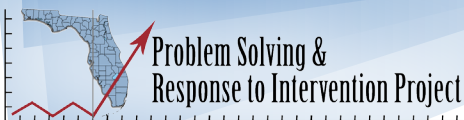




*A Multi-Tiered  
System of Supports*

# MTSS Implementation Components

*Ensuring common language  
and understanding*



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## Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Implementation Components Common Questions

### **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Defined:**

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a term used to describe an evidence-based model of schooling that uses data-based problem-solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. The integrated instruction and intervention is delivered to students in varying intensities (multiple tiers) based on student need. “Need-driven” decision-making seeks to ensure that district resources reach the appropriate students (schools) at the appropriate levels to accelerate the performance of ALL students to achieve and/or exceed proficiency.

Many existing terms and initiatives share the common elements of data-based problem-solving to inform instruction and intervention (e.g., Positive Behavior Support [PBS], Problem Solving/Response to Intervention [RtI], Continuous Improvement Model [CIM], Lesson Study, Differentiated Accountability). Although several initiatives share this core characteristic of data-based problem-solving, the **differences** in the use of **terms** (i.e., the labels used to describe them), **who** has responsibility for implementing data-based problem-solving (e.g., general education, special education, student services), and the **language** used to describe the initiatives have often resulted in high levels of variability in the implementation of the model at state, district and school levels. These differences serve to potentially limit the impact of this model on both the integrity of implementation and on student growth.

The primary function of district leadership is to 1) ensure that a **common-language, common-understanding** exists around the rationale for and the purpose and expected outcomes of implementation, 2) clearly identify **who** has the responsibility for **what** and how those individuals will be held **accountable**, 3) ensure that district **policies** are supportive of, and not barriers to, the implementation of the model, 4) provide sufficient support (professional development, technical assistance) to ensure that the implementation plan and timelines can be achieved and 5) identify clearly the district- and school-level leaders who will have implementation expectations as part of their annual performance reviews.

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### 1. What are the basic components of the problem-solving process?

The 4-step problem-solving model involves:

- Step 1: Define, in objective and measurable terms, the goal(s) to be attained (what is it we want students/educators/systems to know and be able to do).
- Step 2: Identify possible reasons why the desired goal(s) is not being attained.
- Step 3: Develop and implement a well-supported plan involving evidence-based strategies to attain the goal(s) (based on data that verified the reasons identified in Step 2).
- Step 4: Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in relation to stated goals.

Some important things to consider when using a data-based problem-solving model:

1. A problem-solving model provides the structure to identify, develop, implement and evaluate strategies to accelerate the performance of ALL students.
2. The use of scientifically based or evidence-based practices should occur whenever possible.
3. The effectiveness of the problem-solving process is based on both fidelity of the problem-solving process itself and fidelity in the implementation of the instruction/intervention plan.
4. The problem-solving process is applicable to all three tiers of instruction/intervention and can be used for problem-solving at the community, district, school, classroom and/or individual student levels.

### 2. How do we define Tiers 1, 2, and 3?

**Tier 1** is what “ALL” students get in the form of instruction (academic and behavior/social-emotional) and student supports. Tier 1 focuses on the implementation of the district’s Core Curriculum and is aligned with the learning standards. Tier 1 services (time and focus) are based on the needs of the students in a particular school. Some schools require more time than other schools in particular core curriculum areas based on student demographics (readiness, language, economic factors) and student performance levels to ensure that all students reach and/or exceed state proficiency levels.

**Tier 2** is what “some” students receive in addition to Tier 1 instruction. The purpose of Tier 2 instruction and supports is to improve student performance under Tier 1 performance expectations (levels and conditions of performance). Therefore, “effective” Tier 2 services occur when at least 70% of students receiving Tier 2 services (in addition to Tier 1) meet or exceed grade level/subject area Tier 1 proficiency levels (academic and/or behavior) established by the district. Tier 2 services are more “intense” (more time, narrow focus of instruction/intervention) than Tier 1. Tier 2 services can be provided by a variety of professionals (e.g., general education and/or remedial teachers, behavior specialists) in any setting (general education classroom, separate settings, home). Since the number of minutes of Tier 2 services is in addition to Tier 1, the total amount of time a student receives Tier 1 and Tier 2 services is based, fundamentally, on the number of minutes all students receive Tier 1 supports.

