

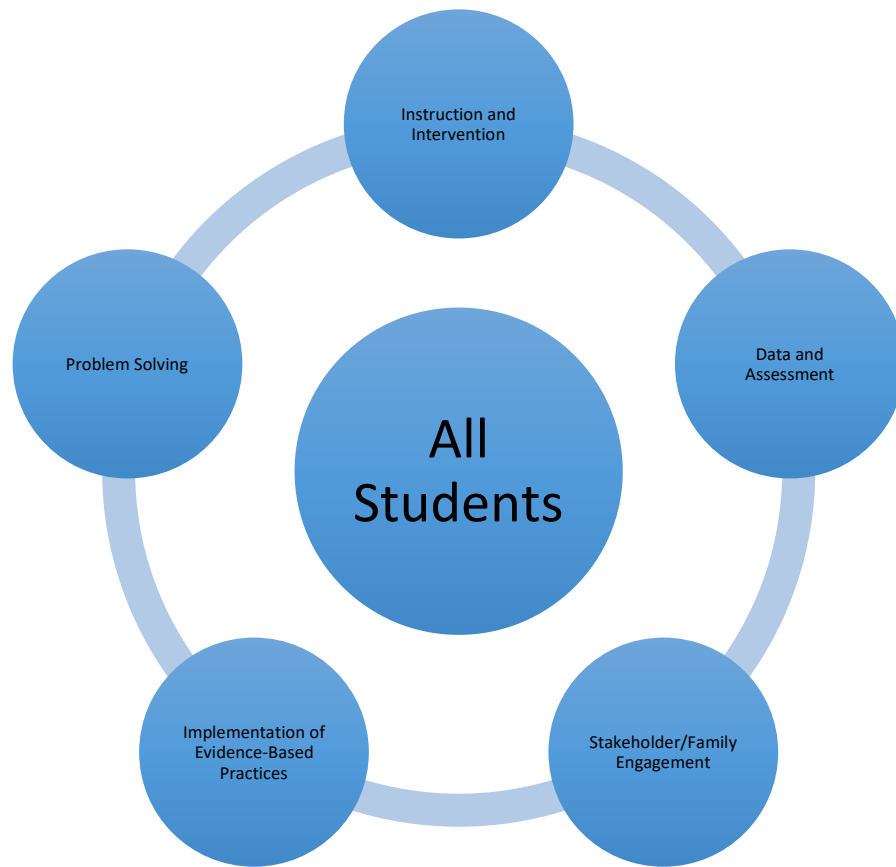
Imlay City Schools



We See Success!



Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Handbook



Acknowledgement

This document is a collaborative effort between Imlay City Schools and information obtained from the Michigan Department of Education regarding Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).

Thank you to all who help created this document. The following Imlay City Schools staff members participated in the creation of this document:

Dr. Dina Tallis

Director of Elementary Education and Student Support Services

Mrs. Devon Caudill

Weston Elementary Principal

Mrs. Megan Cottone

Borland Elementary Principal

Mrs. Kristal White

ICS Early Literacy Coach

Mrs. Andrea Schermerhorn

Early Literacy Interventionist

Ms. Heather Murray

K-12 ESL Teacher

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Introduction

In the following pages, you will find information that describes, in detail, our District's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process along with guidelines for its implementation. This is a process designed to meet the unique needs of all students.

While there are numerous models of MTSS in the professional literature, there are essential components across all models that are the defining features and are critical for an effective MTSS. These essential components include instruction and intervention, data and assessment, stakeholder/family engagement, implementation of evidence-based practices, and problem solving.

The goal of MTSS is to create a systemic change by improving decision making at all levels, starting in pre-kindergarten. Imlay City Schools is committed to providing early supports for our students as they strive to be successful learners in the pre-K-12th grade educational process.

Guiding Principles

- ✓ All children can learn.
- ✓ It is our responsibility, our duty, as educators, to create a positive climate in which all students receive a fair, equitable, and continuous education.
- ✓ We are all part of the solution.

