

Handout 1: Key Terms

<i>Key term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Assessment tool	As an instrument used to assess implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)/response to intervention (RTI) framework, an assessment tool helps determine how far schools have progressed or advanced through the levels of implementation.
Broad MTSS/RTI practices	MTSS/RTI practices that are considered to be general activities lacking explicit detail that educators can interpret and implement in various ways. This study classifies components and subcomponents as “broad” MTSS/RTI practices.
Component	The framework for key MTSS/RTI practices used in this study is hierarchical (see table 1 in the report). At the highest level, the framework includes four components of MTSS/RTI (administer assessments, offer multiple tiers of instruction and intervention, support data-based decisionmaking, and support infrastructure practices for RTI implementation). These components include more detailed subcomponents or specific aspects (for example, administer universal screening measures). Subcomponents are then broken down into dimensions that help define and measure the subcomponents (for example, use reliable and valid screening tools).
Expected practices	The MTSS/RTI practices that a state requires or recommends for implementing MTSS/RTI according to that state’s MTSS/RTI framework.
Key MTSS/RTI practices	The activities and procedures for implementing MTSS/RTI. These practices are informed by the national evaluation of RTI for elementary school reading’s rationale for identifying key RTI practice guidelines (Balu et al., 2015); research literature (see, for example, Gersten et al., 2008) to fully define the practices; other state tools; and expert review. The key MTSS/RTI practices are organized by component, subcomponent, and dimension. The study team reviewed the descriptive and correlational research literature and identified practice guidelines that experts recommend, such as administering universal screening at least twice a year to all students, using reliable and valid assessment tools, varying instructional intensity through group size and instruction dosage, monitoring tier 2 students monthly, and monitoring tier 3 students weekly. The team also examined the research literature to identify practices that are critical to all MTSS/RTI models, such as using data to make decisions about instruction and interventions, monitor student progress, align interventions to the core curriculum, and individualize tier 2 and 3 intervention. The team also reviewed state and national tools for assessing MTSS/RTI implementation to identify the practices and how each tool

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	organizes them. Finally, experts in RTI, positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), reading research, and data-based decisionmaking reviewed and vetted the list of key MTSS/RTI practices.
Levels of implementation	The progressive stages of implementing an MTSS/RTI framework. Levels are typically described on a continuum, ranging from not having any practices in place to implementing ideal practices. Ideal implementation refers to implementation based on a state’s use of research and best practice evidence to define the practices with the highest likelihood of adjusting instruction to improve student outcomes. Levels of implementation may be described using descriptive labels (for example, not started, emerging/developing, operationalizing, or optimizing) or a numeric scale (for example, 0, 1, or 2).
Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)	A multi-tiered framework that supports the early identification of students with learning and behavioral challenges. MTSS addresses both academics and behavior, whereas RTI is concerned primarily with academics. Thus, MTSS is often used as an umbrella term that includes both RTI and PBIS. Multi-tiered generally refers to three tiers that correspond to different intensities of support. Tier 1, or schoolwide support and instruction, is provided to all students, and a majority of students (often 80–90 percent) respond well to this support. Tier 2 supports are more specialized interventions that generally meet the needs of the 5–15 percent of students who do not respond effectively to tier 1 supports. Tier 3 supports are more intensive, individualized interventions that typically meet the needs of the 1–5 percent of students who do not respond effectively to tier 1 or 2 supports. These percentages are considered ideal for implementation of a multi-tiered framework but vary by school context. The MTSS framework includes processes for screening all students, providing tiered instruction and intervention supports, and monitoring students’ progress. MTSS is typically associated with general education and providing evidence-based programs to all students (Burns, Jimerson, VanDerHeyden, & Deno, 2016; Zumeta Edmonds, 2016).
Response to intervention (RTI)	A multi-tiered framework to address problems early for students at risk for poor learning out-comes. Schools identify struggling learners through universal screening and provide multiple tiers of evidence-based instruction and interventions; monitor student progress and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions, depending on a student’s responsiveness; and, as appropriate, help identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities according to state and district guidance (Center on Response to Intervention & National Center on Intensive Intervention, 2014).
Specific MTSS/RTI practices	MTSS/RTI practices that describe precise actions in a manner that educators interpret in the same way and that support implementing a practice as expected by a state (for example, specifying how to implement a practice, with whom, or how often). This study classifies dimensions as specific MTSS/RTI practices.

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Technical adequacy indicators	Validity and reliability are indicators that a tool is technically adequate. <i>Validity</i> refers to whether the tool assesses what it is supposed to assess. Types of validity include content validity (whether a tool properly assesses important MTSS/RTI practices) and criterion validity (how well scores on one measure, such as tool ratings, predict scores on another measure, such as student test scores). <i>Reliability</i> refers to the extent to which a tool produces similar results under consistent conditions. One type of reliability is internal consistency, which focuses on the consistency of results across items on a tool (for example, tool users who responded one way to items about the administer assessment component tend to respond similarly to other items measuring the same component).
Tool type	The category of instrument used to assess implementation of an MTSS/RTI framework. Types of tools include rubrics, rating scales, checklists, and surveys.

References

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