

Delaware Multi-Tiered System of Support

District and Charter Quick Reference Guide February 2021



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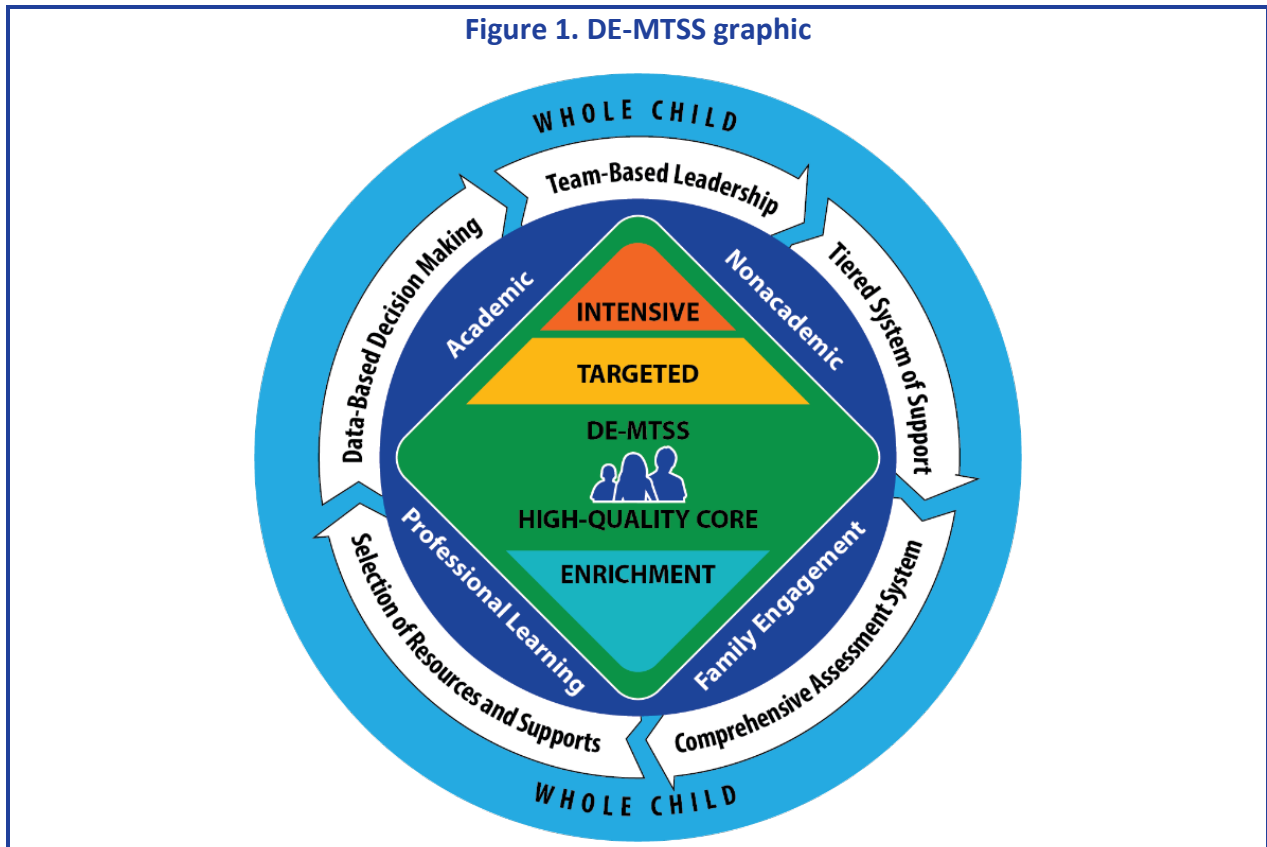
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Introduction

This quick reference guide provides an overview of the Delaware Multi-Tiered System of Support (DE-MTSS; Figure 1) and describes key action steps that districts and charters can take to implement DE-MTSS. The audience for this guide includes school district and charter administrators and personnel, including superintendents, curriculum directors, special education directors, academic officers, and other district-level stakeholders.