Compliance with Legislation: Third Grade Reading Law

House Bill No. 4822; the Third Grade Reading Law, was signed in October 2016. This new law indicates a scaffolded approach to implementation. Beginning in school-year 2017-2018, districts must assess K-3 reading skills three times per year, the first within 30 days of school starting; provide written notice to parents of suspected deficiencies; provide an Individual Reading Plan (IRP) for each student identified with a reading deficiency within 30 days after a deficiency is identified; implement an evidence-based core reading instruction program, provide parent "read-at-home" plans and other documentation of school's efforts to engage parents; in third grade, provide more intervention than the previous year for students with identified deficiencies; provide daily small-group or one-to-one instruction for students in interventions; administer on-going progress monitoring assessments to monitor student progress in reading and interventions; provide parent training workshops to align with the parent "read-at-home" plan; and utilize a Literacy Coach to support staff and reading instruction implementation and interventions.

Assess K-3 Reading Skills Three Times p/year: NWEA will be administered three times p/year for all students K-5. The first, being within 30 days of school starting (Screener). Based on this screening data, students will be identified for DIBELS assessments to more closely examine possible areas of deficiency (Diagnostic). Students receiving interventions will participate in on-going assessments to monitor their progress in reading; DIBELS (Progress Monitoring).

Provide Written Notice to Parents of Suspected Deficiency: Students identified through the assessment process as having a reading deficiency in one/any of the five areas; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension, will receive an Individualized Reading Plan (IRP). This will be presented at Parent Teacher Conference or (if identified with a deficiency after the second or third

screening assessment) within 30 days. The IRP will detail evidence specific to assessment data and individual student interventions.

Implement an Evidence-Based Core Reading Instruction Program: All teachers, K-5, will implement a 90-to-120 minute Language Arts block of instruction using the Wonders programming.

Provide Parent “Read-at-Home” Plans: At Parent Teacher Conference, in the fall of each school year, all parents will receive a copy of the Imlay City Schools Parent Read-at-Home Plan. This plan addresses all five areas in reading and provides parents easy-to-follow activities that they can do at home with their children.

3rd Grade Students Will Receive More Intervention Than the Previous Year: Students who have an IRP in third grade, which follows them from second grade, will be afforded additional intervention time.

Provide Daily Small-Group or One-to-One Interventions: All students with IRPs and identified deficiencies will receive daily interventions in the form of small-groups or one-to-one. Interventions will be in place every school day; Monday through Friday.

Administer On-Going Progress Monitoring: All students with IRPs or identified by classroom teachers as in need, will participate in DIBELS progress monitoring at least every three weeks outside of screening assessments.

Provide Parent Training Workshops Aligned with the Read-at-Home Plan: Building principals and building staff will provide parent training workshops to incorporate training and help for parents in best practices for helping their children at home.

Utilize a Literacy Coach: K-5 teachers will work with the Literacy Coach toward fidelity of implementation and growth in instructional knowledge in reading.

Glossary of Terms

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS): An integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to meet the achievement and behavioral needs of ALL learners. In short, an MTSS framework is designed to ensure that each and every student that walks into a classroom will have his or her individual needs met through high-quality instruction.

Response to Intervention (RTI): The practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions that are matched to student needs. Student needs are identified through formative and summative assessments. Students are identified as Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 in their academic or behavioral needs. When provided interventions, in their tiers and within the scope of their individual needs, students will be monitored through assessments to gauge their success within the intervention.

Tier 1 or Core/Intentional Instructional Practice: Instruction provided to 100% of students. Ideally, this should effectively meet the needs of 80-85% of all learners. *Based on their performance, learners should move fluidly between all three tiers, based on performance and knowledge/skill attainment.*

Tier 2 or Targeted Interventions: This tier comprises targeted group interventions serving approximately 15% of learners. These learners receive these target interventions in addition to the continuation of Tier

1 core instruction. *Based on their performance, learners should move fluidly between all three tiers, based on performance and knowledge/skill attainment.*

Tier 3 or Intensive Interventions: This tier of interventions services approximately 5% of learners. Learners at this level received intense individual interventions while continuing to receive Tier 1 instruction. *Based on their performance, learners should move fluidly between all three tiers, based on performance and knowledge/skill attainment.*

Screening: A quick and simple assessment of key indicators of performance in a particular area (i.e. reading, math, etc.) considered to be predictive of more complex performance in that area.

