BRANCHING
MINDS

An MTSS Mobilization Framework for 2021-2022 SY

Introduction:

Rolling out MTSS can be daunting. We build step by step, year by year, to develop a clear vision, shared language, and aligned initiatives. We work with our teams to build capacity to understand better and accomplish the work. Let's be honest; the work doesn't always feel feasible.

 At Branching Minds, we want to help you make sure your plans for the evolution of your MTSS are rooted in understanding where your school is at with each aspect of the work, and what the next steps are to drive the work forward. As a continuum to the MTSS Buy-in and Mobilization Guide we recently released, we have created this **MTSS Mobilization Framework.**

The framework provides resources and actions for each key component at all of the 3 "phases" of the implementation journey:

- Foundational
- Developmental
- Fully Operational

The framework will help you to mobilize your team around MTSS and know where to focus your efforts. It takes years to be fully operational in all components, so just like we do with students, take it one step at a time.

How to Use this Guide:

We recommend that building MTSS Teams review this document together and evaluate where the school lies in each component. If you are just starting out, you may be working towards being "foundational," and that's great. Start in that column and work your way down the table. Some districts may be foundational in one component and fully operational in another. Once you have identified where you are, look horizontally to consider the next steps and work together to develop some goals for the year and beyond. Wherever you start, we have various resources to inform your practices and dig deeper into each component. It takes years to be fully operational in all components, so just like we do with students, take it one step at a time.

In the words of Ms. Julia Child, "The only stumbling block is fear of failure." Follow the directions, find where your school is at, and see what lies ahead in the journey!

District and School Leadership Support

FOUNDATIONAL

At the Foundational Level, District and School Leadership is responsible for:

- Developing an MTSS Support Team
- Co-creating (with the MTSS team) a shared vision for MTSS, including desired outcomes for educators and students, and incremental goals to achieve them (aka an MTSS Implementation Plan)
- Establishing a common language by providing shared definitions for key MTSS terms and concepts
- District and School Leadership sets the stage for change by:
- Frequently clarifying and communicating the vision, celebrating milestones, and providing specific critical feedback
- Identifying key stakeholders and creating opportunities to communicate needs/impact throughout the life of MTSS
- Establishing a collaborative school culture

DEVELOPMENTAL

At the Developmental Level, District and School Leadership is responsible for:

- Actively leading and consistently communicating with participants (school stakeholders, parents, and community) throughout the MTSS process and aligning to district and school goals.
- Attending MTSS meetings, as appropriate, setting expectations, and providing feedback to support the purpose and conduct of meetings.
- Listening and applying problem-solving to determine availability and allocation of human and program resources.
- Analyzing school schedules to ensure time and space are available to implement screenings, meetings, and interventions with fidelity.
- Making the appropriate adjustments to the core curriculum, schedules, staff, etc., based on analyses of key patterns in data.

FULLY OPERATIONAL

At the Fully Operational Level, District and School Leadership is responsible for:

- Consistently directing the MTSS team and school staff towards established school/district goals.
- Collecting, considering, and making changes to the implementation of MTSS and school culture, based on feedback from key stakeholders.
- Leveraging the MTSS infrastructure framework to shape additional school and district long-term planning and goals.
- Incorporating MTSS practices to become an integral component of the formal educator (administrators and teachers) evaluation process.

MTSS Team Support (at the school level)

At the Foundational Level, the MTSS Team is responsible for:

Establishing 3 distinct "levels" of MTSS data-driven problem-solving work at each school:

1) **School Level MTSS:** often conducted by the MTSS team, looking across schoolwide data sets, to conduct school-wide data reviews, looking for issues that may impact instruction, academic progress, or school culture. The solutions they find may be applied broadly and result in significant effects.

2) **Grade/Content Level MTSS:** look across small group data and either grade-wide or content-wide data for trends; creating and monitoring small group support plans.

3) **Student Level MTSS:** often conducted by the MTSS in partnership with teachers and/or parent(s)/guardian(s), looking at data and creating and monitoring individual student's plans.

Group Norms and Roles: The MTSS Team must also establish and review Group Norms and Group Roles such as the Facilitator (often MTSS coordinator), Timekeeper, Minutes/notes taker, and Archivist (person who solidifies decisions in MTSS handbook or school files).

