



Kentucky's framework for a multi-tiered system of supports (KyMTSS) is a multi-level prevention system designed to support student achievement and social-emotional behavioral competencies through an integration of differentiated core instruction, assessment and intervention.

Universal screening, diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring measures are core components of a comprehensive screening and assessment system within KyMTSS. Using a systematic data-based decision-making process, MTSS teams analyze and use data from universal screening, diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring assessments to make decisions about instruction, movement within the multi-level prevention system and intensification of instruction, interventions and supports.

Universal Screeners:

Universal screening for early literacy provides an evidence-based and proactive way to monitor the effectiveness of Tier 1 reading instruction and to identify students who may be at risk for developing reading difficulties and in need of additional instruction or intervention.

It is critical for educators to identify the potential for reading difficulties in the primary grades in order to provide support early and prevent failures from accumulating over time. Universal screening provides a standardized way to quickly, efficiently and reliably predict students who may be at risk for reading difficulties. Using validated screening procedures, the MTSS leadership team ensures that all students are screened with fidelity on an on-going basis, typically three times during the school year (i.e., fall, winter and spring).

Universal screening data support decision making at all levels of the system – from the district level to the individual student level.

- District teams use screening data to make decisions and set goals related to program improvement and curriculum, initiative alignment and sustainability, allocation of resources and equitable access and opportunity across schools.
- School teams use screening data to review school and grade level trends, monitor effectiveness of schoolwide curriculum and supports, identify areas of need, and to set measurable schoolwide goals.

- Intervention teams use screening data to identify students in need of additional support or extensions. They adjust instruction, intervention and supports as needed (Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports, 2021).

When selecting appropriate screening tools, MTSS teams should consider cultural and linguistic needs, the local context and desired outcomes of the school or district as well as the technical adequacy of the measure.

Universal screening provides a quick and efficient way to identify students who are at risk but does not give a full picture of the underlying root cause of the problem. Additional diagnostic assessment is needed to provide more detailed information about individual students' strengths and weakness.

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic reading assessments are designed to measure a student's skills against established performance levels in essential components of reading relative to grade-level standards or established performance levels.

Diagnostic assessments are designed to help teachers more effectively support student learning by clarifying a student's specific pattern of strengths and needs. For students who are identified at risk for reading difficulties, diagnostic assessment provides information about the underlying problem, so teachers are better able to differentiate instruction and match intervention to the specific area(s) of need.

Diagnostic assessments are typically longer and more in-depth than screening assessments. They provide a deeper look at the underlying subskills that align to the essential areas of reading to inform decisions about how to best adjust instruction and plan interventions.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring measures are brief, repeated measures that capture students' progress or rate of improvement over time in response to instruction or intervention using valid and reliable measures (Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports, 2021). The data provides information on whether the student is making adequate progress with the current level of support.

Progress monitoring requires repeated assessment with more frequent assessment when challenges are more intense. Data is collected and graphed regularly so student progress can be compared to a goal set using the standardized decision-making process. The frequency of progress monitoring should be matched to the intensity of the instruction. For example, progress monitoring at Tier 2 is typically every two weeks or at least monthly for students identified for academic intervention and supports, and at least weekly for students identified for more intensive intervention at Tier 3.

Progress monitoring typically targets one or two specific skills that are the best indicators of growth (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). Grade-level and intervention teams use progress monitoring data to make decisions about student responsiveness to interventions and supports and to adjust as needed. Accurate decision-making requires on-going data for valid interpretation. To obtain a reliable estimate of the student's response to the intervention, data should be collected and graphed for a minimum of six data points in order to establish a trendline for accurate analysis. Teams review data patterns and compare students' rate of improvement to the growth necessary to meet their goals (The IRIS Center, 2015).

District and school teams use systems level progress monitoring data to assess the effectiveness of district and school level interventions and ensure that the interventions selected are resulting in positive student (Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports, 2021).

[Developing the Reading Improvement Plan per Senate Bill 9 \(2022\)](#)

Collaborative problem-solving teams are an essential element of KyMTSS, and student intervention teams are one of the recommended teams for effective implementation. The focus of this team is on the needs of individual students who require a more intensive level of support to progress toward proficient performance – academically, behaviorally or social-emotionally. Student intervention team membership includes a school administrator or school counselor, classroom teacher, team member with relevant academic and social-emotional behavioral expertise, any staff providing intensive intervention support (interventionist, English language services or special education services) and student, family and/or community agency support. The core functions of the student intervention team within MTSS include:

- Individual student problem-solving;
- Selection of evidence-based instructional strategies and interventions matched to targeted need(s);
- Development of an intervention plan; and
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the intervention by reviewing student progress monitoring data and fidelity of implementation.

Data-based decision-making is a core function of all KyMTSS collaborative teams. Student intervention teams use a systematic process to determine student needs, identify evidence-based solutions, develop a plan and monitor the impact of the instruction and interventions. A good intervention plan must be feasible to implement, have evidence of being effective and should include the following characteristics:

- Explicitly state what will be implemented or taught;
- Set a clear goal with criteria for success;
- Focus on measurable outcomes;
- Define who is responsible for implementation;

- Describe the plan for measuring and monitoring outcomes;
- Describe the plan for monitoring fidelity; and
- Identify any needed resources and/or training available to implement the plan.

Senate Bill 9 requires a reading improvement plan developed and implemented by a reading improvement team. It is recommended that districts consider utilizing existing teams and the systematic problem-solving process within their MTSS framework to meet this requirement. The members and function of the reading intervention team as defined in the bill are consistent with the recommended KyMTSS intervention team structures: membership, level of focus and core functions. If utilizing an existing MTSS team to fulfill the requirement of SB 9, districts should ensure that appropriate members, role responsibilities and functions of the team are represented.

In an effective MTSS, parents or guardians are part of the problem-solving process and intervention planning at Tier 2 and Tier 3. Data sharing is a two-way process – educators share student performance data and families share information about their children’s interests, strengths and challenges. Families are continually informed of their child’s progress or lack of progress. SB9 requires schools to provide a written quarterly report to a parent or guardian of any student subject to a reading improvement plan.

References:

- Bailey, T. R., Colpo, A. & Foley, A. (2020). Assessment practices within a multi-tiered system of supports (Document No. IC-18). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovationconfigurations/>
- Center for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support at the American Institutes for Research (2021). *Essential components of MTSS: Screening*. Retrieved from <https://mtss4success.org/essential-components/screening>
- Center for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support at the American Institutes for Research (2021). *Guide to designing the screening process*. Retrieved from <https://mtss4success.org/resource/guide-designing-screening-process>
- The IRIS Center. (2015). *Intensive intervention (part 2): Collecting and analyzing data for data-based individualization*. Retrieved from <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/dbi2/>