Progress Monitoring: An assessment to identify improvement compared to benchmarks. Progress monitoring should occur frequently while students are participating in tier 2 or tier 3 interventions as a method to identify 1. If the intervention is effectively building skills and capacity in the identified area and 2. If the intervention is appropriate for student needs.

Intervention: The systemic use of a technique, program, or practice that is designed to improve learning or performance in specific areas of student need. It must be implemented with fidelity and integrity.

Formative Assessment: A range of formal and informal assessment procedures employed by teachers/educators during the learning process. These procedures may result in modified teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment. It typically involves qualitative feedback (rather than scores) for both the student and teacher, the focus on the details of content and performance.

Summative Assessment: Assessment of learning that summarizes the development of learners at a particular time. After a period of work, i.e. a unit for two weeks, the learner sits for a test and then the teacher marks the test and assigns a score.

Child Assistance Team (CAT): A team that is designed to determine targeted skill deficits and interventions at Tier 3. Tiers 1 and 2 should be implemented, with fidelity and integrity, prior to referring a student to the CAT.

Roles and Responsibilities

District MTSS Director

- Be knowledgeable and keep current about MTSS philosophy including curriculum, instruction, assessments, and interventions.
- Be the “go-to” person about MTSS in the district.
- Facilitate district-level MTSS meetings, at least monthly, with district and building-level stakeholders.
- Monitor the MTSS process, as a whole.
- Develop tools and materials related to district MTSS processes and programs.
- Provide support related to MTSS processes and programs.
- Advocate and always look for changes that may help increase student learning and student success.

Building Principals

- Be knowledgeable and keep current about MTSS philosophy including curriculum, instruction, assessments, and interventions.
- Be the “go to” person about MTSS in the building.
- Facilitate building-level meetings, evaluations, and discussions on the topic of MTSS.
- Organize data-management meetings at least three times per year (after each benchmark assessment period) and identify how data will be shared with all staff.
- Weekly walk through fidelity checks for staff providing and students receiving, interventions. Document.
- Monitor grade-level and CAT discussions.
- Provide a schedule that accommodates the process, including the non-negotiable intervention block at each building.
- Ensure parent communication in on-going and provided to parents regarding student participation in interventions.
- Develop building-level goals for implementation of MTSS.
- Advocate and always look for changes that may help increase student learning and student success.

Teachers

- Be knowledgeable of curriculum and instruction expectations for your building.
- Be knowledgeable of assessments you will be proctoring and using to help identify students for interventions.
- Deliver core curriculum using best practices and use grade-level collaboration to assist this.
- Identify student skills using available formative and summative assessment data. Compare them to local and national standards.
- Identify specific areas of skill strengths and skill deficits as you place students in Tier 1, 2 or 3.
- Administer progress monitoring assessments for students you serve as interventionist.
- Be an active participant in the MTSS process, including retaining ownership for students who receive interventions from other sources and asking questions when they arise. Active participation when a CAT referral is needed is essential.
- Work collaboratively, with a positive and open-mind, with all educators involved in the learning process of students.
- Advocate and always look for changes that may help increase student learning and student success.

ESL Teacher

- Be knowledgeable of curriculum and instruction expectations for your building(s).
- Be knowledgeable of assessments you will be proctoring and using to help identify students for interventions and EL support.
- Deliver core curriculum using best practices in EL and use grade-level collaboration to assist this.
- Identify student skills using available formative and summative assessment data. Compare them to local and national standards in EL.
- Identify specific areas of skill strengths and skill deficits as you place students in Tier 1, 2 or 3,

for EL.

- Administer progress monitoring assessments for students you serve as interventionist.
- Be an active participant in the MTSS process, including retaining ownership for students who receive interventions from other sources and asking questions when they arise. Active participation when an EL CAT referral is needed, is essential.
- Work collaboratively, with a positive and open-mind, with all educators involved in the learning process of EL students.
- Advocate and always look for changes that may help increase student learning and student success.

