



The Ultimate MTSS Progress Monitoring Guide and Toolkit



Introduction

Imagine your classroom as a vibrant tapestry of different abilities, dreams, and challenges. Enter the Ultimate MTSS Progress Monitoring Toolkit: your guide to understanding and supporting each unique learner. We will explore effective monitoring techniques and nuanced data interpretation to help you create the conditions where each student doesn't just make progress, but soars. And, we've included helpful resources and editable templates you can start using immediately.

Progress monitoring in MTSS provides the opportunity to turn data into dialogue, and numbers into narratives, ensuring that every child is seen, understood, and nurtured. Whether you're taking your first steps into the world of MTSS or you're a seasoned navigator, this resource is crafted to amplify your influence in the classroom.

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... create the conditions where each student doesn't just make progress, but soars.

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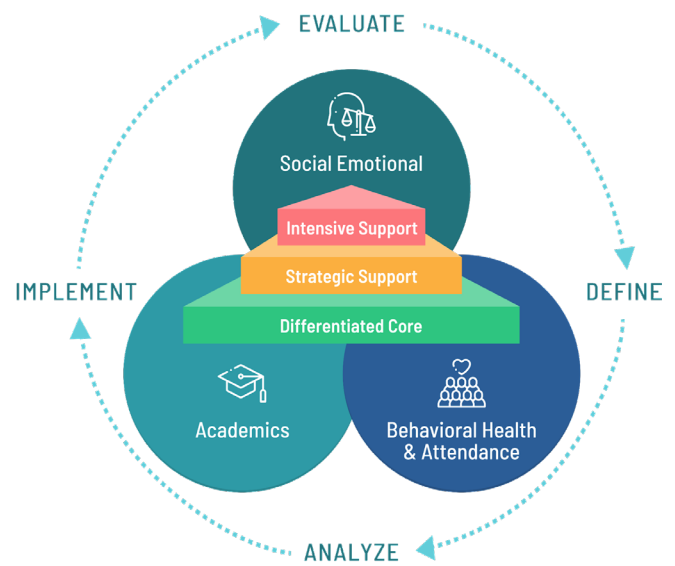
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Brief Overview of MTSS

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a data-driven, prevention-based framework for enhancing school-wide teaching and learning.

At its core, MTSS promotes early identification of student needs, allowing for timely intervention. MTSS is the opposite of “wait to fail!” The system is structured with three layers (or “tiers”) of support to meet the unique needs of each student. The first tier focuses on high-quality universal instruction for all students. Targeted Tier 2 interventions are layered in for students who need additional support. Tier 3 then provides even more intensive interventions for students with significant challenges. Students can and should move between levels of support as needs are addressed, and new challenges arise.

RELATED RESOURCE: [What Is MTSS? The Multi-Tiered System of Supports Ultimate Guide](#)



Why Monitor Progress in MTSS?

In the context of MTSS, data is more than numbers.

Data analysis drives the entire approach to teaching and intervention. Educators need regular, reliable data to see if their instruction is working as intended. This is where progress monitoring comes in. The consistent use of progress monitoring tools not only allows for the identification of students at risk but also serves as a means to validate the effectiveness of the interventions in place.

Progress monitoring provides real-time insight into:

- Which skills students are mastering
- Which strategies are effective
- How to tailor instruction to individual needs

FAQs

Q: How does progress monitoring contribute to improved outcomes for all students?

A: Progress monitoring provides the data needed for educators to identify and address achievement gaps early, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, receive the tailored support they need to succeed.

Key Progress Monitoring Components

A robust MTSS framework hinges on two critical components: a dynamic teaming structure and a systematic problem-solving process. By emphasizing collaborative teamwork among diverse stakeholders and implementing a structured approach to problem-solving, MTSS ensures that progress monitoring is not just a periodic checkpoint but a continuous and integral part of the educational process.

Whether it's in analyzing data to inform instruction, designing interventions, or adjusting support strategies, the collective wisdom of a well-coordinated team is invaluable.

This collaborative spirit not only enhances the problem-solving process but also ensures that decisions are made based on a comprehensive understanding of the student's experiences and needs.

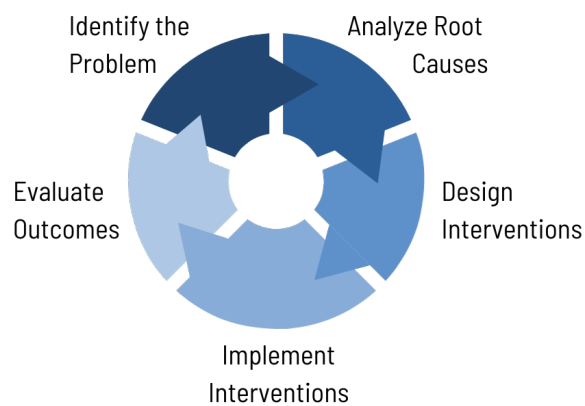
Teaming

For MTSS to function optimally, a dedicated and diverse monitoring team is essential. Essential stakeholders include administrators, general and special education teachers, school psychologists, counselors, and support staff. Additionally, involving parents and community members can provide invaluable insights and foster a sense of shared responsibility.