Figure 1. DE-MTSS graphic



DE-MTSS vision

DE-MTSS provides a whole-child framework for all students to reach their full potential in a positive, inclusive, and equitable learning environment. Through high-quality instruction and intervention – and a culture of collaboration, communication, and flexibility – parents, educators, and leaders work together to develop a responsive system of support that addresses the academic and nonacademic needs of all learners and boosts student performance.

What is DE-MTSS?

The DE-MTSS framework is designed to meet the needs of the whole child through an integrated, multilevel prevention system that optimizes team-based leadership and data-driven decision making to meet the academic and nonacademic¹ needs of all students. Educators provide high-quality, core academic instruction and nonacademic practices as universal supports to all children. School teams use a universal screening process to identify students who need additional help, and they deliver evidence-based interventions and supports that match student needs and are informed by ongoing progress monitoring and additional formative assessments.

Key ideas

DE-MTSS is a framework for aligning, organizing, and sustaining the delivery of evidence-based instruction and interventions. It is not a program or curriculum.

DE-MTSS integrates academic (e.g., reading and mathematics) and nonacademic (e.g., behavior and social-emotional) systems, data, and practices to support the whole child.

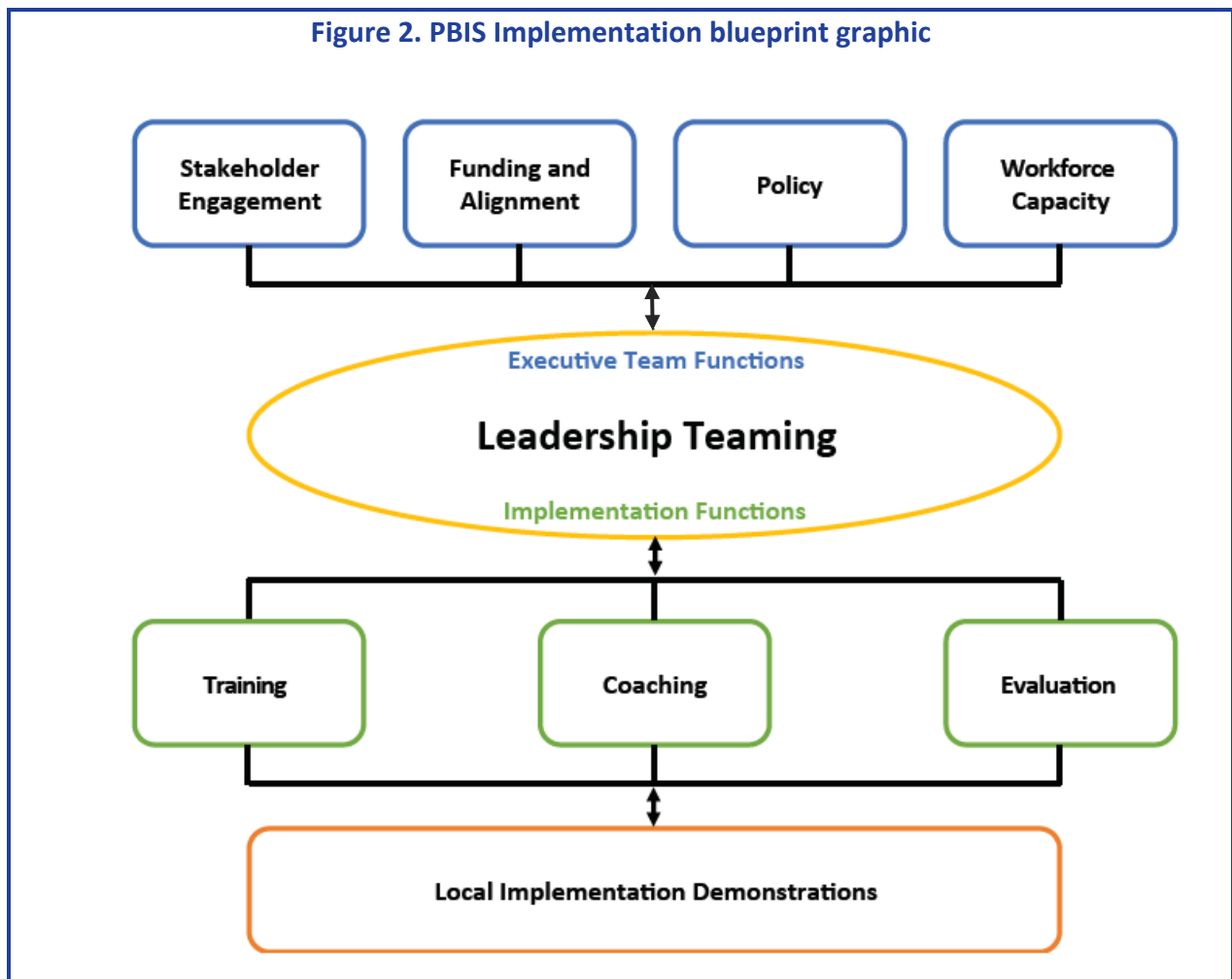
The DE-MTSS framework aligns, organizes, and sustains the delivery of evidence-based instruction and interventions. To support improved whole child outcomes, DE-MTSS integrates academic (e.g., reading and mathematics) and nonacademic (e.g., behavior and social-emotional) systems, data, and practices. This integration is important because of the connections among academic performance, behavior, and social-emotional functioning. Furthermore, integrating academic and nonacademic systems increases efficiency, which helps districts, charters, and schools use resources more effectively to support all students and build educator capacity (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).

