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# Delaware Multi-Tiered System of Support

School Quick Reference Guide

February 2021





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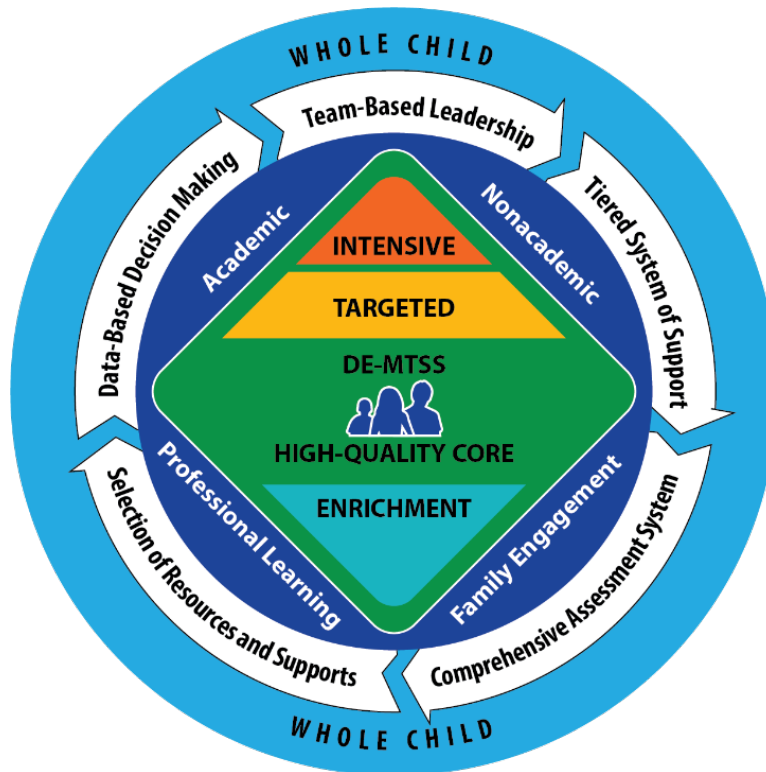
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## Introduction

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 schools can take to implement DE-MTSS. The audience for this guide includes school administrators, leadership team members, and other personnel responsible for coordinating DE-MTSS at the school level.

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 (Figure 1) 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 nonacademic<sup>1</sup> 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).