The composition and specific roles within the MTSS team can vary based on the school's resources and student population. However, the goal remains the same: to collaborate and make decisions that best support student success (Eber, Weist, & Barrett, 2013). Teams should meet regularly to review progress monitoring data, evaluate outcomes, and determine next steps.

Problem Solving

The process is iterative, meaning that teams revisit and revise based on the student's response to the intervention. And, these components ensure that MTSS is not one-size-fits-all but instead is tailored to the unique needs of each student (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).



Problem Solving Cycle

RELATED RESOURCE: [Developing a Successful MTSS Team](#)

FAQs

Q: Why do we need to collect so much data? Isn't my professional judgment enough to understand a student's needs?

A: Data provides objective, quantifiable information that helps uncover patterns over time and clearly show effectiveness of interventions. Your professional judgment is invaluable, and data collection will complement it, not replace it. Data ensures that all students receive the support they need based on consistent, evidence-based criteria.

Q: Will this data be used to evaluate my performance as a teacher?

A: The primary purpose of this data is to support student learning and growth, not to evaluate teacher performance. It's a tool to help you, as the educator, understand where your students are and how best to help them. That said, data can also highlight areas where teachers might benefit from additional professional development, which is intended to be supportive, not punitive.

Q: My class is diverse, with so many needs. How can I possibly collect and analyze data for every student?

A: It's certainly a challenge! That's why an MTSS platform like Branching Minds offers support for differentiating data collection and analysis. Tools such as bulk tiering and group data analysis can help manage this complexity. Working collaboratively as a team or department and involving other educators, such as special education teachers or reading specialists, distributes the workload and provides much-needed perspective and assistance. No one should be doing this work alone.

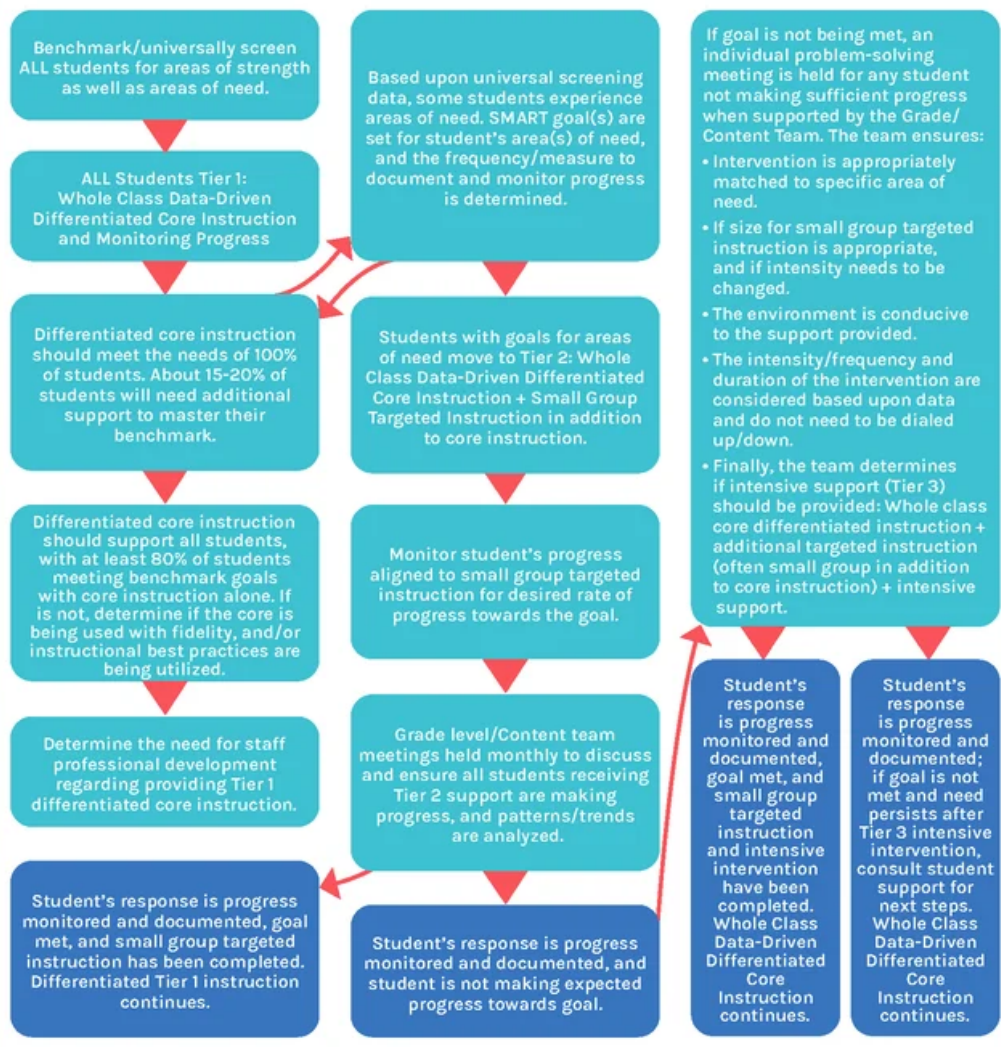
Essential Progress Monitoring Skills and Tools

This MTSS Progress Monitoring Guide provides practical strategies and user-friendly templates to optimize your monitoring efforts and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Check out the [flowchart](#) below for a step-by-step visual of how a data-driven practice fits into MTSS. You'll see that progress monitoring is central to the process!