Early Literacy Coach

- Be knowledgeable and keep current about MTSS philosophy including curriculum, instruction, assessments, and interventions, in literacy.
- Be the “go-to” person about literacy in the district.
- Facilitate district-level (K-3) literacy meetings, at least monthly.
- Monitor the literacy process, as a whole.
- Develop tools and materials related to literacy processes and programs.
- Provide support related to literacy processes and programs.
- Weekly walk through fidelity checks for staff providing and students receiving literacy instruction. Document.
- Be knowledgeable of curriculum and instruction literacy expectations for your district.
- Support teachers in the delivery of core curriculum using best practices.
- Work collaboratively, with a positive and open-mind, with all educators involved in the learning process of students.
- Advocate and always look for changes that may help increase student learning and student success in literacy.

Interventionists

- Be knowledgeable and keep current about literacy MTSS philosophy including curriculum, instruction, assessments, and interventions.
- Be the “go-to” person about literacy MTSS in the district.
- Be knowledgeable of curriculum and instruction expectations for your buildings.
- Be knowledgeable of assessments being used to help identify students for interventions.
- Help monitor the literacy MTSS process, as a whole.
- Provide support related to literacy MTSS processes and programs.
- Participate in grade-level and CAT discussions.
- Help ensure parent communication in on-going and provided to parents regarding student participation in interventions.
- Administer progress monitoring assessments for students you serve as interventionist.
- Be an active participant in the MTSS process, including retaining ownership for students who receive interventions from other sources and asking questions when they arise. Active participation when a CAT referral is needed is essential.
- Help/assist in developing tools and materials related to literacy intervention processes and

programs.

- Support teachers in the delivery of interventions using best practices.
- Work collaboratively, with a positive and open-mind, with all educators involved in the learning process of students.
- Advocate and always look for changes that may help increase student learning and student success in literacy.

Title 1 and ESL Paraprofessionals

- Be knowledgeable and keep current about MTSS philosophy including curriculum, instruction, assessments, and interventions.
- Support teachers and the Early Literacy Interventionist in the Tier 1, 2 and 3 processes. This will include providing interventions for students, under the guidance of classroom teachers, the Early Literacy Interventionist and the building principal.
- Provide interventions, as discussed and assigned, with fidelity. Allow for and participate in conversations moving in and out of interventions smoothly.
- Share your thoughts and ideas about the students in your intervention groups with teachers, the Early Literacy Interventionist and the building principal.
- Communicate frequently with classroom teachers, The Early Literacy Interventionist and the building principal. You are an important part of the educational process.
- Advocate and always look for changes that may help increase student learning and student success.

Creating a Multi-Tiered System of Supports

MTSS requires careful analysis of data, current practices, and professional learning for all staff to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to be successful. Some of the decisions about the system can be made immediately, while others are best made as the system begins to function and data is provided to guide decisions.

As the system is created, it is important to document the decisions and work. This is essential for supporting the staff in implementation with fidelity and for program sustainability. The system should have clear expectations that are consistent with the district's beliefs and current practices. Additionally, having the process written out (in this handbook) will allow for effective and efficient orientation of new staff. It will also provide consistent and clear expectations of practices as well as a reference guide for implementation across grade-levels.

