



MTSS Handbook

Updated September 2024

Section 1: Foundations, Approach, and Guiding Principles for MTSS

Introduction

A. Our Mission:

The mission of the Onteora Central School District (OCSD) is to prepare all students with the knowledge, competencies, social responsibilities, and positive self-image to be lifelong learners and contributing members of society. The Onteora Central School District will provide programs and conditions that maximize learning success so that all students meet high-level performance standards.

B. Our Values:

At the heart of our mission is a core set of shared values that serve to ground and enliven our collective identity and strengthen our commitment to our mission as educational leaders. The foundation of success for our students and our school system is rooted in our core values, and these values define our way forward.

- **Every Child** - We put students at the heart of everything we do.
- **Collective Greatness** - We, as a community, leverage our individual strengths to reach challenging goals.
- **Collaborative Spirit** - We believe in each other and find joy in our work.
- **Limitless Curiosity** - We never stop learning and growing.
- **Moral Compass** - We are guided by strong character, ethics, and integrity.

Our goal is that every member of the Onteora Central School District family—*educators, parents, students, and community members*—will adopt and share this set of values as we work to best serve students on their educational journey.

C. Our MTSS Goals:

The Onteora Central School District believes a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework will help us achieve our school and community's commitment to the mission to achieve positive and equitable outcomes for all of our students. MTSS is a problem-solving and prevention model with strong evidence of success. MTSS uses data-based decision-making to inform academic and behavioral instruction and intervention based on individual student needs. As a result of our commitment to developing an effective support system for all students, we have partnered with

Branching Minds, a comprehensive data management tool designed to support our understanding of why students are struggling, find interventions that match student needs, and monitor progress effectively and collaboratively. Our commitment is to provide a series of coordinated systems and structures that when implemented with fidelity and rooted in our district's instructional core, result in positive benefits for all students.

Our goal for our students: The MTSS framework allows our students to be known, respected, and supported across the diversity of their learning needs, to achieve success in their academics, personal relationships, and future endeavors.

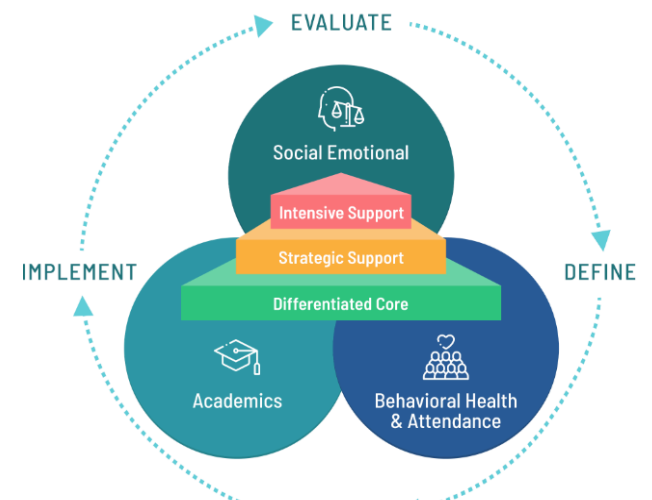
Our goal for our educators: Educators will see this MTSS framework as a way to support all students more easily, effectively, and efficiently. We aim to streamline the collection and documentation of observations and student data, as well as the planning and reporting process required for differentiation and intervention. In doing so, we can enable our teachers to spend more time building relationships with their students, delivering personalized support, and experiencing professional success.

Our goal for parents: Parents will partner with educators to collaborate and participate in the MTSS process. Parents will be actively engaged in their students' educational experiences, success, and current and post-secondary goals by attending scheduled meetings, monitoring their students' academic and social-emotional progress, communicating their student's needs with an educational partner, and maintaining high expectations for their students.

An Overview of an MTSS Approach

A. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS): What & Why

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a proactive collaborative approach to data-driven instructional decision-making that is continuous, cyclical, and considered within the context of larger educational and social systems. The MTSS framework uses high-quality, evidence-based instruction coupled with a standards-based curriculum, universal screening practices, the tiered intensity of support based on level of need, and continual use of data to guide decision-making to ensure that ALL students receive the appropriate level of



engagement to be successful. MTSS gives both schools and districts the framework necessary to organize resources that align academic standards and behavioral expectations, implement best practices with fidelity, and maximize the opportunity for ALL students to achieve and/or exceed grade-level proficiency. MTSS's success hinges upon partnerships with students as active participants in their education, families as engaged partners, and communities as networks of additional support that serve to strengthen educational systems at the classroom, school, district, regional, state, and national levels. (Can't see all of the images →)

MTSS is NOT new. There are thousands of research-based interventions to choose from, tons of best practices to keep in mind, and so many data points to inform our data-driven decision-making. There is tremendous evidence supporting the power of an effective MTSS practice to improve student outcomes for struggling learners, but there is also solidly convincing research that it improves student outcomes for ALL learners. A rising tide raises all boats. **For Best Practice, This Process Can Not Stand Alone.**

We hope that this handbook, and our partnership with Branching Minds, will enable us to support all of our students at the Onteora Central School District, from those in general education to special education to the gifted learners, as well as those who move fluidly across all, by making the work of MTSS easy, efficient, effective, and thereby, equitable.

B. The Guiding Principles of MTSS:¹

These are the foundational elements of MTSS that will guide the Onteora Central School District to success.

Our K-12 Commitment: Our secondary schools include the same set of essential components as elementary schools, but the strategies utilized may look different

- 1. MTSS is about the success of ALL students.**

- a. ALL** Educators must work **proactively** to support students' learning needs.
- ALL** students can learn and are encouraged to reach their fullest potential.
- ALL** available resources are accessible to teach all students.

- 2. Within MTSS, Leadership is vital.**

- Strong administrative support ensures clarity around protocol and commitment to time and resources.
- Administration supports educators by sharing the common goal of improving instruction (core,

¹ adapted from Heartland Area Education Agency (IDM Guiding Principles).

supplemental, and intervention).

- c. An MTSS team builds internal capacity and sustainability over time.

3. Educators are respected as diverse lifelong learners.

- a. A coaching system for educators allows for ongoing training and support to assimilate the new knowledge and skills they are gaining through intervention success.
- b. Extra support for our educators encourages them to anticipate and be willing to meet newly emerging needs based on student performance.
- c. This support can be in the form of follow-up modeling, as well as the coaching system.
- d. This support can be provided in person, via webinars, in groups, one-on-one, through tutorials, articles, etc.
- e. Strong professional development within all topic areas of MTSS ensures effectiveness and integrity at all levels of instruction.

4. Scientific, research-based core instruction and intervention is the foundation for success.

- a. **Core Curriculum:** To ensure students have the best chance at success, use strategies with a scientific, research-based approach.
 - Core curriculum and instructional approaches must have a high probability of success for most students (80%).
 - Implementation of the core curriculum must be verifiably implemented with fidelity.
- b. **Tiered Levels of Support:** Beyond the core curriculum, match students' instruction/support to the level and intensity of their needs. The levels of support provided to students are based on the increasing level of student needs, which is organized through a tiered framework:
 - Tier 1 is whole class core instruction
 - Tier 2 is whole class core instruction + additional targeted instruction (often small group)
 - Tier 3 is whole class core instruction + additional targeted instruction + intensive intervention

5. Instructionally relevant, valid, and reliable assessments are critical for providing proactive and reactive support and must be used in conjunction with progress monitoring for MTSS success.

- a. **There are 3 types of assessments, which vary in administration and use:**
 - i. Summative assessments are administered to all students annually to determine students' mastery of grade-level standards and provide educators with information about adequate yearly progress at site and district levels.

- ii. Universal screening assessments are administered to all students three times per year to proactively and objectively identify which students are potentially in need of educational support/enhancements to supplement the core curriculum. Furthermore, evaluation of universal screening data is conducted to ensure the core curriculum results in success for a sufficient percentage of students. These assessments should be nationally or state-normed and predictive of performance on summative assessments.
- iii. Progress monitoring assessments are given to students receiving intervention support and are administered weekly or every other week, depending on the intensity of need. These data should come from Curriculum-Based Measurements (CBMs) because they provide a reliable and valid measure of student growth in a particular skill area.

6. A Response Protocol is needed to make decisions about the conditions of learning and a layered continuum of supports available for students.

- a. A Response Protocol refers to the method and approach used when determining student needs and how to address them—it defines “who gets what and when.”
- b. The Response Protocol outlines a plan for using research-based, targeted interventions and enrichment services with increasing levels of cumulative support.
- c. The Response Protocol outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff and clarifies the procedures and processes within the model (e.g., requirements to move a student into Tier 3, procedures for notifying parents, etc.).
- d. There are three types of Response Protocols:
 - i. A Standard Treatment Protocol (STP) is used when all students struggling with a similar area receive the same support plan.
 - ii. A Problem-Solving Protocol (PSP) is used when a student receives an individual plan designed for their specific needs.
 - iii. A combined approach (ST/PSP) uses elements from both protocols to design additional support.

7. Data guides instructional decisions.

- a. Data is used to align curriculum and instruction to assessment.
- b. Data are used to allocate resources.
- c. Data drives professional development decisions.

8. Stakeholder alignment across school, family, and community is integral to the success of students

within the MTSS model.

- a. As students are surrounded by a network of support their success increases.

C. The Components of an Effective MTSS

Universal Screening for ALL Students

Screening is generally conducted 3 times a year, to identify students who may be at risk for poor outcomes, and need additional academic, social, emotional, and behavioral support. Screening is also used to identify patterns and trends of learning and achievement at the school and grade levels.

Multi-Level Prevention System

A multi-level prevention system includes a continuum (tier 1, 2, and 3) of integrated academic, social, emotional, behavioral, instructional and intervention supports that are evidence-based and culturally and linguistically responsive.

Standard Treatment Protocol/Problem-Solving (STP-PS) in MTSS

The combined Standard Treatment Protocol/Problem-Solving (STP-PS) Model with Branching Minds (BrM) drives the decisions made in the MTSS system, and includes 4 steps:

1. **Problem Identification** (“Who and what are we concerned about?”): the difference between what learning and/or behavior is expected, and what actually occurs is clearly defined.
2. **Problem Analysis** (“Why do we think the problem is occurring?”): Multiple sources of data are used (e.g., formative and summative assessments, attendance data, the BrM Insight Surveys, etc.,) to generate possible cause(s) of the problem.
3. **Plan Implementation** (“What can we do about it?”): Using the BrM platform, an intervention plan is developed collaboratively and implemented. The plan contains learning goals, support activities that are research-based strategies from the BrM library that maximize the likelihood of success, and a plan for monitoring progress.



Universal Screening for ALL Students



Multi-Level Prevention System
beginning with Quality Core/Universal
Curriculum & Instruction



Problem-Solving Protocol (Define the
Problem, Analyze Why & Develop a
Plan, Implement Plan, and Evaluate
the Plan Effectiveness & Adjust)



Making Data-informed Adjustments
to Student Support



Communication and Collaboration
through Quality Meetings

4. **Plan Evaluation** (“Was our support successful?”): Progress data are reviewed to determine if the plan was delivered with fidelity and the extent of impact in closing the gap toward expected performance. If a positive impact is not evident, the problem-solving process begins again.

Making Data-informed Adjustments to Student Support

It is critical to understand that MTSS is based on this premise:

- the earlier we can identify a problem,
- analyze it so we can best understand our learners’ needs,
- implement a plan providing each student the level of support they need using research-backed interventions matched to their specific challenges, and
- frequently monitor for fidelity and effectiveness,

the higher the likelihood we can help our students achieve success more easily, more quickly, and more commonly within the general education setting. MTSS is how we provide an equitable and successful education for ALL students.

Making data-informed adjustments to student support includes applying the problem-solving protocol to analyze student response to instruction and intervention and making decisions about adjusting levels of support, instruction, and intervention. Data from valid and reliable screening and progress monitoring help teams determine who gets what, and when. Data informs decisions to increase or decrease levels of support through the multi-tiered continuum.

Communication and Collaborating through Quality Meetings

A cohesive approach to student achievement requires a collaborative approach where teachers use assessments to inform individual and collective practice. Collaborative team structures explore data for patterns and determine the causes of success and performance gaps. These teams put data at the center to guide instruction, adaptations, and interventions, to identify students or groups of students who need additional support, and to monitor student progress. Successful collaboration results in data-informed instruction, data-focused school-level and student goals, and data-centered professional development.

Section 2: Data-Informed Universal Instruction

A. Universal Supports

a. Tier 1 Core Instruction:

At Tier 1, **all** students receive scientific, research-based core instruction implemented with integrity and emphasizing grade-level standards and school-wide behavioral expectations. Instruction at Tier 1 should be explicit and differentiated. Including flexible grouping and active student engagement. To ensure 80% of students' needs are met at Tier 1, high-quality instruction is essential. Features of high-quality, research-based instruction include (Chard et al., 2008):

- **Standards-Based Curriculum:** A curriculum based upon the [New York State Learning Standards](#).
- **Systematic Explicit Instruction:** Skills taught increase in complexity over time using direct, clear, and concise instructional language.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Students have different levels of background knowledge and school readiness. Therefore, differentiated instruction engages each student in active learning according to their instructional level. The content, delivery, and complexity of instruction can differ within classrooms while allowing all students the opportunity to progress toward standards mastery.
- **Flexible Grouping:** A combination of whole group, small group, and individual instruction allows teachers to create fluid groups that meet the needs of all students.
- **Active Student Engagement:** Ensuring all students are actively involved during instruction by employing high rates of opportunities to respond, ample time to practice skills, student-led instruction, and prompt corrective feedback.
- **Classroom Behavior Strategies:** Proactively and explicitly teaching the expected behaviors and routines, frequent use of reinforcement and praise (4:1 positive to negative feedback loop), quick and efficient transition times, and consistent instructional response to misbehavior.