MTSS Intervention Process Flowchart

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



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Baseline Data Collection

Baseline data serves as a starting point, offering a snapshot of a student's current abilities and setting the stage for goal formulation and intervention planning.

Universal screenings are vital because they provide this initial snapshot. They offer insight into which students are performing at grade level and which ones might be at risk. Administered three times a year, these assessments are usually concise but comprehensive enough to capture the range of student skills.

When conducting these screenings, it's essential to choose tools that are both reliable and valid. These tools should be sensitive to individual differences and provide educators with a clear picture of where each student stands academically.

On a larger scale, baseline data collected through universal screening helps determine the overall health of your core instruction. A strong core is the foundation of a healthy MTSS practice. This Core Workout Worksheet is designed to help school leaders determine the state of their core instruction, and walk through the questions they need to reflect on with their teams to target problem areas and affect positive change.

APPENDIX A: [Core Workout Worksheet](#)

Goal Setting

Goal setting is a cornerstone of the MTSS framework. When goals are clear, measurable, and realistic, they provide a roadmap for both educators and students, guiding interventions and instructional strategies. It can be challenging to set good goals, though!

It is common to see goals that are:

- ✗ Too broad
- ✗ Unrealistic
- ✗ Lack a plan for consistent monitoring
- ✗ Have no end date

Educators need training on setting, assessing, and revising goals. The SMART acronym is helpful to remember each component of goal setting: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Fostering collaboration among educators, students, and parents/guardians will also help create goals that are specific and tailored to the individual student.

APPENDIX B: [Quick Guide to SMART Goals](#) and [Smart Goals Worksheet](#)

RELATED RESOURCE: [5 Mistakes to Avoid When Setting SMART Goals in MTSS](#)

A strong core is the foundation of a healthy MTSS practice.

FAQs

Q: Is there a correlation between the frequency of monitoring and improved outcomes?

A: Yes, research indicates that regular and consistent monitoring is associated with improved outcomes (Lambert, Algozzine, & McGee, 2014).

Selecting an Aligned Progress Monitor

This MTSS Progress Monitoring Guide provides practical strategies and user-friendly templates to optimize your monitoring efforts and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Check out the flowchart below for a step-by-step visual of how a data-driven practice fits into MTSS. You'll see that progress monitoring is central to the process!

Identify the Skill Deficit Clearly:

Before choosing a progress monitoring tool, it's vital to have a clear understanding of the specific skill deficit. Whether it's reading comprehension, mathematical problem solving, or any other skill, a precise definition is crucial. For example, "struggling in reading" is too broad; "difficulty in understanding the main idea in a passage" is more specific.

Match the Granularity:

Ensure the tool you choose measures progress at the same level of granularity as the deficit. If you're targeting a very specific skill, like recognizing phonemes, then the tool should monitor that exact skill and not a broader one, like general reading ability.

Choose a Sensitive Tool:

The progress monitor should be sensitive enough to detect small changes in the learner's performance. This ensures that even slight improvements or regressions are caught, allowing for timely interventions or instructional changes.

Research Validity and Reliability:

Always select a tool that has been researched and proven to be valid (measures what it claims to measure) and reliable (gives consistent results over time). This ensures the data you collect is trustworthy.

Ensure Relevance:

Consider if the tool is appropriate for the age, grade, or developmental level of the learner. An instrument designed for early elementary students might not be suitable for middle schoolers, even if it targets the same skill deficit.

Ease of Administration:

While this shouldn't be the primary factor, it's essential to consider how easy it is to administer the monitoring tool. Take into consideration the frequency, time, and size (individual or group) of administration.

If the progress monitoring tool is too complicated or time-consuming, there's a higher likelihood that it might not be used consistently, which can affect the integrity of the data.

Review Sample Items or Questions: Before settling on a tool, review some sample items or questions. This will give you a clear picture of what's being assessed and ensure it aligns with the targeted skill deficit.



For further guidance on selecting aligned progress monitoring tools, the National Center for Intensive Intervention offers several in-depth resources:

- To help identify skill deficits, learn about how to utilize [Diagnostic Data](#).
- For assistance in gauging granularity, see the [Academic Progress Monitoring Tools Chart](#) and the [Behavior Progress Monitoring Tools Chart](#).
- For validity and reliability information about specific tools, see the [Academic Progress Monitoring Tools Chart](#) and [Behavior Progress Monitoring Tools Chart](#).

Seek Feedback:

Connect with other educators or specialists who might have experience with the tool you're considering. Their insights can be invaluable in determining if a particular progress monitor is the right fit for your needs. PLCs can provide a collaborative and focused environment for educators to collectively analyze student data, share expertise, and explore select progress monitoring tools that are precisely aligned with identified skill deficits.