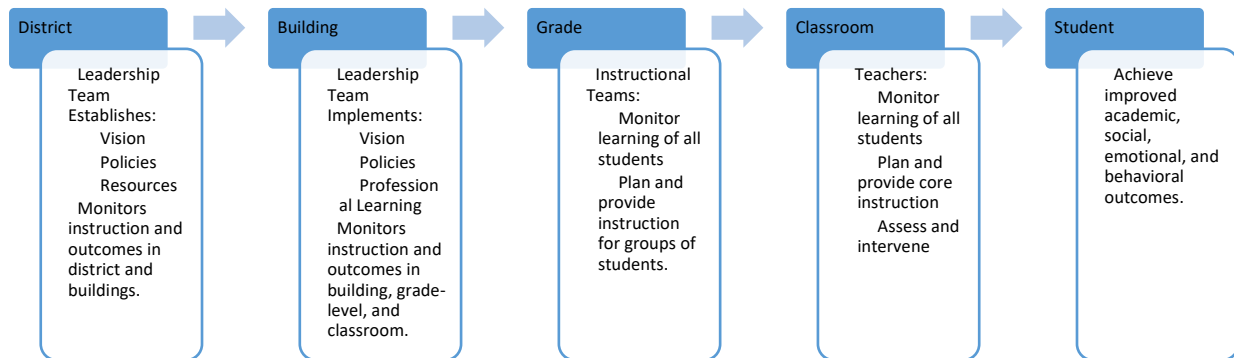
MTSS Leadership

To create an MTSS program that is effective and sustainable, leadership and support must be present. District and building efforts must be aligned to proactively support the essential components of the MTSS framework. The focus of this leadership team and all efforts will be improving the academic, social, and behavioral outcomes of all students. This means that leadership must build district and building buy-in through positively and proactively supporting the MTSS framework. This support must be evident through decisions and actions for instructional improvement and the overall improvement of

processes for all students.

The leadership team is responsible for the development, implementation, and on-going monitoring of the MTSS plans and for building consistent capacity across the district. It is this district plan that allows the MTSS achieve system change. Positive leadership from the district and building level also ensures that common MTSS challenges: lack of fidelity in implementation, loosely managed interventions, poor results, etc., are addressed.

When MTSS is fully implemented, with support from all levels, in a sustainable way, a cascading effect is evident. Each level has different, but aligned, responsibilities. The figure below shows a broad level view of this effect. Below the figure are more detailed tables defining district and building leadership/team expectations.



District Leadership: Proactively supports the essential components of the MTSS framework across all schools in the district, and their decisions and actions work toward making the MTSS framework more effective, including keeping the focus on improvement learning outcomes for all students.

The district has a leadership team that:

- Meets regularly, is comprised of the Director of Elementary Education and Student Support Services (including MTSS), elementary building principals, Early Literacy Interventionist, Early Literacy Coach, and the district EL teacher.
- Is a conduit for three-way communication between faculty, staff, students, and families.
- Working towards a plan that will result in district-wide implementation of MTSS and engages in specific work designed to support MTSS and enhance MTSS programs.
- Develops and implements specific policies and procedures resulting in district coordination of curriculum protocols, assessment systems, professional learning, etc.
- Regularly analyzes district and school performance data and MTSS implementation to make decisions about MTSS, school improvement, and professional learning needs.

Building Leadership: Proactively supports the essential components of the MTSS framework, and their decisions and actions work toward making the MTSS framework more effective, including keeping the focus on improving learning outcomes for all.

The building has a leadership team that:

- Meets at least monthly and is comprised of the principal and other staff members who provide a voice to all staff and key professionals throughout the school.
- Is a conduit for three-way communication between faculty, staff, students and families who are members of the school.
- Develops and implements specific policies and procedures for implementation curriculum protocol, assessment systems, and professional learning.
- Establishes a school schedule that has protected time for core instruction and interventions.
- Regularly reviews and analyzes data to make decisions about instruction, MTSS, school improvement, interventions, and professional learning needs.

Essential Elements of MTSS

The Michigan Department of Education has defined MTSS and included eleven essential elements to help clarify the definition. In order to be an effective and efficient system, all eleven elements must be present. To further simplify the eleven elements, they have been combined to form 5 cluster areas. The cluster areas consist of: instruction and intervention, data and assessment, stakeholder/family engagement, implementation of evidence-based practices, and problem solving.

Instruction and Intervention

The instruction and intervention cluster is made up of the following three essential elements:

1. Implement effective instruction for all learners-A unified system of comprehensive service delivery requiring significant general and special education system change that meets the needs of ALL learners.
2. Intervene early-All learners are screened through assessments several times per year, identifying learners who are not making expected progress. These learners are provided with targeted and/or intensive interventions and monitored for progress on an ongoing basis.
3. Provide a multi-tiered model of instruction and intervention-Levels of interventions will be used to meet the learning needs of all learners. As described previously in the glossary of terms, students in tiers 1, 2, and 3 should move fluidly between tiers as needed and appropriate.