A solid Tier 1 should be sufficient to help **80%** of students meet or exceed grade-level expectations as measured by a standardized summative assessment. If Tier 1 instruction is not successful in meeting the needs of 80% of the school's population, the school team should evaluate the quality of the curriculum and its delivery.

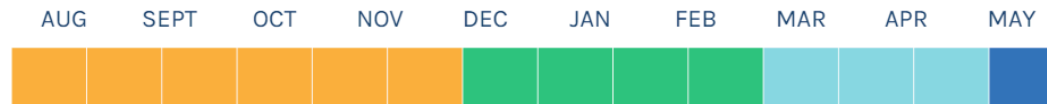
Instructional leaders should also consider possible solutions to create a better match between students' needs and the core curriculum and instruction (e.g., improving explicit instruction, differentiation strategies, use of flexible grouping, and maximizing active student engagement).

b. Tier 1 Core Instruction - Acceleration

When students do not pass the EOY State Assessment or are not responding to classroom instruction, the MTSS team should determine if those students' needs are the product of a larger system-level deficiency. If the identified problem or issue is deemed to be due to a Tier 1 instruction/curriculum issue, then the student(s) should not receive Tier 2 instruction or Tier 3 intervention. The support team needs to determine what school, grade, or classwide adjustments are required to the academic or SEL curriculum & instruction, and/or environment. They must then create a plan for acceleration.

Accelerated core instruction is a way of differentiating instruction through prioritizing curriculum standards based on the learning needs of many students. Accelerated core instruction will ensure that all students receive more targeted, scaffolded instruction in grade-level standards while at the same time providing access to future prerequisite skills.

Remediated Instructional Calendar



Accelerated Instructional Calendar



- Previous Grade Normed-Learning Expectations
- Beginning Grade Normed-Learning Expectations
- Mid-year Grade Normed-Learning Expectations
- End of Year Grade Normed-Learning Expectations



Data-driven differentiated core instruction is designed to meet 100% of learners' needs



Orange County
School District

Remediation vs. Acceleration: OCSD implements acceleration to provide all students with learning gaps; the support needed to quickly fill their gap and keep them on grade level instead of remediating their learning and potentially causing more gaps to occur for the student with their current grade normed learning expectations.

The support teams and individual teachers should document instruction adjustments, supports, and differentiation that occur during core instruction in an AIP (accelerated instruction plan) created for small groups of students. These plans should be monitored and reviewed in the same manner as all other Tier 2 or Tier 3 support plans.

c. Tier 1 Core Instruction - Enrichment

Students who are meeting or exceeding standards may require enrichment beyond the core to demonstrate academic growth. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that all students make academic progress regardless of their entry level.

d. Tier 1 Core Instruction - Learning Supports

A learning support is a research-based resource used during Tier 1 core instruction for all students. Our professional learning helps teachers identify support resources to complement an existing curriculum by providing additional practice, strategies, tools, and explanations. These supports are especially useful to accelerate learning, where all students may be missing critical background knowledge or readiness.

e. Tier 1 Core Instruction - Specially Designed Instruction

IDEA defines special education services as “specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability” (34 CFR 300.39) Specially designed instruction refers to adaptations to the content, methodology or delivery based upon individual student instruction that addresses the unique needs of the child that results from the child's disability, ensure access to the general education curriculum so that the student can meet general standards, and are implemented as outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) is implemented per the student's IEP and seamlessly woven into a school's Multi-tiered System of Support at every or any tier level; where instruction and interventions are implemented using a data-based problem-solving process that matches the intensity of support to meet student needs (both strengths and weaknesses). All students have access to differentiated, Tier 1 instruction based on grade-level standards, including students with disabilities, who need various levels of support, scaffolds, and/or adaptations to master grade-level standards. Students with disabilities are legally entitled to specially designed instruction within their least restrictive environment, including intensive interventions, when the intensity of their needs warrants this level of support.

f. Considerations for English Language Learners (ELLs)

The term English Language Learners (ELLs) refers to students whose first language is not English and encompasses both students who are just beginning to learn English (often referred to in federal legislation as "limited English proficient" or "LEP") **and** those who have already developed considerable proficiency. The term underscores the fact that these students are mastering another language, in addition to meeting all the academic challenges that face their monolingual peers. Branching Minds takes students' ELL levels into account when collecting the Insight Survey, as well as recommending interventions and accommodations matched to their needs.

It is helpful to take into account the following considerations when supporting ELLs through an MTSS model:

- **Teaching should be culturally responsive:** The student's prior experiences should be considered, including home language background, and socio-cultural background.
- **Interplay of English Language Learning & Reading Instruction:** Teachers should consider the relationship between a student's language proficiency and his/her literacy skills. Reading fluency and comprehension may be strongly determined by vocabulary and linguistic proficiency of both the first and second languages.
- **Interplay of English Language Learning & Math Instruction:** Linguistic proficiency and vocabulary comprehension are important when understanding math concepts. Several concepts of math are not necessarily universal.
- **Additional Variables:** Within MTSS problem-solving, **literacy, and oracy (in both home and new languages), culture and educational history** are variables to be considered when assessing and planning instruction for ELLs. In all three tiers, these variables stay consistent.
- **English Language Learning:** core instruction for all LEP/ELL students must always include English language learning as well.
- **Matching Instruction to Student Need:** Differentiated instruction should be used for ALL students; however, differentiated instruction for ELLs should consider the student's level of English proficiency and prior educational experiences in addressing cultural and linguistic differences. When determining appropriate instruction/intervention, the following list applies to **all levels** of ELL students:
 - Consider the amount and type of ELL instruction the student received in the past and the present
 - If applicable, consider the amount and type of home language instruction in the past and the present
 - Ensure that the language(s) used for intervention matches the language(s) used for core instruction
 - Consider the impact of language and culture on instruction and learning

- Contact the family for guidance and feedback
- Ensure that certified ENL teachers serve on the MTSS instructional decision-making team
- **Assessment:** To better understand the needs of LEP/ELLs students
 - **Home Language Questionnaire:** To identify if a language other than English is spoken at home
 - **Interview:** To assess the relationship between their 2+ languages and the extent of formal education the student received in any other language
 - **Initial ELL Placement Test - The New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) :** Based on the interview results, students are identified on their level of proficiency. It will identify the initial placement within ELL
 - **Annual ELL Assessment - The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT):** End of the year assessment to determine next year's placement. It indicates a student's English proficiency level
 - **Monitor:** Proficient students who have exited the ELL program based on **NYSESLAT** scores continue to require monitoring in the absence of intervention until the student achieves fluency.

Overview of Universal Supports by Grade-level

Onteora Central School District places a strong emphasis on providing quality Tier 1 Core instruction that thoughtfully ensures access to all students. All students receive instruction and support through a coherent curriculum designed to address the skills needed for our students to master grade-level standards with proficiency. It is our expectation that all teachers provide standards-based instruction using district-adopted curriculum materials within their classrooms. Our teachers follow district-wide instructional calendars which identify power standards at each grade level and content level. Onteora School District is dedicated to creating a learning environment that supports students academically and socially-emotionally; creating lessons that include universally designed support so that ALL students can access instructional materials in their least restrictive environment. All students regardless of special programs, including 504, English Language Learners, and Special Education, are provided daily core instruction as noted below.

Universal Support Grades K-5	
What	Engage NY NY Learns Curriculum Materials by content/grade level Instructional Calendars Accommodations Special Education (Specially Designed Instruction) English Language Learner Supports Differentiated Instruction Universal Supports: Small Group Activities, Differentiated Instruction, Accessible Materials PBIS SEL Curriculum Morningside
When	Core Instructional ELA Block 80 minutes/5 days per week Core Instructional ELA Block 120 minutes/5 days per week Reading, Writing, Read Aloud, Word Study (Woodstock) Core Instructional Math Block 60 minutes/5 days per week- 4-5 Core Instructional Math Block 40 minutes/5 days per week- K-3 Science/Social Studies Blocks SEL Instruction 1x30 weekly K-5

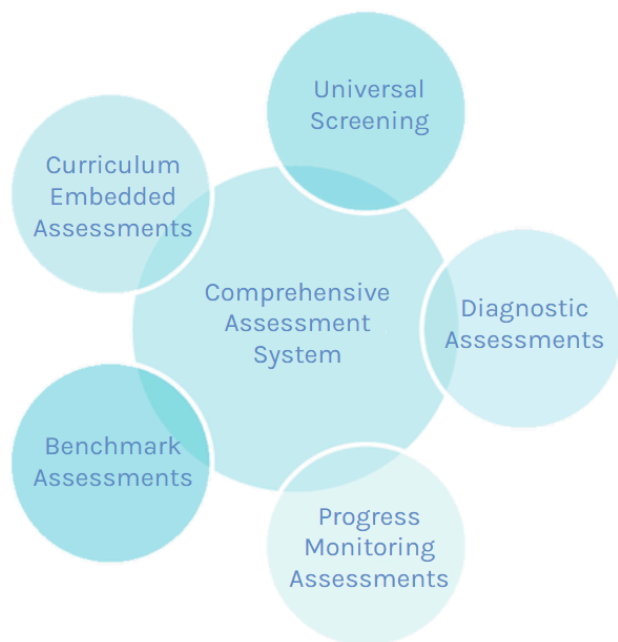
Universal Support Grades 6-8	
What	State Standards - Engage NY and NY Learns Curriculum Materials by content/grade level Instructional Calendars Accommodations Specially Designed Instruction (Special Education) English Language Learner Supports Differentiated and Universal Supports: Small Group Activities, Differentiated Instruction, Accessible Materials Engagement Support: Classroom Data Monitoring, and Mentors (for new teachers)
When	42 Minute periods SEL Instruction every 6 weeks in MS; approx 1 X month HS

	Home and Careers
--	------------------

Universal Support Grades 9-12	
What	State Standards - NY Learns and Engage NY Curriculum Materials by content/grade level College and Career Readiness Lesson Plan Template Accommodations Special Design Instruction (Special Education) English Language Learner Supports Differentiated and Universal Supports: Small Group Activities, Differentiated Instruction, Accessible Materials Engagement Support: Classroom Data Monitoring, and Mentors (for new teachers) Learning Center Support Access to Library Media Specialist
When	42 minute periods

Section 3: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

A. Comprehensive Assessment Protocol



We utilize formative assessments, interim assessments, and summative assessments with our students to gauge their understanding of what is taught; however, MTSS incorporates proactive and ongoing assessments, universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, and progress monitoring. Assessments tell us about our students and they allow us to assess our systems for stability.

i. Questions that we ask when reviewing systems:

1. Is our core healthy?
2. Are our students responding to interventions?
3. Are interventions happening with fidelity?

A comprehensive assessment protocol helps teams make decisions about students' progress in all academic content areas. They are instructionally relevant, valid, and reliable assessments that are critical for providing proactive and reactive support. There are 5 types of assessments, which vary in administration and use.

Universal Screening	Periodic skill-based and normed assessment provides the school with insight into the strength of the core instruction and students' needs.
Diagnostic Assessments	Skill-based assessments provide deeper insight into a student's particular skill deficits.
Progress Monitoring Assessments	Skill-based assessments are used to determine growth when a student is receiving an intervention.

Benchmark Assessments	Standards-driven assessment that measures student performance periodically throughout the year. All core subjects take benchmark assessments.
Curriculum Embedded Assessments	Encompass both formative and summative standards-driven assessments that occur throughout the learning experience and provide teachers with data on student performance related to a particular learning outcome.

B. Our Universal Screening Plan:

Universal screening is the process of assessing all students to identify individuals who are at risk or in need of more individualized support (Hughes & Dexter, 2008). It is similar to screening for potential health problems by taking a child's temperature or monitoring their height and weight.

Grades K-5 Universal Screening and Diagnostic Assessments and Decision Rules:

The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth will serve as the K-5 screener for math and literacy. Given the design, format, and content of the assessment, it will also serve as a means for us to benchmark performance at the student, classroom, school, and district levels and provide some early predictions as to student performance to the state standards and PARCC assessments. It allows us to set goals, communicate expectations (with students, staff, and families), and carefully monitor progress across key milestones throughout the school year, rather than only wait for results at the end of the year. MAP is an online assessment of literacy and math. It will be administered to all students in grades K-5 three times during the year (fall, winter, and spring).

Kindergarten students will complete the MAP just as students in other grades. However, because many young children are still naturally developing specific skills in the first weeks and months of the kindergarten year, we want to be

careful about over-identifying young children for specific skill deficit intervention (ahead of natural progressions). Kindergarten students will complete MAP mid-year to allow an adequate opportunity to acquire skills needed to demonstrate mastery of grade-level content in the areas of literacy and math. Academic interventions in kindergarten should be ongoing with students who demonstrate a need for literacy and math.