**Tier 3** is what “few” students receive and is the most intense service level a school can provide to a student. Typically, Tier 3 services are provided to very small groups and/or individual students. The purpose of Tier 3 services is to help students overcome significant

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barriers to learning academic and/or behavior skills required for school success. Tier 3 services require more time and a more narrow focus of instruction/intervention than Tier 2 services. Tier 3 services require effective levels of collaboration and coordination among the staff (general and specialized) providing services to the student. The expected outcome of Tier 3 services, combined with Tiers 1 and 2, is that the student(s) will achieve Tier 1 proficiency levels (academic and/or behavior) established by the district.

### **3. How do we differentiate Tiers 1, 2, and 3?**

The tiers are differentiated by the “intensity” of the services provided. Intensity is defined as the number of minutes and the focus of the instruction/intervention. An increase in the number of minutes of exposure to quality instruction/intervention and/or the narrowing of the focus of instruction would be defined as “more intensive instruction.” Therefore, Tiers 2 and 3 are defined within the context of Tier 1. The number of minutes of instruction and the breadth of that instruction that defines Tier 1 in a school will be the basis for the criteria for Tiers 2 and 3. For instance, if ALL students receive 90 minutes of reading instruction in Tier 1 and that instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, then Tier 2 would be defined as additional minutes of quality instruction and/or intervention that focuses on one or more of the five areas of reading, but not all. The “focus” would be in the area of greatest need for the student. In general, a four step process will help to define and differentiate the tiers: HOW MUCH additional time will be needed, WHAT will occur during that time, WHO is the most qualified person to deliver the “What” (instructional strategies) and WHERE will that additional instruction occur. Tier 3 will be the most “intensive” instruction the building can offer.

### **4. What does “instruction” look like in Tiers 1, 2, and 3?**

**Tier 1** The delivery of instruction in Tier 1 is focused on grade level/subject area/behavior standards using effective large and small group instructional strategies. Differentiated instruction occurs to a degree that is appropriate for the size and diverse learning abilities of the group and the instructional skills of the teacher. The number of minutes per day of Tier 1 instruction is based on district standards for what all students are expected to be exposed to for a particular content/subject area and is often determined by state guidelines or regulations. For instance, ninety minutes per day is the typical number of minutes that students in elementary grades receive instruction in literacy. Sixty minutes per day is the typical number of minutes of exposure to mathematics. The impact of Tier 1 instruction should result in approximately 80% of the students achieving grade-level expectations (e.g., proficiency) or making significant growth in the case in which the typical student is performing below grade/subject standards. Schools would be expected to develop school-wide targets and supports for the promotion of appropriate academic and social behaviors and the prevention of maladaptive or challenging behaviors based on evidence of behavior patterns and culturally competent expectations specific to their regional or local needs.

**Tier 2** The delivery of Tier 2 instruction is focused on skills that pose a barrier to the acceleration of student learning. Typically, a “standard protocol” approach is used with Tier 2 instruction. Student-centered data (benchmark, progress monitoring, group diagnostic) are used to identify groups of students who share the same academic and/or

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behavior need. The problem-solving process is used to develop evidence-based interventions to accelerate the development of those skills. The evidence-based instruction is provided to students typically in a group format. The determination of “who” provides the instruction and “where” the instruction is provided is based on a four-step process: HOW much time is needed each day to accelerate the skill development, WHAT instruction/intervention will be provided during that time, WHO will provide the instruction/intervention and WHERE will the instruction occur. No “rules” exist regarding the “who” and “where.” Therefore, Tier 2 instruction could be provided in the general education classroom by the general education teacher, in the general education classroom by a supplemental instruction teacher or outside of the general education classroom. The number of minutes of instruction must be greater than the number of minutes provided to typical students for that skill focus. Since academic engaged time (minutes per day of exposure to quality instruction) is the best predictor of rate of progress, acceleration requires minutes in addition to Tier 1. Any Tier 2 instruction provided to students must be integrated with Tier 1 content and performance expectations. Providers of Tier 2 instruction are encouraged to incorporate the instructional language and materials of Tier 1. The impact of Tier 2 instruction should result in approximately 70% or more of the students achieving grade-level expectations (e.g., proficiency) or making significant growth in the case in which the typical student is performing below grade/subject standards.