Consider Piloting the Tool:

Before fully committing to a tool, pilot it with a small group of learners. This will give you firsthand experience of its efficacy and whether it aligns well with the skill deficit in question.

Stay Updated:

Educational tools and strategies are continuously evolving. Make it a point to stay updated with the latest research and trends in progress monitoring to ensure you're always using the best tools available.

Use the most up-to-date versions of probes and norms tables.

APPENDIX C: [Selecting an Aligned Progress Monitor Checklist](#)

Special Note: Curriculum-Based Measurements (CBMs)

CBMs stand out as exceptional tools for progress monitoring for several compelling reasons.

- CBMs are directly aligned with skills taught, ensuring the assessments are relevant and indicative of a student's grasp of the material. This direct alignment fosters meaningful, real-time feedback for educators, allowing them to identify specific areas of strength and weakness in a student's performance.
- CBMs are designed for frequent administration, making them ideal for continuous monitoring. This frequency enables educators to promptly detect learning gaps and make instructional adjustments, reducing the risk of students falling behind.
- The standardized nature of CBMs facilitates consistent data collection and comparison across various time points, classrooms, and even schools. Such standardization is invaluable in making informed decisions about instructional effectiveness and programmatic changes.

PLCs can
provide a
collaborative
and focused
environment.



Curriculum-Based Measurements (CBMs) cont.

These CBMs are instrumental in monitoring progress because they are quick to administer, provide immediate feedback, and directly align with the skills they intend to measure.

1. Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)

- **Targeted Skill:** Reading fluency and comprehension
- **Description:** Students read a passage aloud for one minute; errors and words read correctly per minute are tallied.

2. Maze Fluency

- **Targeted Skill:** Reading comprehension
- **Description:** Students read a passage with every seventh word replaced by a multiple-choice trio, selecting the correct word.

3. Early Numeracy Measures

- **Targeted Skill:** Basic math skills
- **Description:** Quick assessments of counting, number identification, quantity discrimination, and missing numbers.

4. Math Computation (M-COMP)

- **Targeted Skill:** Math calculation skills
- **Description:** Students solve as many math problems as possible within a given time frame.

5. Writing CBM

- **Targeted Skill:** Writing fluency and quality
- **Description:** Students write a story or essay within a short time frame; words written and correct writing sequences are scored.

6. Spelling CBM

- **Targeted Skill:** Spelling accuracy
- **Description:** Dictated words are written; correct letter sequences are scored.

7. Number Identification Fluency

- **Targeted Skill:** Number recognition and fluency
- **Description:** Students quickly identify as many numbers as possible within a time limit.

8. Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)

- **Targeted Skill:** Phonemic awareness
- **Description:** Students listen to a word and then segment it into individual phonemes.

9. Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)

- **Targeted Skill:** Decoding and phonics
- **Description:** Students read a list of nonsense words to assess decoding skills.

While there are many progress monitoring tools available, it's essential to ensure the one you select is directly aligned with the skill deficit you're targeting. This guarantees that your data is accurate, relevant, and useful in guiding your instructional decisions.

Data Collection Methods

Effective tools, both digital and paper-based, ensure educators can gather, analyze, and act on the information they obtain.

Paper-Based Tools

1. Progress Monitoring Graphs: Visual charts where educators can plot student progress over time.
2. Intervention Fidelity Logs: Track the interventions provided, frequency, and duration.
3. Anecdotal Notes: Capture qualitative data like observations, student feedback, or specific incidents.

APPENDIX D: [Editable resource: Progress Monitoring and Fidelity Tracker](#)

Digital Platforms

1. Google Forms and/or Sheets: A flexible tool that can be customized for various data collection needs in educational settings.
2. An MTSS Platform like Branching Minds: Our system-level MTSS platform helps teachers follow the best practices of problem-solving work efficiently, effectively, and collaboratively from the start, saving time and effort while improving outcomes for all students. Learn more about Branching Minds [here](#) to see how we can help make your MTSS vision a reality!

Analyzing and Visualizing Data

Visualizing and analyzing data transforms raw numbers into actionable insights. Visualization simplifies complex data sets, making patterns, trends, and anomalies more discernible. This enables educators to make informed decisions swiftly. Effective data visualization ensures that stakeholders, even those less familiar with data interpretation, can grasp key findings, accelerating collective action and understanding.

When monitoring progress within an MTSS framework, several key pieces of data visualization can be valuable:

- **Universal Screening Results:** Charts or graphs showing the results of screening assessments for all students, typically segmented by grade level or class. This helps to identify students at risk.
- **Benchmark Comparisons:** Visual comparison of student or group performance against set benchmarks or norms. This can be represented as bar graphs, scatter plots, or line graphs.
- **Intervention Effectiveness:** Graphs or tables showing the effectiveness of specific interventions for groups or individual students. This can help in determining which interventions are most effective and which need adjustments.
- **Behavioral & Attendance Data:** Visuals might include behavior incident counts, types of behaviors, locations of incidents, and/or trends in student attendance, which can be an indicator of engagement or other underlying issues.