Universal Screening			
Tools	What Is It?	Who Administers	When Administered
NWEA MAP	The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth for math and literacy	Administered to all students in grades K-8. Grade K will use midyear data as a baseline.	Fall/Winter/Spring Fall/Spring (6th-8th grade)

Secondary Universal Screening and Diagnostic Assessments and Decision Rules

Our High School team uses a gated system for screening levels of risk for our students. This means we utilize a process of multiple assessments to identify students' needs, identify foundational skill deficits, and develop an appropriate plan.

Initial HS Screener: Standards-driven district common assessments will be administered in all core classes two times per year. A pre-assessment tool for ninth-grade English and Math students will be the Grade 8 end-of-year state assessments and NYS Grade 8 ELA and Math assessments.

Students demonstrating a need for Tier 3 support will be screened using an appropriate diagnostic assessment to determine if there is a foundational skill deficit. Students identified with a foundational skill deficit may have a plan aligned to Tier 1 instruction related to the foundational skill as well as a Tier 2 level support plan in any subject areas in which the student needs support.

There are also times when screening may take place outside of regular windows, for example in the event of teacher concern, transience, trauma, or a change in placement may warrant an additional assessment to help the school team problem-solve.

Early Warning System: Early warning systems help educators identify students who are at the highest risk of not graduating. We utilize an Early Warning system through our Case Management Team that monitors attendance, social-emotional/behavioral status, credit accrual, current grades, and course failures. Our school-level team reviews early warning indicator data 3 to 4 times per month and helps us make decisions on additional diagnostic testing that may be appropriate.

In addition to the early warning indicator (EWI), school personnel may also flag a student as having a warning indicator. A student may be tagged and receive a support plan if the student has:

- demonstrated a pattern of poor attendance in a particular class period
- demonstrated grades that will likely result in course failure (for subjects other than Math and ELA)
- demonstrated a behavioral pattern that is preventing the student from successfully engaging in the course

This plan should have a short dosage (time/intensity). Teams should review this plan bi-weekly. If the need continues beyond a 4-week period, the team should reconvene and consider additional problem-solving.

Universal Screening/Diagnostic			
Tools	What Is It?	Who Administers	When Administered
8th Grade State Assessment Data	8th Grade State EOY Assessment	8th Grade State EOY Assessment/If transient, the school administers a universal 9th-grade assessment	April/May 8th grade
District-created Common Assessments	District-created, standards-aligned Midterms and Finals in academic course offerings	General Education Teacher Common Assessments	Winter/Spring
Early Warning Indicator (EWI)	Grades, Attendance, Behavioral Referrals, and Transcripts	School-wide MTSS Team and Case Management Team	Bi-Monthly
Reading Diagnostic	Middle School 8th grade NWEA Maps	Formal diagnostics; administered by middle school teachers	Diagnostics are administered to all students to gather data
Math Diagnostic	Middle School 8th grade NWEA Maps		

C. Our Evaluation of Screening Data:

Guiding questions:

1) Are we sufficiently delivering Tier 1 instruction?

- a) **With universal screening (K-8):** Are at least 80% of students reaching grade-level proficiency?
- b) **With individual screening (9-12):** Are less than 20% of students being referred for individual screening? (i.e., are at least 80% of students expected to meet course expectations defined by 9th-grade assessment, state assessment historical data, and/or grades?)

Core instructional practices should meet the needs of at least 80% of the students. If fewer than 80% of students are demonstrating proficiency per universal screening standards, teams review the MTSS Problem

Solving Steps at Tier 1 to determine how to improve the core instruction so it benefits more students.

2) Is the Tier 1 instruction supporting our students equitably?

- a) With universal screening:** Does the percentage of students reaching grade-level proficiency significantly vary across demographic subgroups?
- b) With individual screening:** Does the percentage of students being referred for individual screening significantly vary across demographic subgroups?

The core instruction should equitably support the diversity of our district. Suppose a particular demographic of students is not sufficiently served by the core instruction, such that approximately 80% of students within that subgroup are not meeting expectations. In that case, we must evaluate the core related to that demographic of students and problem-solve why it does not sufficiently meet their needs before placing them in Tier 2 or 3.

3) Who needs Tier 2 and 3 support?

- a) With universal screening (K-8):** Students who fall below the 10th percentile should receive Tier 3 level of support, and students who fall between the 10th and 24th percentile should receive Tier 2 level support.

For grades K-8, MAP data are automatically ingested in Branching Minds, and school managers can tier students based on cut scores following [these directions](#).

The MAP performance of the student should be verified by comparing it to other sources of data (past tier performance, benchmark data, formative assessments, etc.). The MAP assessment is intended to over-identify students needing support, so if other data suggest that they are not at-risk, they do not need to receive Tier 2 or 3-level support. Managers can adjust the tier from the Tier History Report on Branching Minds following [these directions](#).

- b) With screening tools/common assessments (Grade 9):** Students who fall below a Level 2 on the NYS ELA/Math exam should be screened to receive Tier 2 level support in the identified subject area. Students should be further screened with an appropriate diagnostic tool to rule out a foundational skill deficit. If the student has a foundational skill deficit the student should receive

Tier 3 level support in the foundational skill, as well as the Tier 2 level support in the identified subject area.

For Grades 9-12; common assessment data is imported into Branching Minds and school managers can set tier levels based on district-determined cut scores. Cut points are determined for each assessment before administration to accurately predict students' need levels.

At any time, staff may utilize additional data to consider additional support for a student. Teams should be sure to identify the root cause of the student's performance using diagnostic reading tools. If a foundational deficit is identified, the student should receive a Tier 3 level of support.

D. Our Progress Monitoring Plan:

Purpose: The purpose of monitoring progress is to determine the effectiveness of a support plan at Tier 1 or an intervention plan on student learning. When data show students are progressing, interventions are maintained until students meet identified goals. When data show students are not progressing, a change in intervention is necessary (Fuchs, Compton, Fuchs & Davis, 2008). When changes are made to intervention plans based on data, intervention or phase lines should be placed on student graphs to indicate the change. Students receiving Tier 2 support should be assessed weekly or every other week, while students receiving Tier 3 support should be assessed weekly.

Schedule: As the severity of the student's problem, and the intensity of school resources provided to address that problem increases, so should the frequency of progress monitoring.

Person Responsible: Ideally, the individual implementing the intervention plan should administer the progress monitoring assessments or record behavior data in accordance with best practices. There are documented gains in student outcome data when the person implementing the intervention administers frequent progress monitoring assessments (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986; Ikeda, Rahn-Blakeslee, Niebling, Allison & Stumme, 2006). This information should be considered when establishing roles and responsibilities related to progress monitoring.

Grade K-8 Schedules of progress monitoring for academic and behavior skills

Academics	Suggested Timeline	Instrument/ Assessment Used	Person Responsible
Tier 1	Universal Screening: 3 times per year (beginning, middle, end) students K-5 2 times per year (beginning and end) students 6-8	NWEA - MAP	Classroom Teacher
Tier 2	Monitor Progress: Twice monthly (more often as concern increases, may need multiple assessments for reliability)	Aimsweb Plus	AIS Providers
Tier 3	Monitor Progress: Weekly	Aimsweb Plus	AIS Providers

Behavior	Suggested Timeline	Instrument / Assessment Used	Person Responsible
	***OCSD is planning the implementation process/protocols for behavior through Branching Minds.		
Tier 1	Universal Screening: 3 times per year (beginning, middle, end) for all students	Early Warning Indicators	Classroom Teacher(s)

Tier 2	Monitor Progress: Daily	Behavior charts – evaluation or frequency of focus behavior (determined on an individual basis)	School Counselors
Tier 3	Monitor Progress: Daily	Behavior charts – evaluation or frequency of focus behavior (determined on an individual basis)	Social Workers School Psychologists

Secondary Schedules of progress monitoring for academic and behavior skills

Progress Monitoring Assessments and Tools allow staff to visualize the student’s growth after receiving targeted or intensified instruction or support so staff can make responsive decisions to adjust support in a timely manner. Branching Mind's High School has selected specific progress monitoring tools that have established reliability and validity for the purpose of evaluating skill-based progress for students receiving targeted or intensified instruction and/or support.

Academics	Suggested Timeline	Instrument/ Assessment Used	Person Responsible
Tier 1	Cohort Screening: students demonstrating a need based on a 9th-grade screener, historical state assessment data, or EWI may indicate the need for additional support within Tier 1 instruction.	Common content areas assessments (9-12)	Classroom Teacher

Tier 2	Monitor Progress: Bi-Weekly (more often as concern increases, may need multiple assessments for reliability)	Aimsweb Plus	AIS Teacher
Tier 3	Monitor Progress: Weekly	Aimsweb Plus	AIS Teacher Reading Specialist

Behavior	Suggested Timeline ***OCSD is planning the implementation process/protocols for behavior through Branching Minds.	Instrument / Assessment Used	Person Responsible
Tier 1	Universal Screening: 2-3 times per year at secondary.	Early Warning Indicators	Classroom Teacher(s)
Tier 2	Monitor Progress: Daily	CICO progress monitoring and intervention	School Counselors
Tier 3	Monitor Progress: Daily	Behavior charts - evaluation or frequency of focus behavior (determined on an individual basis)	Social Workers School Psychologists

Section 4: Planning and Implementing Interventions

A. Core Elements of an Intervention Plan

An Intervention Plan: An intervention plan differs from Tier 1 support in that it is targeted toward a specific skill deficit. An intervention plan must include a defined goal, progress monitoring assessment, and intervention details like duration, frequency, and setting. Designing these plans should also engage students in goal-setting and self-reflection. An intervention plan helps teachers articulate, and students understand

- The specific skill or ability the student needs to master is the goal.
 - How they will know that the student has achieved mastery, via a progress monitoring assessment.
 - The program, activity, or strategy needed to achieve the goal, which is the intervention.
1. **A Goal:** A goal is a specific articulation of an academic/social-emotional/behavioral skill a student needs to achieve to successfully participate in core instruction. Goals should be SMART: they are specific about what should be accomplished, measurable with quantifiable data, attainable for that student, relevant to grade-level expectations, and time-bound over several weeks.
 2. **An Intervention:** An Intervention is an intentional, research, or evidence-based program, instructional activity, or strategy to target a specific academic/social-emotional/behavioral skill. Interventions are delivered with a specific frequency and duration over a defined number of weeks, depending on the level of need. Intervention may be delivered in a variety of contexts such as small groups or one-on-one in or out of the classroom.
 3. **A Progress Monitoring Assessment:** Progress monitoring assessments are quick, skill (not content) based, valid, and reliable (i.e., having demonstrated to accurately and consistently measure what they are supposed to be evaluating). These assessments are given to students receiving Tier 2 or 3 levels of support every other week or weekly, respectively, and provide visibility into the effectiveness of support and guide decision-making around changing the support approach.

The purpose of monitoring progress is to determine the effectiveness of an intervention plan on student learning. When data show students are progressing, interventions are maintained until students meet identified goals. When data show students are not progressing, a change in intervention is necessary (Fuchs,

Compton, Fuchs & Davis, 2008). When changes are made to intervention plans based on data, intervention or phase lines should be placed on student graphs to indicate the change. Students receiving Tier 2 support should be assessed every other week. Students receiving Tier 3 support should be assessed weekly. Assessments used for progress monitoring should be valid and reliable measures of the specific skill being evaluated so that they can be used to compare students' rate of growth to the expected rate of growth (based on local or national peer comparison).

B. Tier 2 Targeted Group Instruction

At Tier 2, students identified as being at-risk academically or behaviorally through academic performance, classroom behavior, attendance, and/or universal screeners are provided scientific, research-based targeted small-group instruction aligned with Tier 1 content and performance expectations. Approximately 10-15% of students will need supplemental instruction at Tier 2 to become proficient. Tier 2 support is implemented with groups of students demonstrating common skill deficits or social/emotional/behavioral risk characteristics. These students should be monitored in Branching Minds, where a collaborative plan is developed, monitored, and documented.

Targeted group instruction typically involves an additional 60-90 minutes of instruction (outside of core instruction) provided each week (e.g., two to three 30-minute instruction periods). Targeted group instruction must be more explicit: more intensive than core instruction; more supportive in the form of encouragement, feedback, and positive reinforcement; carefully scaffolded; and ideally occur in groups of approximately 3 to 5 students for elementary, and 6 to 8 students or Tier 2 support classes broken into a few groups of 6 to 8 students, for middle and high schools.

C. Tier 3 Intensive Individualized Intervention

Students who have not demonstrated progress with targeted group instruction at Tier 2 require more time in more intensive interventions. Tier 3 interventions are distinguished from Tier 2 instruction because they are individualized based on data collected in individual problem-solving meetings and occur with smaller student-teacher ratios (e.g., ideally 1-on-1, however, groups of 3-5 students or a larger group broken into a few groups of 3-5 students, is acceptable for middle and high schools), and possibly occur for a longer duration of time (e.g., more daily minutes or more weeks spent in intervention). About 1-5% of students will require this level of intensive support.