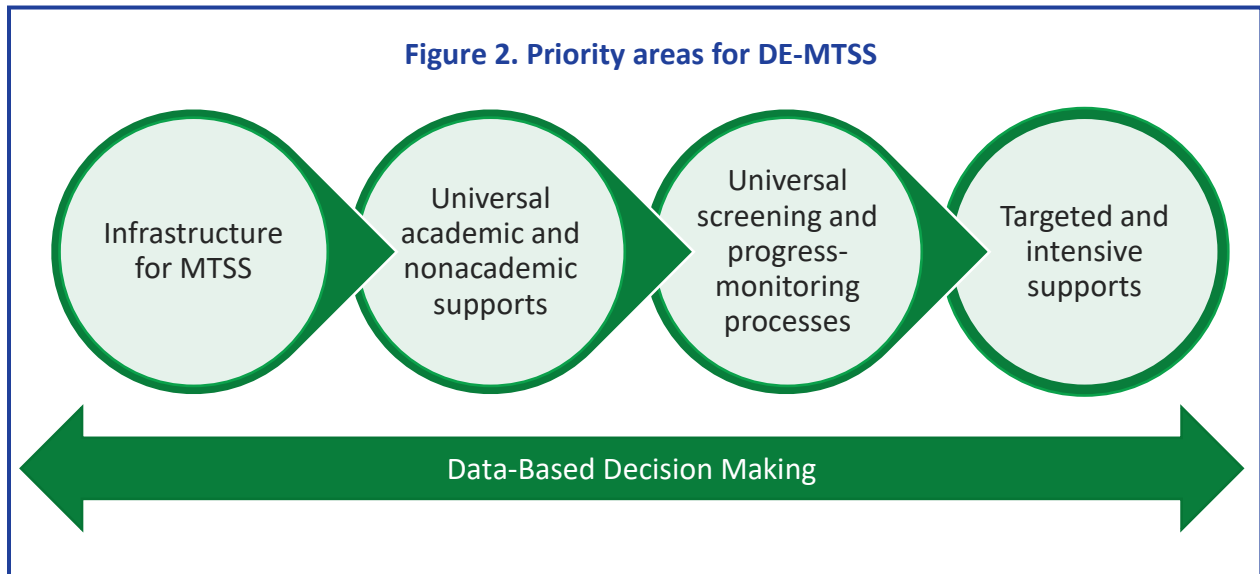
## Getting started with DE-MTSS

Figure 2 outlines priority areas for schools to focus on when beginning to implement DE-MTSS. The first step is to establish the infrastructure for DE-MTSS, including school teams and data-based decision-making systems. Next, prioritize high-quality universal academic and nonacademic supports for all students, including the use of high-quality instructional materials and schoolwide behavior supports. Next, establish universal screening and progress monitoring

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<sup>1</sup> *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.

processes that allow teams to identify students in need of additional supports and determine if students are responding to interventions and supports. Finally, focus implementation efforts on establishing systems and processes for providing targeted and intensive supports for students who require them. Throughout the DE-MTSS implementation process, teams use data-based decision making to continuously improve instruction and supports for all students.



## DE-MTSS school implementation actions

This section presents an overview of actions that schools can take to implement DE-MTSS. It is important to note that implementing MTSS is an ongoing process; therefore, these actions should not be considered a checklist for implementing MTSS. Further this list is not comprehensive of all actions that the team must take when initiating DE-MTSS.

### DE-MTSS school implementation actions

- [Establish MTSS teams.](#)
- [Conduct a needs assessment.](#)
- [Inventory the MTSS resources currently in place and determine if changes are needed.](#)
- [Develop and maintain an annual MTSS action plan.](#)
- [Create universal academic and nonacademic supports for all students.](#)
- [Select and use valid and reliable screening tools and processes.](#)
- [Select valid and reliable progress monitoring tools and design a progress monitoring process.](#)
- [Create a system for providing targeted interventions and supports.](#)
- [Develop a process for providing intensive interventions and supports.](#)



## Action: Establish MTSS teams. (back to top)

**Who:** School administrators and personnel with knowledge, skills, and experience in implementing MTSS

**What:** Establish teams to coordinate MTSS implementation and conduct problem solving at the school, grade, and student level.

**When:** During the pre-implementation phase

**Why:** Implementation teams play an important role in ensuring DE-MTSS is conducted with fidelity and that implementation is purposeful and active. A well-functioning team contributes to sustainability of MTSS implementation, even when there is staff turnover (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).

- Form an MTSS school leadership team with the essential functions of coordinating implementation of Tier 1 systems and supports, assessing fidelity of implementation, and developing an annual MTSS action plan. This MTSS team may be an existing leadership team.
- Create MTSS teams to conduct problem solving at the grade level and student level. These teams identify students in need of additional supports, design interventions and supports for individual students, and monitor student progress to determine next steps.
- Ensure that all teams have a defined mission and purpose that does not overlap with other teams (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).
- Establish meeting norms and use a structured agenda and a defined problem-solving process during meetings. Adopt a structured problem-solving process, such as [Plan-Do-Study-Act](#) or [Team-Initiated Problem Solving](#).

