 1.

Tools
- MTSS & Special Education
- MTSS Dental Analogy
- Data-based Decision Making Guidance
- Curriculum Scope and Sequence Protocol
- Literacy by Level

Discussion Questions

Choose one or more of the following discussion questions and discuss, tweet, or write a reflection.

- How is an ideal MTSS system like an ideal system of oral health and tooth care?
- How would you describe MTSS to a parent who asked about the district MTSS plan, using the dental analogy?
- Why is it so critical for all students to receive equitable access to Tier 1 with supplemental support, if necessary?

Resources
- Learn more about “supplement, not supplant” guidance of Title 1 in ESSA and consider how it relates to layered supports in a multi-tiered system of supports
- 6 Principles of IDEA
MTSS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Complete the MTSS Self-Assessment to determine where your district or school currently stands in the planning process.

Access a copy of the self-assessment [here](#).

This self-assessment is intended to be used by a planning team at the school or district level. You may choose to individually rate each item and collectively discuss to come up with a rating agreed upon by the group or you may choose to discuss as a group and come up with an overall group rating. You may choose to look at each component in a holistic manner (academic, social/emotional, and behavioral) or choose one particular area and focus your survey on that (e.g. academics). This assessment was intended to take between 40-60 minutes to administer. Actual time will vary depending upon the composition of your team and disposition of its member for discourse.

Access Self-Assessment
MTSS TOOLKIT & CLEARINGHOUSE

Search for and access tools, resources and protocols to get help with MTSS planning and implementation at the Massachusetts Tools for Schools Clearinghouse:

www.matoolsforschools.com
REFERENCES