Curriculum and Instruction

With this guide, curriculum and instruction are being discussed separately for the purpose of meaningful and purposeful discussions. While conceptually, curriculum and instruction along with interventions are interconnected, it is important to discuss each of them separately to ensure both are adequately planned for within the District. Throughout the guide, the term standards refer to the Michigan Department of Education’s standards as well as any local learning standards that have been identified; curriculum refers to the materials used to facilitate the learning of those standards, as well as other knowledge, skills, and expectations within both the core and interventions; and instruction refers to

how the standards, knowledge, skills, and expectations are taught.

Core Curriculum (Tier 1)

The foundational element of the curriculum protocol, supporting students academically. The core curriculum must have a strong evidence base, address all of the essential elements of the content area, and be taught with fidelity. Across all grade levels, staff need to consider the core skills, knowledge and expectations that will be required of students by state and local standards. The core curriculum needs to be identified, used consistently and with fidelity prior to attempting to design and provide interventions. If the core is not effective, due to lack of evidence-base or inconsistent use, the system will become overwhelmed as more students appear to need Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions than the system can effectively support.

For behavior, the core curriculum consists of the school-wide positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) program.

Curriculum for Intervention (Tiers 2 and 3)

When establishing interventions for students identified strategic in need (Tier 2) or intensive in need (Tier 3), it is essential to remember that students cannot lose core curriculum time to receive interventions. This exemplifies the importance of the intervention block. Students who do not need interventions during the scheduled intervention block time should be participating in extension or practice activities on previously taught material.

Instruction

With the understanding of instruction being how curriculum is taught, it is important to plan how the system is going to support instruction. This includes the non-negotiable instructional practices that are to be used by all staff, as well as creating building schedules that provide sufficient time for necessary instruction to occur.

Data and Assessment

The data and assessment cluster is made up of the following three essential elements:

1. Monitor student progress to information instruction-Teachers frequently and with fidelity, use relevant data to measure, on an ongoing basis, student progress, to inform their educational decision making and impact what they are doing to improve student achievement.
2. Use data to make instructional decisions-The district, school, and staff will use data to guide all of their instructional decisions.
3. Use assessments for three purposes: universal screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring-The staff will use an assessment to screen the instructional needs of all learners. As learners are identified for more targeted or intensive instruction and/or interventions, the staff will use diagnostic assessments to identify the specific learning needs of all learners. The staff will monitor the progress of students to inform decision making.

Having an effective and complete assessment system that provides the correct data is what allows problem solving to be effective and for MTSS to function and sustain. There is no single assessment that

will provide all necessary data; there must be a variety of assessments to answer different types of questions regarding student achievement. All data collected should be done using instruments and techniques that provide valid and reliable data for the purpose which it is being used.

Universal Screening

Universal screening is the systematic assessment for all students on academic indicators. Its purpose is to identify student who are at-risk and may require and/or benefit from additional support, varying in terms of level and intensity. These screeners also identify the intensity of support focus (Tier I, II, or III). While these screeners identify the intensity needed, they do not necessarily indicate the appropriate instructional focus. To determine instructional focus, additional information is needed. Possible additional information may be diagnostic assessments, formative classroom assessments, and teacher observations.

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessments are designed to provide more precise and detailed information about a student’s knowledge and skills. Diagnostic assessments give very specific information about student skills and therefore the assessment should focus on sampling a student’s knowledge in ways that are instructionally relevant.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring assessment are used to monitor the effectiveness of interventions-to assess student progress or performance in the identified area. It is essentially the method used to determine if a student is benefiting from interventions.

Assessment Types and Characteristics

Types of Assessment	Characteristics	Uses
Universal Screenings *These assessments shall be embedded into classroom instruction and assessment processes.	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading</p> Universal screening for students in reading and math are measures of critical skills that are necessary for all students to master. <u>Kindergarten</u> Letters and Sounds Recognition NWEA DRA2 <u>First Grade-Third Grade</u> NWEA	 On-going throughout the school-year Three times per year: fall, winter and spring Once per year; spring Three times per year: fall, winter and spring

	DRA2 <u>Fourth Grade-Fifth Grade</u> NWEA	Twice per year; fall and spring Three times per year: fall, winter and spring
Diagnostic Assessments	Reading Diagnostic assessment refers to the use of formal standardized tests that assess skills, in-depth, for the essential reading and math components. <u>Kindergarten-Grade 5</u> DIBELS	Three times per year: fall, winter and spring
Progress Monitoring	Reading Progress monitoring assessments must be able to show small increments of change in the skills that are the focus of interventions. <u>Kindergarten-Grade 5</u> DIBELS	Three times per year: fall, winter and spring