Tier 3 involves Tier 1 core curriculum, plus Tier 2 targeted interventions/supports plus more intensive and individualized intervention. Tier 3 refers to academic and behavioral instruction/interventions provided to students considered to be at high risk for failure and in need of our most intensive and individualized support. Tier 3 instruction groups are smaller and sometimes delivered 1:1 when needed.

Tier 3 intervention plans include more than what occurs during intervention time. They also include strategies for maximizing student outcomes during core instruction or Tier 1, as well as supports to use at home or in the community.

D. Our Workflow for MTSS

Our workflow for MTSS for Elementary Schools:

Activity	Key Concepts or Issues (enter planning notes here)	Timeline	Person Responsible
Administer universal screeners (academics and behavior)	NWEA and running records administered to all students, 3 times per year. In-class performance is also used to identify student needs in Math and ELA.	Fall, Winter, and Spring	Principal, District Leader
Tier students based on screener data	Tier 2 – students between 11 th and 30 th percentile on screener. Tier 3 – students between 1 st and 10 th percentile on screener.	After screener/benchmark assessments	Principal and MTSS Team
Establish a high-quality effective core	Tier 1 has an impact rate of 80%	Trainings and PD days throughout the year	District Administration and Principal
Schedule initial Student Support Meetings	This is for students who need Tier 2 and 3 support and who haven't received it before.	Weekly (6-week follow-up)/ As needed	MTSS Coordinator
Collect teacher observations through Insight Surveys	Surveys should be filled out on the BrM platform for all students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 support in the area they are struggling with.	Students are first identified for Tier 2 or 3, then once or twice per year	MTSS Team and Teachers
Develop collaborative Intervention Plans	Goals, progress monitors, and interventions will be added to each student in Tier 2 and 3 in the area they are struggling.	During the initial support meeting	MTSS Team and Teachers
Share updates with family and student	Letters can be generated on the BrM platform using preloaded templates, (Templates need to be made and translated into languages other than English according to home language questionnaire)	After the initial support meeting	Teachers

Activity	Key Concepts or Issues (enter planning notes here)	Timeline	Person Responsible
Administer universal screeners (academics and behavior)	<i>NWEA and running records administered to all students, 3 times per year. In-class performance is also used to identify student needs in Math and ELA.</i>	<i>Fall, Winter, and Spring</i>	Principal, District Leader
Tier students based on screener data	<i>Tier 2 – students between 11th and 30th percentile on screener. Tier 3 – students between 1st and 10th percentile on screener.</i>	<i>After screener/benchmark assessments</i>	Principal and MTSS Team
Implement intervention and monitor the plan	<i>Classroom and AIS teachers with assigned work will administer.</i>	Tier 2: 3- 5 days a week 60-90 minutes a week (10-30 min session) Tier 3: 4-5 days a week 120-135 minutes a week (30-40) min a session	Teachers and Interventionists
Review the impact of supports and student progress	<i>Review data on students' plan & progress page. Ensure intervention(s) were delivered with intended fidelity and evaluate growth.</i>	<i>Tier 2 and Tier 3: after progress monitoring, assessment by the individual teachers, and review by the team as needed for students not progressing</i>	MTSS Team Teachers Grade level teams
Adjust the plan based on relevant data	<i>If a student does not make sufficient progress, follow problem-solving protocol and adjust plans.</i>	<i>After the teacher or collaborative review</i>	MTSS Team and/or Teacher delivers intervention

Our workflow for MTSS for Secondary Schools:

Activity	Key Concepts or Issues (enter planning notes here)	Timeline	Person Responsible
Administer universal screeners (academics and behavior)	6-8th grade students are screened using MAP testing in September and May. If a student is deemed eligible they are retested in Winter. We also use other data points to determine need, state tests, teacher recs, attendance, and report card grades.	All students are screened using MAP testing in September and May. If a student is deemed eligible they are retested in Winter. We also use other data points to determine need, state tests, teacher recs, attendance, and report card grades.	Principal
Tier students based on screener data	Tier 2 – students above 10 th percentile on basic skills screener; between 10-25% on common assessment data. Tier 3 – students below the 10 th percentile on basic skills screener.	After screener/benchmark assessments at the end of the prior school year	Teacher Teams
Establish a high-quality effective core	Tier 1 has an impact rate of 80%	Fall, Winter, and Spring during school-wide health meetings	District Administrator and Principal
Schedule initial Student Support Meetings	This may be a small set of students for the initial rollout. PLC meetings to discuss students. The next level is MTSS students who reach the threshold of Tier 2 and 3.	Monthly	MTSS Coordinator
Develop collaborative Intervention Plans	Goals, progress monitors, and interventions will be added to each student in Tier 2 and 3 in the area they are struggling.	During the initial support meeting	MTSS Team and Teachers
Share updates with family and student	Letters can be generated on the BrM platform using preloaded templates.	After the initial support meeting	Teachers
Implement intervention and monitor the plan	Teachers and interventions with assigned work will be administered.	Tier 2: 20 minutes per session, 3 sessions per week Tier 3: 20 minutes per session, 3 sessions per week + 30 minutes per session, 2 sessions per week	Teachers and Interventionists

Review the impact of supports and student progress	<i>Review data on students' plan & progress page. Ensure intervention(s) were delivered with intended fidelity and evaluate growth.</i>	<i>Tier 2: monthly in-grade team meetings Tier 3: after progress monitoring assessment by an individual teacher, reviewed by the team as needed for students not progressing</i>	MTSS Team and Teachers
Adjust the plan based on relevant data	<i>If a student does not make sufficient progress, follow problem-solving protocol and adjust plans.</i>	<i>After collaborative review</i>	MTSS Team and Teachers

E. Synopsis of MTSS at Onteora Central School District

- A. An important aspect of building an equitable MTSS system is ensuring that students are paired with need-based instruction or support in a timely manner. The matrix Instruction and Support Matrix categorizes broad skill areas in reading and math, pairing them with recommended instruction and supports available at Onteora Central School District. In using this matrix, Onteora Central School District's problem-solving teams will pair instruction and support with identified skills needs, not based on other student characteristics. Our goal at OCSD is to have an array of instructional supports that any student can access to build critical foundation skills if the need should arise.

Our Tier 2 and 3 Support Plan:

- 1) Onteora Central School District advocates the use of a combined Problem-Solving and Standard Treatment Protocol (PS + STP as described previously) for students requiring support at Tier 2 and Tier 3. The planned intervention engagement time, the selection of an evidence-based intervention, and appropriate progress monitoring measure/schedule are systematized through STP and scaffolded through Branching Minds. The decision around which evidenced-based interventions constitute a plan is individuated through Branching Minds and based on PS. Below are the established STP parameters for group size, intervention engagement time, and progress monitoring frequency by tier:

Overview of Targeted and Intensive Intervention at Elementary Schools

Tier Level	Duration of Plan	Support Frequency and Duration	Progress Monitoring	Group Size
2	6 weeks on a specific area of instructional need, or until the student meets the goal	60-90 minutes/week	Bi-monthly	Small group 1:4 to 1:8
3	6 weeks on specific areas of instructional need	120-135 minutes/week	Weekly	Individual 1:1 to 1:3

Overview of Targeted and Intensive Intervention at Secondary Schools

Tier Level	Duration of Plan	Support Frequency and Duration	Progress Monitoring	Group Size
2	5 weeks on a specific area of instructional need, or until the student meets the goal	80 minutes/week (two 40-minute sessions)	Bi-Monthly	Whole class Small Group 1:4 to 1:8
3	5 weeks on specific areas of instructional need	120 minutes/week (two 40-minute sessions + two 20-minute sessions OR three 45-minute sessions)	Weekly	Individual 1:1 to 1:3

- 2) To create Tier 3 plans, the team should also consider home and community variables from the parents' perspective to complete problem analysis to pinpoint the specific nature of the student's needs. Data collected during Problem Analysis is used to develop targeted individualized plans. School personnel, parents, and (when applicable) outside agencies determine who is responsible for addressing components of the intervention plan which is documented on Branching Minds. The Tier 3 plan is more than what occurs during the additional intervention time. Any instructional plan incorporates the student's entire day, and extra care must be taken to ensure coordination and collaboration between school personnel and families. ***See Appendix A**
- 3) Families are sent Tier 2 and Tier 3 notification letters, indicating the area of support needed and the assigned teacher at the start of the instruction or intervention (print letter from Branching Minds). ***See Appendix C**

- 4) All intervention session details and progress monitoring documentation are entered and maintained on Branching Minds. *See Appendix A
- 5) If a student withdraws or transfers to another school within our district, all MTSS information is updated on Branching Minds and accessible to that school using Branching Minds.

Section 5: Making Data-informed Adjustments to Student Support

An Overview of Plan Evaluation and Decision-Making Guidelines at Onteora Central School District.

A. Evaluating Effectiveness of Tier 2 and 3 Plans:

The district recommends that grade-level teams take responsibility for evaluating the progress of students requiring support at Tier 2, and MTSS teams work collaboratively with teachers and parents to evaluate students requiring more intensive support at Tier 3. However, if a student is stagnant at Tier 2, or grade teams have additional concerns, they should schedule an individual problem-solving meeting with the MTSS team.

Guiding Questions:

1) Was the intervention delivered with fidelity?

a) Review intervention delivery for sufficient dosage:

Before determining if the intervention was effective, it's important first to check that it was delivered for the intended amount of time. At Onteora Central School District (OCSD), we verify the delivery of interventions by recording the sessions on Branching Minds. The Branching Minds platform then displays a status bar of how many minutes out of the intended number of minutes the intervention was received. Any plans that were delivered below 90% of their intended dosage are considered not sufficiently administered.

b) Review intervention delivery for implementation integrity:

Implementation integrity is defined as the extent to which the intervention was delivered as intended. Schools must ensure that the instructional plan is implemented with integrity before determining whether a student requires more intensive support. At OCSd, the school principals verify the integrity of intervention delivery through direct observation and teacher self-reports. When the delivery of intervention has been verified to be consistent with the intended delivery (outlined in the support description of Branching Minds), it can be documented in the notes section of the intervention session on Branching Minds.

Monitoring implementation integrity is not intended to be an evaluative process. Using data about integrity to evaluate a teacher's ability to do his or her job is a misuse of data. Instead, monitoring integrity is intended to be an evaluation of adherence to the instructional plan and implementation data should be used to judge the extent to which the actual instruction matched the intended instruction.

If the intervention is not delivered with sufficiency and/or integrity, then all other evaluations of Tier 2 stop, and the school team works to improve integrity. It is neither ethical nor acceptable practice to judge a student's growth when the fidelity of the intervention is not adequate.

2) Is the student making sufficient progress?

a) Ensure the validity of the progress monitoring data

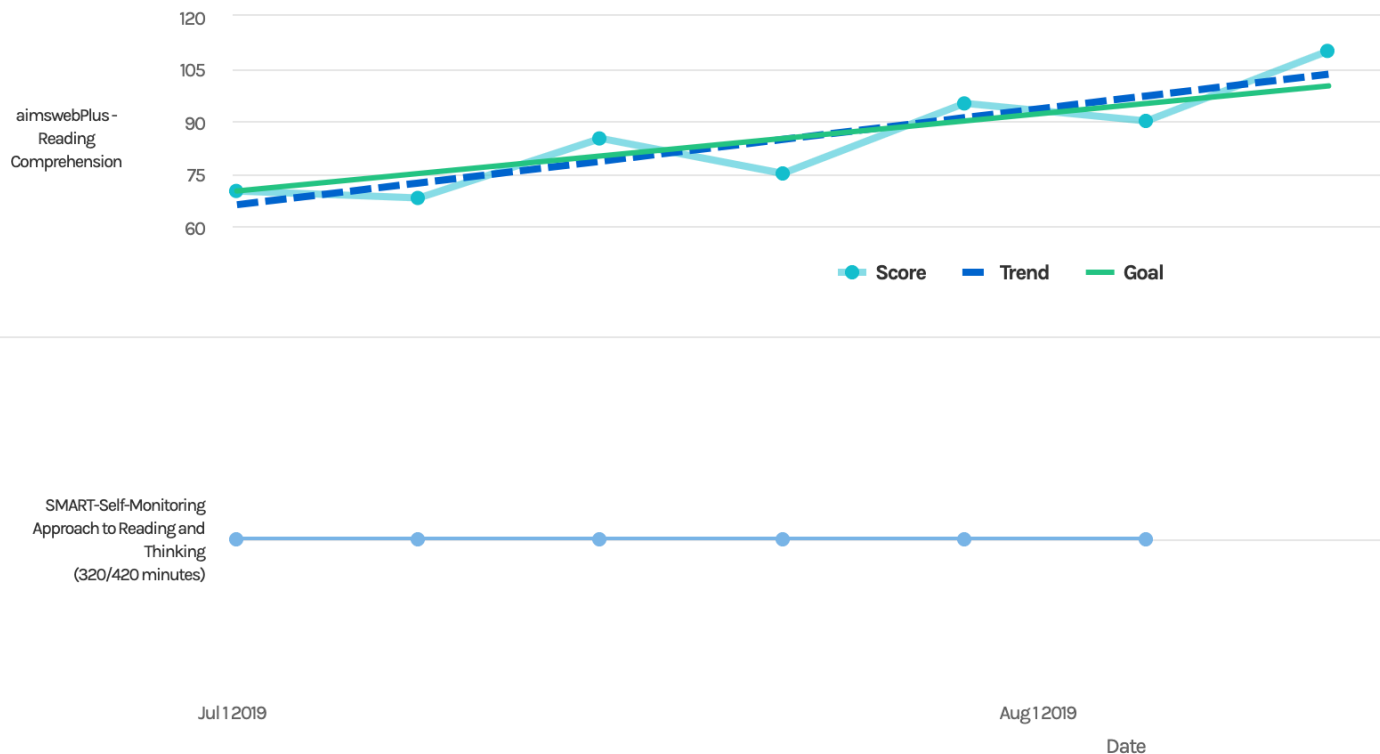
Academic progress monitoring data is considered *invalid and unusable* if:

- a valid and reliable curriculum-based measure was not used
- there are less than 8 data points collected (4 data points sufficient to evaluate minor plan adjustments)
- more than one progress monitoring point is collected in the same week
- more than 3 weeks have elapsed between data points
- administration directions were not followed
- the student was given multiple attempts/probes
- the student was given extra practice time

b) Review the growth of the student reflected by progress monitoring data

Before discussing this question, it is important to understand the components of a student's progress monitoring graph. As seen in the figure below, the progress graph has a trend line, a goal, and a goal line (also referred to as an aim line). The goal is the target for a specified time frame, and the goal line (solid

green) illustrates the minimum acceptable growth over time needed to meet the goal. A trend line (blue dash) reflects the student's pattern of growth. The trend line projects the student's performance if no changes are made to the current plan and the student continues on the same trajectory.