DEVELOPMENTAL

At the Developmental Stage, the MTSS Team is responsible for:

Determining key MTSS timelines for:

• Triannual benchmark/screener windows

• Designated staff, timelines, and communication plans for progress monitoring

• Determining necessary professional development based on data derived from school-wide academic/SEL assessments, teacher coaching/consultation, or in alignment with MTSS implementation goals

• All MTSS related meeting dates/times

Communicating Decisions: The MTSS Team has a transparent and clear system for routinely communicating decisions back to respective team members or other associated stakeholders.

FULLY OPERATIONAL

At the Fully Operational Stage, the MTSS Team:

• Sets, reviews, and revises annual implementation goals

• Provides the majority of the feedback for instructional improvement through a shared coaching/consultation model

• Collects and reviews MTSS health data and then makes necessary adjustments to the protocol as appropriate

• Updates the MTSS handbook and reviews with staff incrementally each year, all modules & appropriate changes

Core Instruction for Academics and Behavior

FOUNDATIONAL

At the Foundational Level, the Core Instruction for Academics and Behavior:

- Allows 80% of students to meet or exceed grade-level expectations as determined by benchmark/screening data.
- Uses a standards-aligned curriculum in all academic subject areas as well as explicit instruction of social-emotional skills, all tied directly to universal and summative assessments.
- Uses universal research-based assessment to drive differentiation at the grade/classroom level and inform flexible grouping according to student ability level.
- Incorporates professional development to school staff on Core Curriculum, Universal Design for Learning, Classroom Management, and Differentiation.

DEVELOPMENTAL

At the Developmental Level, the Core Instruction for Academics and Behavior:

- **Includes intentional small group instruction** along with whole group and small group differentiation strategies. These strategies/supports are indicated by data specific to the subject or skill area to adequately p/re-teach, reinforce, or extend student knowledge.
- Regularly reviews and reinforces classroom behavior expectations to minimize time off task.
- **Makes sure the curriculum is equitably serving all students:** This means that students can relate to content, allows for active student engagement by drawing from diverse contexts, and meets the SEL needs of all students.

FULLY OPERATIONAL

At the Fully Operational Level, the Core Instruction for Academics and Behavior:

- The MTSS team regularly evaluates the health of the core curriculum and makes necessary adjustments based on school-wide data.
- Improves instruction and ensures fidelity of implementation through routine collegial collaboration and/or coaching.

Consistent Universal Screening

FOUNDATIONAL

At the Foundational Level, Universal Screening includes:

- **Three windows** (fall, winter, spring) with specific dates & schedules placed on the school calendar are dedicated to assessing all students.
- Standardized, norm-referenced, state standards-aligned measures are given to **ALL students** and cover all grade levels and content areas (including SEL).
- **Valid and reliable** results help to identify students who meet criteria for support based on established cut-scores that correspond to national percentiles.
- **Data review within 2 weeks of administration** to promptly identify students at risk as well as determine school-wide trends.

DEVELOPMENTAL

At the Developmental Level, Universal Screening requires:

- All designated staff members to administer, score & interpret data after receiving necessary training on measures.
- Staff contributing to small group and individual decisions based on data organized by one designated person and is readily accessible.
- Key measures and decision criteria are identified and documented in the MTSS handbook.
- The team considers multiple data points and determines needs within a problem-solving framework; but also responds adaptively to unique cases requiring expedited analysis/solutions.

FULLY OPERATIONAL

At the Fully Operational Level, Universal Screening requires:

- Staff identifies situations in which specific data may not be valid/reliable based on students' knowledge or testing conditions. This decision may lead to identifying alternative assessments or sources or reducing the number of assessments.
- Staff routinely use triangulated data to make decisions about growth, support levels and focus on any particular assessment measure.
- Appropriate levels of data support all instructional planning.

High quality, well-documented student support plans

FOUNDATIONAL

At the Foundational Level, quality student support plans require:

- Students identified as needing support are discussed by a multidisciplinary team of individuals who regularly interact with that child.
  - The team develops clear intervention plans that include all of the following:
  - Identified skill deficit
  - Measurable SMART goal
  - Evidenced-based intervention
  - Schedule of sessions
  - Progress monitoring tool & schedule
  - The person identified for implementing and/or monitoring plan.
- A Standard-Treatment Protocol (STP) is used when all students struggling with a similar area receive the same support plan (small group instruction).
- A Problem-Solving Protocol (PSP) is used when a student receives an individual plan designed for their specific needs.