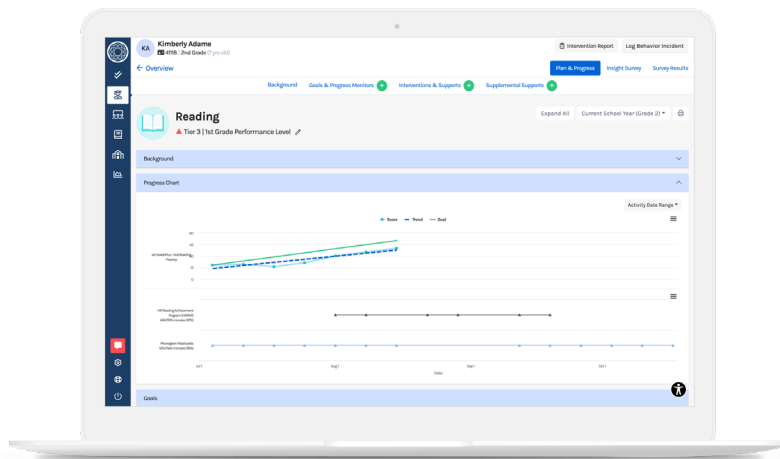
FAQs

Q: How often should progress monitoring occur?

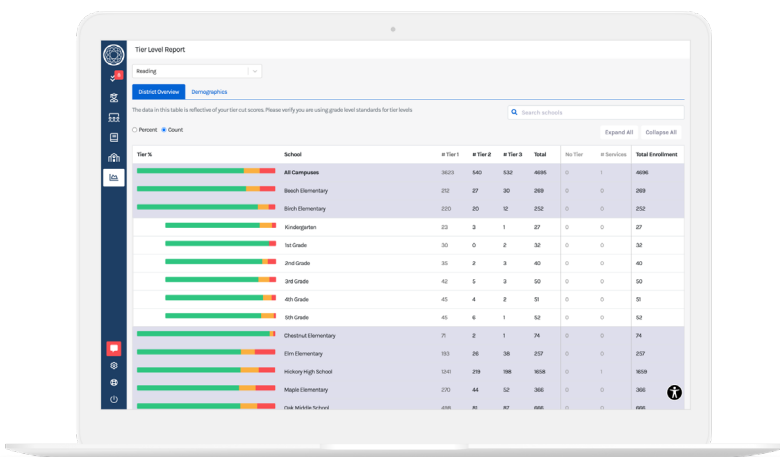
A: The frequency of progress monitoring can vary based on student needs and the specific intervention being used. The more intensive the intervention, the more frequent the monitoring. Typically, weekly or bi-weekly progress monitoring will ensure adequate data has been collected alongside plan implementation and will serve as a good foundation to base your next steps.

Data gathered is only as good as the insights drawn from it.

- **Progress Monitoring Charts:** Line graphs that show a student's performance data over time, typically against a benchmark or goal line. These are particularly critical for students in Tiers 2 and 3.



- **Gap Analysis:** Visuals that highlight the difference (gap) between where a student is performing and where they should be, or the gap between different groups of students.
- **Demographic Breakdowns:** Charts or tables that break down screener, intervention, or behavioral data by demographics such as race, gender, socio-economic status, English Language Learner (ELL) status, etc. This can help in identifying any disparities or patterns that need addressing.



- **Intervention Logs:** Visual representation or logs of the interventions a student has received, their frequency, and their duration. This can be valuable for ensuring fidelity and consistency in the application of support.

Remember, the goal of visualizing data within an MTSS framework is to make the data actionable. Visuals should be clear, concise, and directly related to decision-making processes.

Regularly reviewing and updating visualizations as new data becomes available ensures that interventions are timely and effective.

FAQs

Q: How can schools ensure that data visualizations are accessible to all stakeholders, including those with disabilities?

A: Accessibility can be ensured by:

- Using colorblind-friendly palettes.
- Providing alternative text descriptions for visual content.
- Ensuring compatibility with screen readers.
- Offering tactile or auditory representations of data for those with visual impairments.
- Making sure visualization platforms are mobile-responsive to cater to stakeholders without desktop access.

Ongoing Progress Monitoring

Not all interventions work equally well for every student. This is where the power of ongoing progress monitoring becomes evident: it informs educators when modifications are needed.

Signs That Intervention Needs Adjustment:

- **Stagnant Performance:** If a student's performance plateaus for several consecutive monitoring sessions, it could indicate the intervention is not effective.
- **Regression:** A decline in performance could be a sign that the intervention is not only ineffective but potentially detrimental.
- **Increased Behavioral Issues:** If a student displays new or increased behavioral challenges, it might suggest the intervention isn't addressing underlying issues or might be causing frustration.
- **Lack of Engagement:** If a student becomes disengaged or is consistently non-compliant, the approach might not be resonating or might be too challenging.
- **Consistent Feedback From the Student:** Always consider student feedback. If they consistently report they're not finding the support helpful, it may be time to re-evaluate.