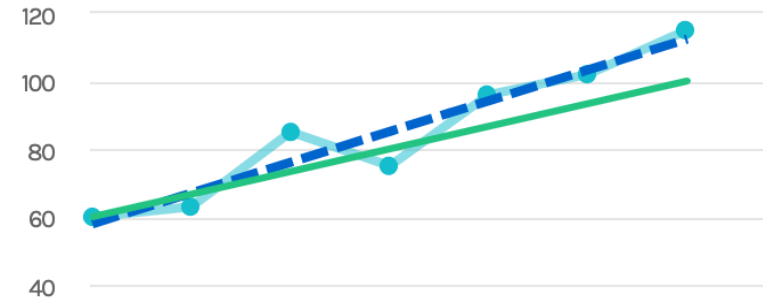


Number of data points: When making significant tier or plan changes, a team should first ensure there are 8 data points. This does not mean, however, that school teams cannot examine student growth prior to having 8 data points. Teams, or individual teachers, should briefly examine a student's trendline after each data point, and make adjustments if it becomes clear the student will not meet their goal at the current trajectory. It is normal for students' scores to have some variability from week to week because students may perform relatively higher or lower on a specific probe based on background knowledge,

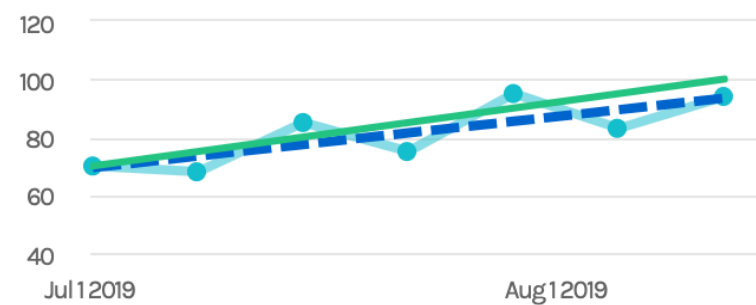
testing environment, or numerous other factors. Consequently, 8 data points provide the most reliable and solid pattern of performance.

What is the student's growth relative to the goal line?: Student growth is documented using progress monitoring graphs in Branching Minds. When examining a student's trend line relative to the goal line, the question you should ask is, "Is the trend line (i.e., student's performance) above, near, or below the goal line?"

Sufficient Growth at Tier 2 and 3: If the trend line is steeper than the goal line, this demonstrates the minimum desired growth has been achieved, and the intervention is likely working. (A *general guideline to consider is that in addition to the trend line, the last 2-3 data points should also be above the goal line in order for the student to have demonstrated consistently improved performance.*) If those criteria are met, and class performance has also improved, reducing the intensity or level of support is appropriate. If the student meets the goal but has not improved classroom performance, the MTSS team should engage in individual problem-solving to identify possible explanations.



Uncertain Growth at Tier 2 and 3: If the trend line is below the goal line and performance on grade-level standards is not improving, then a change in the intervention plan is required. When determining whether a change is needed, schools return to problem identification to determine if the problem was identified accurately. Problem Analysis is also revisited to determine if the original hypothesis about the student's problem is accurate. Modifiable factors can be examined to determine if a modification can be made to better support the identified problem. When the team decides to change the intervention plan, an intervention line indicating a phase change should be indicated on the graph. A new phase of intervention begins, and 8 data points are needed to determine the



effectiveness of the new intervention plan.

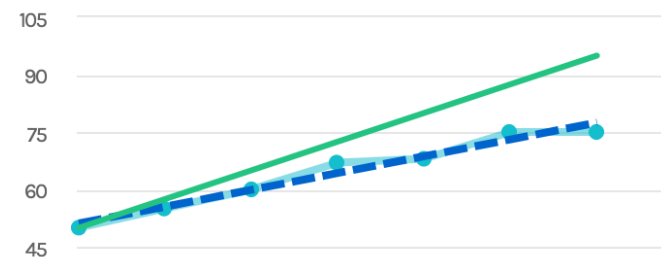
It is critical that teams understand that the goal of data review is to take charge of closing the student achievement gap by making meaningful changes to the instructional plan, and not simply to move students through the process. Some identified problems can be solved with a minor adjustment at Tier 2, so teams should consider both the intensity of the problem and the current rate of improvement when examining graphs.

Insufficient Growth at Tier 2: If Tier 2 support is determined to be inadequate and the student's growth is below the goal line, he or she may require more intensive support at Tier 3. For this to occur, the MTSS team must be certain that prior instructional support has been aligned with student needs and implemented with sufficiency and integrity. Branching Minds captures this information.

Insufficient Growth at Tier 3: If Tier 3 support is determined to be inadequate and the student's growth is below the goal line, the problem-solving team should work to re-evaluate the plan and adjust one or more of the following:

- focus on a different and/or more foundational skill
- change the intervention
- change the time of the intervention
- change the interventionist
- increase frequency

Teams should continue to problem-solve and adjust plans for students receiving Tier 3 support for at least 16-20 weeks (if directly placed in Tier 3), or 8-10 weeks (if received 8-10 weeks of prior Tier 2 support). Suppose progress monitoring data have been collected consistently during those intervention periods, and the student still does not show sufficient growth. In that case, it is then appropriate to refer the student for a formal evaluation. The criteria and process for a referral are outlined below.



Summary of Minimum Requirements Before Changing Tiers:

- ✓ Daily Tier 1 (core) instruction
- ✓ 8-10 weeks of research-based intervention
- ✓ Intervention logs completed
- ✓ Consistent progress monitoring
- ✓ Fidelity observation occurred to ensure the integrity of the implementation
- ✓ Monthly MTSS data team meetings with ROI calculated
- ✓ Documentation of parent communication of student progress
- ✓ One intervention change (if showing uncertain progress)

Tier 2 Decision Rules:

Performance Level	Growth/Rate of Improvement	Decision
3 consecutive PM data points at or above the 25th percentile goal line	Sufficient Growth	Move to Tier 1: Discontinue or fade out Tier 2 targeted small-group instruction
PM data consistently between 10-25th percentile	Sufficient Growth	Stay in Tier 2: Maintain the current Tier 2 targeted small-group instruction for another cycle
	Uncertain Growth	Stay in Tier 2: Revise the current Tier 2 targeted small-group instruction and implement for another cycle
4 consecutive PM data points between the 0-9th percentile	Uncertain or Insufficient Growth	Move to Tier 3: Increase intervention intensity to reflect Tier 3 level of support and implement for another intervention cycle

Tier 3 Decision Rules:

Performance Level	Growth/Rate of Improvement	Decision
3 consecutive PM data points at or above 10th percentile	Sufficient Growth	Move to Tier 2: Revise plan to reflect Tier 2 targeted small-group instruction, and implement for another cycle
PM data consistently below 10th percentile	Sufficient Growth	Stay in Tier 3: Maintain the current Tier 3 intervention for another cycle
	Uncertain Growth	Stay in Tier 3: Revise the current Tier 3 intervention and implement for another intervention cycle
	Insufficient Growth	Consider Special Ed Referral: Review criteria and schedule referral meeting with team and parents

C. MTSS Intervention Flowchart Guide

When faced with many data sources and outcomes, it can be challenging to know what to do next. The flowchart is valuable because it guides us to look through multiple lenses when problem-solving. First, we address how to dig deeper to provide support. Whether addressing Tier 1 data-driven core instruction for all learners, Tier 2 needs for targeted learners, or is very individualized, targeted support at Tier 3, the flowchart guides problem-solvers to move the plan forward considering the very specialized components at each tier. Simultaneously, the flowchart refers to problem-solvers continuously evaluating and ensuring the implementation of strong core instruction under every layer of support. The visual of the MTSS Triangle turned on its side best represents that interventions occur in a layered approach, increasing the intensity and duration of support as needed.



MTSS Intervention Process Flowchart

This process illustrated below is intended to wrap around the academic and social-emotional needs of the entire student body.



Section 6: Communication and Collaboration within MTSS

A. School-level Teaming

a. Forming a School Site MTSS Team

The MTSS team is a school-based problem-solving team; it's the engine that drives the MTSS system. The MTSS team proactively addresses system needs by reviewing school-wide data (within grade levels and classrooms) and supports individual student growth by helping to monitor progress and make decisions for students at Tier 3. The site administrator designates the composition of the MTSS team. MTSS team membership is determined both by standing members who contribute expertise from their respective disciplines and those who may be invited to address a specific concern. Examples of standing members on the MTSS team include administrator, general education teacher, school psychologist, counselor, social worker, content area specialist, ENL teacher, special education teacher, and grade-level or department representatives.

MTSS Team duties are as follows:

Meet monthly with a structured agenda:

- Review universal screening data;
- Review school-wide data, consider feedback and concerns from PLCs, and make data-based decisions;
- Provide input on professional development as it relates to the school's MTSS system and Tier 1 needs;
- Provide input regarding school site intervention/enrichment schedule, curriculum, and/or course offerings;
- Support grade levels/departments in serving students during intervention sessions in collaboration with general education teachers;
- Discuss and communicate with the site administrator on issues relevant to the MTSS process;
- Consult and collaborate with administrators, counselors, teachers, and parents about MTSS, problem-solving process, and procedural integrity;
- Hold problem-solving meetings (that may include parents) for individual students;
- Refer students for comprehensive special education evaluations when data indicate this step is warranted.

Successful teams clearly articulate everyone's roles and responsibilities so people are adequately able to prepare for

what is expected of them and bring their best to the team. The following are typical roles and responsibilities that should be explicitly assigned to members of the MTSSI team, given individual strengths and abilities:

1) Administrative Representative

- Provides leadership at MTSS team meetings
- Facilitates monitoring of instructional integrity within grade levels/departments
- Provides leadership at MTSS team meetings
- Ensures regular progress monitoring for all students in Tiers 2 and 3 (both for students with IEPs and those without IEPs)
- Ensures school schedule and resource allocation enable a successful MTSS practice
- Celebrates and communicates success

2) MTSS Team Coordinator/Facilitator

- Coordinates and sets agenda for MTSS team meetings
- Provides expertise to the MTSS team regarding problem-solving protocol
- Provides expertise in data analysis
- Identifies trends in student/staff needs across the school
- Ensures meetings stay on schedule

3) Grade-level/Content Area Representative/ Department Liaison)

- Serves as a liaison between PLC/grade-level/department team and MTSS team
- Attends grade-level PLC/MTSS meetings regularly
- Identifies trends in student/staff needs across grade-level or content area
- Presents data/background information on the student being discussed (in the absence of the classroom teacher)

4) Specialists (rotating members including, ELL teacher, speech/language pathologist, AIS math teacher, AIS reading teacher, occupational therapist, physical therapist, school nurse, and behavior specialist based on the student being discussed)

- Provides expertise to the MTSS team regarding interventions and skill remediation
- Supports MTSS team with data interpretation and ensures linkage of data to selected interventions
- Gathers progress monitoring data from PLCs and Tier 2/3 interventionists for review during MTSS meetings

- Consults/collaborates with classroom teachers regarding differentiated instruction

5) Classroom teacher (rotating member representing student)

- Provides experience with and knowledge of students being discussed
- Presents data/Tier 1 and 2 interventions/background information on student
- Ensures next steps are documented and communicated with student and/or family

b. Our MTSS Teams: Staff, Roles, and Responsibilities

Critical to the functioning of an effective MTSS team is communication and collaboration between all school personnel. It is important to remember as we identify roles within an MTSS system that, as educators, we *all* own the success of *all* students.

Successful MTSS implementation requires well-defined procedures at the site level, in addition to clearly articulated roles and responsibilities. It is essential that school administrators identify and designate staff who will address the what, when, and how of MTSS implementation for positive student outcomes to be achieved.