Stakeholder/Family Engagement

The Stakeholder/Family Engagement cluster is made up of one essential element:

1. Engage families and community-Families and community members are engaged and informed in the instructional process.

Involving families through the MTSS process is critical to the success of the student and the process itself. Imlay City Schools must make a concentrated effort to involve parents as early as possible, beginning with the monitoring of individual student performance within the core curriculum. Below is a table which describes some ways to meaningfully engage parents.

Tier	Events	How to Involve Parents
	Prior to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a process to inform families regarding the MTSS process. ● Include a clear description of MTSS processes in the school student/parent handbook.
	Start of the school year for all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send family-friendly notice home, reviewing the process developed to inform families of the MTSS process. ● Provide families with information regarding conferences, websites, newsletters, open-houses, etc. to facilitate families' understanding of the process and the

		benefit for students.
Tier 1	Universal Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data from universal screening with regards to student achievement and progress, will be available for all parents at their request and through regular school reporting. ● This data will be shared with families at parent-teacher conference.
	When individual student deficiencies are identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct parent-teacher conferences, meetings, communication to share data identifying areas of concern. ● Provide strategies and materials for parents to help students.
Tier 2	Team meets to address problems identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess student more in-depth using diagnostic screenings. ● Using data, brainstorm next steps to meet student needs; intervention team, Early Literacy Coach, Early Literacy Interventionist, Building Principal, etc. ● Implement interventions as identified. ● Communicate with families throughout the process to ensure they are aware of problem areas identified and implementation of intervention strategies.
	Documentation of progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct progress monitoring every 2-3 weeks to assess student progress/growth in identifies areas of concern. ● Review student data frequently and ensure student is placed in the correct intervention block. If a student's needs change, restructure his intervention to meet those needs. ● Continue to communicate with families by providing updates of progress.
Tier 3	Team meeting to review progress and make instructional decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If diagnostic assessments with strategic interventions do not show growth or progress, identify student through the school-wide Child Assistance Team. ● Classroom teachers should fill out a CAT referral form and provide to the appropriate staff members to schedule a CAT meeting. ● Communicate with families regarding growing concern over lack of progress within Tier 2 and that child will be further evaluated through the CAT.
	Decisions that result in a student spending more time in intensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement interventions/supports identified through the CAT process. ● Keep families involved in the process through

	instruction	<p>communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If any further assessments (special education) are being considered, communicate with families and follow all special education guidelines in regards to obtaining permission to test students.
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Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices

The Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices cluster is made up of the following three essential elements:

1. Assure a research-based Core Curriculum (aligned with Michigan state standards)-the curriculum is aligned with the Michigan standards to ensure that learners are exposed to curriculum that has demonstrated effectiveness in meeting the learning needs of at least 80% (Tier 1) of the student population.
2. Implement research/evidence-based, scientifically validated, instruction and interventions-The district, school, and teachers will use instruction/interventions that have been validated through research/evidence as having a substantial impact on student achievement.
3. Implement with fidelity-Staff will implement instructional and/or intervention practices according to the intent of the research base.

Problem Solving

The Problem Solving cluster is made up of one essential element:

1. Utilize a collaborative problem solving model-A structured, systematic problem solving model based in general education to identify student learning needs, analysis of learning problems, and use of analysis data to guide instructional decisions.

At the core of MTSS is problem-solving. The MTSS problem-solving process should be driven by data. The four essential steps to effective problem-solving processes include: (1) problem identification; (2) problem analysis; (3) improvement planning; and (4) evaluation. All staff must be supportive and supported in the use of problem-solving processes by having on-going support and training opportunities facilitated by district peers or administrators.

One of the most effective multi-tiered systems shift from having a single student-improvement/problem-solving team that involves a few staff to using grade-level or content area instructional teams that, depending on the grade level, involve all staff. With the focus of instructional teams being improving instruction for all students, it makes sense to have all staff involved in the process. This fosters a collective sense of buy-in and responsibility for all students. Therefore, all grade-level meetings and collaboration should include MTSS as an agenda item.