RELATED RESOURCES: [How to Know if an MTSS Intervention Plan is Successful](#) and [How to Respond to an MTSS Intervention Plan Showing No Growth](#).

Use Standardized Cut Points to Guide Decision Making

To ensure consistent support for students across a school or district, it is important to create decision rules or "cut points" that provide guidance for problem solving teams. Whether lessening supports, maintaining their current level, or intensifying interventions, decision rules trigger a conversation about the effectiveness of intervention and the need (or not) for change. See the downloadable Tier 2 and Tier 3 Guidance Charts below for suggested academic decision rules.

APPENDIX E: [Guidance on Tier 2 and Tier 3 Decision Rules](#)

FAQs

Q: Can't we rely on quarterly or semester exams to gauge student progress?

A: Quarterly or semester exams offer a snapshot of a student's performance but don't provide ongoing, granular data that helps educators adjust interventions in real-time.

Ensuring Fidelity

Ensuring fidelity means maintaining the integrity of an instructional or intervention program by delivering it as it was designed and intended. Fidelity is paramount because, without it, educators cannot determine whether a program's successes or failures are due to the program itself or variations in its delivery (O'Donnell, 2008).

When fidelity is compromised, the results of progress monitoring can be misleading. For instance, an intervention may appear ineffective when, in reality, it hasn't been implemented correctly.

This can lead to inappropriate instructional decisions, depriving students of potentially effective strategies or support. Moreover, consistency in program delivery ensures that all students receive equitable, high-quality instruction.

APPENDIX F: [MTSS Intervention Fidelity Checklist](#)

RELATED RESOURCE: [Guide to Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation](#)



FAQs

Q: Isn't flexibility in program delivery important to cater to individual student needs?

A: While individualized instruction is vital, fidelity ensures that core, evidence-based components of a program are consistently delivered. After establishing fidelity, educators can introduce supplementary strategies tailored to individual needs without compromising the program's integrity.

Q: Can fidelity checks be seen as a lack of trust in educators' professionalism?

A: Fidelity checks aren't about mistrusting educators but ensuring consistency and effectiveness across the board. They serve as a supportive tool to help educators achieve the best outcomes for their students.

Communication

Effective communication with stakeholders — parents, fellow educators, administrators, and students themselves — is paramount for the success of progress monitoring. Clear communication ensures everyone is on the same page and understands the student's needs, the interventions in place, and the progress being made.

Tips for clear, consistent communication with stakeholders:

1. **Transparency:** Always provide stakeholders with comprehensive data and explanations, ensuring they understand the implications.
2. **Frequency:** Regular updates, rather than waiting for formal review periods, help stakeholders stay informed and engaged.
3. **Jargon-Free:** While educators might be comfortable with technical terms, always use language that's easy for everyone to understand.
4. **Feedback Loop:** Encourage stakeholders to share their insights and observations. They might provide a different perspective that can be invaluable.
5. **Use Visuals:** Charts, graphs, and other visual aids can make complex data more accessible and digestible (Hattie, 2009).
6. **Collaborative Meetings:** Organize meetings where stakeholders can discuss progress, ask questions, and offer feedback.

RELATED RESOURCES: [5 Resources for Building Positive Family Relationships in MTSS](#)

Conclusion

When approached as a source of vital information about the students we serve, the practice of progress monitoring in MTSS transcends its cold, numerical nature and becomes a guiding light — a beacon of insight illuminating the individual paths of our students. It reminds us that in every bar graph, every line chart, there is a young mind brimming with potential. Effective progress monitoring helps us reach each one, making the most of our precious time and their precious possibilities.

FAQs

Q: Why is it necessary to communicate progress so frequently? Doesn't it lead to information overload for parents and other stakeholders?

A: While there's a risk of overwhelming stakeholders with too much information, frequent communication ensures transparency and allows for timely intervention adjustments. It's about finding a balance.



About the Author

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Stephanie Bryan has a decade of experience in the education field, and 8 years of specialty experience working in MTSS and literacy. She graduated from the University of Florida in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. As former Dean of Intervention, she coached educators on MTSS best practices, intervention implementation and data analysis. Her foundation in MTSS work was laid during her time working at the Florida Center for Reading and Research. Since then, she has aided in the creation of MTSS systems and services at a first year turnaround school, selected and served as a mentor teacher for a fellow of the Xavier University Norman C. Francis Teacher Residency Program, and was twice nominated for the New Orleans Excellence in Teaching Award. Stephanie subscribes to the philosophy that all students are capable of making progress and succeeding in the general education environment under the provision of targeted, individualized and evidence based instruction.

Citations

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Appendices

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APPENDIX B: [Quick Guide to SMART Goals](#) and [Smart Goals Worksheet](#)

APPENDIX C: [Selecting an Aligned Progress Monitor Checklist](#)

Appendix D: [Editable resource: Progress Monitoring and Fidelity Tracker](#)

APPENDIX E: [Guidance on Tier 2 and Tier 3 Decision Rules](#)

APPENDIX F: [MTSS Intervention Fidelity Checklist](#)

Core Workout Worksheet

	Core Data Deep Dive			Hypothesis	Action Steps
Topic	What % of the student population is sufficiently supported by core instruction (tier 1)?	Which grade levels are not yet being adequately supported?	Which demographic student groups are not yet adequately supported?	What are possible causes ? What additional information is needed?	Who do I need to speak with ? What questions do I have to follow up on? Do I need to re-prioritize my time to address a need?