The Principal or Site Administrator:

Principals provide leadership and commitment to MTSS at all three tiers. Administrators lead implementation, participate on the MTSS team, provide relevant and focused professional development linked to MTSS, and incorporate MTSS into their school improvement plans. Administrators also review universal screening data to ensure Tier 1 instruction is meeting the needs of a minimum of 80-85% of the school population. Site administrators develop the master schedule to include blocks of time for intervention/enrichment. Site administrators monitor the integrity of instruction at both the core and intervention levels and consider the following:

1. Monitoring core instruction:

- Are all students working with grade-level materials and standards?
- Are teachers well-supported in implementing adopted programs and items from the approved supplemental list?
- Is the content for students appropriately paced?
- Does the movement through material attend to the developmental readiness of the student?
- Is there evidence of differentiated instruction?

- Is small-group, leveled instruction provided multiple days each week?
- 2. Monitoring intervention integrity:**
- Is the intervention plan implemented with integrity?
 - The administrator signs off on the integrity of instruction and intervention across tiers.
- 3. Establishing a feedback system regarding instructional integrity:**
- Make quality instruction a part of the annual goals for all teachers.
 - Acknowledge staff members who are delivering quality instruction and support those who are not to raise their level of performance.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) or Grade/Department Level Teams:

PLCs (department and/or grade-level teams) serve a critical role in problem-solving at Tiers 1 and 2. PLCs provide a collaborative learning environment to support effective differentiated instruction and classroom management strategies at all tiers. They plan for grouping, content, and delivery of instruction at Tiers 1 and 2. PLCs review universal screening data and use this information to inform Tier 1 differentiated instruction.

Additionally, PLCs identify students who are not responding successfully to core instruction and support and utilize differentiated instruction to support them. PLCs make data-based decisions to identify students in need of Tier 2 targeted group instruction. PLCs meet regularly for instructional planning, data review, intervention plan adjustment, paperwork completion, and instructional decision-making (e.g., student movement between tiers).

PLCs work with the MTSS team to generate interventions based on individual problem-solving when students are considered for, or already receive Tier 3 support. MTSS teams review Tier 1 progress data to determine if Tier 3 targeted interventions are resulting in student success with core instruction and support. Within an MTSS framework, it is recommended that classroom teachers manage students who are in Tier 1, while the MTSS team manages students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 (a teacher familiar with the student is generally a part of the MTSS team).

School Support Staff in an MTSS Framework:

School-based teams must creatively think about how to maximize resources at the site level. Under the leadership and guidance of the site administrator, the MTSS team identifies key personnel to provide high-quality intervention and instruction, matches evidence-based instructional materials to student needs, and designs

well-planned schedules to maximize the delivery of services within the three-tiered model. A critical resource in all schools is the highly qualified support staff, who lend expertise to supporting student success.

However, teams must exercise judgment consistent with legal guidelines and district policy when determining how to allocate these teachers' time. Support staff, such as special education or ELL teachers, must honor their responsibilities to provide the uniquely designed instruction delineated on students' Individual Education Plans or through the ELL department.

Classroom Teachers:

Classroom teachers are the front line of MTSS. General education teachers have the best opportunity to enhance intervention and instruction in their classrooms by providing standards-based and differentiated core instruction for all students. Whether it is meeting the needs of students who are gifted, ELL, and/or students who have IEPs, classroom teachers have the greatest daily impact on learning. General Education teachers know and understand intervention plans for groups and individuals, allowing for follow-up and additional support in the regular classroom. General Education teachers and/or core subject teachers participate in data collection—both school-wide screening and progress monitoring. With this knowledge, these teachers are best able to change or adapt instructional strategies based on information gained through the data collection process. Whether directly responsible for data collection or not, teachers review all their students' data to understand performance levels and inform instruction.

Classroom teachers work with their MTSS team to identify and plan instruction for Tier 1 (in the classroom) and Tier 2. If a student demonstrates the need for Tier 3 support, classroom teachers collaborate with the school's MTSS Team for individual problem-solving (Tier 1 and 2) and team/parent communications.

School Counselor:

Professional school counselors implement a comprehensive program that addresses the needs of all students. Through the review of data, professional school counselors identify struggling students and collaborate with other educators to provide appropriate interventions through the MTSS/Student Support Process. Professional school counselors work collaboratively with other educators to remove systemic barriers for all students and implement intervention programs that assist in student success.²

² "The Professional School Counselor & Response to Intervention" (adopted in 2008 by the American School Counselor

School counselors are both supporters of MTSS and interveners within the MTSS process. The following table summarizes the two roles:

	Supporter	Intervener
Tiered Model	Highlight at MTSS team meetings the evidence-based counseling interventions in various settings that already serve the goals of the team and the needs of identified students, as well as those that could contribute.	Provide evidence-based counseling interventions in school-wide, classroom, small-group, and individual settings to address academic and/or behavioral concerns.
Data	Share data collected from counseling interventions with the MTSS team to document student movement through the tiers.	Collect and analyze data regarding all interventions used to meet the goals of the MTSS team and to serve students identified by the team.
Social Advocacy	Highlight specific data from needs assessments that demonstrate academic/behavioral issues identified by students, staff, and/or parents. Bring to the team's attention issues of social justice and the needs of marginalized populations while connecting these issues to the MTSS team's goals.	Design and implement needs assessments for students, staff, and/or parents to give them a voice in identifying needed academic and/or behavioral supports. Create and deliver specific counseling interventions based on the needs of underserved populations.

School Psychologist:

School psychologists are valuable members of the problem-solving team. School psychologists possess expertise in assessment, can understand and interpret data for academic, social-emotional, and behavioral areas, and are considered mental health professionals. School psychologists also possess knowledge about school systems, family systems, and community systems including, but not limited to:

- Knowledge of school law, special education law, and Section 504 law (including eligibility criteria)
- Knowledge of school-wide practices to promote learning (multi-levels of support within schools for both academics and behavior)
- Knowledge of the importance of fidelity (for core instruction, intervention, and systems implementation)
- Knowledge of data-based decision-making within school systems
- Collaboration within the school system, with families, and within community systems (and mental

Association)

health providers).

When problem-solving for individual students, school psychologists know the importance of looking at all sources of data (instruction, curriculum, environment, learner) including fidelity, environmental factors, language acquisition, and diversity (cultural, linguistic, developmental characteristics, learning process). Using this knowledge, school psychologists advocate on behalf of students to ensure the proper interventions are implemented based on consideration of the above factors.

At Onteora Central School District, here is how we have distributed the roles:

Role	Duties
Administrative Representative	● Provides leadership at MTSS team meetings ● Facilitates monitoring of instructional integrity within grade levels/departments ● Provides leadership at MTSS team meetings ● Ensures regular progress monitoring for all students in Tiers 2 and 3 (both for students with IEPs and those without IEPs) ● Ensures school schedule and resource allocation enable a successful MTSS practice ● Celebrates and communicates success
MTSS Coordinator	● Coordinates and sets agenda for MTSS team meetings ● Provides expertise to the MTSS team regarding problem-solving protocol ● Provides expertise in data analysis ● Identifies trends in student/staff needs across the school
Grade-Level/Content Area Representative	● Serves as liaison between grade/content/MTSS team ● Attends grade-level MTSS meetings on a regular basis ● Identifies trends in student/staff needs across grade-level or content area ● Presents data/background information on the student being discussed (in the absence of the classroom teacher)
Specialists (e.g., ELL teacher,	● Serves as a liaison between grade/content/MTSS team ● Attends grade-level MTSS meetings regularly

speech/language pathologist, intervention teacher, AIS teacher, special education teacher, OT, PT, counselor, social worker, school psychologist, behavior specialist)	• Identifies trends in student/staff needs across grade-level or content areas • Presents data (Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 background information on the student being discussed (<i>in the absence of classroom teacher</i>))
Classroom Teacher	• Provides experience with and knowledge of students being discussed • Presents data (Tier 1 & Tier 2)/background information on student • Ensures next steps are documented and communicated with student and/or family

B. Data Sources

An important consideration within Onteora Central School District MTSS is data sources that are available to staff across the district. Our data map helps us organize our data into three categories. Onteora Central School District utilizes Branching Minds to ensure that the data we are collecting is providing feedback on the quality and fidelity of instruction and intervention.

1. Capacity Data: do we have the capacity to do this?
2. Implementation Data: are we implementing this as intended?
3. Outcome Data: is this change having the impact we had hoped for?

The following chart outlines our data sources:

	Screening	Diagnostic	Progress Monitoring
Capacity	NWEA MAP DIAL	Running Records Teacher formatives	Formative assessments Common Assessments Aimsweb Plus
Implementation	% of students assessed >98% Fidelity Observations	Fidelity Observations Data-informed, diagnostic validated	Cyclical Bi-Monthly Monthly
Outcome Data	Tier Level Report	Cohort Assessment Performance Report State Assessments	Progress Monitoring (ROI) Group or Individual Graphs Tier Movement Report

C. Meeting Guides

Common Planning Time

Common Planning Time among educators is a crucial element in the success of a multi-tiered system. Planning time helps improve instruction by allowing teachers to share best practices, examine data, discuss students' work, engage in instructional-related PD, and plan curriculum and lessons together. In order for common planning to contribute meaningfully to student outcomes, sufficient time should be built into the schedule when possible.

- at least 30 min/week for grade-level meetings, data analysis, and (minimum) -during the professional period

An effective MTSS practice is comprised of three different types of meetings that have three different functions

and agendas:

The School Level Meeting (Elementary and Secondary): The goal of this meeting is to understand the health of school-level MTSS practice by looking at the percentage of students who are adequately being served by the core, the equity of instruction across demographics, grades, and classrooms, and improvement in student outcome measures since the last meeting. These metrics are used to evaluate the quality of practice across Tier 1, 2, and 3 levels of support and guide school-level improvement plans. Here is a [Core Workout Worksheet](#) to help understand the needs and opportunities to strengthen your core instruction. And here is a [School Leaders Say What and School Leaders Now What](#) resource, which serves as an MTSS Health Data collection Check-in worksheet and an MTSS Action Plan worksheet to help scaffold those conversations

- a. At the elementary level, this meeting is conducted three times a year following the administration of universal screening assessments.
- b. At Onteora Middle & High School, this meeting is conducted three times a year following final quarterly course grades

The Grade/Content Team Meeting (Elementary and Secondary): The goal of this meeting is to ensure at-risk students are receiving support and making progress, that patterns/trends in student growth are identified, and that plans are adjusted or support is provided to teachers based on observed trends in student need. Students with IEPs, students learning English as a second language, and those exceeding expectations/needing enrichment are always included in these discussions too!

- c. At the elementary level, this meeting is conducted by each grade or content team monthly to discuss all students receiving Tier 2 and 3 support.
- d. At Onteora Middle School there are Grade Level/Cohort Level Monthly meetings for grade levels to assess efficiencies that support growth within the whole grade level. This team identifies opportunities to support students toward graduation as a grade-level team, addressing course pass/failure rates, attendance, and behaviors. etc. Onteora High School also plans content area department meetings 1x/a month to identify core content skill deficits and plan for acceleration and foundational skill-building opportunities.

Cohort Multi-Discipline Grade Level Meeting (Secondary): The purpose of this meeting is to find efficiencies that support growth within the whole grade level. Teachers will identify core deficits across the cohort/grade band, and determine how and where students should receive support and/or interventions.

- e. Monitors cohorts for high levels of Early Warning Indicators, improve attendance and engagement strategies and behavior

The Individual Student Support Meeting (Elementary and Secondary): This meeting provides the time and space for individualized deep dive problem-solving for students not making sufficient progress when supported by the Grade/Content Team Community Meeting, e.g., stagnating students receiving Tier 3 support

- f. At the elementary level, students can be brought to Individual Problem Solving Meetings at any time they

exhibit significant deficits on universal screeners, consistent inability to access grade-level content, trauma, or failure to make progress with Tier 2 interventions and grade level/content area problem-solving is not changing the student's outcomes.

- g. At Ontario Middle and High School students can be brought to their cohort school counselor for individual problem-solving at any time they exhibit significant deficits on universal screeners, consistent inability to access grade-level content, trauma, or failure to make progress with Tier 2 interventions, and grade level/content area problem-solving is not changing the student's outcomes.

Meeting Type	School Level Meeting	Grade/Content Team Meeting	Individual Student Support Team Meeting
Goal	Evaluate school-wide health and wellness of MTSS practice	Monitor the progress of students receiving Tier 2/Tier 3 support, and look for trends in support needs at the system, teacher, or student level.	Deeper dive problem-solving for students not making sufficient progress, and to create/revise Intervention Plans.
Duration/ Frequency	1 hour, 3x per year (post-universal screeners)	1 planning period a month	Weekly or bi-weekly ½ or full-day meetings (depending on the size of the Tier 3 population)
Attendance	- Principal - Data specialists (e.g., AP, School Psychologist or counselor) - Student service/instructional service representative - Special Ed representative/teacher - General Education representative/teacher	All teachers and specialists who are working with students receiving Tier 2 support in that grade or content area.	- MTSS lead (principal, AP, or school psych) - Intervention specialist(s) - Rotating gen ed teacher of the student being discussed

Agenda	• Examine the percentage of students adequately served by the core • Examine equity of core instruction (across demographics, grades, and classrooms) • Evaluate student body growth and tier movement • Evaluate equity of student growth and tier movement • Evaluate the quality of intervention delivery • Plan for improved support	<i>First meeting after screener</i> • Tier and/or review tier placement of students • Create Tier 2 groups and plans • Schedule students receiving Tier 3 support problem-solving meetings <i>Follow-up meetings</i> • Review the progress of Tier 2 groups • Look for trends in student growth • Make course corrections to promote growth (e.g., provide support to teachers, change strategy) • Schedule individual problem-solving for students if necessary	• Teacher presents data • The team evaluates student progress • The team analyzes and identifies problems • The team creates an intervention plan to support student <i>**Should avg 4-5 students in a ½ day, or 8-10 students in a full day</i>
---------------	---	---	---

D. Master Schedules

To build a strong multi-tiered system of support, it is necessary for schools and districts to prioritize and allocate time matched to student needs. Effective tiered schedules include adequate time for core instruction, assessments, intervention time, team meetings, and planning. A master schedule supports a tiered system of instruction and support, inclusive of Tier 1 core instruction and common planning time.