**Tier 3** The delivery of Tier 3 instruction is focused on the skills that pose the greatest barrier to acceleration of student learning. Tier 3 instruction is characterized by the greatest number of minutes of instruction available in a building and the narrowest focus of that instruction. Typically, the instruction is provided to individual students or in very small groups. The same four questions are used to guide the development of the instruction (HOW MUCH, WHAT, WHO, WHERE). Instruction/intervention is developed using the four-step data-based problem-solving process applied to individual students (compared to problem-solving instruction for SKILLS in Tier 2). Data collected to inform Tier 3 instruction typically is individual student diagnostic data (academic and/or behavior). The total number of minutes per day of Tier 3 instruction is in addition to those provided in Tiers 1 and 2. If an “alternate core” approach is used, the total number of minutes is at least the equivalent of the typical number of minutes provided in Tiers 1 and 2 for that content area. Tier 3 is the most powerful instruction and is characterized by:

1. More instructional time
2. Smaller instructional groups (or individuals)
3. More precisely targeted at the appropriate level
4. Clearer and more detailed explanations are used during instruction
5. More systematic instructional sequences are used
6. More extensive opportunities for practice are provided
7. More opportunities for error correction and feedback are provided.

### 5. What does assessment look like in Tiers 1, 2, & 3?

**Tier 1** - Assessments at Tier 1 typically include both formative and summative measures and may occur as frequently as daily or weekly such as classroom mini-skill assessments (to assist with lesson planning) to quarterly benchmark assessments and/or end-of-year summative measures such as FCAT, end-of-course exams, etc., to monitor progress of all students and evaluate effectiveness of Tier 1 instruction and supports.

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Assessments used at Tier 1 should be able to answer specific questions in order to help guide problem solving efforts at Tier 1 and should align with evidence-based instructional practices and NGSSS adopted in the State of Florida that ALL students are expected to meet (see questions 2-4 above). Some of those questions are (but not limited to):

1. What percent of students are meeting grade level expectations and/or are “on-track” for promotion/graduation?
2. Is Tier 1 instruction for each grade level content or subject area effective (i.e., approximately 80% or more students are proficient or making significant growth)?
3. How effective have improvement plans (i.e., SIP) been at increasing the growth of all students in addition to reaching higher percentages of students reaching proficiency in content and subject areas?
4. Which students demonstrate significant gaps between their current performances on Tier 1 assessments in relation to grade level expectations of performance for a given point in time?
5. What is the relationship between Tier 1 formative classroom assessments or benchmark assessments and performance on summative measures (e.g., FCAT, end-of-course exams, etc.)?

**Tier 2** - Assessments at Tier 2 are likely to be varied for different student needs.

The frequency of assessments can be as low as once a month to as frequent as once a week depending on the needs of the small group of students and the assessment parameters (e.g., FAIR vs. CBM). In addition, assessments of behavior at Tier 2 may occur each period or each day. Just as with Tier 1, Assessments at Tier 2 should be able to answer specific questions such as (but not limited to):

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

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9. Are students who are demonstrating progress at Tier 2 based on progress monitoring data also demonstrating progress on their Tier 1 assessments? If not, why not?

**Tier 3** - Assessments at Tier 3 are intended to be very frequent and assess more micro-level skills to address significant learning challenges or barriers to reaching success at Tiers 2 and/or Tier 1. The frequency of assessments used at Tier 3 for monitoring progress should be based on the intensity of needs of the student and matched accordingly. A general rule of thumb: the more a student is behind Tier 1 expectations of performance and/or the less responsive a student is to previous interventions attempted, the more frequent and varied the assessments should be to ensure matched instructional supports to “catch-up” to grade level expectations. Many of the questions posed at Tier 2 are applicable to Tier 3, except the focus at Tier 3 is typically focused at the individual student level.

Additional questions to ask:

1. Is the student appropriately matched to the intervention plan(s) developed for the student?
2. Does problem-solving address the “whole student” in that likely both academic and behavioral needs are significant?
3. If the student is demonstrating a positive response to the intervention(s), then is the student also demonstrating improvements in Tier 1 assessment performance? If not, why not? What next goals/needs should be targeted? Does the student need Tier 3 services anymore (they may still need Tier 2 services)?
4. If the student is not progressing, is fidelity a concern? Does this student need a long-term (2 or more years) plan for “catching-up” to grade level standards (including transition plans between grades)?