Core Workout Worksheet

Common Considerations Re: The Health of Your School's Core	How Do I Know? (examining curriculum guides, lesson plans, classroom observations, analyzing discipline data, joining department/grade level collaborative meetings, etc.)
District/School provides clear expectations regarding teaching and learning. The district provides required classroom tools/resources (content and assessment) needed for student success	
Instruction is standards based and student work reflects that alignment	
Instructors are highly skilled, have content knowledge, deliver engaging lessons and students are informed of the standards they must meet	
Instructional strategies are research based and are routinely differentiated, responding to students' exceptionalities, language and cultural needs	
Instructional materials are provided in multiple formats over the course of a lesson or unit	
Instructional staff collaboratively plan and document teaching and learning intent	
Instructors use a variety of strategies to assess learning	
Instructional staff routinely analyze and use diagnostic tools to determine the impact of teaching on learning and make adjustments	
Instructional Staff routinely receives specific feedback from content experts and school level administrators	

Smart Goals Quick Reference

Purpose: To ensure that educators can effectively set and monitor goals for students within an MTSS framework, this reference provides a clear understanding of how to create and evaluate SMART Goals. These goals are integral for assessing students' academic and behavioral progress.

Letter	Definition	Questions to Ask	Example	Reasoning
<u>S</u> pecific	This is where the educator defines the specific skill they want the student to achieve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the specific skill or behavior to improve? - Why is improvement important? - Who is involved (student, teacher, parents)? - Where will the goal be implemented (classroom, home, special education room)? - Which resources are required (materials, support personnel)? 	<i>...students will work to enhance reading fluency, specifically aiming to improve speed, accuracy, and expression.</i>	The goal is specific in targeting “reading fluency,” focusing on “speed, accuracy, and expression.”
<u>M</u> easurable	This is where a commitment to quantifying student progress is made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How much improvement is expected? - How many times should the desired behavior occur? - How will progress be measured (tests, observations, data tracking)? 	<i>Progress will be monitored bi-weekly through timed reading assessments and oral reading checks...</i>	The goal is measurable by setting clear criteria for success.
<u>A</u> chievable	Here we select our goal number. Taking into consideration a student’s current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the student accomplish this goal? - What resources or supports are needed? 	<i>...with the goal of achieving a minimum of 95 words per minute with 98% accuracy and satisfactory expression</i>	The goal is achievable and realistic for a 4th-grade student, as it involves practicing with grade-level passages, a common method for improving fluency.

	abilities while also utilizing a norms table for setting academic goals helps in ensuring ambitious yet achievable targets.	- Is the goal realistic given the student's current abilities?	<i>as measured by a standard fluency rubric.</i>	Accuracy and rate were selected using a norms table and taking students' current abilities into account.
<u>Relevant</u>	Here, we want to ensure the goal is relevant to the student's grade level and educational development.	- Is the goal worthwhile, and will it meet the student's needs? - Is this the right time to pursue this goal? - Does this goal support the student's learning plan and long-term objectives?	<i>Students will practice reading grade-level passages aloud, with a focus on maintaining a consistent pace and using appropriate intonation.</i>	The goal is relevant by focusing on reading fluency, a key skill for 4th graders that supports comprehension and overall literacy.
<u>Time Bound</u>	Goals should be sure to include a specific time frame. This holds us accountable for checking back in!	- When does the student need to accomplish the goal? - What realistically can be done during this grading period or semester? - What can the student do each week or month to progress?	<i>Over the next 6 weeks...</i>	The goal is time-bound, with a clear timeframe set.
<u>Review & Adjust</u>	Regular monitoring is crucial. Schedule consistent reviews of the student's progress toward the SMART Goals. If goals are not being met, re-evaluate and adjust them based on the student's needs, available resources, and any other relevant factors. This dynamic approach is central to the MTSS framework, ensuring that student support is responsive and effective.			

Utilize this [SMART Goal Worksheet](#) to set clear and attainable objectives, ensuring consistent tracking and reflection as part of your MTSS progress monitoring efforts. As you reach the end of this resource, remember that setting structured, well-defined goals is just the beginning. Regular review, assessment, and adaptation of these goals using the tools and insights provided will be key to your sustained progress and success within the MTSS framework.

Smart Goal Worksheet

Utilize this SMART Goal Worksheet to set clear and attainable objectives, ensuring consistent tracking and reflection as part of your MTSS progress monitoring efforts.

S Specific	- Goal: - Details:
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M Measurable	- Indicators of Progress: - Measurement Tools:
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A Achievable	- Student's Current Ability: - Resources Needed:
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R Relevant	- Alignment with Educational Objectives: - Significance to Student's Learning:
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T Time Bound	- Deadline: - Milestones:
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Selecting an Aligned Progress Monitor Checklist

This essential checklist will guide you in selecting the most aligned progress monitoring tools, ensuring precise and effective tracking of skill acquisition for every learner.