What is the role of the district/charter in implementing DE-MTSS?

Achieving improved whole-child outcomes through MTSS requires a focus on effective systems, as well as the use of effective practices. District and charter infrastructure and systems are critical to successfully implement quality instruction, supports, and interventions in schools and classrooms. Figure 2, from the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS),

¹ Nonacademic refers to practices and instruction that contribute to valued outcomes not directly related to academic performance, such as positive behavior, social-emotional competence, mental health, and physical health.

represents the functions of the district/charter in implementing PBIS or MTSS. The center of the graphic is the district/charter leadership team that has the core function of building MTSS capacity in the district or charter. At the bottom of the graphic, local implementation demonstrations refer to schools that are model sites for implementing MTSS. These schools receive the most intensive supports and serve as models of what successful MTSS implementation looks like. The blue boxes at the top of the graphic are executive functions of the district/charter that include stakeholder engagement, funding and alignment, policy, and workforce capacity. Each of these systems-level components are essential to building capacity for MTSS within the district/charter. The green boxes of training, coaching, and evaluation refer to the ability of the district to build the capacity of school-level personnel to effectively implement MTSS practices.



<https://www.pbis.org/resource/returning-to-school-during-and-after-crisis>

What are implementation drivers?

Districts and charters support their schools by ensuring that the key elements of capacity and infrastructure are in place so that the MTSS framework can be implemented with fidelity.

These components of capacity and infrastructure are **implementation drivers**.

According to the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), implementation drivers are “key components of capacity and infrastructure that influence a program’s success. They are the core components needed to initiate and support classroom, building, and district level change” (NIRN, n.d.). The following is a brief description of each driver and sample actions that district and charter teams can take to develop the drivers.

Successful implementation of DE-MTSS requires a focus on district infrastructure and capacity. Districts support implementation of DE-MTSS in schools by creating the context within which DE-MTSS can be implemented effectively.

- **Leadership drivers** provide direction and coordination to guide the implementation process. Leadership drivers include establishing the vision for DE-MTSS, removing barriers to implementation, and managing resources. To enhance leadership for DE-MTSS, district and charter teams
 - establish DE-MTSS teams and effective teaming structures, using existing teams and structures when appropriate;
 - develop and use an action plan with goals and timelines; and
 - allocate the resources needed to improve implementation.
- **Organization or contexture drivers** create more effective and efficient systems for DE-MTSS. These drivers include establishing effective data systems, developing processes for sharing data and feedback, and designing tools and resources to support implementation in schools. To create systems for successful implementation, district and charter teams
 - develop common processes and procedures for implementing DE-MTSS;
 - implement an electronic data system to store and access a range of data, including data on academic and nonacademic student outcomes and fidelity of implementation; and
 - deliver data-based performance feedback to schools.