### **6. What is “fidelity” and how is it assessed?**

There are three basic types of “fidelity” for districts and schools to support and/or integrate into instruction and intervention:

1. Fidelity of implementing the critical components of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS);
2. Fidelity of using the problem-solving process across all three tiers; and
3. Fidelity of implementing evidence-based instruction and interventions matched to specific need(s).

The first type of fidelity (District MTSS system) requires that the district and school(s) have provided the basic elements of the MTSS infrastructure. This includes the provision of professional development and support (technical assistance/coaching), data support (data sources and technology), leadership support (policies, expectations and evaluation) and program evaluation (on-going data collection to ensure integrity of implementation and support). Assessment tools have been developed in Florida to assess levels of implementation and educator perceptions of the fidelity of the MTSS system. These tools include (among others) the Self-Assessment of Problem-Solving Implementation (SAPSI), the Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ), the PBS Implementation Checklist (PIC), and the Benchmarks of Advanced Tiers (BAT) that can be used to determine implementation across buildings, educator perceptions (beliefs, skills, practices, and satisfaction) and a district



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Needs Assessment Process. More information about these tools and processes can be found at [www.floridarti.usf.edu](http://www.floridarti.usf.edu) and [www.flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu](http://www.flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu).

The second type of fidelity focuses on the degree to which the four-step data-based problem-solving process is implemented appropriately. This is important because the development of instruction and interventions is based on this process. If the process is flawed, then the instruction and interventions developed as a result of the process will be flawed. Tools to assess the integrity of the problem-solving process are available at [www.floridarti.usf.edu](http://www.floridarti.usf.edu). These tools are designed to be used concurrently with the problem-solving process (Critical Component Checklists) and to assess the degree to which “products” contain critical elements of the problem-solving process.

The final type of fidelity focuses on the degree to which instruction and intervention are delivered in the manner intended and the degree to which instruction and intervention is integrated across the tiers of service delivery. This type of fidelity includes both “sufficiency” (the amount of the service delivered) as well as integrity (the degree to which the service was delivered as intended). In Tier one, the integrity of instruction focuses on the degree to which core instruction is delivered in the way intended, based on lesson study (or lesson planning), the presence of effective instructional strategies and the degree to which those instructional strategies are appropriate to the skill level and demographic characteristics of the students (language, abilities). Typically, the fidelity of Tier 1 is assessed through the use of walkthroughs by principals and peers and/or direct observation of the critical elements of the instructional process. Tools such as the Benchmarks of Quality and PBS Implementation Checklist allow for measurement of the fidelity of Tier 1 behavior supports and instruction. The sufficiency of instruction in Tier 1 is based on the degree to which teachers implement core instruction consistent with the time expectations for instruction in specific content areas each day (e.g., literacy, 90 minutes). Integrity in Tiers 2 and 3 focuses on a structured support system for Tier 2/3 providers. This system consists of regular meetings to determine student response to the intervention, barriers to the delivery of the intervention, and technical assistance to deliver the intervention as intended. Sufficiency is measured through the use of documentation templates that measure the degree to which the intervention was provided as intended (e.g., number of minutes or percentage of plan components) and the type of intervention, to name a few. For behavior, the Benchmarks of Advanced Tiers (BAT) can also assist with monitoring the fidelity of instruction/intervention that is provided at Tier 2/3.

### **7. How do we ensure fidelity of instructional/intervention services across the Tiers?**

There are many strategies that can be used at the state, district, and school levels to increase the probability that appropriate levels of fidelity occur when designing and implementing evidence-based instruction and interventions for students. Identifying, promoting, and training school leaders and educators about evidence-based instructional practices that all students receive can result in maximum effectiveness of Tier 1. State, district, and school leaders should provide effective leadership and professional development to align and integrate multiple initiatives, and streamline procedures associated with supporting the use of a data-based problem-solving process with fidelity. Ensuring fidelity of educators’ use of the problem-solving process and implementation of evidence-based practices can be achieved by ensuring alignment between state, district, and school missions through development of MTSS implementation plans. State, district,

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and school leaders can also use MTSS implementation data at each respective level to identify gaps in infrastructure or supports needed to sustain efficient and effective use of evidence-based practices at the school and classroom levels. Professional development opportunities should also be varied and designed to directly support educators on how to assess fidelity at each tier and utilize identified strategies for ensuring fidelity of implementing evidence-based instruction. For example, leaders can promote the importance of, strategies for, and assessment of fidelity in the conversations of Professional Learning Communities at the school and district levels. State or district leaders may also include development of policies that require documentation of fidelity as part of the data-based problem-solving process, and dissemination of specific methods that can be used at the building level to provide support for fidelity of instruction and intervention.