- Identify the Skill Deficit Clearly:** Before choosing a progress monitoring tool, it's vital to have a clear understanding of the specific skill deficit. Whether it's reading comprehension, mathematical problem solving, or any other skill, a precise definition is crucial. For example, "struggling in reading" is too broad; "difficulty in understanding the main idea in a passage" is more specific.
- Match the Granularity:** Ensure the tool you choose measures progress at the same level of granularity as the deficit. If you're targeting a very specific skill, like recognizing phonemes, then the tool should monitor that exact skill and not a broader one, like general reading ability.
- Choose a Sensitive Tool:** The progress monitor should be sensitive enough to detect small changes in the learner's performance. This ensures that even slight improvements or regressions are caught, allowing for timely interventions or instructional changes.
- Research Validity and Reliability:** Always select a tool that has been researched and proven to be valid (measures what it claims to measure) and reliable (gives consistent results over time). This ensures the data you collect is trustworthy.
- Ensure Relevance:** Consider if the tool is appropriate for the age, grade, or developmental level of the learner. An instrument designed for early elementary students might not be suitable for middle schoolers, even if it targets the same skill deficit.
- Ease of Administration:** While this shouldn't be the primary factor, it's essential to consider how easy it is to administer the monitoring tool. If it's too complicated or time-consuming, there's a higher likelihood that it might not be used consistently, which can affect the integrity of the data. Take into consideration the frequency, time, and size (individual or group) of administration. Refer to assessment instructions for this information.
- Review Sample Items or Questions:** Before settling on a tool, review some sample items or questions. This will give you a clear picture of what's being assessed and ensure it aligns with the targeted skill deficit.
- Seek Feedback:** Connect with other educators or specialists who might have experience with the tool you're considering. Their insights can be invaluable in determining if a particular progress monitor is the right fit for your needs. PLCs can provide a collaborative and focused environment for educators to collectively analyze student data, share expertise, and explore select progress monitoring tools that are precisely aligned with identified skill deficits.
- Consider Piloting the Tool:** Before fully committing to a tool, pilot it with a small group of learners. This will give you firsthand experience of its efficacy and whether it aligns well with the skill deficit in question.
- Stay Updated:** Educational tools and strategies are continuously evolving. Make it a point to stay updated with the latest research and trends in progress monitoring to ensure you're always using the best tools available. Always make sure you are using the most up-to-date versions of probes and norms tables.

Guidance for Tier 2 and Tier 3 Decision Rules

Utilize clear performance and growth benchmarks to make informed choices when monitoring progress – whether it's advancing students to lesser support tiers, maintaining their current level, or intensifying interventions. This concise framework ensures targeted, data-driven strategies for each student's unique journey toward academic success.

Guidance for Tier 2 Decision Rules:

Performance Level	Growth/Rate of Improvement	Decision
3 consecutive PM data points at or above 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 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

Guidance for 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

*The “percentile” represents the comparison of the student’s growth to what is average for the grade level.

MTSS Intervention Fidelity Checklist

Instructions

Utilize this checklist regularly to review the various components of the MTSS intervention implementation. Tick each box once the criterion is met or the action is completed. Address any unchecked items as soon as possible.

Training

- All individuals delivering the program have completed initial training.
- Training included a thorough review of the program's components and objectives.
- Trainees demonstrated understanding through assessments or observations.

Materials

- Inventory of required materials is complete and up-to-date.
- Materials are readily accessible to all program implementers.
- Usage of materials aligns with program guidelines.

Adherence

- Sessions are regularly observed for quality control.
- Program is being implemented according to the designed protocol.
- Any adaptations are documented and justified.

Frequency & Duration

- Program is delivered with the recommended frequency.
- Duration of each session aligns with program guidelines.
- Adjustments to frequency or duration are documented and justified.

Feedback Mechanism

- A clear process exists for reporting concerns or deviations.
- Feedback is regularly reviewed and addressed.
- Individuals feel comfortable and encouraged to provide honest feedback.

Documentation

- Detailed records of each session are maintained.
- Documentation includes any deviations or challenges encountered.
- Data is stored securely and is easily accessible for review.

Ongoing Training

- Schedule for refresher training sessions or workshops is established.
- Training content is reviewed and updated as needed.
- Attendance at ongoing training is tracked and enforced.

Stakeholder Engagement

- All stakeholders are informed about the goals and methods of the program.
- Communication channels with stakeholders are open and effective.
- Regular feedback from stakeholders is sought and incorporated into program adjustments.



BRANCHING MINDS



About Branching Minds

The Branching Minds platform helps educators and administrators find the best evidence-based interventions for each learner, streamline documentation, and quickly understand student progress.

“What's so great about Branching Minds is it's so teacher-friendly to do what you need to do to support MTSS. This rate of improvement line is telling you so clearly if the student is improving, and are they going to hit the goal.”

*Angela Plugge, Director of Learning,
Waverly School District (Nebraska)*



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demo today! ⇒