- **Competency drivers** are activities to develop, improve, and sustain the ability of teachers and administrators to implement DE-MTSS with fidelity. Competency drivers include the selection of effective staff and the provision of evidence-based training and coaching. To build competency to implement DE-MTSS, district and charter teams
 - integrate DE-MTSS responsibilities into district/charter job postings;
 - develop a plan for improving district, charter, and school capacity to implement DE-MTSS; and
 - provide training and coaching to build awareness, knowledge, and skills related to DE-MTSS.

DE-MTSS district/charter implementation actions

This section presents an overview of actions that districts and charters can take to support implementation of MTSS in schools. It is important to note that implementing MTSS is an ongoing process; therefore, these actions should not be considered a checklist for implementing MTSS. Furthermore, although these actions are important for the district/charter to take, this list is not comprehensive of all actions that the team must take.

DE-MTSS district/charter implementation actions

- [Establish a district/charter MTSS leadership team.](#)
- [Self-assess capacity and develop an action plan.](#)
- [Select a fidelity of implementation tool\(s\).](#)
- [Inventory the MTSS resources currently in place and determine if changes are needed.](#)
- [Select assessments and develop a data system.](#)
- [Develop a district/charter evaluation plan.](#)
- [Select evidence-based practices, supports, and high-quality instructional materials.](#)
- [Provide guidance on establishing a tiered delivery system.](#)
- [Make training and coaching available to all schools and differentiate supports.](#)
- [Support schools in engaging with families as meaningful stakeholders in MTSS implementation.](#)

Action: Establish a district/charter MTSS leadership team. [\(back to top\)](#)

Who: District/charter administrators with authority to make funding and policy decisions and personnel with knowledge, skills, and experience in implementing MTSS

What: Establish a district/charter MTSS leadership team with the responsibility for leading and coordinating MTSS implementation across the district/charter.

When: During the pre-implementation phase

Why: A cohesive district/charter leadership team creates systems (e.g., evaluation, capacity building, and action planning) that contribute to successful implementation of MTSS in schools.

- Essential functions of the district/charter leadership team(s) include executive leadership, implementation planning, and training and coaching.
 - Executive leadership is conducted by the superintendent, assistant superintendents, directors, or other administrators. This function includes removing barriers to implementation, allocating resources, and embedding MTSS into district policies and hiring processes.
 - Implementation planning is conducted by personnel with knowledge and skills in MTSS implementation (e.g., reading specialists, school psychologists). Implementation planning includes setting action plan goals and steps, coordinating with school leadership teams, and evaluating MTSS implementation efforts.
 - Training and coaching are conducted by personnel with expertise in academic and nonacademic content and planning and facilitating professional learning in schools. Professional learning providers may work with school leadership teams, grade-level teams, or individual teachers to improve knowledge and skills in implementing MTSS.
- The structure of the district/charter MTSS team(s) will vary, depending on the needs of the district/charter. McIntosh and Goodman (2016) suggest a cabinet-level team to address the executive leadership functions and a separate implementation-planning team. If there are separate teams, it is important to ensure communication and collaboration among teams. One way to accomplish this communication is to have a liaison who joins both teams and keeps all team members updated about the actions of the other team.

- Establish meeting norms and use a structured agenda and a defined problem-solving process during meetings. Teams can adopt a structured problem-solving process, such as [Plan-Do-Study-Act](#) or [Team-Initiated Problem Solving](#).
- Meet monthly to review the status of MTSS-related activities at the district and building levels, ensure appropriate action is taken to reduce barriers to successful implementation, and ensure fidelity.
- Ongoing communication and collaboration between the district/charter leadership team and school leadership team are essential for effective implementation of MTSS. Figure 3 provides an overview of the role of the district/charter team and the school team in implementing DE-MTSS.