### Sample team member roles

Facilitator: Develops and leads team through the agenda

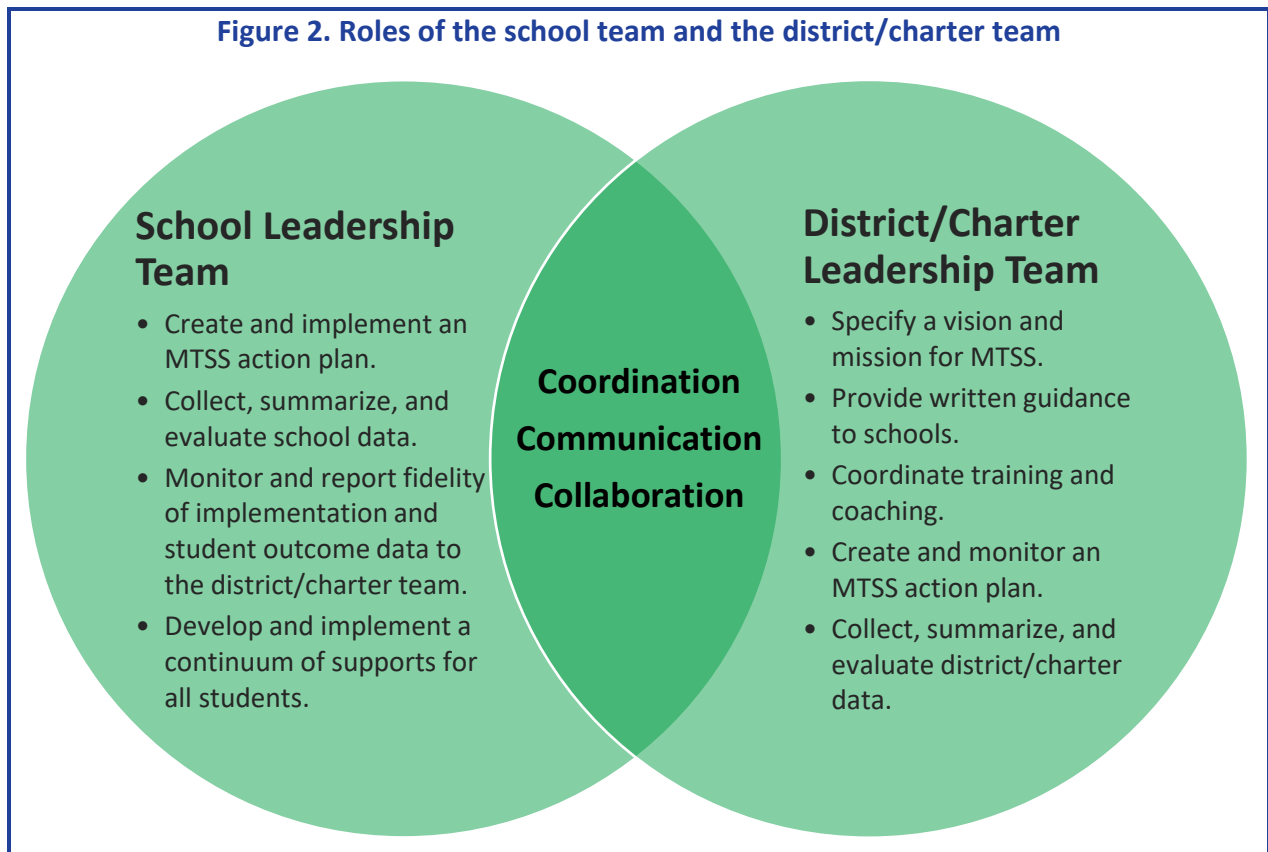
Note taker: Documents key items and distributes notes to the team

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)

- Integrate MTSS teams, when possible, to include a focus on academic and nonacademic supports. Although not everyone on the team needs to be an expert in both areas, expertise in academic and nonacademic domains will help the team support the needs of the whole child (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).
- Plan for ongoing communication and collaboration between the district/charter leadership team and school leadership team. Figure 3 provides an overview of the roles of the district/charter team and the school team in implementing DE-MTSS.



- Resources:
  - [DE-MTSS Regulations](#)
  - [Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project Team Meeting Resources](#)
  - [Tools to Support Intensive Intervention Data Meetings](#)

## Action: Conduct a needs assessment. (back to top)

**Who:** MTSS leadership team members

**What:** Use a fidelity of implementation tool to conduct a needs assessment of MTSS implementation. Fidelity tools may focus on MTSS implementation broadly or on a specific area of MTSS (e.g., behavior or reading).