### **8. What are “decision-rules” and how are they connected with assessing effectiveness of instruction/intervention?**

Decision rules are used to determine the degree to which instruction and/or intervention has been effective at achieving the goals identified in Step 1 of the problem-solving process. Three levels of response to instruction/intervention are used to make the determination of effectiveness: positive, questionable and poor. A positive response to instruction/intervention is demonstrated by a significant improvement in the rate of student performance, such that the performance goal will be reached within a reasonable period of time (based on goal setting in the Problem Identification step of the data-based problem-solving process). A questionable response to instruction/intervention is demonstrated by improvement in the rate of student performance, but the level of that rate of improvement is less than desired to achieve the performance goal. A poor response to instruction/intervention is demonstrated by no change in the rate of student performance following implementation of the instruction/intervention and/or a drop in the rate of student performance. The degree to which the instruction/intervention was implemented with fidelity must be addressed prior to making any decisions about the continuation, modification, or a complete change in instruction/intervention based on the type of student response to instruction/intervention.

Initial recommendations regarding the provision of instruction/intervention can be aligned with student response to instruction/intervention. These recommendations provide a way in which decisions made in different school settings within a district can be consistent. The recommendation following a positive response to instruction/interventions is to continue with the instruction/intervention and the regular progress-monitoring schedule. If a response to instruction/intervention is questionable, the recommendation is to increase the intensity of the instruction/intervention (e.g., time, focus) for a specified period of time and to increase the rate of progress monitoring (if appropriate). When the response is poor, the recommendation is to return to the data-based problem-solving process to develop a new intervention.

### **9. What are the critical elements of the district and school infrastructure that must be in place to implement and sustain MTSS?**

The following are critical elements that should be in place to efficiently and effectively implement and sustain a multi-tiered system of supports across a district:

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1. Effective, actively involved, and resolute leadership that frequently provides visible connections between a MTSS framework with district & school mission statements and organizational improvement efforts.
2. Alignment of policies and procedures across classroom, grade, building, district, and state levels.
3. Ongoing efficient facilitation and accurate use of a problem-solving process to support planning, implementing, and evaluating effectiveness of services.
4. Strong, positive, and ongoing collaborative partnerships with all stakeholders who provide education services or who otherwise would benefit from increases in student outcomes.
5. Comprehensive, efficient, and user-friendly data-systems for supporting decision-making at all levels from the individual student level up to the aggregate district level.
6. Sufficient availability of coaching supports to assist school team and staff problem-solving efforts.
7. Ongoing data-driven professional development activities that align to core student goals and staff needs.
8. Communicating outcomes with stakeholders and celebrating success frequently.

### **10. What are the skills and activities that best define the role of “coaching” within a MTSS?**

In the context of implementing and sustaining a MTSS at the school level, the following skills are needed to be available in the school (either provided by an individual “MTSS Coach” or as a set of activities and supports provided by the school-based leadership team) and sustained by state and district PD efforts:

1. **Demonstrating effective interpersonal communication skills** that build trust and relationships among all stakeholders to support implementation and use of a MTSS model and the problem-solving process with fidelity.
2. **Using multiple types and sources of data** accurately to inform problem-solving efforts at either the organizational (i.e., solving implementation problems) or student levels (i.e., solving student learning problems).
3. **Disseminating content knowledge** to stakeholders about:
  - a. Organizational change/Implementation processes
  - b. Three-tiered model of service delivery
  - c. 4-step problem-solving model
  - d. Knowledge about evidence-based instructional practices and curriculum in academic content areas
  - e. Knowledge about evidence-based instructional practices and curriculum in behavior content areas
4. **Facilitating team-based collaborative problem-solving processes.**
5. **Supporting leadership team and staff capacity** to sustain a MTSS independently effectively, & efficiently over time.
6. **Providing adult/staff training and technical assistance** in accordance with professional development “best practices” and in alignment with FLDOE professional development standards.

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7. **Assessing the impact of coaching activities and supports** on student & staff performance and outcomes.