Sample team member roles

Facilitator: Develops and leads team through the agenda

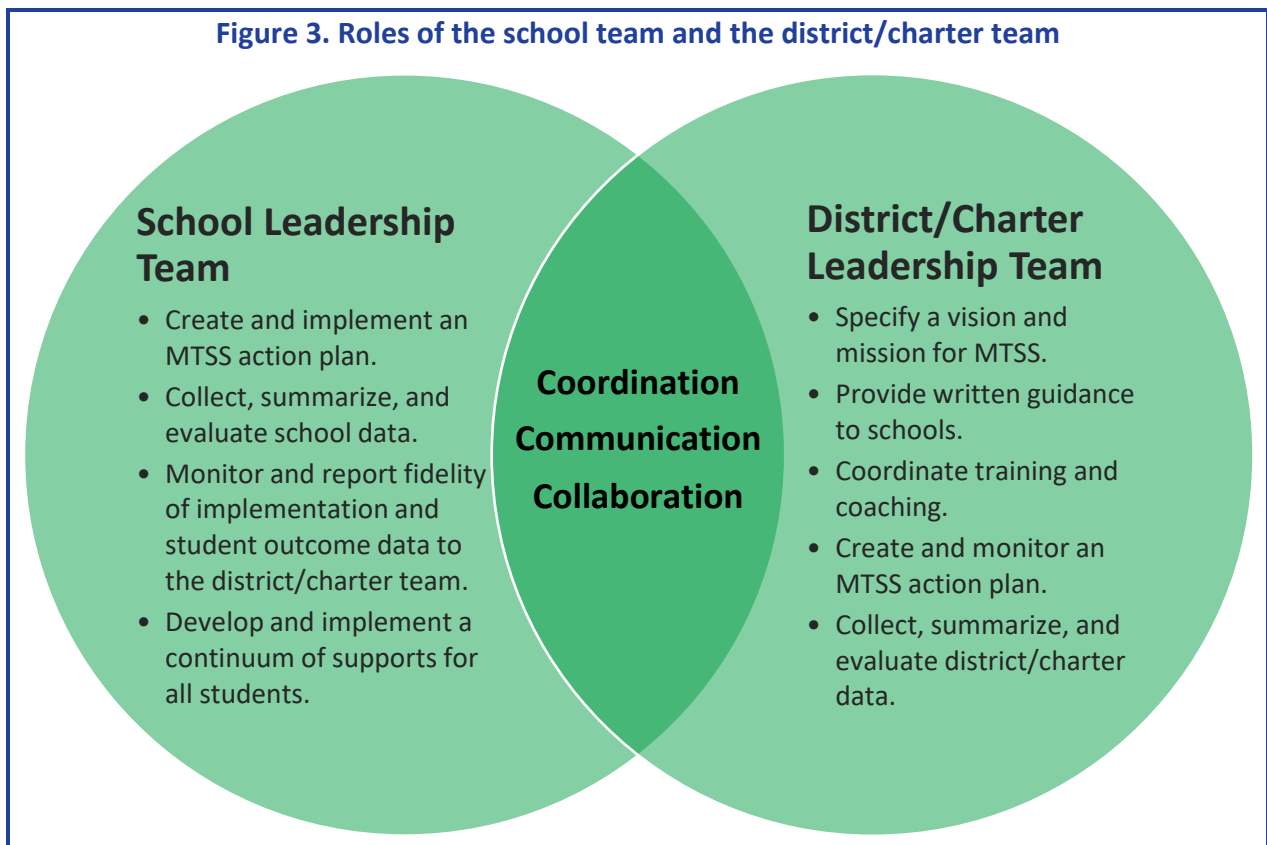
Note taker: Documents key items and distributes notes to the team

Timekeeper: Keeps team on task and monitors time

Data coordinator: Brings data to the team and analyzes data before meeting

Active team member: Actively contributes and maintains engagement (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016)

Figure 3. Roles of the school team and the district/charter team



Action: Self-assess district/charter capacity and develop an action plan. (back to top)

Who: District/charter MTSS leadership team

What: Complete a self-assessment of district/charter capacity to implement MTSS (e.g., District Capacity Assessment), and use the information to develop an action plan.