Sample Schedules for Class Changes and Overlapping Lunches

Period	Length	Time	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Period 1	50 min	8:08 - 8:58	CORE	CORE	IA	CORE
Period 2	50 min	8:58 - 9:48	CORE	CORE	CORE	IA
Period 3	50 min	9:48 - 10:38	IA	IA	CORE	CORE
Period 4/Lunch	77 min	10:38 - 11:55	Recess (10:38 -10:50)	Lunch (10:38 -11:05)	WIN (50 min) (10:38 - 11:15)	WIN (50 min) (10:38 - 11:28)
			Lunch (10:50 - 11:15)	Win (50 min) (11:05 - 11:55)	Lunch (11:15-11:40)	Lunch (11:28 - 11:55)
			Win (40 min) (11:15 - 11:55)		WIN (11:40 - 11:55)	
Period 5	50 min	11:55 - 12:45	CORE	CORE	IA	IA

Period 6	50 min	12:45 - 1:35	CORE	IA	CORE	CORE
Period 7	50 min	1:35 - 2:25	IA	CORE	CORE	CORE

Section 7: Referral for Special Education Eligibility

A. Referring for a Comprehensive Evaluation to Determine Special Education Eligibility:

The MTSS team continuously evaluates the growth of students who are receiving Tier 3 interventions by reviewing progress monitoring data and the intervention plan. A student who fails to demonstrate growth over time and after instructional, curricular, and environmental variables that contribute to or influence individual student learning have been considered and supported, a referral for a comprehensive evaluation can be recommended because the team suspects the student may have a disability. Before the MTSS team refers a student for a comprehensive evaluation, the team should be confident. This requirement, outlined in the previous section, ensures that school personnel has responsibly and comprehensively taken steps to address variables that can be controlled within a school setting (e.g., instruction, curriculum, environment) to rule out the possibility that these are not the primary causes of a student's lack of growth or failure to respond to instruction and intervention.

Referral for a comprehensive evaluation reflects the suspicion of a disability and indicates the MTSS team's belief that a student's lack of growth is due to learner variables that require specially designed instruction. A comprehensive evaluation is pursued under federal guidelines (IDEA, 2004). This evaluation may or may not include formal, individualized "testing" depending upon the scope of the evaluation as determined by the evaluation team, including the parent.

Under current federal guidelines, parents may request a comprehensive evaluation to determine special education

eligibility at any time. Typically, a school-based team, led by a building administrator, would respond to this request by inviting parents to a meeting to discuss their concerns and determine a plan to move forward positively on behalf of the student. Teachers should use the “Family Requested SpEd Eval Meeting Invite” letter on Branching Minds. After the meeting, the team should provide the family with documentation on the agreed-upon next steps for the student (e.g., pursuing a comprehensive evaluation, revising a Tier 3 intervention plan, etc.). Teachers should use the “Family Requested SpEd Eval Meeting Follow-Up” letter on Branching Minds.

Students receiving special education services may participate across tiers depending on their needs. For example, a student eligible under the category of Specific Learning Disability in the area of math may be receiving support at Tier 1 for reading, Tier 2 for behavior, and Tier 3 for math. The goal for all students receiving support at Tier 3, including those who are special education eligible, is to close the achievement gap and transition back to less restrictive support.

B. Our Referral Process for Special Education:

A referral for special education will be determined when the data (i.e., progress monitoring, fidelity checks, intervention logs, parent letters, rate of growth, gap analysis) indicate that a student may have a learning disability (*which all can be viewed from the Branching Minds Student Intervention Report*). Any information obtained during the MTSS data collection and intervention period may be used as part of the eligibility determination following informed written parental consent. Teachers should use the OCSD form for Student Referral for SpEd. Consent for an evaluation may be requested or received during Tier 3 interventions, but evidence from Tier 3 must be a part of the determination, and a lack of response to Tier 3 interventions may not be predetermined. An evaluation for SLD may be performed in conjunction with the second half of Tier 3, but may not be concluded before Tier 3 interventions are proven ineffective.

1. One condition for eligibility would involve a situation in which a student demonstrated a positive response to intervention when intensive interventions were implemented; however, the intensity and resources required to sustain student growth or performance are beyond that which is available solely through general education.
2. The other condition involves a student who does not make adequate growth to close the gap between current and expected performance, despite evidence that all resources to enable student learning have been exhausted.

In either case, multiple tiers of instruction or intervention are necessary to determine the level of services needed to

meet the needs of students suspected of having a disability and to determine whether the level of services requires special education resources. In addition to determining how students respond to instruction and intervention provided in the general education environment, educators also must rule out other factors that could be impacting student performance. For example, a student cannot be determined eligible as a student with a Specific Learning Disability or Language Impairment if the determinant factor is one or more of the following:

- Lack of appropriate instruction in reading; including phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, phonics, and reading fluency
- Lack of appropriate reading comprehension strategies
- Lack of appropriate instruction in math; and
- Limited English proficiency.

Within the problem-solving process, if the team suspects that a student may be exhibiting a disability other than a Specific Learning Disability, the referral process for that disability must be followed. It is important to note that MTSS practice is not required or appropriate for all areas of suspected disability.

Prior to referral for a special education evaluation due to a suspected SLD, the following components of MTSS should be met:

Requirements for Consideration of Eligibility for Specific Learning Disability:

- ✓ Daily Tier 1 (core) instruction
- ✓ The weakest prerequisite skill targeted on the instructional level for intervention
- ✓ 16-20 Weeks of Tier 3 research-based intervention (if directly placed in Tier 3) OR 8-10 weeks of research-based Tier 3 intervention (if the student received 8-10 weeks of Tier 2 targeted small-group instruction prior to being moved to Tier 3)
- ✓ Intervention logs completed & student-specific
- ✓ Progress monitoring (16-20 weekly consistent points)
- ✓ Intervention delivered with 90% fidelity with integrity checks
- ✓ Monthly MTSS data team meetings with the rate of growth evaluated
- ✓ Documentation of parent communication of student progress
- ✓ Two changes in Intervention (if directly placed in Tier 3 Intervention) or one change during Tier 3 intervention if moved from Tier 2 to Tier 3
- ✓ GAP Analysis (conducted by the school psychologist) indicates that a student's progress is not sufficient for adequate growth

- ✓ Exclusionary factors (i.e., Vision/Hearing/Motor Disability, Intellectual Disability, Emotional Disability, Cultural/Environmental/Economic Factors, and Excessive Absenteeism <90% attendance rate) have been ruled out
- ✓ Parents were invited to the meeting to discuss a referral for special education evaluation

The above requirements should be documented on the Branching Minds Intervention Report, as well as the “Student Referral for SpEd” letter, and should be submitted to the SpEd evaluation team.

Team members involved in deciding to refer for special education may include:

- The principal or another designee
- School psychologist
- Classroom teacher
- Intervention/support team members

Section 8: Professional Learning

This chart is designed to maximize the effectiveness of MTSS in the Onteora Central School District and to provide a timeline for our implementation. Staff development continues to be phased in, beginning with the academic needs of grades K-12. This is an ongoing process as the revised MTSS model is incorporated into our daily process. Professional learning will continue to increase common understanding and practices and to support newly hired teachers. Long-term substitute teachers, as well as permanent substitute teachers, will also be considered in this plan.

In addition to the MTSS rollout plan, ongoing professional learning for our core curriculum is critical for the success of our students. This will be coordinated by district administrators and building principals to meet the needs of the staff.

Focus of training	Introduction	Implementation	Review & Follow-Up
-------------------	--------------	----------------	--------------------

Key Concepts of MTSS	Administrative staff and elementary building level MTSS teams (August 2023-June 2024)	1. Grade-level meetings, and department meetings K-12 2. Superintendent Conference Days at administrators' discretion	MTSS Teams and administrators will provide input to district administrators who will adjust the MTSS Handbook and professional learning as needed.
Understanding and Implementing Tiered Interventions	Administrative staff and elementary building level MTSS teams (August 2023-June 2024) Distribution and explanation of MTSS Handbook to all K-12 teachers (Spring 2024)	1. Grade-level meetings, and department meetings K-12 2. Superintendent Conference Days at administrators' discretion	1. Ongoing training and support 2. New staff members trained in all interventions
Training & Application of Universal Screening: NWEA MAP	ALL teachers will be given an overview	ALL classroom teachers and key personnel (as needed) determined by the administration, will be trained in the administration of the screener, and how to interpret the data it provides	Ongoing training and support (as needed) New staff members trained in: 1. Application and use of universal screening 2. Use of universal screening data to determine the interventions needed
Training and Application of Progress Monitoring: a review of programs in the process	When options for a progress monitoring tool are narrowed down, staff will have the opportunity to attend demonstrations to learn more about the assessments and provide their input into the decision-making process	ALL classroom teachers and key personnel (to be determined by leadership) will be trained in the administration of the progress monitoring program and how to interpret the data it provides	1. Ongoing training and support as needed 2. New staff members trained in the application and use of the progress monitoring program 3. Use of progress monitoring program data to determine the interventions needed

Section 9: A Synopsis of MTSS at the Onteora Central School District

Elementary:	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Focus of Tier Support:	Designed for all students, with ongoing differentiation. Focus on alignment of instruction and instructional resources to the common core.	Small-group problem-solving Targeted evidence-based Tier 2 instruction for students not meeting expectations, in addition to core instruction.	Individualized problem-solving Intensive and strategic evidence-based Tier 3 interventions, in addition to core instruction. Focus on specific foundational skills.
Population Supported:	All students (100%)	Some Students (less than 15%)	Few Students (3-5%)
Assessments Used:	Universal screenings, and benchmarks: For example NWEA MAP, F&P & TC	Progress monitoring occurs every two weeks or as appropriate to the targeted skill area.	Progress monitoring occurs weekly , based on targeted skills.
Curriculum and Intervention Supports:	District core curriculum, and schoolwide programs	Research-based curriculum, and Tier 2 evidence-based strategies (curated by Branching Minds)	Research-based curriculum, and Tier 3 evidence-based interventions (curated by Branching Minds)
Amount of Time Allotted:	ELA: 60 mpd kdg 90 mpd 1-5 Math: 30 mpd kdg 60 mpd 1-5	60 minutes/week (three 20-minute sessions OR two 30-minute sessions) In addition to instruction at Tier 1	120-135 minutes/week (three 20-minute sessions + two 20-minute sessions OR three 45-minute sessions) In addition to instruction at Tier 1
Group Size:	Whole class and small group	Small groups: 4-8 students	Direct Support: 2-3 students or one-on-one instruction
Location:	General education classroom	General education classroom may be outside of the classroom	Outside of general education classroom
Personnel:	Classroom teacher	Classroom teacher or other	Specialized staff (reading or math AIS)

		professionals (reading or math AIS teacher)	teacher.)
Implementation:	Ongoing	Each cycle is at least 6-8 weeks, with at least 3-4 data points	Each cycle is at least 8-10 weeks, with at least 8 data points

Our workflow for MTSS for Elementary Schools:

Activity	Key Concepts or Issues (enter planning notes here)	Timeline	Person Responsible
Administer universal screener	Assessments are administered to all students, 3 times per year.	Fall, Winter, and Spring	Principal
Tier students based on screener data	Tier 2 – students between 10 th and 24 th percentile on screener. Tier 3 – students between 1 st and 9 th percentile on screener.	After screener/benchmark assessments	Principal & MTSS Coordinator
Schedule initial Student Support Meetings	This may be a small set of students for the initial rollout.	Monthly	MTSS Coordinator
Collect teacher observations through Insight Surveys	Surveys should be filled out on the BrM platform for all students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 support in the area they are struggling with.	Students are first identified for Tier 2 or 3, then once or twice per year	Teachers
Develop collaborative Intervention Plans	Goals, progress monitors, and interventions will be added to each student in Tier 2 and 3 in the area they are struggling.	During the initial support meeting	MTSS team and teachers
Share updates with family and student	Letters can be generated on the BrM platform using preloaded templates,	After the initial support meeting	Teachers
Implement intervention and monitor the plan	Teachers and interventions with assigned work will be administered.	Tier 2: 20 minutes per session, 3 sessions per week Tier 3: 20 minutes per session, 3 sessions per week + 30 minutes per session, 2 sessions per week	Teachers and interventionists