**When:** During the pre-implementation phase

**Why:** To determine the consistency of MTSS practices currently in place and to inform action planning

- A needs assessment uses a fidelity of implementation tool to establish baseline data about the systems and practices that are currently in place in the school. Fidelity of implementation tools help the team to understand how consistently essential features of MTSS (e.g., core instruction, problem-solving process) are implemented as intended.
- Select fidelity tools that assess implementation of specific academic or nonacademic practices, or integrated MTSS more broadly. For example, the Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory is a tool for assessing implementation of schoolwide reading practices within an MTSS framework. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Tiered Fidelity Inventory assesses the consistency of schoolwide implementation of PBIS.
- Following the needs assessment, use the same tool periodically to assess progress in implementation. 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).
- Use the data from fidelity assessments to provide positive feedback to staff on progress toward implementation goals.
- As part of the needs assessment, review current aggregated school data to identify areas for improvement.
- Resources:
  - [Delaware Multi-Tiered System of Support School Needs Inventory Rubric](#)
  - [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](#)

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

**Who:** MTSS leadership team members

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

**When:** During the pre-implementation phase

**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.
- Document the resources available for MTSS implementation, including the data sources, practices (i.e., curricula and supports), and teams within the school.
- When documenting practices, include published programs, teacher-developed practices, and strategies. Distinguish between practices that are simply available and practices that are in use.
- 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 school-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 school (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).
- Resources:
  - [DE-MTSS: Layered Continuum of Supports](#)
  - [DE-MTSS Team Audit](#)
  - [SWIFT MTSS Resource Inventory Form](#)

## Action: Develop and maintain an annual MTSS action plan. (back to top)

**Who:** MTSS leadership team members

**What:** Use the data from the needs assessment and the resource mapping activities to develop an annual action plan.

**When:** During the pre-implementation phase and annually

**Why:** To document the activities that will improve implementation of MTSS, the knowledge and skills of personnel, and student outcomes

- Document goals and action steps that will enhance the knowledge and skills of personnel (e.g., training and coaching) and build the infrastructure for DE-MTSS.
- Prioritize universal Tier 1 systems, practices, and supports for all students during initial action planning and MTSS implementation.
- Develop a process to regularly review and monitor progress on action plan goals (e.g., at monthly MTSS leadership team meetings).
- Resources:
  - [DE-MTSS School Action Plan Template](#)

## Action: Create universal academic and nonacademic supports for all students. (back to top)

**Who:** MTSS leadership team members and all educators and staff

**What:** Develop a plan for implementing and monitoring Tier 1 universal academic and nonacademic supports.

**When:** During the pre-implementation phase and ongoing throughout implementation

**Why:** Tier 1 universal supports provide the foundation for an equitable and effective MTSS to enhance outcomes for all students.

- An effective Tier 1 system is essential to ensuring that most students have their needs met with Tier 1 alone and fewer students need extra supports. The MTSS leadership team should define the universal curricula, materials, practices, and supports for Tier 1.
- Develop guidelines for how to best implement the core curriculum, including guidance on how to differentiate and universally design instruction to meet the diverse cognitive, physical, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of learners.
- Identify high-quality instructional materials available at the school and provide professional learning to ensure a consistent understanding of how to implement the materials.
- Identify and document effective academic and nonacademic practices that should be used throughout core instruction. For example, [high-leverage practices](#) can support all students in Tier 1.
- Identify and teach a set of three to five schoolwide positive behavior expectations for all environments. These expectations should be positively stated and easy for all students to remember.
- Teach expected behaviors for classroom activities (e.g., teacher-led instruction, group work, tests and quizzes) or routines (e.g., entering the classroom, getting materials, transitioning to new activities).
- Integrate nonacademic supports into academic instruction. Effective classroom behavioral support (e.g., frequent response opportunities) maximizes instructional time and promotes academic learning.