When: During the pre-implementation phase and at regular intervals throughout implementation

Why: To identify areas of need for capacity building at the district level and to document next steps

- District capacity is defined as the systems, activities, and resources necessary to adopt, implement, and sustain a practice (Ward et al., 2015).
- It is important for the district/charter team to have a clear understanding of how they are assisting schools in implementing MTSS and where improvements are needed. A capacity assessment is a useful tool for identifying next steps for action planning and to monitor progress toward district/charter goals.
- The District Capacity Assessment (DCA; Ward et al., 2015) is a tool that is designed to help district/charter teams understand how well they are supporting schools in effectively implementing evidence-based practices, such as MTSS. The DCA may be used to assess capacity to implement any well-defined innovation or practice. In this case, the team should focus on MTSS as the innovation when completing the DCA.
- The district/charter leadership team can use the information from the DCA to develop action plan goals aimed at improving district/charter MTSS implementation. The action plan should document goals, activities, and timelines for completing activities.
- The DCA should be used to regularly (e.g., semiannually) monitor changes in district/charter capacity to implement MTSS.
- Resources:
 - [District Capacity Assessment \(DCA\)](#)
 - [DCA Action Planning Recommendations](#)
 - [District Capacity Assessment Action Plan](#)

Action: Select fidelity of implementation tool(s). (back to top)

Who: District/charter MTSS leadership team

What: Select fidelity of implementation tool(s) that align with the district/charter vision for MTSS implementation in schools.

When: During the pre-implementation phase

Why: Fidelity data are used to improve supports to ensure implementation of MTSS as intended.

- One of the first steps for the district/charter leadership team is to select a fidelity of implementation tool or tools that will be used to measure the extent to which MTSS practices are implemented as intended at the school level.
- Fidelity data are used to establish the baseline for implementation and for progress monitoring. The data from fidelity assessments can be used to provide positive feedback to staff on progress toward implementation goals.
- Fidelity tools are often used annually to assess implementation of MTSS in schools. During initial implementation, these tools may be used more frequently (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).
- Teams may select a fidelity tool that assesses implementation of specific academic or nonacademic practices. For example, the Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory is a tool for assessing implementation of schoolwide reading practices within an MTSS framework. The PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory assesses the consistency of schoolwide implementation of PBIS.
- Example fidelity of implementation tools:
 - [PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory](#)
 - [Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory Elementary-Level Edition](#)
 - [Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory Secondary-Level Edition](#)
 - [Essential Components of RTI Integrity Rubric and Worksheet](#)
 - [Delaware Multi-Tiered System of Support School Needs Inventory](#)

Action: Inventory the MTSS resources currently in place and determine if changes are needed. (back to top)

Who: District/charter MTSS leadership team

What: Generate a list of MTSS resources (e.g., data sources, practices, teams) currently in place in the district/charter.

When: During the pre-implementation phase and on an ongoing basis

Why: To understand what MTSS resources are currently available and to identify areas where changes are needed

- Resource mapping or asset mapping is a process of identifying and documenting the resources currently available to allow the team to make the best use of current resources and determine if changes are needed.
- Maintain an inventory of the data sources, practices (i.e., curricula and supports), and teams within the district or charter.
- When documenting practices used, include published programs, teacher-developed practices, and strategies. Distinguish between practices that are simply available and practices that are in use.
- Conduct a gap analysis to analyze strengths and areas with few options for support. To conduct a gap analysis, examine resources to identify (1) gaps where additional resources are needed and (2) resources that can be eliminated or replaced with more effective practices.
- Create and maintain a district-level MTSS Quick Audit, which provides a summary of the practices (i.e., strategies and programs) available at Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 throughout the district/charter (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).
- Resources:
 - [Michigan District Assessment Inventory Tool](#)
 - [Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts](#)
 - [Colorado MTSS Initiative Inventory](#)
 - [SWIFT MTSS Resource Inventory](#)

Action: Select assessments and develop a data system. (back to top)

Who: District/charter MTSS leadership team

What: Develop a process for selecting assessment tools and an electronic data system for storing and analyzing academic and nonacademic data in an integrated fashion.