Within problem-solving comes the expectation of a clear and consistent MTSS program. Imlay City Schools is committed to implementation a well-defined process for data-decision making to ensure data area analyzed, decisions are made, and students receive interventions in a timely manner at the appropriate level for their needs. Expected process is listed below:

1. Implement the core curriculum with fidelity.
2. Identify students as benchmark, strategic, or intensive in needs according to their universal screening data along with classroom formative assessments and teacher input.
3. Place students in appropriate intervention blocks as determined by your intervention block team, support system team (Early Literacy Coach, Early Literacy Interventionist, etc.), and grade-level collaboration.
4. Work to assess students using a diagnostic assessment to better identify specific strategies and/or skills that students are struggling with. Ensure interventions relate to these needs.
5. Progress monitor students every 2-3 weeks to assess their growth and learning.
6. If students are making adequate progress, continue in interventions. Students may move fluidly from one group to another to ensure they are consistently in interventions which best meet their needs.
7. If students are not making adequate progress, switch interventions if needed to ensure needs are being met.
8. If progress is still not being made, fill out a CAT referral form to look more closely at the needs of students and engage in a collaborative decision-making process which involves a team of intervention specialists.

*Note, communication with families should occur throughout each step of the process. Families should not be “shocked” to find out their child is struggling. Being up front and honest is critical.

*Note, if the CAT team decides to pursue additional testing through special education, consultation with the special education coordinator is necessary to ensure compliance with state and federal guidelines.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the difference between Tier 1 and what I normally do in my classroom?

Ideally, there is no difference between Tier 1 and what you normally do in your classroom. Tier 1 assumes differentiated instruction is occurring in your class and that you are using flexibly grouping practices in your instruction on a regular basis. As long as all children are receiving instruction and their instructional needs are being met, Tier 1 is the general education classroom. If you are not using a combination of whole group, small group, and even individualized instruction in the general classroom, then you are not meeting the requirement that all children should receive appropriate instruction. Your classroom should be based upon a system that ALL students in the classroom participate in universal screenings that all you to target students who are not responding to the instruction and that uses progress monitoring to measure student’s response to changes in your instruction (interventions). There should be multiple formative assessments, multiple means for a child to demonstrate their learning, and multiple means of delivering instruction to the child.

2. How long do I have to do Tier 2?

Typically, in most models, Tier 2 is a minimum of 9-15 weeks of intense, supplemental instruction. It is critical to understand that the goal of Tier 2 is not specifically close the gap between performance level of the targeted student and the other students, but that the gap is

only closing. The measure of success at Tier 2 is that the child is making progress towards closing the gap. Tier 2 may and should be repeated several times consecutively or repeated in staggered time periods.

3. What is meant by the term fidelity?

There are two components to fidelity. The first component is the length of time needed to conduct the interventions with students. If an intervention is scheduled to be done four times per week, for 30 minutes per occurrence, then fidelity may be measured in if you are sticking to the schedule and actually providing this intervention four times per week for 30 minutes each time. The second component of fidelity is to actually conduct the intervention in the manner that it is meant to be administered. For example, if Read Naturally is the intervention being used, do you have someone that fully understands and can correctly implement Read Naturally.

4. How do I determine if a student should go up (or down) a tier?

This determination should be individualized for each student and should be based upon whether the student is (or is not) making adequate progress based on progress monitoring data. Please communicate frequently and effectively with each student's learning team and your peers to discuss this case-by-case.

5. Isn't this MTSS process and RTI the evaluation for determining eligibility for special education?

No. RTI cannot be the sole component of an evaluation for special education. There must be a comprehensive and documented evaluation to determine special eligibility for special education. RTI data are an important part of the evaluation as it can provide specific data to show student growth or therefore lack of.

6. Which staff should be involved in the implementation of MTSS?

All staff should be involved. District leadership, building leadership, teachers, coaches, interventionists, paraprofessionals, etc. MTSS is a process that allows all educators to work together to identify at-risk students early on and provide interventions to meet student needs. Having support and buy-in from all staff is critical to the success in an MTSS model.