- Resources:
  - [High-Leverage Practices](#)
  - [Achieve the Core](#)
  - [What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides](#)
  - [PBIS Tier 1](#)
  - [CASEL](#)
  - [CAST](#)



## Action: Select and use valid and reliable screening tools and processes. (back to top)

**Who:** MTSS leadership team members in coordination with the district/charter MTSS team

**What:** Develop processes to proactively identify students who require additional supports.

**When:** During the pre-implementation phase and ongoing throughout implementation

**Why:** To identify students who require additional supports beyond those provided to all students

- Universal screening is a systematic process for proactively identifying students who require additional supports in academic and/or nonacademic areas.
- Identify the desired outcomes, administration schedule, implementation procedures, and data analysis strategies to be used in the universal screening process.
- Select valid and reliable screening tools and processes. Consider school needs, context, and priorities, as well as the technical adequacy of the tools.
- Select screening tools and processes that are brief and efficient and assess the most important areas of skill development (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). The nonacademic screening process may involve the use of existing data, including attendance, suspensions, and office discipline referrals, or systematic behavior screeners.
- Engage with district/charter leadership teams to select and install any new universal screening measure so that it fits the local context and resources are allocated appropriately.
- For each academic or nonacademic area, specify the tools or data that will be used, who will administer the assessments, when assessments will be delivered, and when data will be reviewed.
- Provide professional learning to ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills to implement the universal screening process with fidelity and use screening data to make decisions about which students need additional supports and to identify students' areas of need.
- Conduct universal academic screening three times per year (e.g., September, January, and May). The nonacademic screening process may occur on an ongoing basis as data are

collected throughout the year. Screening may also occur when new students join the school.

- Use a well-defined cut score or decision rule to identify students who may need additional supports or enrichment. To more accurately identify students who need additional supports, conduct a second stage of screening by examining additional data for those students identified as at risk in the first stage of the screening process.
- Use screening data to identify students' current skill levels and specific needs for intervention. For example, educators may analyze screening data to identify the patterns of errors that students are making.
- Analyze school- and grade-level screening data to determine if universal supports have met the needs of 80% or more students. If the school or grade level has fewer than 80% of students achieving the desired outcome for Tier 1 performance, determine if additional classroom instructional and systems-level supports and strategies are needed.
- Resources:
  - Delaware Positive Behavior Support Project: [Top Ten Questions about Universal Screening](#)
  - National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) [Academic](#) and [Behavior](#) Screening Tools Charts
  - Ci3T [Systematic Screening for Behavior](#)
  - [Using Office Discipline Referrals as a Behavioral Screener: Considerations from NCII and the Center on PBIS](#)

## Action: Select valid and reliable progress-monitoring tools and design a progress-monitoring process. (back to top)

**Who:** MTSS leadership team members

**What:** Select progress monitoring tools and develop processes for collecting and analyzing progress monitoring data.

**When:** During the pre-implementation phase and ongoing throughout implementation

**Why:** Progress monitoring data allow educators to make timely decisions about whether an intervention or support is successful or if a change is needed.

- Progress monitoring is used to quantify a student’s rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, intervention, or supports and guide future learning. Progress monitoring can be used to provide additional information about the effectiveness of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
- Select progress monitoring tools that are reliable and valid measures of a target skill or behavior, sensitive to changes in student performance over time, and designed for frequent and ongoing use. In addition, consider the context, needs, and priorities of the school when selecting assessments.
- Provide professional learning focused on ensuring that all staff understand the purpose of progress monitoring, have the knowledge and skills to implement the progress-monitoring process with fidelity, and can use progress-monitoring data to make decisions about student responsiveness.
- Develop student progress monitoring plans that include the selected progress monitoring measure, frequency of data collection, baseline data, goals based on a validated goal-setting strategy, decision rules, and data review dates.
- Collect progress monitoring data at regular intervals and establish a plan for monitoring fidelity of the progress monitoring process.
- Review collected data with student-level problem-solving team members. Evaluate graphed data and discuss if a student’s trajectory will meet the established goal.

- Use decision rules to determine if students are responding to an intervention. An example of a decision rule is as follows: “After six to nine data points have been collected, if the student’s trend line is flatter than the goal line, make a change to the intervention.”
- Engage in a problem-solving process when progress monitoring data indicate the student’s rate of progress is unlikely to achieve the established learning goal. Students who show minimal response to Tier 2 interventions may require more intensive and individualized supports.
- Resources:
  - [Academic Progress Monitoring Tools Chart](#)
  - [Behavior Progress Monitoring Tools Chart](#)
  - [Strategies for Setting High-Quality Academic Individualized Education Program Goals](#)
  - [Strategies for Setting High-Quality Academic Individualized Education Program Goals](#)
  - [Data Rich, Information Poor? Making Sense of Progress Monitoring Data to Guide Intervention Decisions](#)
  - [Direct Behavior Rating Overview](#)

## Action: Create a system for providing targeted interventions and supports. (back to top)

**Who:** MTSS leadership team members

**What:** Develop a process for delivering small group, standardized academic interventions or targeted nonacademic supports using evidence-based intervention programs.