When: During the pre-implementation phase and on an ongoing basis as needed

Why: To provide the assessments and data analysis tools that allow for data-based decision making and continuous improvement

- Develop a process for selecting assessment tools for MTSS, including tools for screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic assessment, and fidelity assessment.
- Assessments should be reliable, valid, efficient to use, and helpful for decision making. Consider whether the tool addresses an identified need, how the tool fits with other assessments in use in the district/charter, and the capacity of personnel to implement the assessment (Michigan Department of Education, 2020).
- Use a reputable source, such as the [National Center on Intensive Intervention Tools Charts](#), to guide the selection process for screening and progress monitoring tools.
- Provide guidance to schools on schedules for administering the assessment, a plan for who will administer the assessment, and plans for who will enter the data/scores (if applicable). In addition, offer guidance on who will use the data and when the data will be used.
- Allocate time and resources to support ongoing, high-quality professional learning for the use of all assessments, including the purpose of the assessment, how to administer and score the assessment, and how to interpret data from the assessment.
- Support data-based decision making in schools by establishing a [data system](#) that allows educators to efficiently access, store, and analyze data. An effective strategy is to use an electronic data system with common student identification numbers across all data systems in the district.
- Develop a data system that allows for entry and analysis of academic and nonacademic data to assist teams with using these data in an integrated manner.

Action: Develop a district/charter evaluation plan. [\(back to top\)](#)

Who: District/charter MTSS leadership team

What: Develop a plan for summarizing academic and nonacademic needs and outcomes alongside fidelity and capacity data.

When: Annually

Why: To inform action planning and to provide a snapshot of MTSS implementation data to stakeholders, including district and school personnel, school board, and families

- MTSS evaluation plans present an annual summary of MTSS data that the district/charter team can use to inform action planning and to share results with stakeholders. Evaluation plans are used for both summative and formative purposes and typically rely on data that have already been collected (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).
- According to McIntosh and Goodman (2016), major components of district evaluation plans include the following:
 - What are we doing to improve student outcomes? (process)
 - How well are we doing it? (fidelity)
 - Are our actions improving student performance? (outcomes)
- Common district/charter evaluation questions include the following:
 - What leadership team activities have been completed?
 - What MTSS professional development (i.e., training, coaching, evaluation) has been delivered?
 - To what extent is MTSS implemented as intended in schools?
 - What schools can serve as model schools for local implementation demonstrations?
 - To what extent do schools implementing MTSS with fidelity show desired changes in student outcomes (e.g., discipline rates, academic achievement, graduation)?
- District/charter evaluation plans may draw from the following data sources:
 - Professional learning calendar (process)
 - Professional learning activity evaluation (process)

- Action plan items completed (process)
- DE-MTSS Needs Inventory, Tiered Fidelity Inventory, or other fidelity assessment (fidelity)
- Academic screening data (outcomes)
- Office discipline referrals (outcomes)
- Attendance data (outcomes)
- Resources
 - [PBIS Evaluation Blueprint](#)

Action: Select evidence-based practices, supports, and high-quality instructional materials. (back to top)

Who: District/charter MTSS leadership team

What: Develop and use a process to select instructional practices, interventions, and supports and provide guidance to schools.

When: Ongoing, throughout implementation

Why: To assist schools in implementing effective instruction and supports that meet the needs of all learners and improve student outcomes

- Assist school teams by developing and maintaining a list of recommended evidence-based practices and supports for both academic and nonacademic areas.
- Use a reputable source to guide the selection process. Examples include [Curriculum Support Guide](#), [EdReports](#), [National Center on Intensive Intervention Tools Charts](#), [What Works Clearinghouse](#), and the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#).
- When selecting tools, focus on the evidence to demonstrate effectiveness of the practice, the usability of the practice or support, the professional learning needed to fully implement the practice, the need within the district/charter, the fit with current instructional practices and supports, and the capacity of personnel to implement the practice.
- Equitably allocate resources to ensure all educators have access to the professional learning, coaching, materials, time, and space necessary to implement instructional practices, interventions and supports with fidelity (e.g., educator materials, fidelity measure, and learner consumables).
- [The Hexagon: An Exploration Tool](#) can be used by the district/charter team to better understand how MTSS practices fit into the district's existing work and context.

Action: Provide guidance on establishing a tiered delivery system.