DEVELOPMENTAL

At the Developmental Level, quality student support plans require:

- Implementation integrity is regularly recorded using session notes.
- All plans are centrally located, promptly updated, and readily accessible to (or shared with) all stakeholders, including parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Follow-up dates are scheduled to review student progress and make determinations for the next steps.
- A clearly defined continuum of student support meets the needs of students at all tiers. This is outlined in the MTSS Handbook.
- A combined approach (STP/PSP) uses elements from both protocols to design additional support in Tiers 2 and 3.

FULLY OPERATIONAL

At the Fully Operational Level, quality student support plans require:

- An inventory of evidence-based interventions is regularly reviewed and modified.
- Evidence of "shared responsibility" for students is demonstrated by cross-grade support plans/groups.
- Tier movement routinely suggests that intervention impacts students positively, and tier distribution reflects system goals of 80% of students in Tier 1, 15% of students in Tier 2, and 5% of students in Tier 3.

Student Progress is Frequently Monitored

FOUNDATIONAL

At the Foundational level, **Progress Monitoring** requires:

- Measures are quick, curriculum-based tools (CBMS) that align to student skill deficits.
- Teams review graphically represented data that is collected weekly or bi-weekly.
- At least 4-6 data points captured at recommended intervals are considered before decisions can be made. Goals reflect progress towards grade level proficiency in one specific skill area.

DEVELOPMENTAL

At the Developmental level, Progress Monitoring requires:

- Student rate of improvement is measured against goal rate of improvement to determine progress and inform tier movement and/or intervention changes.
- The team reviews the intervention log and regularly considers variables that may impact fidelity, including student attendance, behavioral variables, or other scheduling conflicts.

FULLY OPERATIONAL

At the Fully Operational level, Progress Monitoring requires:

- Teachers are trained at identifying below grade level skill gaps and utilize appropriate tools to measure deficits.
- Survey-level assessments, designed to identify a student's instructional grade level, target progress monitoring to more specific student skill gaps.

Interpret Data & Adjust Instruction

FOUNDATIONAL

At the Foundational Level, Interpretation of Data & Instructional Adjustments require:

- Grade level and/or student support teams **meet (two times) monthly** to review progress monitoring graphs and evaluate student response to intervention.
- Teams decide whether to add, remove, modify, or change interventions based on student progress on valid curriculum-based measures.
- Students are moved between tiers based on evidence, and changes are documented on support plans.
- All decisions are regularly communicated to key stakeholders, including parent(s)/guardian(s).

DEVELOPMENTAL

At the Developmental Level, Interpretation of Data & Instructional Adjustments require:

- Grade level and/or problem-solving teams review barriers to intervention implementation and evaluate overall fidelity of small group and individualized interventions.
- Educators consistently ground their discussion of student growth and educational decisions in objective data.

FULLY OPERATIONAL

At the Fully Operational Level, Interpretation of Data & Instructional Adjustments require:

- Teams regularly evaluate processes and procedures to keep meetings child-focused, data-driven, efficient, and equitable.
- MTSS team also meets triannually to review schoolwide data and make adjustments to the core curriculum as well as a library of interventions.

Resources

Leadership Support

[Developing an MTSS support team](#)

[Establishing a common language](#)

[Setting the stage for change](#)

[Demystifying MTSS](#)

[Collaborative school culture](#)

[Actively leading and consistently communicating with participants](#)

MTSS Team

[Distinct school teams](#)

[A School MTSS Leadership team](#)

[Professional Development Training](#)

[Implementation goals are reviewed and revised annually](#)

[Methods to analyze system health](#)

Robust Core with Differentiated Instruction

[Core curriculum allows 80% of students to meet or exceed grade-level expectations](#)

[Classroom behavior expectations](#)

[Evaluate the health of the core curriculum](#)

[Universal Screener Assessments](#)

Consistent Universal Screening

[Consistent Universal Screening](#)

High Quality, Well Documented Support Plans

[Intervention Planning](#)

[Small group instruction](#)

[Inventory of evidence-based interventions](#)

[Smart Goals](#)

Student Progress is Frequently Monitored

[Progress monitoring](#)

[Subscribe to our resources digest](#) to
- Receive tips on how to implement RTI/MTSS effectively
- Get invited to our events, webinars, and interviews

[Follow Us on Twitter](#)

[Find and Like Us on Facebook](#)

[Join Us on LinkedIn](#)

BRANCHING
MINDS

Branching Minds Helps Educators

Understand school health and wellness across the district	Target approach to strengthen Behavior/SEL intervention practice	Avoid overidentification or underreferral of student subgroups

INFO@BRANCHINGMINDS.COM   (646) 450-5174   BRANCHINGMINDS.COM