**When:** During the pre-implementation phase

**Why:** To provide students with additional opportunities for practice and corrective feedback and to build foundational skills needed for school success

- Tier 2 interventions and supports are for students who are identified via universal screening processes as requiring additional supports beyond those provided to all students. These interventions and supports typically involve small-group instruction to address specific areas of need.
- Maintain a list of evidence-based interventions and supports that are available for students who require additional supports. All interventions and supports should be selected with attention to their evidence of effectiveness and with sensitivity to students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Ensure that tier 2 interventions and supports are well-aligned with the learning objectives and expectations of Tier 1.
- Develop a process for establishing intervention groups that consist of students with similar needs.
- Integrate tiered supports across the school day within the master schedule. Allocate resources to provide targeted interventions and supports to students who need them.
- Ensure that interventions and supports are delivered by trained staff who are equipped with the necessary materials for the intervention.
- Consider the seven dimensions presented in Table 1 when selecting an evidence-based intervention for a student (Fuchs et al., 2017). The first six dimensions are applicable to selecting an intervention for Tier 2, and the last dimension (i.e., individualization) is critical to Tier 3 but is not necessary for Tier 2 intervention.

**Table 1. The Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity**

Dimension	Key considerations
<b>Strength</b>	Does evidence suggest the intervention is expected to lead to improved outcomes?
<b>Dosage</b>	Will the group size, duration, structure, and frequency provide sufficient opportunities to respond?
<b>Alignment</b>	Does the intervention match the student’s identified needs?
<b>Attention to transfer</b>	Does the intervention assist the student in generalizing the learned skills to general education or other tasks?
<b>Comprehensiveness</b>	Does the intervention include elements of explicit instruction?
<b>Academic or behavior support</b>	Does the student have opportunities to develop the behavior skills necessary to be successful? Can the intervention be easily integrated into academic instruction (academic support)?
<b>Individualization</b>	Can the intervention be individualized with a data-based process to meet student needs?

Note. Adapted from [What Is the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity?](#) (NCII, n.d.).

- Resources:
  - [Academic Intervention Tools Chart](#)
  - [Behavioral Intervention Tools Chart](#)
  - [Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity](#)
  - [Evidence for ESSA](#)