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Who: District/charter MTSS leadership team

What: Assist schools with establishing a responsive framework that incorporates research-based instruction, interventions, and supports to meet the needs of the whole child.

When: Throughout implementation of MTSS

Why: An effective tiered delivery system meets the needs of all students and provides for efficient resource allocation within the system.

- Deliver guidance and direction on how to best differentiate instruction to meet the diverse cognitive, physical, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of learners. This guidance includes
 - aligning instruction, interventions, and supports across Tiers 1, 2, and 3;
 - aligning content with curriculum standards;
 - establishing expectations for the instructional routines that should be used; and
 - attending to a range of learning levels that span from struggling to accelerated.
- Develop a process to provide students with access to interventions and supports, including how students will be identified as needing intervention; a description of the continuum of interventions and supports accessible to all learners; progress-monitoring guidelines; and exit criteria (Michigan Department of Education, 2020).
- Provide guidance on a continuum of strategies used to intensify intervention based on learner needs. The [Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity](#) can be used to guide the selection and intensification of an evidence-based intervention.

Action: Make training and coaching available to all schools, and differentiate supports. (back to top)

Who: District/charter MTSS leadership team

What: Allocate time and resources to support ongoing, high-quality professional learning on MTSS.

When: Throughout implementation of MTSS, as capacity-building needs are identified

Why: Training and coaching support sustainable, high-quality implementation by enhancing the knowledge and skills of personnel throughout the system.

- Establish a coordinated system of professional learning and coaching so that all personnel in the district have access to high-quality professional learning based on need.
- Evaluate professional learning in the district/charter at least annually to determine training effectiveness, align learning to current needs, and identify future learning opportunities.
- Build internal coaching and training capacity so that current staff who have knowledge and content expertise in MTSS can assume the coaching role within the district/charter.
- Differentiate training and coaching support based on the needs of the school or personnel.
- Allocate time and resources to support building teams in their use of data for decision making.
- Resources:
 - [DDOE Professional Learning Partners Guide](#)
 - [Learning Forward Professional Learning Standards](#)
 - [Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation](#)
 - [Training and Professional Development Blueprint for PBIS](#)
 - [District Level Coaching](#)

Action: Support schools in engaging with families as meaningful stakeholders in MTSS implementation. (back to top)

Who: District/charter MTSS leadership team

What: Provide guidance to schools to facilitate meaningful partnerships with parents and families.

When: Ongoing, throughout implementation

Why: Meaningful and authentic partnerships with families enhance MTSS implementation and improve supports for the whole child.

- Support schools in establishing a process to engage families as meaningful stakeholders in the implementation of MTSS, including:
 - Opportunities to learn how the district/charter has defined Tiers 1, 2 and 3 and specific strategies for families to support learner success
 - Communicating the description, purpose, anticipated duration, and at-home support needed in a language and format that is conducive to the needs of families
 - Assuring family presence and integrating perspectives, when appropriate, to develop or revise student goals and consider initiatives
- Assist schools with establishing protocols for communicating and collaborating with families.
- Engage families when selecting resources and tools to obtain input and feedback throughout the selection and alignment process.
- Support schools in ensuring that learners and families are informed about assessments. This process includes notifying learners and their families of the assessment purposes, frequency, and dates and offering support, using audience-friendly language and format, to learners and their families on how to interpret assessment results.
- Resources:
 - [PBIS and Family Engagement Overview](#)
 - [Florida PBIS Family and Community Engagement](#)

- [Parent Notification Checklists and Sample Letters](#)

Conclusion

DE-MTSS provides a whole-child framework so that all students reach their full potential in a positive, inclusive, and equitable learning environment. Implementing DE-MTSS is an ongoing process that requires sustained commitment from personnel at all levels of the system. The Delaware Department of Education is dedicated to supporting districts and charters in implementing DE-MTSS to improve academic and nonacademic outcomes for all students. The information in this guide will help district and charter MTSS teams build essential knowledge and create a common language to support MTSS implementation across Delaware.

Acknowledgement

This quick reference guide draws upon the work of the [Michigan Department of Education MTSS Technical Assistance Center](#) as well as the [Michigan Department of Education MTSS Practice Profile](#).

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