### **11. What are the sets of skills required of a principal and what activities best define the role of a principal?**

Leadership is an integral part to successful implementation of large-scale innovations and the effective management of change. The building principal is critical to the implementation of any process introduced at the school level. The general leadership skills of building principals have been identified through school based research over many years. These general leadership skills include: effective communication, facilitation of relationships and a positive, collaborative climate, inclusion of school and community based stakeholders, and a focus on celebrating positive outcomes. The implementation of a MTSS system requires these, and additional skills, to ensure consistent implementation of the process and positive student outcomes. It is important that principals receive professional development and support to develop and maintain these leadership skills. In addition, it is important that the district leadership team creates and supports a professional learning community (PLC) for principals implementing MTSS. Building Principal Leadership skills specific to the implementation of MTSS include:

1. Models a problem-solving process: understands the 4-step process and uses the process to guide staff problem solving.
2. Communicates and reinforces the expectation for data-based decision-making: guides the school staff to frame their decisions within the context of student or other relevant data.
3. Communicates and reinforces the expectation that all Tier 2/3 services will integrate Tier 1 standards for performance, instructional materials and practices to facilitate the transfer of student performance from Tiers 2/3 to Tier 1.
4. Schedules “Data Days” throughout the year to ensure that instruction/interventions are informed by student data.
5. Facilitates the development of instructional schedules based upon student needs
6. Ensures that instructional/intervention support is provided to all staff.
7. Ensures that instruction/intervention “sufficiency” and the documentation of that sufficiency occur for all students receiving Tiers 2/3 support.
8. Establishes a system of communicating student outcomes across the professional staff and with students and their parents.
9. Creates frequent opportunities to celebrate and communicate success.

### **12. What are the most important or highest priority elements of a program evaluation model?**

Program evaluation should both inform how MTSS is implemented and provide information on the practices that relate to improvements in student academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes. Data collection and analysis should be guided by critical questions key stakeholders have about school and district functioning. Examples of critical questions to ask include:

1. How much consensus is there among educators for the implementation of MTSS?
2. Do school and district staff possess the knowledge and skills to implement MTSS?

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3. To what extent are educators implementing evidence-based instruction and intervention across grade-levels, content areas, and tiers with fidelity?
4. What steps of problem-solving are being implemented with fidelity?
5. How are students performing compared to grade-level expectations?
6. What other factors may be contributing to MTSS implementation and student outcomes?

Asking questions such as these allows key stakeholders to prioritize what data to collect and develop methods and procedures for gathering the information. A variety of methods, tools, and procedures exist for collecting program evaluation data regarding MTSS implementation that can be adapted for local use once the critical questions to be answered are identified.

### **13. What are some likely reasons that implementation succeeds or fails at either the district or school levels?**

Many reasons exist for the failure of a systems change effort, such as MTSS. Some of the most important of those reasons are:

1. **Failure to achieve consensus** - Until and unless the district/school staff understand and agree with the need for the change and believe that they have the skills (or will have the support to attain them), a system change effort is likely to fail.
2. **School culture is ignored** - Every district and school has a history that informs its practices, values, and beliefs. MTSS is a framework that organizes implementation processes, not a prescription. Each district/school must incorporate those beliefs, values, and practices into the development of its implementation plan.
3. **Lack of training and support** - The implementation of MTSS involves the use of existing and new skill sets and practices. The implementation of MTSS will be facilitated by a strong system of professional development and support (technical assistance and coaching) and hindered significantly by the absence of such a system.
4. **Lack of feedback to implementers to support continued implementation** - The implementation of any systems change process can be anxiety producing, particularly when that change process occurs concurrently with the on-going requirements of daily work. The frequent feedback of implementation data along with student outcome data to the staff will enable district and school leaders to provide specific staff support to sustain implementation momentum.
5. **Unrealistic expectations of initial success** - System change processes often are implemented in a time of crisis where district and/or community leaders expect immediate results. Although expectations for quick success are understood, expecting too much too soon will result in lack of goal attainment and present a real threat to sustaining the energy and morale of the implementers.
6. **Failure to measure and analyze progress** - The frequent use and reporting of data will demonstrate that progress is being made and that the rate of progress is consistent with initial expectations. Unless this occurs, unrealistic expectations likely will create the opportunity for failure.

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7. **Participants not involved in planning** - Systems change involves the lives of everyone in the system undergoing that change. MTSS cannot be implemented successfully using a “top-down” method. It is critical that all stakeholders are involved from the beginning to help contribute to and inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of the MTSS process.