## Action: Develop a process for providing intensive interventions and supports. (back to top)

**Who:** MTSS team members

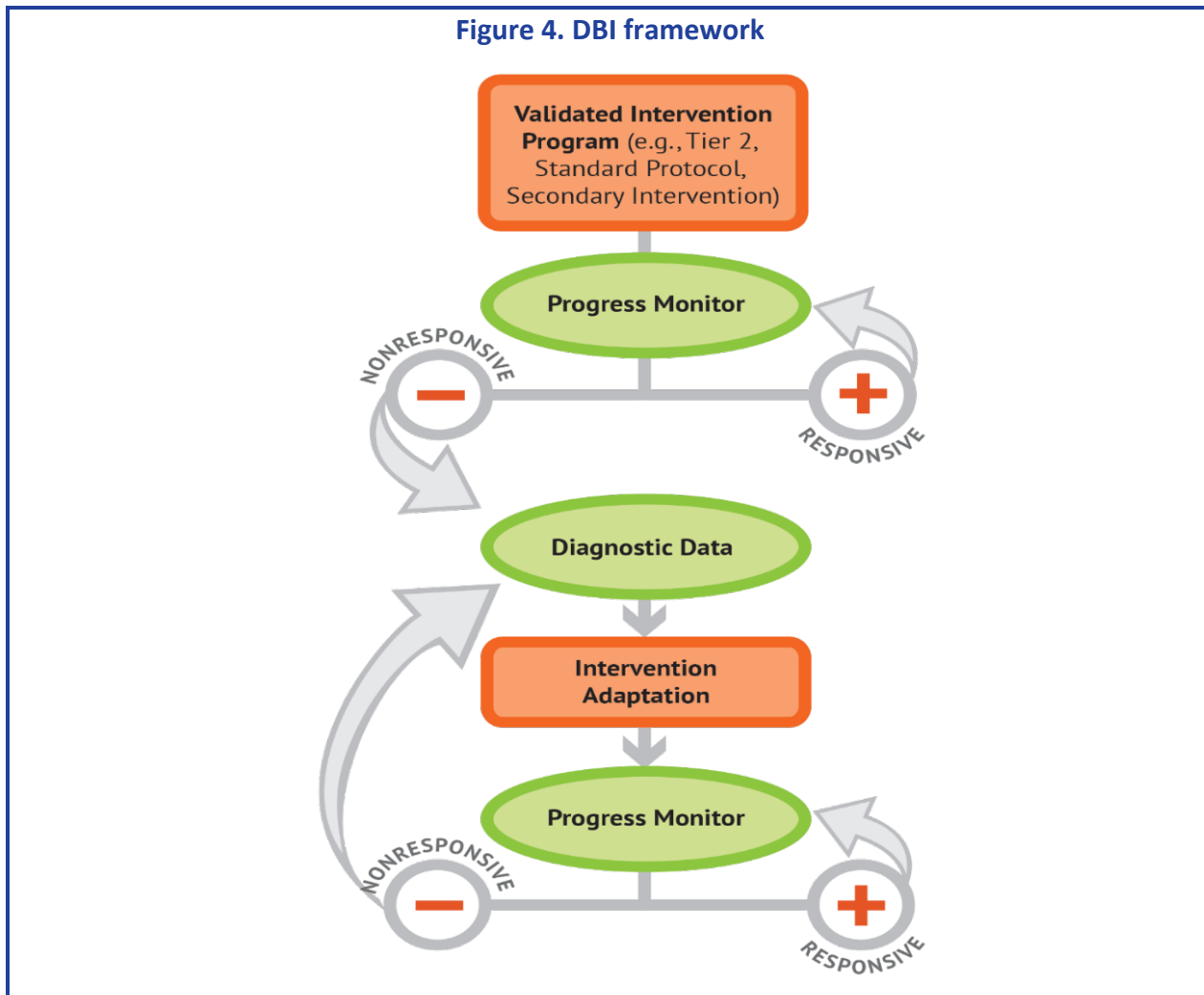
**What:** Develop a data-driven process for adapting and intensifying evidence-based interventions and supports for a small number of students.

**When:** During the pre-implementation phase and ongoing throughout implementation

**Why:** Evidence-based interventions delivered with fidelity will not be sufficient for all students. Some students will require more intensive support.

- Implement intensive intervention for a small number of students with the most intensive academic and nonacademic needs, including students with disabilities. Tier 3 may include increased intensity through smaller group sizes, more instructional time, and increased use of explicit instruction.
- Establish a process for identifying students in need of intensive intervention based on data from Tier 2 or other data demonstrating that the student has an intensive need.
- Develop processes for documenting student intervention plans, progress monitoring plans, and decision rules for determining if the student is making adequate progress.
- Use the data-based individualization (DBI) process to deliver intensive intervention. The DBI process has five steps, beginning with providing a validated intervention program delivered with fidelity (often known as a Tier 2 intervention). Figure 4 presents the DBI graphic from NCII.
- Provide professional learning on a continuum of strategies for intensifying a student's intervention, based on the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity (i.e., strength, dosage, alignment, attention to transfer, comprehensiveness, and behavioral or academic support).

Figure 4. DBI framework



- Resources:
  - [What Is Intensive Intervention?](#)
  - [Introduction to Intensive Intervention Module](#)
  - [Intensive Intervention Course Content](#)



## 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 schools in implementing DE-MTSS to improve academic and nonacademic outcomes for all students. The information in this guide will help school MTSS teams build essential knowledge and create a common language to support MTSS implementation across Delaware.

## References

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