Review impact of support and student progress	Review data on students' plan & progress page. Ensure intervention(s) were delivered with intended fidelity and evaluate growth.	Tier 2: monthly in-grade team meetings Tier 3: after progress monitoring assessment by an individual teacher, reviewed by the team as needed for students not progressing	MTSS team and teachers
Adjust the plan based on relevant data	If a student does not make sufficient progress, follow problem-solving protocol and adjust plans.	After collaborative review	MTSS team and teachers

Secondary:	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Focus of Tier Support:	Designed for all students, with ongoing differentiation. Focus on alignment of instruction and instructional resources to the common core.	Small-Group problem-solving Targeted evidence-based Tier 2 instruction for students not meeting expectations, in addition to core instruction.	Individualized problem-solving Intensive and strategic evidence-based Tier 3 interventions, in addition to core instruction. Focus on specific foundational skills.
Population Supported:	All students (100%)	Some Students (less than 15%)	Few Students (3-5%)
Assessments Used:	State assessments District common course assessments NWEA MAP - grades 6-8	Individual screening: Progress monitoring occurs monthly : content area-specific assessments	Progress monitoring occurs weekly , based on targeted skills.
Curriculum and Intervention Supports:	District core curriculum, and schoolwide programs	Research-based curriculum, and Tier 2 evidence-based strategies (curated by Branching Minds)	Research-based curriculum, and Tier 3 evidence-based interventions (curated by Branching Minds)
Amount of Time Allotted:	ELA: 40 mpd 7-12 Math:	80 minutes/week Two 40-minute sessions	120 minutes/week Two 40-minute sessions + two

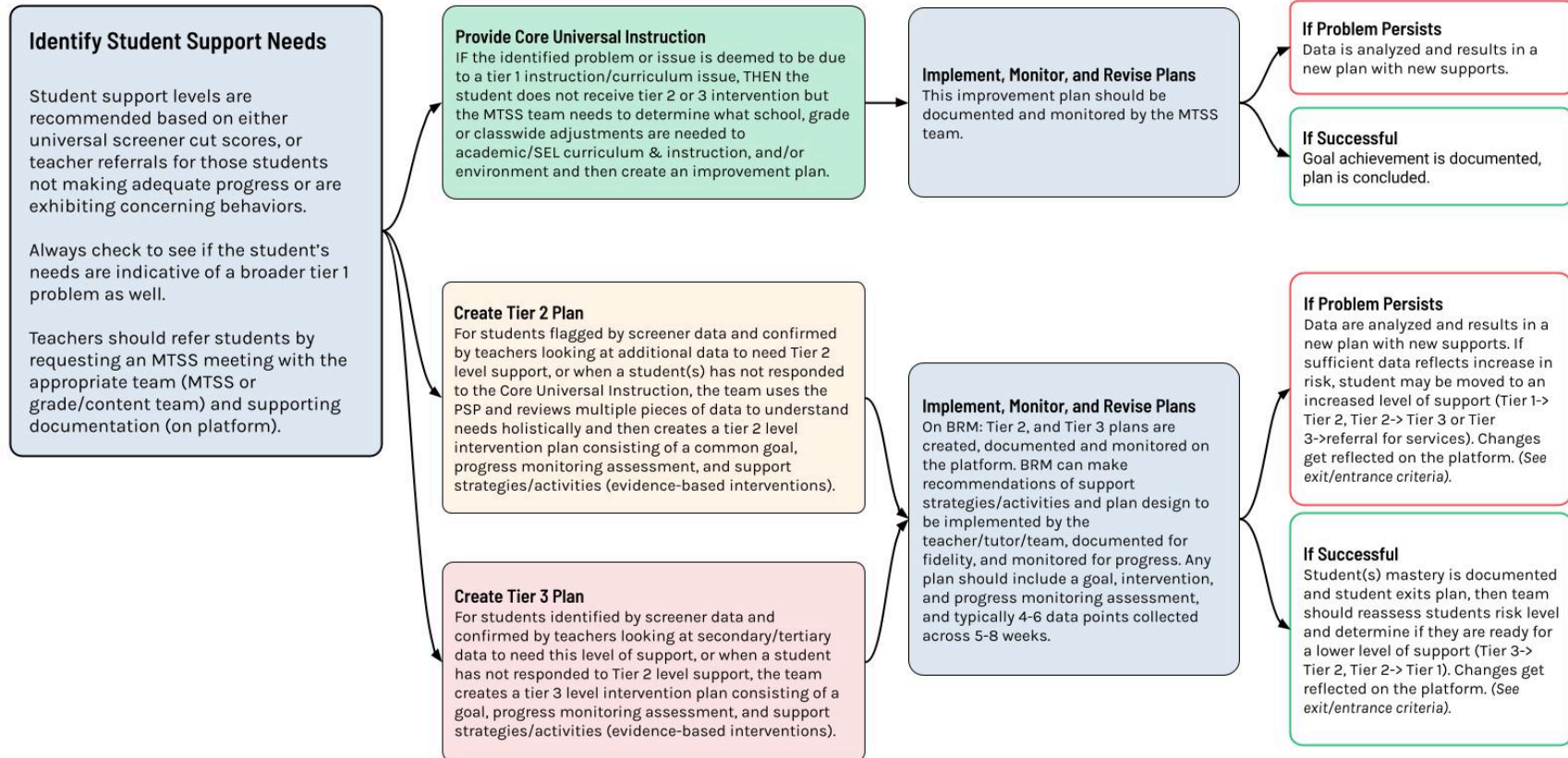
	80mpd 8 40 mpd 6-12		20-minute sessions OR three 40-minute sessions
Group Size:	Whole class and small group	Whole class and small group	Direct Support: 2-6 students or one-on-one instruction
Location:	General education classroom	Tier 2 support classroom	Outside of general education classroom
Personnel:	Classroom teacher	Classroom teacher or other professionals (literacy teacher, SLP, etc.)	Specialized staff (resource teacher, SLP, literacy, etc.)
Implementation:	Ongoing	Targeted support classes are adjusted each semester	Each cycle is at least 8-10 weeks, with at least 8 data points

Our workflow for MTSS for Secondary Schools:

Activity	Key Concepts or Issues (enter planning notes here)	Timeline	Person Responsible
Administer individual screeners	<i>Basic skills screening assessments are administered to students struggling in content area classes</i>	<i>Depending on the screener tool</i>	Teachers
Tier students based on screener data	<i>Tier 2 – students above 10th percentile on basic skills screener; between 10-25% on common assessment data. Tier 3 – students below the 10th percentile on basic skills screener.</i>	<i>After screener/benchmark assessments</i>	Administrator
Schedule initial Student Support Meetings	<i>This may be a small set of students for the initial rollout.</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	MTSS Coordinator
Develop collaborative Intervention Plans	<i>Goals, progress monitors, and interventions will be added to each student in Tier 2 and 3 in the area they are struggling.</i>	<i>During the initial support meeting</i>	MTSS team and teachers
Share updates with family and student	<i>Letters can be generated on the BrM platform using preloaded templates.</i>	<i>After the initial support meeting</i>	Teachers

Implement intervention and monitor the plan	<i>Teachers and interventions with assigned work will be administered.</i>	<i>Tier 2: 20 minutes per session, 3 sessions per week</i> <i>Tier 3: 20 minutes per session, 3 sessions per week + 30 minutes per session, 2 sessions per week</i>	Teachers and interventionists
Review the impact of support and student progress	<i>Review data on students' plan & progress page. Ensure intervention(s) were delivered with intended fidelity and evaluate growth.</i>	<i>Tier 2: monthly in-grade team meetings</i> <i>Tier 3: after progress monitoring assessment by an individual teacher, reviewed by the team as needed for students not progressing</i>	MTSS team and teachers
Adjust the plan based on relevant data	<i>If a student does not make sufficient progress, follow problem-solving protocol and adjust plans.</i>	<i>After collaborative review</i>	MTSS team and teachers

An Overview of MTSS Guidelines: Ontario Central School District



Developing an Implementation & Communication Plan

Developing an implementation plan is critical to the success of an effective MTSS practice. The following three resources can support the development of your implementation plan:

- Here is an [MTSS Buy-In and Mobilization Guide](#) that can help build shared expectations, understanding, and language for your team.
- Here is an [MTSS Mobilization Framework](#) that provides a continuum of implementation from Foundation Knowledge, to Initiation Implementation to Full Operation.
- Below is a rubric that serves as a tool for educators to determine growth toward a fully operational Multi-Tiered Support System that includes the use of the BRM platform. It is not intended for teacher evaluation purposes.

STAGE	Foundation Knowledge:	Initial Implementation:	Full Operation:
Identifying Students in Need of Support Academic and Behavior	Decisions about students receiving tiered intervention for academics or behavior are made based on the criteria below: ☐ Common assessment data benchmarks (academic and behavioral) used to identify students' needs ☐ Multiple stakeholder input ☐ Evidence of the impact of differentiation is present ☐ Adherence to established procedures for providing support; ☐ 1+ profile is created in BrM	Decisions about students receiving tiered intervention for academics or behavior are made based on the criteria below: ☐ Common assessment data benchmarks (academic and behavior) ☐ Multiple stakeholder input ☐ Adherence to established procedures; ☐ >5 profiles created in BrM	Decisions about students receiving tiered intervention for academics or behavior are made based on: ☐ Common assessment data benchmarks (academic and behavior) ☐ Multiple stakeholder input ☐ Student need is assessed at the school, grade, and individual levels ☐ Adherence to established procedures; ☐ >10 profiles created in BrM

Key Components of RTI/MTSS	❑ Evidence-based common curriculum identified and implemented for Tier 1 ❑ Universal screener(s) adopted for academics and behavior ❑ Educators have a shared language and understand protocols for: ❑ Differentiating core instruction ❑ Assessing and monitoring progress ❑ Accessing collaborative support for students	❑ Core curriculum differentiated to meet student needs ❑ Universal screener used to tier students ❑ Progress is routinely monitored and reflected in intervention plans ❑ School wellness is monitored by instituting school, grade level (or department), and individual student meetings	❑ RTI/MTSS Management System (BrM) is used to provide research-based intervention activities and lessons ❑ Quality of RTI/MTSS is evaluated routinely at school, grade/department, and individual student level
-----------------------------------	---	---	--

BRM Platform	All staff: ❑ Receive regular communication regarding the implementation of MTSS and BrM Admins and MTSS teams: ❑ Completed initial professional learning + have login instructions demonstrate proficiency with BrM Library, Student Page (<i>profile, intervention plan, insight survey, to-do list, supports, family communication, meeting notes, adding supports, assessments, scores, and creating goals</i>)	All Staff: ❑ Know how to log in to BrM ❑ Have access to online tutorials ❑ Documented intervention activity via To-Do List ❑ Documents meeting notes and family communications Admins and MTSS teams: ❑ Continue identifying and providing for ongoing professional learning needs ❑ Have created student plans for academics and behavior, ❑ Completed and requested insight survey, ❑ Presented at least 1 intervention plan to Support Team	All Teachers and administrators: ❑ Participate fully in MTSS Team Meetings, participate in selecting intervention supports, complete requested surveys, and provide needed evidence/data for determining student learning response to instruction ❑ Assure full documentation of support and impact on learning ❑ Use supports to tailor instruction for all students during core instruction ❑ Use data to adjust plans, as needed ❑ Use Family Communication templates
Creating and Implementing Intervention Plans	❑ 1+ student identified for support and has a profile and intervention plan Intervention Plans include: ❑ Input from multiple stakeholders ❑ Documentation of family communication ❑ Clearly stated, measurable goals	❑ ≥ 25% of students identified for support have profiles and active intervention plans Intervention Plans also include: ❑ Meeting notes ❑ Logged intervention activities ❑ Progress monitoring data and goal acquisition	❑ ≥50+% students identified for support have profiles and active intervention plans Intervention Plans also include: ❑ Document monitoring and adjusting beyond initial mastery ❑ Show evidence for advancing through tiers of support ❑ Incorporates successful interventions into Tier 1 practice

	☐ Clearly personalized activities		
Monitoring Progress	☐ Common progress monitor tools are used for reading, math, and behavior	☐ Administration and analysis is at least monthly for all students with intervention plans ☐ Universal Screeners and progress monitoring tools are nationally normed assessments ☐ Additional data are considered	☐ Administration and analysis is at least monthly for all students ☐ Responsiveness to Tier 1/core instruction, Tier 2 or 3 is determined by valid/reliable benchmarks during Team Meetings ☐ Students are moved among tiers based on evidence and plans are routinely updated ☐ Changes shared with family
Problems Solving Meeting Quality	☐ Universal screeners are used and discussed at each meeting for academics and behavior ☐ Stakeholder participation is reflective of student need ☐ Follow-up meetings or communications occur following the initial plan implementation	☐ Some data sources are discussed at each meeting and are used to determine the intervention impact ☐ Students are moving among tiers based on evidence and plans are documented ☐ Efficiencies are created through data-driven grouping of students	☐ Multiple data sources are discussed at each meeting and are used to determine intervention impact ☐ New activities are chosen based on evidence of impact from the prior intervention ☐ Procedures in place to ensure assessment, intervention, and meeting fidelity ☐ Students are moving among tiers based on evidence and plans are documented