

Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest

## Supporting Michigan Learners Toward Excellence in Reading



Due to the disruption of school routines during the COVID-19 pandemic, Michigan students require continued support to get their learning back on track. To explore ways to accelerate reading growth for young learners, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest created a documentary featuring strategies being implemented in two Michigan districts to support literacy outcomes.

*“What we’re giving students by providing them with evidence-based instruction in general education and in individualized instruction is helping to ensure that they grow up and they live productive, happy lives.”*

- Doug Fuchs, PhD  
American Institutes for Research

### About the documentary

This 30-minute public television program, produced by the REL Midwest [Strategies to Improve Reading \(STIR\) partnership](#) with Detroit Public Television, presents strategies used by two Michigan districts to accelerate reading growth for young learners. In the program, educators and leaders from [Detroit Public Schools Community District](#) discuss how district and school leaders can support educators to provide high-quality, research-based instruction rooted in the science of reading and aligned with structured language and literacy.

The program also features educators and leaders from [Chippewa Hills School District](#), who discuss their experiences with integrating data-based individualization to intensify the use of research-based instruction for students with individualized needs. The program includes comments by Dr. Michael Rice, Michigan state superintendent, and researchers Dr. Doug Fuchs, Dr. Sarah Arden, Dr. Dia Jackson (AIR), and Dr. Jill Bowdon (REL Midwest).

### Using data-based individualization within a MTSS framework

For students who need intensive, individualized support as they learn to read, one strategy to accelerate learning is to implement data-based individualization within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework. **Data-based individualization is a research-based process for intensifying intervention through the systematic use of data.**<sup>1</sup> For more information, see the [National Center on Intensive Intervention](#).



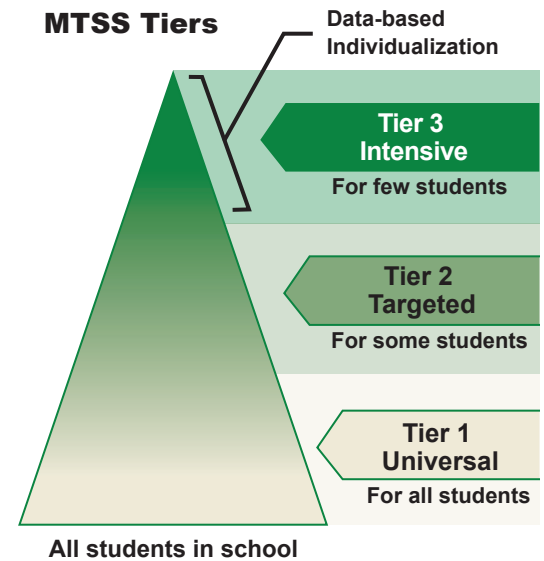
Scan the QR code to watch the documentary

### Using the science of reading in practice

Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) is one example of a professional development program that includes research-based content about how children learn to read. The Michigan Department of Education encourages and funds educator participation in LETRS as a route to increase teacher content knowledge.

Data-based individualization can be used within a MTSS framework to increase the intensity of reading interventions and deliver effective literacy instruction to students with particular needs.<sup>2</sup> **MTSS is a comprehensive framework comprising a collection of research-based strategies designed to meet the individual needs and assets of the whole child.**<sup>3</sup> MTSS includes three levels, or tiers, of instruction. Tier 1 is universal, classroom-level instruction for all students; tier 2 is targeted, small-group instruction for some students; and tier 3 is intensive, individualized instruction for few students. Data-based individualization is situated in tier 3 to deliver intensive intervention to individual students with specific needs (Figure 1). For more information, see the [Michigan MTSS Technical Assistance Center](#).

**Figure 1.** Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).



## Intended audience

REL Midwest created this documentary as a tool for teachers, school leaders, and district leaders to explore strategies for accelerating reading growth for young learners. Although the documentary focuses on examples from Michigan, the best practices and strategies are relevant for policymakers and educators across the country.

## Discussion questions

- ▶ What is your first reaction to this video? What parts resonate with you?
- ▶ How would you apply these stories to literacy efforts in your school, district, or state?
- ▶ How do the strategies shown in the documentary align with the goals of your school and/or district? How can school and district leaders incorporate these strategies into their strategic planning?
- ▶ If you were part of an effort to explore ways to integrate evidence-based professional development and/or data-based individualization within an MTSS framework in your school or district, whom would you involve in those conversations? What steps would you and others need to take to move from discussion into action?
- ▶ What challenges do you see in using these strategies? What are possible ways to overcome these challenges?



## About REL Midwest

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners in seven Midwest states to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support to create a more evidence-based education system.

<sup>1</sup> National Center on Intensive Intervention. (2013). Data-based individualization: A framework for intensive intervention. [https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/DBI\\_Framework.pdf](https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/DBI_Framework.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> St. Martin, K., Vaughn, S., Troia, G., Fien, H., & Coyne, M. (2020). Intensifying literacy instruction: Essential practices. Michigan Department of Education, Michigan MTSS Technical Assistance Center. [https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/Intensifying\\_Literacy\\_Instruction\\_Essential\\_Practices.pdf](https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/Intensifying_Literacy_Instruction_Essential_Practices.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Michigan MTSS Technical Assistance Center. (2022). Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). Michigan Department of Education. <https://mimtsstac.org/ta-center-model/multi-tiered-system-of-supports-mtss>

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